

ACE

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CPC ■ SPECTRUM ■ PC
■ NINTENDO ■ SEGA ■

THE ULTIMATE GAMES MAGAZINE

ADVANCED COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

CRIME BUSTER!

Interactive Sleuthing in
Sierra's *Rise of the Dragon*



CDTV

The Case of the Cautious Condor



WIN!

Amazing TOKI
Coin-up for
Grabs!

ACE

IN THE STATES

First CES '91 Report

Including:

SENSE 8

Portable Virtual Reality

LUCASFILM

Team Interview

VIRTUAL SEX

It could only happen
in California!

WING COMMANDER 2

ULTIMA VII

THINK PINK!

30 Pages of
Software Steals and
Bargain Buys

PLUS: R-Type 2, Team Suzuki Trailblazer, Dragon's Lair II
Mig 29, Hard Driving 2, NARC vs Crimewave, + Many more



FLIGHT OF THE



INTRUDER™

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

In 1972, the USAF launched Operation Linebacker. US forces and their South Vietnamese allies are locked in a life and death struggle with the fanatical North Vietnamese Army. You must stem the tide of the North Vietnamese offensive by cutting its vital lifeline to its front line troops.

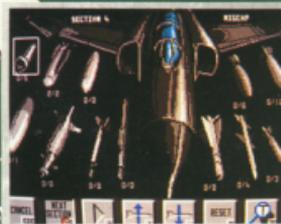
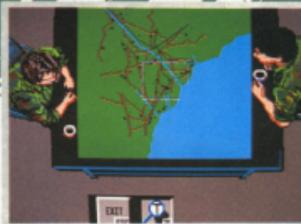
From the US Carriers in the Gulf of Tonkin on "Yankee Station", you must attack a variety of installations defended by surface to air missiles and the MiG fighters of the skillful and determined North Vietnamese Air Force.

Only team work will get you back alive. The "IRON HAND" flights must destroy or suppress the surface to air missiles whilst Combat Air Patrol aircraft circle high above the strike force looking out for enemy aircraft. Finally, the strike aircraft must find and attack the target braving a hail of small arms and anti-aircraft artillery fire at low level. Individual survival is not the only measure of success, it is the success of the mission as a whole that counts - there is no place for seekers of individual glory.

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

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





FEATURES

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

- ⊕ Up to 8 friendly and 4 enemy aircraft on screen simultaneously.
- ⊕ 2 different aircraft accurately simulated. 3 different roles: MIGCAP, IRON HAND, or STRIKE.
- ⊕ Realistic mission environment with enemy artificial intelligence.
- ⊕ Switch between friendly aircraft in flight.
- ⊕ Carrier take-off and landing with "MEATBALL" landing aid.
- ⊕ In-flight radio messages with radio message queueing system.
- ⊕ View from all aspects and 14 in cockpit views.
- ⊕ Large numbers of mobile targets including trucks, trains and barges.
- ⊕ Realistic terrain taken from contemporary operations maps including Hanoi, Haiphong and Than Hoa.
- ⊕ Instant "Quickstart" option.

MIRROR
Soft

Spectrum Holobyte

"The manne, having appeared from no where, then spake to me, enquiring whither I had come and demanding that I refet ye machine. I was sore afraid, left he unleafh some devilyr upon me. He then vanifhed, with ye magic words Faytul Siftum Era."

Unexplained entry in Popy's diary for April 1st, 1665.



Drome's Race Assault is the first game to be awarded the 'Wallpaper award'. See Screen Test...



Images like this will be supporting your PC or arcade users, thanks to Angel Studios. Page 25.



CD: The Case of the Cautious Condor. Personality and more great plus on page 25.

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reviews

The latest releases on computer, console and CD are all given the authoritative ACE treatment...

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We cast a critical eye over four of the most popular titles of the month, and quality speaking loudly.

ON CD page 79

You'll learn the cartoon-quality graphics on the front page - find out all about the Case of the Cautious Condor.

EXTRA! EXTRA!

You can't have helped but notice the free tips supplement adorning the front of this month's issue. After feeding details of every game on the market into our ACE Market Forces and Gameplay Analysis Computer, we shortlisted 10 of the best examples of popular computer gaming. And we've compiled a detailed set of tips for each. So, those of you who own a copy of Robocop 2, Lemmings, F-15, Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles, Awesome, Prince of Persia, Battle Command, Powermonger or Ultima VI, will be laughing.



Whether you're vanquishing dragons, slinging steel balls into future goals, swordfighting or simply shouting things, our tips will help.



Building reveal their plans for long. Turn to page 29 to read about Populous 2, Powermonger action disks and to see how long a goldfish lasts against the frog's pet Piranha.

CALIFORNIA DREAMIN' A month of contrasts. Braving the foul West Coast sunshine, battling through the wretched shanty-town existence of Las Vegas, erstwhile Editor Steve Cooke puts on a brave face and reports from the 1991 Consumer Electronics Show. There's the world's first portable Virtual Reality machine, a report from Angel Studios who are pushing coin-op graphics further than ever before and all the news from Lucasfilm and Electronic Arts. Back in Blighty, we concentrate on software. Team Suzuki, Dragon's Lair 2, Mig 29, Hard Driving 2 and NARC all get the thorough Screen Test treatment. And of course, there's a free 24 page Tricks 'n' Tactics supplement too.

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LITTLE PINKIES

Jam-packed with page upon page of bargains and useful information. Everything from the Stockmarket to cheap joysticks. Page 81

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"Money too tight to mention? You should read ACE" Bargains and facts galore. Public Domain, hardware, games and the Stockmarket too.



©1991 Sierra. All rights reserved. Rise of the Dragon. Trade Number: 81.

COVER STORY

Sierra-on-Line, famed for its Quest series and the "unique" Ultima. Surt Lary have delved deep into the film noir genre to produce Rise of the Dragon, an interactive point-and-click game.



MARCH 1991

If you desire a challenge
beyond human experience..

Move up to a world of role-playing
adventure and take on a true challenge

Eye of the Beholder is an unbelievable task for beginner or veteran. But believe this, whatever your role-playing experience, Eye of the Beholder will SURPRISE, STIMULATE and CHALLENGE you every step of the way.

- 100% point 'n' click game control.
- Fully animated encounters with realistic 'you are there' perspective.
- A web of deceit and intrigue draws you into the totally addictive plot.
- Control up to 6 characters via their portraits and icons.

SSI's AD&D® computer role-playing games have gained a reputation for great gameplay. Now they have added incredible graphic presentation and a user interface that makes this game the state-of-the-art for computer role-playing adventure games.

THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER



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

U.S. GOLD



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AD&D - Second Edition game rules

Available on IBM (EGA, CGA, VGA, MCGA, Ad-Lib) & Amiga.

Leading
the World in
Computer
Role-playing
Games

NEWS

Here comes Cyber Car

Say goodbye to parking problems, theft and ever getting lost again. Mercedes Benz take all the fun out of driving.

Mercedes-Benz, the respected German auto-manufacturer, unveiled the 'car of the future' at the Detroit Motor Show last month.

Everything in this six/eight seater is new. The driver sits in the centre of the vehicle making it suitable for both left and right-hand drive. Twin cameras and a monitor provide excellent rear visibility and a radar system warns of other vehicles changing lanes or possible hazards ahead. The F100 has a HUD-like central display screen to replace the usual instrument panel, which automatically reprioritises information.

F100 can run on petrol, electricity or hydrogen, with the latter offering a solution to the problems of oil-shortages and global warming due to exhaust fumes.

The result of extensive research by both Mercedes-Benz AG and Daimler Benz, there are no plans to put the F100 into production.



Forget your Porsche turbo-scooter, this is the car to drive on the autobahn!

Things are seldom what they seem, especially when you're eating genetically engineered food. Do you remember the advert for Quorn 'the try not alive of the mushroom'?

starring a host of fermyriad mussels and the bible from That's Life. Well, feast your taste-buds on this.

Quorn is, in fact, fermented filamentous fungus. Does anyone fancy a second helping?

Games will soon talk to one another

Bullfrog, the creators of *Populous* and *Powermonger*, have told ACE about an exciting plan to enable future games to share data and talk to one another. If other software developers agree to join this revolutionary idea, players will be able to save characters from one game and load them into another and continue play in this totally new environment. You could fly the fighter from *Xenon III* over the lands of *Populous III*!

"What we hope to do, and it's not official yet, is to transfer the information between our games and titles like *Sim City* from Maxis," says Peter Molyneux, the boss of Bullfrog. "So if you've got a saved game on *Sim City 2*, you can put

it into *Populous II* and play on the same world as you had in *Sim City 2*," Molyneux adds, "Obviously you can't do this with all games".

Bullfrog would like all simulations in the future to be data-compatible. "All this means is a few software developers have to get together and talk about what they're doing," explains Molyneux. "We've already sat down with some people and said 'Let's do it'. Everybody thinks it will be nice but the details have yet to be sown up. I'm not quite sure how the copyright side would work out. It all get's rather petty at this stage. There's a very good chance of *Populous II* being data compatible with other games. You'll certainly be able to take things from *Powermonger* and *Populous* and put them into *Populous II*."

What do you think about this idea? Write in to ACE Letters and tell us!

May The Force Be With You

Lucasfilm Games and JVC Musical Industries are working together on a new Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) game based around the famous *Star Wars* movie.

"*Star Wars* for the NES will offer the most compelling first-person 3D space flight and combat sequences ever," says Lucasfilm Games, part of the giant movie company that created the original movies.

In the forthcoming game, players will be able to control *Star Wars* characters Luke Skywalker, Han Solo and Princess Leia, Obi-Wan Kenobi, C-3PO and R2-D2. Each character has unique strengths and weaknesses, so players must learn which character is most effective in different situations.

Like the movie, *Star Wars* begins in the Tatooine Desert. Luke, in his landspeeder, must dodge boulders, shoot Jawas and avoid sand snakes in a search for Obi-Wan Kenobi, who will give him a lightsaber and teach him the ways of the Force. Luke's adventure lead him to the town of Mos Eisley, where he fends off stormtroopers and meets Han Solo, pilot of the Millennium Falcon. They then have to rescue Princess Leia from Darth Vader, who holds her prisoner on the Death Star. Once they have escaped, players must navigate the trenches of the Death Star in an X-Wing fighter before dropping the fatal missile to demolish the dreams of the Empire.

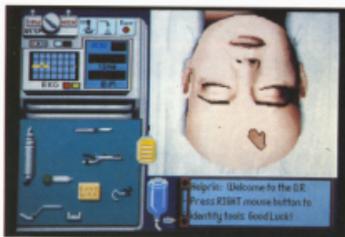
The four game sections are split between top-down and side-to-side scrolling displays. Top-down play involves vehicle manoeuvring, including exploring the surface of the Tatooine Desert in the landspeeder and the exterior of the Death Star in an X-Wing. Horizontal scrolling sequences include explorations of the Mos Eisley spaceport and the labyrinth corridors inside the Death Star. Passwords allow players to restart a game where they left off.

"JVC Musical Industries and Lucasfilm Games make an unbeatable team," says Satoshi Honda, General Manager of Victor Musical Industries. "Our combined creativity, programming skill and experience will make *Star Wars* one of the most important games published for the NES in 1991."

Lucasfilm Games is handling the design and marketing of the *Star Wars* NES game while JVC Musical Industries is looking after the sales and distribution. *Star Wars* will soon be released on the NES and adaptations for the Nintendo Super Famicom and PC are also under consideration.



Are you confused by your zillion-function TV remote controller? Mitsubishi may have a solution to your problems with its PRM-I remote control. This pen-sized device uses visual and tactile clues to distinguish the channel, volume and power buttons. The PRM-I has won a gold award from the



Your first patient on the slab, this is where the fun begins, pass me that drill.



This patient could be drug addict or stroke victim, what do you diagnose?

Mario goes to the movies

Danny DeVito, the pint-sized actor from *Taxi* and *Twins*, is to star in the *Super Mario Bros* live-action movie, the first feature film to be based around a video game character.

The *Super Mario Bros* video game series from Nintendo, which has sold more than 32 million games in the U.S. since its introduction five years ago, has made Mario America's most popular animated character. He's even more popular than Mickey Mouse! DeVito will play Mario in the movie, which will go into production in mid-91 for an expected summer 1992 release.

Developed as a comedy-adventure to appeal to both adults and children, the *Super Mario Bros* movie will be written by Barry Morrow, who scripted the Oscar-winning *Rain Man*. It is understood that Dustin Hoffman owns the movie rights to the Mario character. The only other films to have had a strong video game flavour are Disney's *Tron* and *The Wizard* starring "Kevin" from *The Wonder Years* TV show.

"We feel privileged to bring such well-loved characters as Mario and Luigi to the big screen," says LightMotive, the LA-based production company in charge of the *Super Mario Bros* motion picture. "We look forward to the challenge of creating a story which brings them to life while being true to the spirit of their world."

In the past 12 months, gross sales revenues from the video game *Super Mario Bros III* total \$427,334,000 - revenues which, if the game had been a film, would rank it second only to *ET*, the largest grossing movie in entertainment history.

I don't think this patient is seeing eye-to-eye with you!



I want to be a Brain Surgeon

In the original *Life & Death* from Software Toolworks and Mindscape, players became a physician responsible for treating an appendectomy or a Dracon graft of an aortal aneurysm. In *Life & Death II*, players enter the neurosurgery wing of Toolworks General Hospital and go for the brain!

Does your patient have an aneurysm, tumour or a food allergy? X-Rays, CAT scans, MRI's... as a Toolworks General Doctor, you have the all the modern-day facilities to help your diagnoses. Eventually, your skill at the scalpel will determine whether your patient makes it to recovery... or the morgue!

Life & Death II: The Brain supports full 256-colour VGA graphics and features sampled sound effects for the respirator, EKG beeps and bone drilling tools. No gruesome detail has been excluded. The game is available now on the PC, with Mindscape currently converting *Life & Death II* to the Amiga and ST. A CDTV version is also under consideration.



Over to X-Ray for signs of brain damage.

It's strange how brain surgery makes you hungry for pizza!

Gameboy gets serious

Super Mario Land is a tough act to follow, so GameTek from North Miami Beach in Florida has developed *InfoGenius*, the first line of informational software designed specifically for the Gameboy.

Five *InfoGenius* products have been introduced based on licensing agreements with top-of-the-line reference sources including Berlitz language translators and Frommer's travel guides.

The *InfoGenius Spell Checker & Calculator* enables users to correct spelling errors of over 70,000 of the most commonly misspelled words. The user enters a word via an on-screen keyboard. The correct spelling and a list of words of related alphabetical or phonetic origin is then displayed. The user can also perform mathematical functions.

Both the English/Spanish and English/French language translators use data separated into travel categories such as restaurants, hotels and shopping. An on-screen keyboard is used to spell any one of over 12,500 words in either English, French

or Spanish. The phrases are also separated into specific travel categories and the user may view lists of over 300-related phrases. A metric/currency converter is also included.

The *InfoGenius Travel Guide* provides information on hotels, restaurants, sights and attractions, sports and recreation and night-life in America. It also includes information and emergency numbers. Descriptions and helpful hints are provided for each selection and city. All data is accessed by either price or location or both. The automatic phone dialler can be used to call any number in the database either locally or long-distance.

InfoGenius products will be available in September priced \$39.99 each. GameTek is also a developer of software for the Nintendo Entertainment System, computers and coin-ops. The company, whose games are family-orientated and non-violent, produces a line of children's games, sports games and adaptations of popular American board-games and television game shows such as *Jeopardy* and *Wheel of Fortune*. GameTek markets and distributes games licensed by Fisher-Price, Milton Bradley and Parker Brothers.



DCC... it's the size of an audio cassette and sounds like a Compact Disc.

Philips launches new audio system

Digital Compact Cassette (DCC) is a new sound medium developed by Philips and Matsushita that records and plays digital sound on new-style Compact Cassettes but remains compatible with normal audio cassettes.

The DCC product range for home, portable and in-car use will be introduced in 1992. The new prerecorded Digital Compact Cassettes will be available in parallel. The new cassettes are similar in size to the existing ones but have a new high-tech design. Additional advantages of DCC will be the convenient track selection facility and a standard auto-reverse function. The DCCs have a playing time of 90 minutes and offer the benefits of digital sound quality.

"Just as we did with Compact Disc, we expect the DCC standard will become the new worldwide standard for this medium," says Wim Wielens, Managing Director of Philips Audio.

Tandy is the first licensee of DCC and Philips is offering manufacturing licenses to all interested hardware and software companies. The rival Digital Audio Tape (DAT) system developed by Sony provides a longer playing time than DCC but is not compatible with existing analogue cassettes. DAT players are already on sale in Japan. Philips offers, "DCC is a totally new tape recording system addressing the musical possibilities of today and tomorrow. But it also makes the fullest possible use of the best of proven technology. Digital Compact Cassettes are not only more attractive and more rugged than the old Compact Cassettes; they take this simple carrier into the highest sound class for the first time".

Web of chaos

What has eight legs, two fangs and an attitude? *Arachnophobia*, the latest suspense movie from Steven Spielberg's Amblin Entertainment, is soon to be turned into a computer game from Entertainment International.

The film is set in Canaima, California - the ideal spot for Dr Ross Jennings and his wife Molly to raise their two children. Far from the dangers and congestion of the city, this picturesque community nestled between rolling green hills and rocky cliffs overlooking the Pacific Ocean promises fresh air and friendly people. In the days following the arrival of the Jennings family several of Canaima's citizens die under strange circumstances. Dr Jennings begins to investigate the mysterious deaths and calls on the help of two experts; Dr James Atherton, a world-renowned entomologist, and Delbert

McClintock, pest exterminator extraordinaire. But by the time they manage to convince the shocked residents what has really arrived in Canaima, the sleepy hamlet has already been caught in a web of chaos.

"The game is true to the film scenario," says Entertainment International, "You are hired to track down and free the town from the spiders. After liberating your house you have to find the nest and nip disaster in the bud. To destroy the spiders you can use pulverising insecticide, fumigating bombs or a flame-thrower. The levels represent different parts of the house - the roof, loft, cellar, and so on. Throughout the different levels you encounter spiders that attack you. Not all the spiders react in the same way to your presence - some will jump, others will bite your ankles or scratch your eyes out. There's also a coward who will run away when you approach."

Arachnophobia is being programmed

Extra missions for Corporation



Core Design has released an extra missions disk for its successful sci-fi fantasy role-playing adventure.

The Corporation Mission Disk is effectively a whole new game with another 16 levels of robot-infested corridors to conquer. It also includes more graphics to discover. Unfortunately, players cannot transfer built-up characters from the original game. The Corporation Mission Disk costs £14.99 for Amiga and ST. Core Design says the Mission Disk is harder to play and features more rewards and objects to collect.

The Derby-based company is now working on the PC version of Corporation (due in the spring) and Corporation II, a "completely redesigned follow-up with many innovative features which takes players up into space". This sequel will be launched in September.



The Corporation Mission Disk includes extra graphics, a new big bad robot, planets and furniture.

for the PC, Amiga and C64 by Incredible Technologies in America. Titus in France is providing the ST version. The movie is currently on general release and the game will be available in a couple of months.

Asbro, the hottest toy manufacturer of the 1980's, is using the technology behind its Nemo interactive television entertainment system. The American toy firm responsible for My Little Pony, Transformers and Visionaries spent



Arachnophobia © 1990 Amblin Entertainment, Inc and Hollywood Pictures Company

NEWS

The game begins in Scrooge's office in Duckburg. Here you can play the stock market or choose the next place to explore.



Whizzy makes a 'guest appearance' in the Photo Safari arcade game. You must photograph some exotic beasts and sell their pictures to the Duckburg Museum. Look out for the Dolly Lama, Rhinestone Rhino and Tigger Lilly!



It's a jungle out there and you've got to hack your way through snake-infested swamps and swim among the hippopotami.



Société Européenne des Satellites, the Luxembourg-based company that operates the Astra broadcasting satellite used by Sky, has ordered two new satellites from Hughes Aircraft of El Segundo, California. These are due to be launched by Ariane in 1993 and 1994. The Astra 1D satellite will be able to cope with wide-screen HDTV transmissions.

What's up Duck?



A dive into Scrooge's Money Bin sometimes provides a rare coin.

Walt Disney's answer to those teenage turtles is simply ducktastic. Ducktales, a full-length animated feature film will be hitting big screens around the country later this month along with a computer game courtesy of Disney Software, Titus and Entertainment

International. Ducktales was originally a charming television cartoon series starring, not surprisingly, relatives of Disney's Donald Duck.

The Ducktales - Quest for Gold game is based around an episode from the TV series and features a



Top games mag in paper change shock!

ACE aims to bring high-quality arthouse stock to the masses, claims Editor.

The next issue of ACE magazine will have a decidedly different feel about it. It'll still bring you the very best news, views and reviews on the buzzing future-tech scene, hot games reviews and in-depth tips. But it will be printed on the highest quality arthouse paper. But, from now on, ACE will cost an extra 20p.

Explaining the change, Jim Douglas claims that it will make ACE feel and look like the quality publication it really is. "The paper holds colour more effectively, is nicer to the touch and

will help our design department to make each issue of ACE a real masterpiece.

"The graphic quality of today's games is so much higher, with console and CD products especially leading the way with colourful cartoon-quality animation. Our switch to the new stock will help us give an even more accurate representation of what you can expect to see on the screen.

"Each issue will also stand up better to the thorough thumbing it will receive, and we'll be continually updating our design strategy to make optimum use of the higher quality paper.

"This year ACE will also be offering more supplements, free gifts and big-prize competitions than ever before. Readers can look forward to bigger issues too."

"We're investing a lot of cash in the paper-change and absorbing most of the cost. Inevitably, though, we've had to increase the cover price by a small amount. I am sure readers will be more than pleased with the result."



Launchpad McDuck is Scrooge's personal pilot, winner of the prestigious Cooled Goose trophy, presented to 'the flyer most likely to use his parachute'.



The gang's all here... Scrooge McDuck, Launchpad McDuck, Webby, Huey, Dewey and Louie. Not a good time to mention Peking Duck!

It looks as though you've lost the game, perhaps you should have bought those shares in Dime magazine after all!

contest between Flintheart Glomgold and Scrooge McDuck. Whoever can collect the most money in 30 days will become *Dime Magazine's* Duck of the Year.

Described by Disney as a "pulse-pounding action-adventure full of excitement and challenge", this humorous adventure is split into six different arcade games incorporating colourful cartoon graphics and digitised speech.

Players must help Scrooge and his friends win the contest by travelling all over the world, collecting treasures and investing in the stock

market. At the end of the contest, players return to the Isle of Macaroon to weigh their money against Glomgold's. Fame is reserved for the person with the biggest fortune. There's no spot on Wogan for second-best, you probably wouldn't even get on the Jonathan Ross show.

Ducktales - Quest for Gold is aimed at players under the age of 12. The game has been programmed for the Amiga, PC and C64 cartridge by Incredible Technologies in the States, Titus has converted it to the ST. Versions for the Spectrum and Amstrad are currently under consideration.



Use your rope and grappling hook to pull yourself up to the high ledges in the Mountain Climbing arcade game.

Golden Joysticks

Another year has flown by and the Industry is preparing the fixed grins and doesn't-matter-whether-you-win-or-lose handshakes. And why? Because the Joysticks are nearly upon us. Of course, everyone knows that winning is all that matters, so you'll be keen to wield the not inconsiderable amount of power the voting form here gives you. Simply fill in your nominations, cut out the coupon and mail it to:

Golden Joysticks Nominations, ACE, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

Best Graphics 8-Bit:	Best PC Game:
Best Graphics 16-Bit:	Game of the Year 8-Bit:
Best Soundtrack 8-Bit:	Game of the Year 16-Bit:
Best Soundtrack 16-Bit:	Hardware Manufacturer of the Year:
Best Simulation 8-Bit:	Software House of the Year:
Best Simulation 16-Bit:	NAME:
Best Coin-Op Conversion 8-Bit:	ADDRESS:
Best Coin-Op Conversion 16-Bit:
Best Console Game:

ENTER FIRST INTO BATTLE... LAST TO LEAVE

Battle COMMAND

NOW
AVAILABLE
FOR SPECTRUM
AMSTRAD
COMMODORE

ATARI ST
CBM AMIGA
IBM PC &
COMPATIBLES

Set in the near future, as an alternative reality, *Battle Command* is an arcade/strategy game in which the player controls a single "Mauler" Assault Tank in one of 16 scenarios (missions) in the ultra war, fought between two dominant races in the new World. The latest phase of the North/South war has been going on for over 10 years, with a stalemate potentially developing - a standoff between armies massed over a long dug-in battlefield. Such are the defensive capabilities of each side, full scale attacks are suicidal, so any offensive moves are, by necessity, small "behind the lines" actions performed by elite troops in specially designed vehicles. The Mauler is the latest such machine - capable of being lifted in and out of hostile territory by fast stealth choppers and armed with the most advanced weaponry the Northern scientists can devise.

ZEM: "ZEM HERE" **BTB:** "Stands out in the graphics and atmosphere department. Very convincing. Very open. Very 'being there', add to this the increasingly complicated missions with a growing IQ factor and you have something of a cakewalk that'll keep you coming back for more and more." "A mighty sequel to the mighty *Carrier Command*... except it's rather different."

THE BIG - 12K: "Battle Command is combat with a strategic edge." "The 16 missions are more than enough to keep even the most ardent tank commander happy." **CEAC HIT 100:** "The future is here and it's called *Battle Command*." "In technical terms this is one amazing program, and in gaming terms the same applies." "It's all very addictive and will have armchair technicians gibbering like loonies."

ocean

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DON'T GO TO TOWNS

After spending many hours reading the December issue of ACE, I feel I must congratulate you on the Gamesworld article. This particular piece of the magazine was very well laid out, interesting, detailed and the artwork was excellent. Definitely one of the better articles to appear in ACE recently...

On the minus side, though, I think you are devoting too much of the magazine to technology out of reach of the average user. Machines such as the Neo Geo, the FM Towns, and the CDTV. Also, the new consoles seem to have, to an extent, replaced the 8-bit computer reviews. It's been quite a while since I saw a full-length C64 or CPC review in ACE.

Complaints aside, after over a year of regularly purchasing ACE, I still find it to be, without a doubt, the most colourful, most informative, and – above all – most enjoyable computer magazine available.

Piero Serra, Northampton

Cor! Warm the cockles of your heart! Keep the fever and put it towards an FM Towns! And yes, we will be producing more features in the Gamesworld style, starting in the very next issue. You have been warned.

PULLING A FAST ONE

Like many readers of your magazine, I have noticed over the past few months the presence of the FAST advert in ACE. Whilst in no way defending the actions of software piracy, I find this worrying. The formation of FAST represents a virtual software cartel while there exists no – to my knowledge – organisation defending the interests of the games software consumer. Thus we can see, in an industry with a turnover in excess of 300 million pounds, substantial representation for the manufacturers and none for the consumers.

I propose the formation of a charter, by a neutral organisation, that would uphold the reputation of the software industry and defend the interests of the consumer. The charter could be subscribed to voluntarily by retailers and manufacturers, and the presence of the charter on their adverts could guarantee (for example) some of the following points:

1. Retailers must guarantee that consumers can see displays of software before buying.
2. A money-back guarantee if the packaging or the disks are faulty, or if the programme is bugged.

Letters

Packaging should display screen shots only if they apply to the specific version on sale.

These points would serve the interests of the industry.

Spencer Lewis, Romford

PS I find not only the presence but the tone of these adverts very disturbing.

Excellent idea, Spencer, and we're going to follow it up. See next month's issue for the results. It's worth pointing out, however, that consumers DO have some representation – through ACE. Many people think we just review games the way the manufacturers want us to, because we need the money they pay for advertising. There have been several instances in ACE's history where companies have withdrawn advertising because they did not agree with our reviews of their products. We always try to put the consumer's point of view first. Incidentally, you're not the only person to find the FAST ads disturbing, although see Blitter End in this issue for an Advertising Standards Authority judgement.

DEMO DISKS

When I played Knights of the Crystalline I found that I had bought, in my eyes, a rather average game consisting of several ordinary components with, admittedly, some very original graphics. Of course, there must be many people who saw it quite differently as all its high ratings by different computer magazines shows. The thing I want to emphasise is that even if a game is highly rated by many people that doesn't mean to say that I will like it too.

What I want to suggest is that publishers offer playable demo disks of their games for between E1 and E3 so the consumer could check out the game without risking a lot. If I liked it, I could then buy the full price product with confidence.

Ann-Miriam Maczewski, Germany

Pygnosis actually are in the process of doing this with Lemmings, and will be charging 99p for the disk. The company are very pleased with the result so far, so I

expect we will see more of this sort of thing, but it's worth pointing out that some people claim the disk has the opposite effect – having played the five levels included, they lose the impetus to pay for the whole product, although thinking it is an excellent game. It's very difficult deciding how much to 'give away' in this fashion.

VR HEALTH WARNING

I think that VR will be the biggest leap in advanced computer entertainment since the introduction of the computer itself! But whilst drooling over the possibilities of VR games, something occurred to me – something which currently I have heard nothing about, and that was the dangerous aspect of virtual reality. Would immersing your senses into a completely new and realistic environment mean that the user experiences the same effects as they would if the situation was physically real?

Imagine playing the latest VR RPG. You're walking along a dark passage when a huge grotesque monster jumps out and proceeds to attack you. If the graphics and atmosphere were realistic enough, would you really feel scared – to death maybe?

Are there any doctors out there who can clarify the situation?

Michael Webster, Beverley

A Doctor Writes: Yes, severe shock can be dangerous whatever the cause or context if you have a weak heart, and stress/strain will aggravate most physical infirmities. This has already happened with a boxing arcade game in Japan, where one man is reported to have had a heart attack while hitting the 'pads' used to control the game. On the other hand, sudden death in a VR RPG when confronted with a 30 ft high purple ur-parrot featuring 128 fully articulated different jaws, an insatiable urge to mate with humans, and a whole battery of incomprehensible instruments of torture may, possibly, be the best thing that could happen to you.

YES, IT'S A CONSOLE!

I feel angry, nay incensed, by Douglas Inness' comments with regard to the Megadrive. How can people be so narrow minded? Console owners seem to be continually on the receiving end of criticism where the merits and capabilities of the their machines are concerned and also seem to be regarded as poor, inferior individuals who only want to plug away at a joystick on the latest arcade conversion. Mr Inness obviously hasn't seen or played Phantasy Star 2 or Herzog Zwei (we don't all overdose on shoot-em-ups or platform games, you know).

But getting back to his letter, I paid £265 for my Megadrive with 6 games which I think is better than paying at least an extra £100 for an Amiga or ST that has facilities I most definitely wouldn't use (such as graphics, sound, and business applications)...

You're quite right, Mr Inness, the Megadrive does lack a keyboard. That's because it's a CONSOLE. But, sarcasm aside, a disk drive, keyboard, graphics tablet, modem unit, and CDROM drive are all on the way, which opens the door for tremendous possibilities. But why do parents always want educational justification when deciding whether or not to buy a console or a computer. If all you want to do is play games, buy a console. You're wasting your money and the machine's capabilities if you buy a computer for that reason alone.

If paying £33 for Populous (which is what it costs where I get my stuff from) means no more faulty discs and extraneous loading times for an identical Amiga conversion, then it's certainly going to be a far more enjoyable experience.

J.R.Roche, Altrincham

I think that computer owners are understandably sensitive about consoles because they think that these machines might render their own machines obsolete. This is not the case. As long as magazines like ACE are around (and we plan to be around for a long, long time) we will continue to support and reflect the computer gamer. There are good reasons for getting both a computer and a console. The first has slightly cheaper software (not everyone can afford the luxury of instant loading) and greater functionality, the second is more convenient for dedicated gaming. As we always say, go for both! But at least get the one you want and don't feel dictated to by fashion...

HELP!

I am one very sad and disappointed mother! My son is severely disabled and his computer is an absolute lifeline. He has had a BBC computer since he was about 7 years

VIRTUAL CURSE!

In issue 40 of your excellent magazine, there is an article on virtual reality. It is good to see what is essentially an entertainment magazine cover the new technology that will undoubtedly affect computer entertainment in the future. However, I feel there are some important points which were absent from your feature.

I am a 21 year old student of computer technology and have enjoyed computer games for over 8 years, although I now use my computer for WP, programming, music etc. With this experience I know how some games (even on the old Spectrum 48K) can totally engross a person in their reality.

For example, I am currently enjoying Captive on the ST. This is a thrilling game with all the ingredients necessary to capture the attention (pun intended) and it does this with a basic Atari ST, 2D graphics, and mono sound (on my STFM anyway). Imagine a VR game based on the same concept and design but with realistic 3D graphics and all the features that VR can give the player. I, for one, would never be able to stop playing such an astonishing game.

Even now, there are parents who feel that their children spend far too much time on their computers, to the exclusion of other social activities, such as other children and sports. There are instances of video game addiction that have led those children to steal from parents and beg from strangers to feed this addiction. In my opinion, the situation can only get worse as VR technology becomes more and more sophisticated.

I offer a scenario set in the year 2020.

You have just purchased the latest auto-sensing VR megamachine (AVR)

and the programmes were excellent, helping him with reading, writing, and thinking. However, he came home from school one day with "Amiga madness" and eventually the BBC was out and the Amiga in.

To me, it appears that he has swapped a boxful of really entertaining BBC disks for a boxful of absolutely mindless arcade rubbish, half of which move so fast that he's no idea what's going on. I didn't know what a mouse was until the Amiga arrived, and how I wish that I still didn't! It's useless for Martin and flies off the table when he tries to use it, due to his clumsy spastic movements. I have never seen Martin use the

with free Wild West simulation program. The new machine is an all-in-one module which fits snugly over your eyes. It can sense your every movement from the neural patters signalling your body to move. It feeds the simulation directly into your brain by means of nerve induction. You stand outside and place it over your eyes.

You are suddenly standing on the wooden walkway of an old west town. You look down to see yourself dressed in leather trousers and high boots, shirt, and leather waistcoat. The clothes feel real, the material itchy, the boots soft and comfortable. At your waist is a thick hide belt and hanging at your side is a gun, an old Smith and Wesson.

You look around and all the shops and roads you left behind in the real world are reproduced in the simulation. You start walking down the pathway.

You just passed a clothes shop that, in reality, sold nothing but the latest, brightest fashions - what you see is a dusty old wooden store that sells worn leather riding pants and tough cotton shirts. Where the bar on your left that, in reality, had a pink neon sign, where the choppers hang out, is in reality, you see old double swing doors of a saloon, inside which sit some of the meanest, toughest cowboys of the West.

keyboard with any of his Amiga games. It's just whoosh, bang whallop, here we go again on the jolly old joystick.

Please, please help someone before I'm driven mad by the screeching brakes driving round the never ending bends. Is there somewhere some sensible software for the Amiga to suit a child aged 12-14 years old which requires the use of the keyboard and the brain?

Marion Hayward, Torquay

First, you can rest assured that there is lots of Amiga software that fulfils the needs you speak of. Flight simulators, tank simulators, strategy games, chess programs...the



Every shop in this bustling city transmits its name and merchandise, so the AVR can transform this data into an image which you can see, hear, touch, smell, and taste.

The AVR has a small radar that can detect the smallest objects. For every man the radar detects, you see a man packing a gun and wearing old-style western clothes. For every woman, you see a lady in a big, stiff dress and matching bonnet. For every automobile, a horse-drawn carriage.

The radar detects a gap in the real people who surround you and the AVR decides to offer you an encounter. In that encounter, you see the dreaded Billy the Kid strutting down the earthen path... You decide to make the world a better place and take this sucker out. As he approaches, you draw and shoot, the gun feels real in your hand, the acrid smoke stings your nostrils, and Billy lies at your feet, dead.

You rip the AVR from your sweat-beaded forehead and look down at the concrete pathway - to see nothing. This is where Billy lay, but now there is nothing. With your heart beating, you smile and slowly lift the AVR to your eyes and reenter the Virtual Reality...

This scenario sounds implausible and I admit it is a pessimistic view of the use of the technology, but you have only to look to see how far computers have developed in the last twenty years to imagine how far they can 'theoretically' develop in the next thirty.

The problem of addiction taken to its limit would be a person who would never remove the AVR and would actually LIVE in the virtual reality, waiting for the next real-life simulation to hit the market. If forced back into the real world, the addict would suffer terrible withdrawal and deep depression and finally require psychiatric help to become a real person again.

This is a very, very cynical view, but it is one which must be considered alongside the development of sophis-

ticated VR technology.

The other side of the coin where VR is concerned is in its use for giving the blind or deaf or otherwise disabled people an image of the real world that they would otherwise would not have.

Imagine an AVR for the blind. It would receive data from the shops and radar (and any other theoretical sources) and convert it into an image which is fed directly to the brain, giving the user the ability to interact with the real world as never before. This is only one of the many good uses the technology could be used for.

I have tried to point out the good and bad side of VR and I hope to have invoked some thought on the subject by other readers. Personally, I cannot wait for the first affordable VR games machine to be released as it will be a real landmark in games technology and game experience. Peter Green, Huddersfield

We've given your letter the prize not because we agree with your apocalyptic warnings of a world of VR zombies, but because of your imaginative depiction of the possibilities. It sounds great! A few points...Every technological advance breeds casualties. There are currently millions of people dying from overeating. Blame it on enhanced flavouring? ...Children stole and begged from their parents to go to the movies during the depression...The threat to the young can be controlled by legislation...The risk of psychological dependence on VR would be substantially less when it is seen (as it will be) in the context of the futuristic consumer society in which it emerges, which will undoubtedly offer many other, equally compelling diversions...and, finally, the use to which we put technology is in our own hands. It's YOU who wanted to blow Billy away. It is not technology that we should be afraid of, but ourselves - and there's no escape from that.

NES games on the Super Famicom, whereas Megadrive owners have all the old Sega favourites.

3. I don't think I can stand anything else with 'Super' or 'Mario' in its title.

David Hamilton, Glasgow

I wouldn't count on either 1 or 2, but sympathise with 3!

THE MONEY PIT?

Dear ACE,

I'm a Megadrive owner, but I feel my query probably applies to every console/computer owner. Put basically it's this: Why is software so expensive? The 16-bit computer owners have to pay around £25 for their software, I have to pay around £30 (I appreciate that my software is going to be a little more pricey due to the fact that it's more expensive to produce a chip-based cart than a mass-duplicated disc) and other console owners have to pay fairly substantial sums too (although the latest Japanese 'grey' software will naturally be highly priced because of import costs).

These figures seem too high to me. The 8-bit computer owners pay around £15 for their disc-based software - a full £10 less than disc-based 16-bit games. Usually the reason given for this price difference is increased 'development costs' for the big boys. Can this really be true?

In the early days of 16-bit computers everyone was assured that once the ST and Amiga started selling in volume the price of software would inevitably drop. It hasn't, even though these computers now dominate the computer market. Similar assurances are made to console owners who complain about the prices of carts. Are these promises going to be hollow too?

I'm writing to you in the hope that you can shed some light on just what happens to all my hard-saved wonga when I buy a new game. Sorry for being such a 'moaning minnie'!

Sam Theal, Harrow

The old 'Why is software so expensive?' chestnut has been roasting on the brazier for as long as I can remember. Back in the mid-80s there was near rioting amongst Spectrum owners when they heard that Ultimate Play the Game (now Rare, console developers) were upping the price of their games from £5.99 to a whopping £9.99(!). Now, of course, nearly every major Spectrum release costs that much (although I'm sure many Spectrum owners would welcome a return to those 'Good Old Days'). However, that's by-the-by. In next month's issue of ACE we'll be answering all your queries and more, when we explain exactly where the money goes when you buy a game. I think you'll be surprised by what we reveal!

list is endless. Just go to a good independent computer dealer, explain the problem and ask his advice. If he hasn't got time for you, shake the dust from your shoes and try somewhere else. The mouse problem is an interesting one - we've passed your letter onto Commodore themselves to see if they can help - a track ball might be a minor improvement, and there are one or two 'complex' joysticks on the market with multi-button control. Finally, perhaps you shouldn't worry yourself too much about the screaming of tyres - your son may be finding that this new type of software is a valuable means of letting off steam which might otherwise get bottled up. - once

that's done, I'm sure he'll enjoy something more serious, and there's lots about.

NO MORE WAITERS!

I have decided to get a Megadrive and not a Famicom for three simple reasons.

1. I have a Game Boy and all good Nintendo licenses will be released for it.
2. As far as I have heard, You cannot play

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How popular? The anonymous character may simply be a poorly defined American.

The SNK licensed CD-ROM developer. Practically every programmer we met wanted to develop for it, but ultimately no-one was going to. The reason? The exorbitant prices. One developer claimed that "The SNK offers that we've reached the end of the line as far as silicon game systems are concerned. We just can't afford to go any further until we get either cheaper CD storage or maybe prices on tapes."

Insanity

USA

ACE hits Las Vegas and then storms down through California, bringing you eleven pages of exclusive reports from the land of virtual reality, hypersex, and hardcore games technology. The insanity starts here...

DAT (digital audio tape) still hasn't made it really big, but these portable DAT units from Casio could help make a difference. Like Sony's recently released (and smaller) DAT Walkman, the machines are equipped with SCMS (Serial Copy Management System) that limits direct recording from compact disks to first-generation copies (one-time recording only). Something of a cosmetic measure, we reckon, but it appears to have pacified the CD manufacturers just enough to make the DAT market a viable proposition. The DA-7 features almost unbeatable levels of performance compared to most analogue systems: 100p-20kHz frequency response and 90dB SN ratio for the techno-performers amongst you. THD is 0.008% and wow/futter is less than measurable.



Show people: this delightful pair spent the whole show playing Pit Fighter. Later Big Boy tried to engineer a confrontation with the Ultimate Warrior, but was shepherded away by on-site security guards.

Yes, it's a volcano, erupting only a few yards from the street. Sending rivers of flame across an artificial lake, it rears to its full height of, well, about fifty feet. Passers-by pay practically no attention at all. This, you see, is Las Vegas.

Yes, you can have your double chocolate double malted with whipped fresh cream and butter pecan ice-cream and yes, those are real white tigers in the hotel lobby where you have just won \$500 on a 5c slot and yes, you are screaming with excitement as 2000 coins vomit out of the machine. Passers-by pay practically no attention at all. Las Vegas, remember?

This, however, is a small plastic talking watch that no-one in their right mind would pay 50c for. The passers-by are absolutely fascinated. They're practically killing each other to get a closer look. The man with the watches has the air of a conjurer materialising rabbits with an IQ of 150 and the ability to digest nuclear waste. People are taking him extremely seriously.

That's CES...

THE SHOW OF SHOWS

CES, in case you didn't know, happens twice a year - at Vegas in January and Chicago in June. It is not to be confused with our own Computer Entertainment Show that takes place in London in September. CES is about Consumer Electronics in its widest sense. A series of vast halls, pavilions, and hotel lobbies house everything from computer games to camcorders, from ear-blasting in-car audio to mind-numbing pornographic videos. If you can buy it and it conducts electricity (or plugs into something that does), you can find it here.

CONSOLES ARE GOOD FOR YOU

Video games have been getting quite a pasting in the States as American youth succumbs to the malevolent hypnotic power of 28 million Nintendo Entertainment Systems. Horror stories abound in the media about successfully suicidal Zelda freaks and mini-Marios knocking their heads against brick walls, so now the industry is fighting back with applications that should earn parental respect. The Miracle is currently top of the list...

It's a neat package, featuring a 49 full-size, velocity sensitive keyboard, 128 digital sounds and effects, 16 note polyphony, and a multitimbral MIDI specification. The secret, however, is the NES cart that comes with it - containing a graded series of over 200 piano lessons, presented in formats ranging from video game-style exercises to standard musical notation and theory.

The Miracle keyboard is significant because it shows what can be done when a computer system achieves mass market penetration in the way that the NES has done. Suddenly all kinds of applications that would previously have been too costly to produce can get onto the market by borrowing processing power and VDU presentation from the NES. Stand by for even more add-ons of this nature if the Super Famicom, which has better interface capability, achieves similar market penetration.

The Miracle keyboard: plug in and play along



Nintendo dominated an entire pavilion at CES. With US sales now topping 28 million units, there is a Nintendo console in one of every three US homes...

DRIVE BY WIRE

Blaupunkt's Travelplot uses CD's to store comprehensive map information that links in with wheel sensor input to tell a driver exactly where he is and how he can reach his destination. Pioneer unveiled a similar system that uses satellite navigation signals rather than wheel sensors. Both systems cost around \$3500.

It's beyond any mortal's capabilities to give you a comprehensive round-up of what went down at this year's show. On these three pages we take a whistle-stop tour through a whole range of widgets and topics that you may find compelling, irrelevant, or downright absurd. Elsewhere in this issue you can check out some of the games software we tracked down and there are also additional features on CD software, the latest news on virtual reality, and console development technology at Electronic Arts' San Mateo office. Enjoy...



Game Boy products filled the Nintendo pavilion. Info Games had the most idea of designing a Personal Organizer cart with battery-backed up RAM. The only problem was the fiddly date entry using the rocker switch and buttons to locate and enter letters.



Show people: UK's incentive boss Ian Andrew found himself an angel (he promised not to tell his wife)

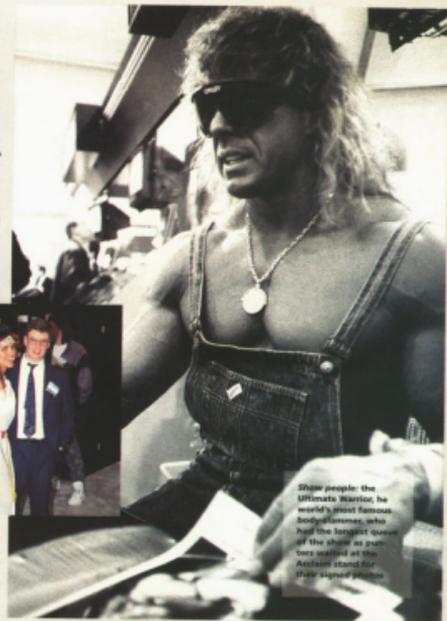
IN CONTROL

The games at CES were, for the most part, predictable and uninspired. Not so, however, the devices on offer for controlling them. Surprisingly, there was nothing on show in the 'cyberspace' user interface categories of body suits, datagloves, or eyeball tracking devices. Instead, we had sticks, chairs, and even a speech recognition device - the Voice Master Key system, which gives you vocal control of your lasers (or your spreadsheet). Currently only available for the PC, VMK will recognise up to 64 voice commands which can then be applied to user-defined keyboard sequences. Since these sequences can load in other files, the possible applications are endless. Now you can just say 'Thanks, John' and hey presto! Word processor loaded, standard thank you letter printed out...



Turtle power in the palm of your hand

This charming device says "Txxx you!" and other endearing phrases in a tiny voice. It will cost you \$19.95 retail and is the sort of thing you buy when you know you've got to buy something for somebody and don't particularly care what it is. Enough said, in more ways than one.



Show people: the Ultimate Warrior, the world's most famous bodybuilder, who had the largest queue of the show as participants milled at the Anaheim stand for their signed photos



The Action Chair and somewhat similar competitor Hot Seat both aimed at giving 'seat-of-the-pants' control of your game or flight sim. Elsewhere we had the usual yokes and multi-button joysticks.



A transparent man-killing gimmick from one mouse manufacturer



Many Americans have a problem: their bodies are too big. Answer: an electronic alarm fitted to the fridge door.

Just as Casio has persevered with all manner of miniaturized watch technologies over the last few years, so Franklin has battled on in the electronic reference widget market. Not content with spelling machines and thesauri, they're now squeezed the Concise Columbia Encyclopedia into silicon. All entries are cross-referenced and it will even stage trivia quizzes. And if that's impressive, try the Spanish Master - 250000 words from Collins Dictionary in both English and Spanish, featuring a dip set that actually says the words so you can hear how they're pronounced.



The Steadicam Jr.: slick and oh so smooth...

STAR OF THE SHOW

It's a bit depressing to have to announce that the most stunning exhibit at CES didn't have anything to do with computer games at all, but with the rapidly exploding video camera market.

As soon as you abandon the limitations of the tripod and start composing dynamic shots with either a cine camera or a video camera, you come up against camera shake. Professionals use a device called the Steadicam which employs a complex system of counterweights and harnesses to allow a trained operator complete freedom of movement but without any discernible judder on-screen. You can follow Warren Beatty from one bedroom to another, up and down stairs, in and out of cars, without so much as a jiggle.

Now the makers of Steadicam have produced the Steadicam Jr, an astonishingly simple hand-held device that does the same thing for personal 8mm camcorders. You mount your camcorder on the tripod-style platform, hold the entire assembly by a comfortable grip using one hand (it's remarkably light), and use the built-in high intensity 3.5" LCD monitor instead of the viewfinder. With your other hand, you can manipulate the camera to pan and tilt as you move around. The cost: \$595, and even at that price it has to be an essential purchase for every user of 8mm or lightweight camcorders.

Also on show was an ingenious device called 'In the Picture' that allows you to track action automatically with your camcorder. Simply attach a small clip-on transmitter to the object or person you want 'in the picture', mount your camera on the unit, and it will then track the person/object in all directions. Great for filming tennis, with you on the court instead of behind the camera.



Hi! We're the Hot 'n' Robots from The Robut Factory in Colorado. We can talk, move forward, backward, left and right, our heads rotate, and we have synchronized, voice activated mouth movement. You can control us with a cassette or by a radio link. We cost \$4250 each. Have a nice day!



Show people: disgusting going-on in the adult video lobby.



Computer technology hasn't hit train sets yet, but top-of-the-range manufacturer LGB reckons it's only a year or so away.

NEW LYNX IN HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT

The Lynx can now be purchased in America for the equivalent of £45. Makes you sick, doesn't it? But this isn't the only surprise in the ongoing battle of the handhelds...

First, the Lynx really has upset the applecart, and not just because of that new low price and redesigned body-shell. While everyone had fallen into the habit of ignoring just about everything Atari, market research suddenly revealed that Lynx sales in the US had topped an astonishing 200,000 machines - more than the Sega Megadrive or PC Engine. Now at \$59, the Lynx has become overnight the handheld to watch in the States - and that could have serious implications for the UK handheld market too.

UK Lynx fans will still have to pay far more for the unit than their US counterparts, so expect a burgeoning grey market in the machines. Expect also to see a growing software base - traditionally the area where the Lynx has suffered seriously in comparison with the monochrome Game Boy.

Sega, meanwhile, got a warm reception for their Game Gear and the NEC Turbographix, although looking pretty, seemed destined for third place in this particular struggle.

Lucasfilm software supremo A.J. Redmer made an interesting point about handhelds: 'People are only just beginning to realise the implications of the smaller screens,' he said, 'and one thing that's emerging is that conventional video game designs don't work so well on the small format. For that reason, both the Sega Game Gear - which borrows heavily from the Master system market - and the Turbographix, which runs PC Engine software - are losing out, because the software that worked so well on their full-size counterparts hasn't translated effectively onto the small screen. The Lynx and the Game Boy, on the other hand, both demanded that programmers start from scratch and as a result the software is much more impressive. From a programming point of view, the Lynx is excellent and with this surprising news about sales, I think it's definitely the machine to watch.'

Who would have thought it? Looks as if the Lynx may make it to the big time after all...

The new Lynx design. Smarter, a touch smaller, and a lot cheaper at \$59



Sega's GameGear was very popular, but the new cheap Lynx could knock it for six.

NEC's portable software compatibility, but some titles don't work nearly as well on the smaller screen format and the machine is still struggling seriously in the States and Japan.

PC

Leisure

The complete guide to PC entertainment

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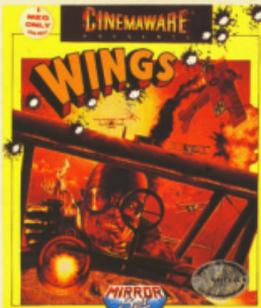
Origin's Spectacular
Wing Commander
Reviewed

Where's your dangerous disk?
Ask the newsagent!



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WINGS



XENON 3



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Angel Studios are one of the few state-of-the-art computer graphics companies hell-bent on giving us all a good time...not content with their superlative animations for film and television, nor with the development of their own powerful virtual environment software Scenix, they're now branching out into arcade entertainment and virtual sex.

Virtual sex?!

Correct. No less than seven minutes of it. Angel are working on a multi-million dollar movie that takes a futuristic look at one of the more exotic applications of virtual reality - making love using 'virtual bodies'. Although it might sound a bit on the Soho side, the storyboards manage to combine technical authenticity with serious speculation about the practical implications of a world dominated by virtual reality systems.

'We're very committed to the idea of entertainment and VR,' said Angel's director of computer simulation and software development, 'and apart from the film we currently have two projects under development in the arcade field



To produce their state-of-the-art animations - this was produced for San Diego's Sea World complex - Angel Studios use Silicon Graphics equipment giving them 17 million pixels and a resolution of 4000x4000. Graphics are either modelled in software or scanned in from physical graphic originals and then are processed. Artwork is input either by scanning or using a digitising table with a .001" resolution. During animation, multiple bit-planes are used for scaling rather than software scaling routines, giving the maximum possible degree of realism.

(see photos). To date, most of Angel's work has been in the TV and film animation world but they've also done some '...defense work - which has been very useful for developing routines that could be used in games.'

Check out the pics on this page and don't miss our forthcoming major feature on Angel Studio's film and arcade developments.



Angel Studios are now branching out into the entertainment field. They have three projects under development - a film about virtual reality (that's a sketch from the storyboard at bottom right) and two arcade developments featuring hydraulic frames. Stand by for a full scale feature on these, currently under preparation at the ACE Synapse Centre.

virtual SEX!

Virtual reality systems are entering areas of entertainment that other technologies simply cannot reach. ACE jacks into Californian cyberspace with news of the latest VR developments



Eric Gullishman in full VR regalia, exploring worlds created in gorgeous textured polygons.

PUTTING ON THE FEEL

It's 7.15pm and the campus of Stanford University, Palo Alto, California, is closed down for the night. Surrounded by dark alleyways leading off into areas of impenetrable shadow, all you have to guide you is a rumour that pioneering VR company Sense8 are to demonstrate their latest DVI-based virtual reality system in building 420-041. This building could be anywhere within several square miles of Freddy Krueger-infested cul-de-sacs, corridors, and classrooms. Your interest in new technology is hitting an all-time low...

Half an hour later, thanks to chance encounters with two apparently normal denizens of darkness, your interest in new technology is not only revived but heading for the roof. You're in a small lecture theatre and there on stage Ken Pimentel of Intel is demonstrating the fruits of his latest project - a multimedia virtual reality system based around Sense8's WorldTool virtual world construction software, two DVI boards, a CD-ROM drive, 25MHz 486 processor, 320MB hard disk, VGA graphics, and additional VPL hardware.

The excitement is all due to the massive graphic enhancement of virtual realities possible using this new system - which is also far cheaper than other set-ups. This improvement is all due to combining the graphics handling power of Sense8's WorldTool software with the processing power of DVI. Using this system means that virtual worlds

VIRTUAL PROBLEMS

Ken Pimental of Intel reckons that despite all the excitement, there are still some very serious obstacles to overcome in the quest for the ultimate virtual experience.

● Resolution

Current VR headsets are geared to work at a resolution of 360°x240 and the display is magnified up to 3 times. The pixels are therefore 'enormous. We need at least a resolution of 1024°x780'.

● Cost of Headsets

Currently £3K-£4K. Need to be less than £500.

● Human factors

This encompasses several different but related difficulties: the weight of the headsets, for example, and tripping up over cables. Another major problem is 'reality switching' - the user is so immersed in his virtual experience that actually operating the equipment becomes a problem.

● Position sensing

Most current systems are expensive, of limited range, and sensitive to 'noise'

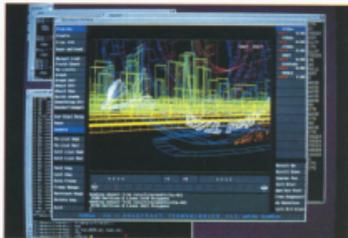


Ken Pimental, who's been working for the last six months on the development of the IntelSenseVR system, still sees serious technical challenges that need to be overcome in VR

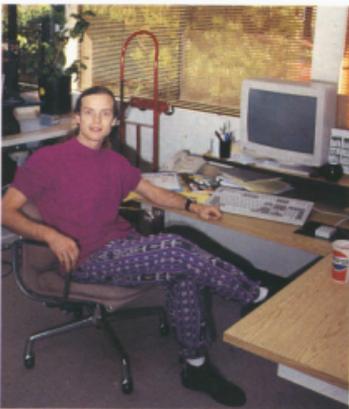
Brad Hunt, Director of Computer Simulation and Software Development for Angel Studios. His credits include work on *The Last Starfighter* and contributions to the special effects in 2010



Angel use real-life models as the basis for facial animation. Gridlines are drawn onto the model's face and used as the basis for polygonation during the modelling process. The human face often requires as many as 15000 polygons for accurate simulation and animation



One of Michael's most important utilities, Keyframe, running on Angel's Silicon Graphics equipment



Eric Gullichsen of Sense8, clutching a copy of ACE, and pointing out some of the finer attributes of the new DV/Sense8 VR system



The Spaceball is just one of the control devices accepted by the Sense8 system. Useful for VR exploration, it's a 6D unit, giving control over X,Y,Z co-ordinates and pitch, roll, and yaw

need no longer be composed of flat-shaded polygons that look like something out of a mildly enhanced version of Battlezone. Instead, you can now see the details of your surroundings vividly brought to life using real-world textures.

DVI offers some important features for virtual environments', points out Ken. 'First, it gives us full motion video at 30 frames a second and full stereo sound. It can also combine video and graphics overlays. It also provides special video effects functions including texturing and fades, mosaics, blend, and so on.'

'What's more, the texture processing of DVI allows terrain mapping - very useful for flight sims and driving games. It also allows object texture mapping and textured horizons.' The result is a virtual world that looks infinitely more real than previous attempts.

In addition, Sense8's powerful WorldToolKit software provides real-time rendering of graphic images, sensor drivers to interface with the real world (through such equipment as VPL's EyePhones and Mattel's Powerglove), and 'geometry readers' - modules that input graphic 3D models created using other software such as AutoCAD.

For games development, all objects in WorldTool can have 'tasks' associated with them, just as in Incentive's 3D Construction Kit you can attach conditions and actions to objects. This means, for example, that can have velocity,

"Software modelling is still the big problem with handling complex 3D environments in real time. People have been putting more effort into the hardware, but not enough into graphics data handling."

Brad Hunt, Angel Studios



Michael Limbeck, Director of Computer Animation, uses experience in architecture and industrial design to generate complex and detailed 3D environments.

This superb dragon from Angel Studios came to life in a Nintendo advertisement

acceleration, and conditions attached to it that will simulate gravity in your virtual environment.

Eric Gullichsen is bursting with justified enthusiasm as he announces that this new DV/WorldTool system is available for under \$20K. Indicating a screenshot of an older, untextured polygonal display, he asserts that 'Virtual realities that look like this are no longer acceptable. Once you add textures, things stop looking cartoonish and become video-realistic.' Don't miss next month's instalment of ACE's VR coverage to see exactly what he's getting so excited about...



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PEOPLE LIKE YOU AND ME
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ARE OFFERING £1000
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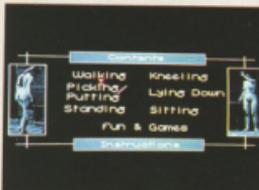
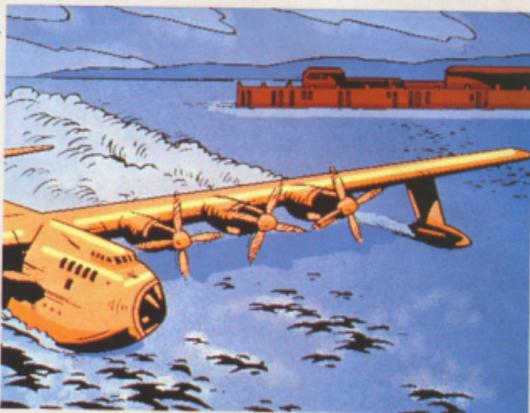


PIRACY
IS THEFT

AMIGA UPGRADE

The CDTV Amiga upgrade looks rather like the old C64 disk drives: a cream coloured box with a slot for your CD in the front. It will enable Amiga owners to play all CDTV software, though rumour suggested you might have to pay extra for the infra-red controller if you wanted to abandon your keyboard. Price for the unit has not yet been announced but could be high: maybe as much as £299. Commodore claimed the unit on show was the finished version and that supplies should be available in the UK this summer.

The Cautious Condor and its owner are shamelessly modelled on Howard Hughes and the Spruce Goose.



Clement Chambers is at it again. CRL boss Clem obviously thought long and hard about how to get naked women onto the screen in the best possible taste. He ended up by using his own production utility DUNE (covered in ACE 26) to provide an animation database of early cinematographer Muybridge's naked women. Or, thank you.



1991 looks like being the year when CD software finally takes off. CDTV is now a certainty for a spring launch (barring acts of God and bankers). NEC are achieving an ever wider user base for their PC Engine CD software, the FM Towns continues to attract developers despite a tiny 70K user base in Japan, and Nintendo did nothing to quell rumours of a cheap CD-ROM add-on for the Super Famicom.

Other rumours included a forthcoming FM Towns launch in the US and Europe, based on the machine's PC capability and an alliance with Microsoft. Those with money in their pocket can look forward to the possibility of buying a Towns complete with Windows 3, superlative graphics, and a whopping great price tag in late 1991 or early 92.

Nobody was particularly excited by all this but, perhaps better, everyone owned up to a firm conviction that not only was CD

CD Countdown

CDTV, a CDTV upgrade for Amiga 500 owners scheduled for summer launch, and oodles of software were all on show at CES. These are the sort of titles that Amiga and CDTV owners could be getting their teeth into in just a few weeks from now...



Lawrence Productions McGee takes a dramatic Omeo approach to children's entertainment. You can guide McGee around his environment and get him to perform certain actions simply by clicking on one of the option icons. In this case, we've sent him to the toilet, but he is politely gesturing for us to leave the room before he gets down to business.



Commodore have redesigned the user interface for the CDTV to cater for all linguistic groups. There's also a very attractive music CD control panel featuring all the usual high-end CD utilities (shuffle, loop, time elapsed etc)



Every character, scene, and object you encounter could be significant. There is no guarantee that your travels will reveal sufficient evidence to make a successful accusation...



There's no animation in the Cautious Condor and no digitised graphics. Ah! What a relief!



The World Vista Atlas gives you that oft-quoted facility to spin the globe, zoom in on a continent, zoom in on a country, and then finally zoom in on a specific area for geographical information. Only CD storage capacity can give you this!



SOUNDS FAMILIAR?

Movie buffs may like to know that one of the voices in the Cautious Condor is done by an actor from the cult movie Surf Nazis Must Die. A small prize to the first person (if anyone!) who can let us know which voice it is...

the way to go, but that we'd be going that way during the year, with a mass CD software market now only two to three years away.

And, putting their money where their mouths are, the software companies responded by showing more CD product than ever before...

WILD BIRD YONDER

Star of the CDTV show was Tiger Media's Case of the Cautious Condor. Set in 1937 it takes a classic Agatha Christie approach to detection as you guide a detective from one location to another on board the Cautious Condor flying boat following the murder of the owner's son.

"Structurally," explains TM's boss Laura Buddine, "it's a maze in time and space. The model for the game was taken from an interactive theatre group in the States who stage events in houses with all over the place. Your experience differs according to which rooms you visit."

There are three hours of audio visual material on the disk, but playtime is limited to 30 minutes - approximately the time the detective has to solve the murder, so the game is almost a real-time experience. There are 15000 paths through the game and only one solution - despite the fact that the game has already been available for some time on the Towns and Tandy CD PC, TM know of only one successful solver. The solution can only be had when your detective (who is intelligent and remembers



Your detective is intelligent and remembers everything he sees. When he has amassed sufficient evidence, you and he can crack the case together.

everything he sees) has enough evidence to make a correct accusation.

Interestingly, TM have avoided animation. They were already tight for space (yes, tight - even on CD) and decided instead to concentrate on creating a 1930's comic strip atmosphere with hand-drawn graphics. For this reason, they also abandoned the idea of digitised graphics: "These would have been cheaper for us," claims Laura, "but we kept thinking that digitised realistic graphics would actually have begged the question as to why things weren't moving. We abandoned the animation because we wanted to a good game, not bad TV!"

CD-G enables you to display simple graphics and text while your conventional CD-G audio disk is playing. In this case it's being used with the CD-G-MIDI function, showing you which MIDI channels are being used by the current disk and - at the bottom - which vocals are being sung. Result - you can not only sing along! Karaoke style but can also change the orchestration by feeding the MIDI track into your synth and getting CD audio, synth, and your own voice all working together!



Our Heave gives you a chance to move through time and space as you not only explore a house but also get the chance to see and hear what it must have been like in other historical periods. For example, we can click on the stove in the kitchen (as here) and not only get information on how it works but also see stoves from other time periods by clicking on the icons for different human generations at the bottom of the screen

Hmmm...we reckon that's an acute observation that a lot of other CD developers could and should take note of.

The audio track uses a dozen actors from an American troupe that specialise in recreating 30' radio drama. All of the SFX were generated by traditional radio techniques (fiddling around with bowls of water etc) rather than by synthesis.

This game doesn't break any technological barriers. Instead, it's set out to achieve perfection of its own kind, and undoubtedly succeeded. Check out the screenshots for a glimpse of some other CDTV products...

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WEST SIDE STORY

SEGA are now claiming sales of nearly a million Megadrives in the States (where the system is known as the Genesis); there are already 28 million NES systems; the Game Boy is selling hand over fist; over 200,000 Americans are in love with the Lynx. While one half of the country glues itself to the TV screen for religious inspiration, the other half gets stuck into Super Mario, which some people think is the same thing.

As a result, companies like EA and Lucasfilm – traditionally the home of state-of-the-art PC software – are now having to turn their attention to the cut and thrust of the console world. How are they coping?

RANCHY BUSINESS

ACE readers may remember our exclusive coverage of the Skywalker Ranch in Lucas Valley. Created by George 'Star Wars' Lucas for his software and technical whizz-kids, the period-style buildings include a complex of spacious wooden stables that house Lucasfilm Games.

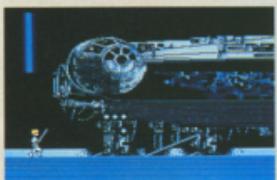
Lucasfilm are now combining their high-end PC games development with programming for the NES. As a result, they're just about to release two games that could hardly be more different: Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe for the PC and Star Wars for the NES, both of which you can see shots of on these pages.

'We're going very carefully into console development,' says software supremo A.J. Redmer, 'we've done the programming for Star Wars but we've teamed up with JVC for the sales and distribution.' This approach has insulated Lucasfilm from much of the upheaval (mostly financial) normally associated with console publishing, so computer game buffs who appreciate the company's sophisticated PC product needn't worry that it will be drowned in a flood of marionette.

Meanwhile, Lucasfilm are still keeping very close tabs on future technology. Although very taken with the Neo



Lucasfilm and Electronic Arts are at the forefront of games software development on the West Coast. ACE goes live in America...



Star Wars looks impressive on the NES and points the way towards the possibility of some of Lucasfilm's more sophisticated games being produced for 16-bit consoles in 1991. More news on this release in the news section of this issue



Larry Holland lives, breathes, and programs World War Two aerial combat scenarios. 'The research is the really satisfying bit,' says the man who's probably read more WWII air force books than anyone else, but he hints that his next game will take place in a different setting

IT'S A DOGIE'S LIFE

Workers on Skywalker Ranch really have to slum it at lunchtimes. A quick stroll across the landscaped gardens, past the 19th century-style conservatory, and into the authentic Old American manor house, the Lucasfilm slaves are corralled into a plush dining room where they have to endure the cooking of a master Cordon Bleu chef. On the menu when we arrived:

1. Sauteed pork chops basted with Fuji apple sauce
2. Yellow Finn potatoes
3. Boiled red cabbage with fennel
4. Garden salad

Yes, it's a doggie's life at the ranch.

Geo ('You could do some seriously impressive development on that machine', gloated AJ), the lads are obviously hanging on for a whole new generation of hardware that will take them even closer to the technology and creative opportunities now enjoyed by their film colleagues at Industrial Light and Magic.

'My ideal machine is possible right now,' announced tech-buffin Doug Crockett, '...it has full motion video, real time digital compression, and high quality stereo audio with dynamic real-time mixing. The big problem is that the current CD-ROM standard just isn't good enough. We've already conceived a system here that can drag data off compact disk far faster – and certainly fast enough for FMV – but the trouble is the standard CD-ROM drives can't handle it. You need a lot more bandwidth if you want to be truly interactive.'

CONSOLE ARTS

A few miles further south of Lucasfilm, EA have committed very heavily to developing for the Sega Genesis. Under the



SWOTI, gives you the choice of three American planes to fly ranging from the P51 Mustang to the massive B-17 Flying Fortress. The game comes with a 225 page manual packed with contemporary photos and information. In-game graphics were by Jim McLeod and Martin Cameron



Greg Hammond, producer of Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe, "hug" one of the 847 models they digitized in their search for the perfect plane animation. Graphic artists Jim McIvor and Martin Cameron digitized models like this in different positions and sizes - the program then does all the "in-betweening" necessary for dynamic scaling during flight.

planes were a little bit slower, but the real improvement is that in SWOTL they don't appear close up quite so soon - first they're little dots on the horizon and then, as you fly past, they're scaled very rapidly giving you a real sensation of fast speed. This is particularly important because in this game we have jets doing as fast

SWOTL SECRETS

Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe features several significant coding developments that make it even more playable than its popular predecessor, Battle of Britain.

First, there's increased artificial intelligence in the opposition, making the challenge tougher and more engaging all round. But according to producer Greg Hammond, "What makes this product really come alive much more than Battle of Britain did is that now we have this dynamic scaling where, if an airplane is in the distance and it's coming towards you at 400 mph and you're in a fighter at a similar speed, it means your rate of speed at closing is 800mph combined. In Battle of Britain the



Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe sends you back to World War 2, but this time the game designers have speculated as to what might have happened if Hitler had succeeded in bringing some of his more obscure research projects into the war. Despite the speculation, the research is meticulous and historically accurate as the player dogfights and campaigns against the ME109 rocket plane and the Gotha 229 jet-powered flying wing.



Luc Barthelet, heading up console development technology at Electronic Arts USA.

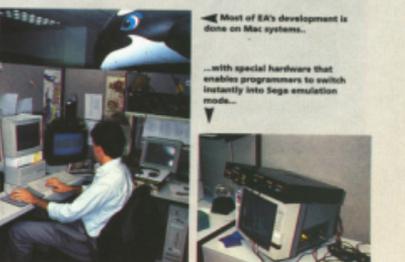
Enemy up ahead! SWOTL features speedier animation and more detailed 256 colour graphics. Once you're shot them down, you get instant replay - numerous other features include in-flight maps, a custom mission builder, and a pilot's service record to keep track of your performance.



Go LIVE to California!

The ACE Interactive Phone Line features live mini-interviews with Lucasfilm and EA developers. Dial now! They're on-line from the official ACE on-sale date (8th February) for four weeks.

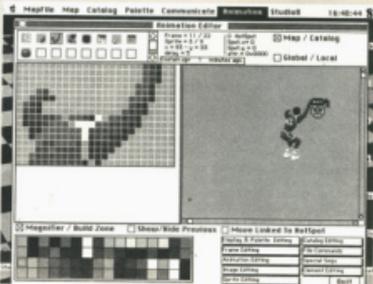
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Most of EA's development is done on Mac systems.

...with special hardware that enables programmers to switch instantly into Sega emulation mode.

...and powerful software development tools. This module enables graphic artists to work on bitmapped backgrounds and sprites which can then be translated into character-block graphics loved by the Sega and, in the old days, by the C64 and Spectrum and back again as well.



FLAMES OF FREEDOM

MIDWINTER

FLAMES OF FREEDOM

Sixty years ago the ice-bound island of Midwinter was saved from the threat of destruction at the hands of invading hordes; but a prosperous future was denied by a greater enemy - the Earth's changing climate. Reclaimed by the seas which had created her, Midwinter was abandoned by her people, in search of a home on any friendly island standing tall above the rising seas.



"In the more temperate equatorial reaches of the Atlantic, only one of forty-two islands held out a hand, welcoming the survivors into the Atlantic Federation, a force for peace, prosperity and democracy. But the new home is threatened by the evil Saharan Empire, a mighty military dictatorship based on the African mainland, already enslaving the other island communities, and ultimately intent on conflict with the Federation.

The enslaved islands are home to freedom fighters looking to break free from Saharan domination and join the Federation. The mammoth task facing the Federation is to covertly aid the liberation of as many islands as possible before the Saharan Empire makes its final push for Atlantic domination. The Flames of Freedom must be lit. The torch is about to be passed to you."



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FREEDOM

As the best Field Agent the Atlantic Federation has, you are charged with the execution of highly dangerous clandestine missions on each of the forty-one islands. Each island has its own political, administrative and cultural perspective, so each mission will require different aspects of your chosen physical, mental and psychological skills.

RESTRICTED

MISSION BRIEFING - BENI MAZAR

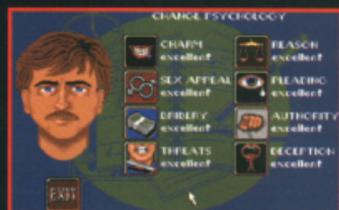
Your first mission objective is to sabotage a Power Station. You'll need to think through the entire process for yourself: - steal explosives from a local army base; find the engineer who designed the station; rescue his daughter to persuade him to give you the plans; hijack a vehicle for use; dodge or kill the sentrys; plant the explosives, and finally escape unseen.

In every mission, you are on your own, but not without help. There are 4000 individuals with which you may interact, including friends, foes, and foes pretending to be friends. Every character has their own looks, personality and life history to assess. You have twenty-four modes of transport available to you, across land, through the air and both across and through the seas. You have over a quarter of a million square miles to cover, all mapped using Maelstrom's unique 3-D light sourced fractal landscapes, and thousands of buildings to explore.

Flames of Freedom provides you with a magnificent strategic challenge, fought according to your strengths, weaknesses and abilities, and visualised via graphics sequences even more stunning than those of its predecessor - with Midwinter II, a new age dawns



Flames of Freedom will be available soon for your Commodore Amiga, Atari ST and IBM PC Compatible, from Rainbird, the Masters of Strategy.



- ★ Sophisticated character profile generators allow you to choose your own looks, sex, psychology and physical characteristics.
- ★ Choose to use Training mode to practice any aspect of the game, 'Firefight' to try one complete mission, or 'Campaign' to tackle the whole shooting match!

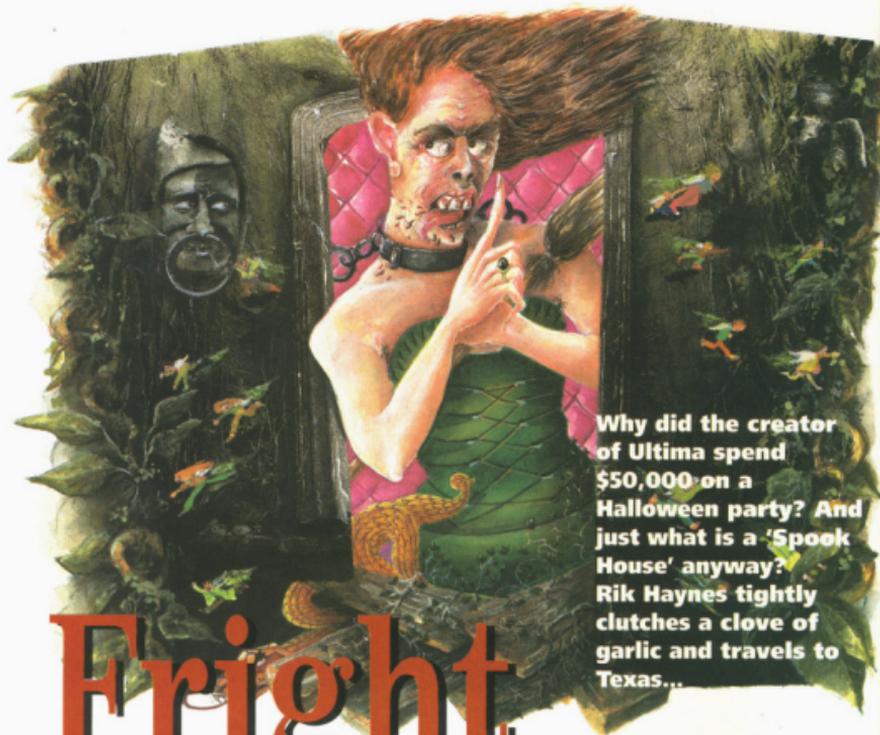


- ★ Cover a quarter of a million square miles of accurately mapped 3-D terrain, generated by light-sourced fractal techniques.
- ★ Auto-route options allow you to plan and execute travel within the 3-D automatically.
- ★ Interact with 4000 characters, each with an individual personal profile.



- ★ Utilise 24 modes of transport, across land, skies and seas.
- ★ Fight with 12 different weapons against a massive array of opposing firepower.
- ★ Use your investigative and deductive techniques to solve endless challenges to aid your progress.

adventus strategy game. Midwinter II, This time its personal !



Why did the creator of Ultima spend \$50,000 on a Halloween party? And just what is a 'Spook House' anyway? Rik Haynes tightly clutches a clove of garlic and travels to Texas...

Fright Night



Cold fear runs through my body as the sounding of a distant bell is carried on the evening breeze. I carefully continue my journey to Britannia Manor, my heart and mind working overtime in nervous anticipation. The cloudy moonless sky gives this night of October 31st the perfect setting for Halloween. The night belongs to ghouls, ghosts and Richard Garriott.

This millionaire gaming genius, creator of the popular series of Ultima fantasy role-playing games and co-founder of Origin, is now ready to thrill a more select audience of fantasy lovers. I join three town-locals for the quest of a life-time. I just hope we live long enough to tell the tale.

TALES FROM THE CRYPT

Let the quest begin. We follow a path lined with glowing pumpkin lanterns engraved with the foul smiles of a devil. Are they laughing at our impending doom? Lord British leads us to the door of Britannia Manor, once the site of a fine Abbey, the home of a now extinct order of monks.

Our guide boldly steps up to the front gates and points his staff at the crystal ball inside the hall. A violent burst of electricity sends the poor soul to his doom. We cannot get in this way. Rumours suggest some of the monks have fled into the nearby woods. Perhaps they know of a way inside this evil place?

A grim guide clothed in black robes wears a haunted look as we approach his encampment. A fire-pit burns bright, something boiling in its dark cauldron. The guide does indeed know of a long-forgotten entrance to the abbey and leads us to it. Along the way he tells us the sad story of this once beautiful building. "The evil sorceress, Minax, took over the Abbey. All who remained have never been seen again. Something vile and terrible must have happened to them. Are you sure you want to make this trip?" says our guide.

The woods are full of werewolves who angrily snarl at the five unwelcome visitors. We keep close to our fearless guide. A horrible noise

commands our attention. Out of the fog we see the glimpse of a horrifying sight, a red-eyed Staker tows the gruesome skeleton of a horse back into the mist of misery. The Well of Soul tells us to go back.

We reach the forgotten entrance. Vines encircle its Gothic columns like a hangman's noose. The cellar doorway is open but our guide won't go any further. We venture inside and a door drops down over the doorway. There's no going back now. This place is pitch-black and seemingly leads nowhere. Something is in here, we can hear it breath. We run through the wine cellar and up a secret stairway to be greeted by a maid during the bedroom. "Be careful, you have entered uninvited and unannounced into the realm of the Evil Enchantress, Minax," warns the simple servant. Our only hope of escape is to find the Gargoyles Talisman. Suddenly something pushes a hole through the bricks and starts to grab towards us. Time to go!

We learn of a creature that lives in the old bell tower, perhaps it knows of the Talisman? Faces, hands and arms push through the walls grabbing at us as we pass through the hallway. We reach the stars of the bell tower. The bell tolls while bats squeal. A menacing vampire floats down from the ceiling looking for his next victim. Not us pal! We enter a foggy swamp - avoiding the soggy Monster from Under the Waterfall - as we cross the shaky bridge to the misty River Styx and boat beyond. We nervously climb onboard this feeble vessel. The boat suddenly moves by itself. We're less than half-way across, when Swamp Monsters jump out of the water and grab the boat and our legs! The boat rocks to and throw and we nearly end-up in the drink.

The Monster Cave certainly lives up to its name before we stumble upon the torture chamber. We weave our way through wailing victims as Minax's minions prod, whip and torture their pathetic captives. The Gatekeeper opens a creaky gate into the throne room. Minax sits at her throne occasionally using a cat-o-nine-tails to casually whip two little girls - twins tied to the throne. A mass of squirming humans sit on the floor. Dressed in a revealing sea-green gown Minax has a beautiful, sensuous body but as we approach she turns her terribly ugly face to us. The Gatekeeper gets getting real close to us, tenderly touching each member of our party without speaking a word. Yuck!

Minax requires an offering before she'll give us the Talisman. She marks the forehead of a vic-



tim in our group with a sign of somebody in big trouble. I'm just glad it's not me. "You must seek your exit beyond the realm of mortal souls... in the Nether World," hisses Minax. "Now go!"

We're now barely half-way through our quest. We're scared, weary and at each-other's throats. Before us lies the chapel, snake cave, spider room, graveyard, crypt, gargoyles, gazebo, hanged man, laboratory, stairway to hell, maze, pit and chequered box before the grand finale with the demon in Garriott's double car garage. Sorry, it looks like reality has started to reenter the house of Lord British and our chill-spilling story. Never mind, I've had immense fun while it lasted.

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD

So what had I experienced in the past 45 minutes? Put simply, I'd played Ultima in the flesh! Instead of multi-coloured sprites I'd encountered over 75 "actors" in ghoulish make-up. The playfield didn't consist of parallax-scrolling backdrops but steep stairs to climb, narrow places to crawl through and no-place to hide. Gameplay in this world consisted of me screaming out in fear for more times than I can remember, or care to own-up to.

Richard Garriott, eccentric millionaire games designer, had turned his hill-top mansion into the ultimate haunted house. This Spook House was superior to anything even Walt Disney's theme-park Imagineers could provide. Garriott's creation was interactive; I had to converse with the



characters and work with my fellow party of explorers. I became totally immersed in the sights, sounds, smells and story. We just didn't know who or what would come next. The Spook House was a fantastic, thrilling and unforgettable experience.

Just what prompted Garriott to do it? "I've been doing Spook Houses a lot longer than I've been doing software," admits Garriott. "I lay it all on my mother. She used to play pranks on me when I was a kid, like building a fake brick wall where my bedroom doorway used to be and waking me up in the middle of the night with scary noises." With such a background, it was perhaps inevitable that Garriott would end up turning his lovely home into a \$50000 Spook House.

There was merely one question left unanswered: what will the imaginative Garriott do next time? "I've already got a heck of a lot of ideas for the next Spook House," smirks Garriott. If only he didn't have to produce Ultima VII first!

TALES OF TRIVIA

Richard Garriott and his helpers traded stories until four in the morning about how they'd managed to scare people during the night.

The Spook House took about six weeks to construct. Garriott's jacuzzi became a graveyard. He even hired his neighbours' house to hold a party for everybody who had worked on the Spook House.

People from the local town of Austin queued outside Garriott's house for nearly 12 hours to receive a free ticket to the Spook House. Unfortunately, not everybody got one. As a result, one person immediately sold her ticket to a disappointed punter for 100 dollars.

One place people didn't visit during the spooking was Garriott's personal astronomical observatory. Garriott's father is a former NASA astronaut who has flown aboard both the Skylab and Space Shuttle.

Richard Garriott often jokes about his passion for movies and lack of love for literature. Garriott claims he's only ever needed three books to write his Ultima games: C.S. Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia*, J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lords of the Rings*, and the *Apple II Rom Manual*.

Origin had an estimated revenue of 10 million dollars during 1990.

Remember, as a member of the Exclusive ACE Club, we gave YOU the chance to visit this Spook House!



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DEATH OF A GOLDFISH

Bullfrog has two tropical fish tanks in its cramped office. One is filled with piranha, the other contains the hapless victims waiting to be eaten alive. As my visit was a special occasion, the hungry piranha had a treat in store. A beautiful fan-tailed goldfish wasn't quite so lucky. At first the sky piranha only took little bites out of the



Forget Jani, a red-bellied piranha is far more frightening... especially if you're a goldfish!

defenseless golden fishy but a split-second later, the largest piranha attacked and sliced the goldfish clean in two. Its head, trailing a stream of blood, floated to the top of the tank. The rest of it was nowhere to be seen. The blood in the water then caused such a food frenzy we had to count the number of piranha left in the tank when it was over. The red-bellied piranha (*Rooseveltiella Nattereri*) grows to a size of 30cm in the northern regions of South America. Its conical teeth and well developed jaw muscles gives it the talent to take big bites out of the flesh of its victims. The red-bellied piranha is banned from certain parts of North America and Australia to prevent them becoming naturalised in local rivers. If you're interested, they like tanks with subdued lighting, oh, and they're partial to the odd goldfish or three!

missions disk. What it won't be is historically accurate. If it was historically accurate you'd have to be forced into winning certain engagements. You'll still get the choice of playing British or German forces in your conquest of Europe. All the graphics will change, except for obvious things like trees. We're having a few problems with certain features though, like what should we do with the sheep? There weren't that many sheep wandering around the Somme in 1916!

"Hopefully the Worlds of Powermonger" data-disks will be coming out at £9.99 each. If the First World War data-disk is successful, then we're planning to do an American Civil War data-disk which will coincide rather nicely with the launch of the PC version of Powermonger," Molyneux states. Phil Treford, who has previously worked on *Psynopsis'* Blood Money, is writing the PC version of Powermonger. This adaptation, due to be released in early April, can be played across a network of up to four machines. Powermonger is also being converted onto more exotic Japanese formats like the Nintendo Super Famicom, Sharp X68000 and NEC PC9801. These adaptations are being handled by Imagineer, this top Japanese games developer has already converted *Populous II* and *Sim City* onto various machines.

"The American Civil War data-disk will have things like muskets, rockets to send messages, horse-pulled wagon trains and proper sailing boats. Again, it will be a completely different game. You'll have all-new weapons and personalities. There will be battles between Union (Northern) and Confederate (Southern) forces, plus a few Indian (Native Americans) skirmishes as well. All we're doing is using the American Civil War as inspiration. I'm really looking forward to doing the American Civil War data-disk, it should be great fun."

"If there's any life left in the old data-disk dog by then, we'll do a futuristic one, possibly bundled with the Editors we use to make-up these Powermonger worlds so people can create their own (see the panel for further details). The only difference between a Powermonger data-disk designed by you and the one's created by us, is that we'll be adding special little features to the game like the trench warfare found in the World War One data-disk."

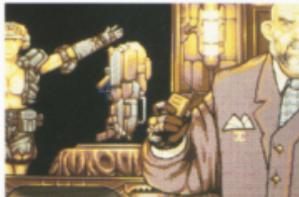
The first Powermonger data-disk should be available as you read this

LAND OF THE GODS

To quote the Powermonger manual, "Bullfrog has an idea of the ideal game it wants to write. *Populous* was the first step to writing this game and *Powermonger* is further along. But *Bullfrog's* ideal game is yet to be written". So will *Populous II* hit that high? "We've been working on the design of *Populous II* since the original was completed," says



Some of the Ancient Greece block graphics to be seen in the up-and-coming sequel to *Populous*.



The next *Populous* release after *Populous II* is currently being programmed by Sean Cooper. Code-named 'Bab' it has something to do with biogenetics. Bullfrog is also working on another 'new concept' game titled *Evolution*. Look out for a special report in a future issue of ACE.

Molyneux, "Populous is very close to all our hearts and we really want to make a very good job of *Populous II* because the game deserves it."

"We want to cure some of the *Populous* problems. The trouble with *Populous* is that towards the end of the game if you're slightly ahead it's obvious that you're going to win. So we're putting some more balancing elements in so the world is never actually won until you've finished the whole thing. The basic action of the game is exactly the same, raising and lowering land. The landscape plays more of a part, so as you raise a point up the landscape changes. If you build a mountain there will be a snowy point at the top, as it goes down to sea level it has a green belt, desert and swamp areas. These all have different effects on the terrain, so in this respect, it's going to be a little more strategic."

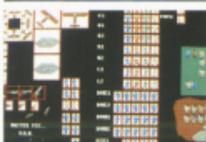
"There's going to be lots and lots of gody effects. Instead of a volcano just going whoosh and appearing, it will rise out of the landscape over a number of games turns, the top will then burst and lava will come pouring down the hill and sweep away everything in its path. When you cast the volcano spell you won't know where the lava will flow. So it could actually blow up all your territories instead of your opponents. New gody effects include tornadoes, typhoons, tidal waves, plagues, pestilence and even some wacky things like rain-storms of frogs and plagues of locusts. We're trying to think of as many effects as possible but a lot of them will have a role-playing type aspect in that you'll only have access to a few of them at the beginning of the world. The idea is that this will encourage people to continue playing to see what the next effect will be. There's not only going to be bad gody effects, you'll be able to make land more fertile, clear paths for your people, part the seas, etc."

"There will be three tribes - good, evil and people with no religion. The game will start in a world not unlike Ancient Greece. *Powermonger's* graphics system was based around vectors whereas *Populous II* will be based around blocks."

"*Populous II* will be faster than the original because it is completely written in assembly language instead of a mix of machine code and 'C'. We're going to try to produce a game which can be finished on bulletin boards. *Populous II* should be finished on the Amiga and ST by the end of summer. *Populous II* will be ten times better than the original." Megalomaniacs have never had it so good.



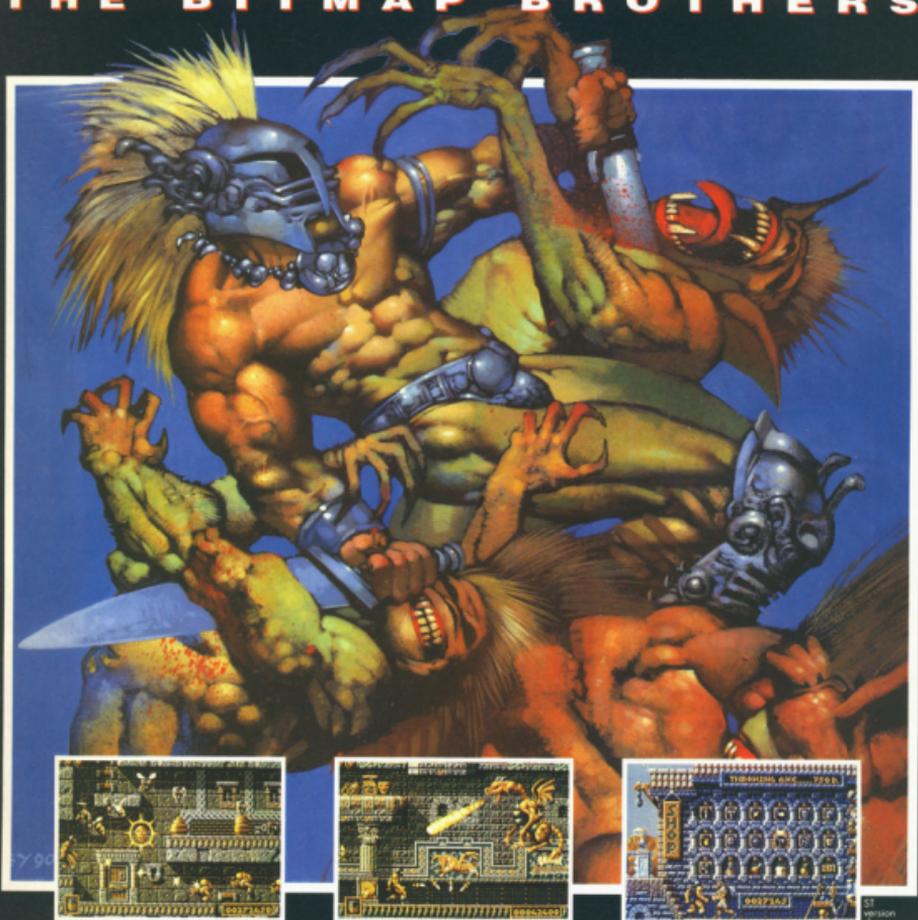
Bullfrog have been buying around with several graphic styles for possible future expansion data-disks.



Preliminary graphics for the First World War *Powermonger* data-disk - drawn by a fan of the original game and sent into Bullfrog!

G O D S

THE BITMAP BROTHERS



Are you bored of games that pose no real challenge? Mindless adversaries that can't fight back? Dumb nasties who just ask to be slaughtered? **GODS is a complete departure!**

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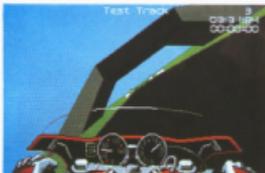


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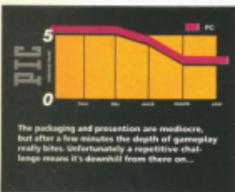
Dragon's Lair II: Time Warp. Still a little lacking on the gameplay front, but still delivers on the visuals.



Team Suzuki is awarded the first ACE Trailblazer on page 48. Get your motor running and head out on the highway.

ACE TRAILBLAZER!

This month sees the first use of our new award, *The ACE Trailblazer*. Games awarded this coveted recognition of quality must demonstrate either marked innovation or the peak of excellence in their particular field. For example, a shoot-em-up can still win a Trailblazer, but it will have to be an exceptional shoot-em-up. Trailblazer games will all be essential purchases.



The PIC - Predicted Interest Curve - is the most sophisticated reviewing tool around.

The curve is divided into six sections, indicating the player's adrenalin level after one minute, one hour, one day, one week, one month, and one year. And this can tell you a lot more about a game than just the interest levels...

The minute, hour, and day ratings can tell you a lot too. If there's a dip here, followed by a rise, you've got a game that may take a bit of getting into. Alternatively, the graphics may put you off for a while until the gameplay starts to grip. Check out the PIC comment for more details.



- The very fast multi-level parallax scrolling
- Excellent sound effects in the dentist's waiting room
- Gameplay in the 3D maze Barbican section



- Limited use of objects
- Over-frequent disk access
- Colour combinations in the bedroom scene

We won't rate a game unless it represents what you'll find on the shelves. If a game's not finished, we won't rate it. Instead we give it an ACE Preplay verdict panel that tells you how we think it's shaping up. In most cases, a full review of the finished

ACE AWARDS

ACE always awards seals of approval for outstanding software performance. If a game really breaks the boundaries in sound, graphics, or originality you'll see the appropriate ACE Award flash on the review. Unless it's truly dire - in which case it'll get the ACE Turkey award. Software houses: you have been warned!



A game will only find itself wearing the Trailblazer if it represents the ultimate stage of development in its particular genre. Games attaining this award are recommended without reservation.



Originality counts for a lot these days, and any games that have it deserve a special mention. This ACE award is reserved specifically for these rare games.



One of the first things to grab you in a game is its graphics. Games that redefine the state-of-the-art get this seal of approval from ACE.



Sound is the 'forgotten' aspect of games - but can make or break them. ACE only awards this one to brilliant use of audio in a game.

THE LINE UP

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ON CONSOLE pages 63-66

Megadrive Battle Squadron from Electronic Arts, Mario 4 on the Super



The meet the strangest people down by the warehouse. Just what does this enigmatic oriental want, and why is he so keen to offer advice?



The effects can last forever. No one said that this was one going to be a cakewalk. The odds are piling up on high, though nothing for the 100% completion top!

A town gone bad. A mayor's daughter on the slab. And a hard-bitten detective out on his own. Private Investigations anyone?

D RISE OF THE Dragon



Los Angeles, 2053. Amidst much misery and hardship among the populace, drug abuse is rife. The only people making a decent living are government officials and drug dealers. And the way things stand at the moment, the dealers seem to be having a better time of things. The Mayor's daughter Chandi is dead from an overdose, and the cops are clutching at straws.

William "Blade" Hunter, ex-cop, part time P.I. and full-time cynic has been drafted onto the case. His mission is to untangle this dangerous web of death and deceit and waste the crime lord at its centre.

Rise of the Dragon is an adventure constructed using Dynamix's new game development system. And for the most part it's hugely successful. If

Blade's self-contained apartment. Moving the cursor around the edge of the screen will indicate possible exits. Bottom right is the inventory screen.

you imagine a kind of cross between Eco Phantoms, Loom and Indiana Jones, you'll have a good idea how the control works. There's no typing necessary; everything in the world is controlled by cursor.

Like any P.I. worth his salt, Blade doesn't even get out of bed until noon. While this is great for the image, it means he's only got half the day left to go to work. Once he's dressed, it's always worth checking his vidphone messages to see what the day holds. In this case, he'll get his first lead; a sleazy character known as The Jake was spotted with Chandi shortly before her death.

Guiding blade out of his apartment (right-clicking when the cursor reads EXIT will describe where the exit leads, and left-clicking will take you there) and down to the Em-way (LA's subway system) is simple enough. From here, you can send



Dance LT
Chang LI
... Just what
to be in offer



Once almost handling has been mastered and you've got your bearings, the old will draw you in swiftly and continue to offer new challenges month to keep your interest. However, you'll probably crack the game pretty quickly after which the experience, although maintained by some alternative solutions - will inevitably fall off.

MSX BASIC

850



IBM PC

Playing in 256-colour mode makes Rise of the Dragon an amazing game to look at. Hard-disc installations in a word, though, and even some slower machines have their work cut out dealing with the hefty graphics blocks and multi-leads.

RELEASE DETAILS

IBM PC	£24.99	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£24.99	MARCH
ATARI ST	£24.99	MARCH

Conversations with characters can hold and turn. Be prepared to hunk up hard words with hard action.

Blade to any destination that he knows of in the city. This is an important point. Unless Blade has come across some information - like someone's address - he won't know how to get to it, and since you view the gameworld through his eyes, it won't show up on the Em-way map.

Before each lead can be successfully investigated, a particular problem must usually be overcome. Offices close at night, for example. Police will show up the most inconvenient times. And the criminals won't slow their fiendish plans while you catch up.

The basic framework of the game involves a lot of legwork. Successful interrogation of a character will usually yield some sort of lead. Although controlled by multiple-choice selections, your interaction with the characters is reasonably subtle, allowing a lot of object-swapping, and good level of conversation-branching. Characters will behave according to your treatment of them. In most situations, you can play Blade as either a gun-toting thug, a straight-arrow or a sleazy greaseball. Continually threatening to push peoples' faces inside out will eventually have to be backed up by action.

The biggest problem with Rise of the Dragon is that it's a bit easy. A few concerted attempts and you'll have the case sewn up. However, it has a number of facts in its favour. For a start, it's fascinating to play. In every situation, there's always something new to try. The graphics are superb. You can either play in 2, 16 or 256 colours. Obviously, the higher the capabilities of your machine, the better the game looks. Monochrome is a bit dodgy, 16 is fine and 256 is absolutely beautiful.

Another reason for its relative ease is a testimony of the thoughtfulness of the story design. In order to give a flimsy quality to the way the game progresses, Blade won't hit any real dead ends. Whereas most adventures will regularly kill



Checking the Viphone is an essential part of any P.I.'s day. Checking up on other people's messages can be just as informative as looking at your own.



...And it looks as if hard action is what you're about to get! Is she really as friendly as she seems?



1. Just thought I'd come by and see how you're doing.
2. I can see you're pretty upset about seeing me with that other woman. I can explain if you'll just give me a minute.
3. Th. really sorry. What I did was totally wrong. Please forgive me!

The price of infidelity. Your old flame is more than pleased with the company you've been keeping of late.

off the hero from the word go, Blade has a pretty safe time unless he does anything desperately silly. In the latter part of the game, however, the action escalates and more care must be taken.

Also included are two arcade sequences which play during combat with the bad guys at the end of the game. The difficulty of these sections can be tailored to suit your preferences, and even skipped through if you're really not an arcade person.

Apart from the longevity question, Rise of the Dragon is an excellent game. It's fun to play, easy to get into and it also has some genuine pace, a factor that sets it above most adventures on the market. Sierra's next game using their new system could be a masterpiece.

Jim Douglas

Run for your wife! Daphne's mum "encourages" you to rescue her beloved daughter...

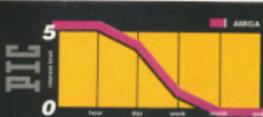


WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT, DIRKY?

Those unfamiliar with Readysoft's interactive cartoons may be wondering how they work. It's really quite simple. An animated sequence is played showing Dirk in a perilous scrape. You must decide how and when Dirk will react and use your joystick accordingly, pushing up, down, left or right to move or pressing fire to use the sword. The wrong move or timing results in a short death scene and the loss of one of your three lives. Get it right and the main sequence continues.

The problem is that you are not truly interacting with a cartoon as all, more being guided along a plot route decided by the programmers - and it's not always obvious what that route is from what you see. For example, in the first scene Dirk is being attacked by his mother-in-law. You must push left to jump out of the way. However, there's no good reason why you couldn't jump to the right or back, or even use your sword (not that Daphne would be too pleased with you hacking apart her relatives!) except that the programmers don't want you to. The game can often boil down to a lot of tedious and unrewarding testing of every possible move until the correct one is found.

...The nearby ruins of Singer's castle prove no sanctuary from trouble because this snake is certainly no charmer...
 ...Deeper into the castle and another snake - plus a talking time machine! Now to rescue Daphne (?)...



The graphics and sound are just dreadfully good and it has to be said that the urge to see what's next provides a reasonably strong incentive to play. However, it's not going to take too long to complete if you really put your mind to it (just that much of a mind is required). If you're only after the game because you want to show off the graphics and sound capabilities of your Amiga or Atari ST then buy the PD demo and save yourself forty odd quid.

ADD RATING	AMIGA
694	
5 4 3 2 1	

In what's next General, there are more screens and bigger animated images this time around, but it's basically more of the same - striving to look as well as to be so that the chaotic and locked-screeny mess the only skill needed to complete the game is dogged perseverance. Let's face it, he should let the one on with another. The ones committed will remain loyal.

ADD RATING	ATARI ST
688	
5 4 3 2 1	

Not quite as impressive as its Amiga cousin. The graphics solution are not as subtle, although they are on the ST which uses the AMIG cultural palette and the screen update is slightly slower, which detracts from the cartoon look of the game but does give you a better chance of hitting your mouse correctly. The sound remains an undeniably superior one of a lower quality, but still very good. However, the gameplay is unchanged (over the plot).

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£44.95	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£44.95	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£44.95	OUT NOW
MACINTOSH	TBA	TBA

No other versions planned

DRAGON'S LAIR II: TIME WARP



...Glink! One trip through time later and Dirk finds he's prehistory! He's never one to do things by halves! Look! These hoofed gents have you beloved...

...Zooziling!!! Through time again to the Gates of Eden. "Go away, no visitors!" misses the blue-ringed angel...



...One last trip and you find Mordroc, who is just about to put the Ring of Death on Daphne's finger which will make her forever his! In desperation you throw your sword at the arch villain, piercing his arm. But the battle is just beginning...

Singer may have been slain, but now there's a new dragon in town... Dirk's mother-in-law! Princess Daphne has been kidnapped by the wizened and wicked Mordroc, who has hidden her in a wrinkle in time. Inspired by his love for Daphne and the size of his mother-in-law's rolling pin, Dirk must overcome ravenous snakes, living skulls, giant pterodactyls, camp angels and Mordroc himself to rescue her in this rollicking (and expensive) romp through the halls of time!

● David Upchurch

READYSOFT/EMPIRE's latest graphic extravaganzas: Will Dirk dare to be different in *Dragon's Lair II*? Or will *Wrath of the Demon* steal his thunder?





— Action on the trot from Scene 1. Jump the obstacles and punch out the attacking ghoules while scooping up potions from the floor. There are three potion types: one restores energy (shown by the ring of coloured discs in the top left of the screen), one saps the energy of any monsters on screen and the last makes you invincible for three seconds. They can be stored up and used when needed.

Put simply, the plot is this: You play a warrior sent to slay a Demon threatening your King's realm. Why the manual can't just come out and say this is a complete mystery. Instead, you get a load of old guff about some wizard called Antrax (?), a faery having a bad dream and a murdered King's messenger - it's all far too convoluted to explain here. I suppose it's meant to generate 'atmosphere'.

Thing is, it's not really needed - there's a truly marvellous intro which creates bags of atmosphere all by itself. I know you read this every month but it really is something special and uses animation techniques reminiscent of the classic Disney cartoons. At natural breaks in the game there are well-drawn pictures and text explaining the progress in the plot.

The game is made up of a series of 'scenes', each of which contains some sort of task to be completed and, while they are not outstandingly original, they are sufficiently varied to prevent any boredom setting in. The size and animation of all the characters is superlative - the galloping horse and the hilariously goggle-eyed dragon are particularly memorable.

The scrolling levels feature numerous levels of parallax which create a great feeling of depth. David Whittaker's soundtracks are fine but not outstanding - they're very reminiscent of *Beast 2*,



WRATH OF THE DEMON

in fact. Technically, this has to be the most accomplished and polished game yet written for the Amiga.

Thankfully, the programmers Abstrax have also spent a bit of time on the gameplay. All controls are responsive and the game tasks are entertaining. A stunning game that not only looks fantastic and sounds great but plays well too.

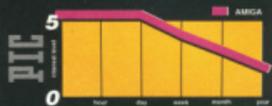
● David Upchurch

LOOK AT THE SIZE OF THOSE SPECS!

WARNING! Techies of a weak disposition should stop reading now!

The programming team behind the fan-fabulous graphics in *Wrath of the Demon* are Pierre Proulx, Claude Pelletier and Martin Ross, who call themselves Abstrax and are based across the Big Pond in Quebec, Canada. The game was developed over 10 months and comes on four discs, needed to store the 3.5 Mb of graphics data and 600K of sound data. The action is accompanied by 8 different sound tracks (written by David Whittaker) with the music samples recorded at 20 kHz. On your quest through the 600 screens of action you'll meet 120 different monsters, with the biggest being a whopping 300 x 164 pixels!

← The graphic proleto to the second Scene. Is that a goblin or has he just got a headache?



Great to look at and great to play. The many levels of action should provide an enjoyably long-lasting challenge.

ADD REVIEW

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AMIGA

Demon is an obvious challenge to *Beast 2*, and in this month's *Wrath of the Demon* we've had down. The drive has to be the best ever seen on the Amiga. The in-game presentation is stunning, with impressive levels of parallax and a stunning and expanding graphics style. But (thankfully) it's far more than just a pretty face. The game tasks are fun and, although mainly hack 'n' slash, memorably varied.

RELEASE DETAILS

ATARI ST	£29.99	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£29.99	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£29.99	OUT NOW
MACINTOSH	£29.99	OUT NOW
C64	TBA	TBA

No other versions planned



The dragon's lair! Now where have I heard that before...?



Yaaaagh! You'll jump out of your skin when confronted by this horrid little devil on a trek through some underground caves in Scene 4.



TEAM

SUZUKI

Team Suzuki offers the player the chance to pit their simulated motorcycle prowess against some of the best riders in the world, racing around real tracks too. And thanks to some excellent programming and thoughtful control methods, it manages to be both easy to pick up and genuinely realistic.

The game contains the a whole race season, across 16 international circuits and you can play right through from start to finish if you've got the staying power (and the ability). More advisable in the early stages of play, though, is to put in a lot of practise. Even with three different control options available (joystick or 2 mouse settings) and three engine sizes at your fingertips, it will take a good while to acustom yourself to the behaviour of the bike.

125cc race bikes are a breed apart from their road-going equivalent. When pushed, you can achieve a clean 120mph from their howling little powerplants. It's best to get to grips with the rudiments of bike handling and track etiquette on a machine of this size, since these bikes (in the game) have automatic gearing.

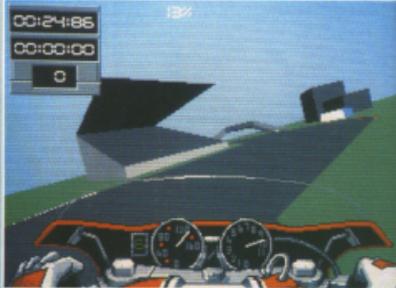
Once you're happy with the extreme degrees of leaning necessary to get around some corners

With sixteen international race circuits, computerised versions of the top riders in the world, and a brand new super-fast polygon routine, GREMLIN must be onto a winner...

at speed, it's possible to work on faster lap times and picking your best "line".

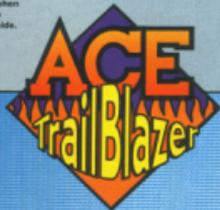
Unlike the real thing, the Team Suzuki bikes will never fall over. However, every time they leave the circuit they will incur some damage. Reach 100% damage and your bike will gracefully lie down and die. Damage points are also amassed by bumping into other bikes and trackside objects.

By the time you can complete a couple of laps without your damage reaching 50%, chances are you're ready to race. Qualifying for a race involves completing three laps of the appropriate circuit (unless competing in the World Championship, you can ride any circuit at any time). Your lap times will determine your position

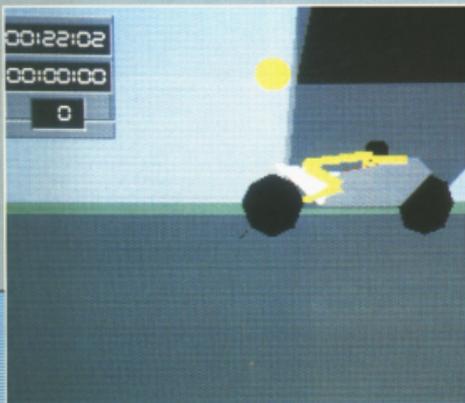


Practise laps help get to grips with the behaviour of the bike. It's best to hit the inside of the corner when you're half way round and then gradually slide out to the outside.

On the grid. Your progress during the qualifying laps determines your position.



During practice, you can view the bike from virtually any angle. Actually riding while viewing the world like this is far from easy.



Polygon riders can be switched off to speed up the frame rate if you desire.



5
POLY
0

Initial impressions are extremely good, with the slickness of the 3D world overriding the fact that you spend the first hour creating the bike. After that, there's a minor frustration stage while you master bike control. Once on the other side of this dip, though, it's a straight run for Suzaki.

ACE RATING
900

Super slick graphics and a genuine immersion of actually riding the bike. A breakdown of the virtual road courses as the camera zooms in onto the track offers useful hints, and the retro graphics worth option offers even more speed.

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£24.99	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£24.99	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£24.99	OUT NOW

No other versions planned

Chasing other bikers is a dangerous business. Taking a cavalier approach to overtaking will surely see you off the track.



Your final few seconds of each race can be viewed through the track-side replay camera. Useful hints can be gleaned by checking your track position before the crash.

on the grid in the main race. Even if you fail to complete the qualifying laps, you can still race, but you'll start in last place.

Unlike most racing games where you can work your way up through the other competitors with relative ease, overtaking in Suzuki is far from a formality. Since all the computer controlled riders will automatically keep as close to the perfect line as possible, the only way you can get around them is to take a route other than the optimum, losing precious seconds if you make a mistake.

During practice, you can view your bike from five different angles, each infinitely definable by rotating and elevating the camera. While racing, though, you can only view from the rider's point of view, from behind the bike and over the back of the bike.

To speed up the already swift frame-rate, you can opt to turn off the other riders (resulting in ghost-bikes) and also do away with the bike's instrument panel and handlebars.

For anyone with more than a passing interest in either motorbikes or what can be done with a decent polygon system, Team Suzuki is an essential purchase.

● Jim Douglas

Despite its relatively primitive technology, the MiG-29 Fulcrum is one of the best fighting aircraft in the world, so there's plenty of potential in this first-ever flight sim from Domark.

Unfortunately you couldn't call the Amiga version more than adequate; despite the giant box, the 129-page full-colour book on the MiG-29, the extensive manual and the fold-out poster, the most important part of the package, the game itself, doesn't impress.

Things start fairly well with a grungy heavy metal intro tune (it's not very Russian, though), followed by a title screen showing the MiG flying over the Kremlin. It's downhill from there, as the opening screen of the game, showing a bleak office with an overhead projector displaying a list of missions, is unintentionally hilarious - the pilot in the background looks constipated and his com-



Prepare for take-off. Ground detail is pretty minimal, and there's no increase in speed to compensate.

MiG-29 FULCRUM

mander clutching a clipboard has a peculiarly deformed hand (too much cheap vodka, perhaps).

You select a mission from the six available, one of which is a training flight where a crash returns you to the runway (in other missions, a crash is fatal).

The five genuine mission scenarios include sub-hunting in the Arctic, dogfighting with Chinese fighters over the Great Wall, attacking bridges, trucks and SAMs on the ground, and a final multi-role scenario destroying a nuclear

power plant in the desert (topical or what?). You have to accumulate 500 points before tackling the final mission.

Although the cockpit interior appears to be an accurate depiction of the inside of a MiG, it's not too exciting. Systems such as radar, altimeter, head-up display, weapon selection and engine controls are all familiar from many other flight sims, and you have a choice of keyboard, mouse, joystick or analogue joystick controls. I found the plane hard to keep in steady flight using a mouse, so the automatic level flight control is useful.

Although you get a lovely picture depicting each mission scenario before it starts, the out-of-cockpit graphics are on the minimal side; deserts, ice fields or night landscapes according to mission. Using the numeric pad keys you can alter your angle of view, eliminate the control panel or select a third-party view to enhance the game, but nothing will enhance the poor sound except turning it off.

According to test pilot John Farley, performance accurately represents that of the genuine article, and here we have to defer to experience. You have a small choice of weapons - cannon, and air-to-air or air-to-ground missiles - but the dogfighting sequences are too slow to be really exciting.

Overall, MiG-29 Fulcrum is a bit of a cabbage. It might look good from the screenshots, but the limited action, restricted scenarios, and lack of expandability through extra mission disks, make you ask yourself what is the point of producing a merely adequate sim when there are several excellent ones already on the market.

● Chris Jenkins

It might be built from transistors and chewing-gum, but the MiG-29 Fulcrum is a fierceoms fighting aircraft. ACE takes DOMARK's simulator for a spin.



Each mission briefing is preceded by an attractive illustrative screen. Here a small town nestled in the Siberian mountains is under attack from enemy missiles. Your mission is to find the sites and destroy 'em.



PICT

AMIGA

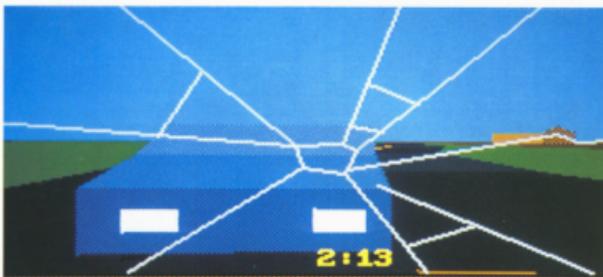
The intro screens and graphics displays are pretty impressive, but in the areas of depth and variation it's a disappointment. It looks more than a competent simulation to compete in a crowded market, and MiG-29 doesn't make enough of the opportunities offered

AGE RATING	AMIGA	
750	AMIGA	
	<p>Though it's only slightly slower than other Amiga flight sims, that title makes a lot of difference. The backgrounds aren't very detailed, and though you see wisps of enemy aircraft and ground objects look impressive, in flight the impression isn't so great. Control isn't particularly easy, with the mouse, at least, and the biggest disappointment is the sound, which after the theme tune is minimal. Competent, but not everything it could be.</p>	
RELEASE DETAILS		
AMIGA	£34.99	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£34.99	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£39.99	OUT NOW

Is *Hard Driving 2* a true sequel or are DOMARK 'clutch'-ing at straws?

It's always nice to see a software company continuing to update their product after release. Buy something like a word-processor and you get such updates for free, but if we're talking about a game, it's galling to be asked for another wad of cash for a supposed sequel which is in many ways just a 'bug-fixed' version of the original.

It has to be said that *Hard Driving 2 - Drive Harder* is a fine game (though you shouldn't make the mistake of thinking that the guy in the driving helmet is Bruce Willis). Based on an impressive coin-op, it uses fixed-vector graphics



Remember that you're not driving in France and try to keep on the right side of the road. No, no, when I say right I mean the left. I... Look out!



Oh, how lovely. The missions that have a script to the dial-table? Yes, it's a hell of a long time from the original and it's still a shame to

HARD DRIVING 2 DRIVE HARDER

to create a series of realistic driving courses complete with death-defying stunt obstacles. The result is a unique cross between a racing game and a flight simulator.

Initially there are five courses to choose from, though the icon-driven track designer means that you can edit them to suit your taste, or create your own courses from scratch, defining your own lap time values, restart points and so on. You have a wide range of control options including mouse, joystick or keyboard, and several combinations of the two. You might like to start with automatic gear changing, and work up to manual shift as your performance improves.

The full 3D view track is surrounded by realistic objects such as road signs, houses, barriers, and even cows (!). Some objects are obstacles, others are just decoration, but the stunt sections such as loops and jumps have to be taken seriously.

Performance is realistic - take a curve too fast and you start skidding convincingly - and the speed of the whole game is slightly faster than that of the original, which is a welcome improvement.

Other improvements include auto-centering of the steering, improved visibility check (other cars no longer appear through mountains!) and a two-machine link-up. In this mode any combination of PC, Amiga and ST can be linked together via RS-232, and you can race head-to-head without collision detection, or in a standard race with collision detection and a drone car.

If you want a truly different race game, try *Hard Driving 2 - Trouble* is, it's most likely to appeal to people who already have the original *Hard Driving*, and they might not think the minor improvements are worth the money. A case for an upgrade offer, Domark?

● Chris Jenkins

Crash and you'll get an instant replay of the tragic event from a flying camera. Here you're just about to have a bit of a harvey with a barn.



The versatile and (after a little practice) easy-to-use track editor. Invent a real toughy, then invite a cocky *Hard Driver* mate to see how good he or she really is.



The car takes a little while to get a hang of, but fortunately the improved control options mean the learning curve isn't as frustratingly high as the original. The extra courses and the option to design your own courses add longevity to an excellent product.

AGE RATING	AMIGA
820	<p>Congratulations to Domark on improving the performance of this good-looking racing game. The speed of the original was a slight problem, but here it has been increased to be par with the best graphics and animation. However, this isn't enough of a mission to qualify as a different game. The options list to be reviewed hasn't been better to hold off on the first <i>Hard Driving</i> until this improved version was ready for release!</p>
RELEASE DETAILS	
AMIGA	[£24.99] OUT NOW
ATARI ST	[£24.99] OUT NOW
IBM PC	[£29.99] OUT NOW

What a strange brew! One minute you're playing an upgraded *Dungeon Master*, next a cut-down *Shadow of the Beast* and then... well, I don't know quite how to describe it, it's a sort of combination of the previous two sections I guess. Even stranger, this bizarre mixture actually works.

Wil Mason, a lecturer in medieval history, is traveling home through desolate storm-lashed Snowdonia when his car breaks down. Unable to fix the fault he takes shelter in a strange stone tower nesting in the nearby woods. Exhausted, he soon falls asleep.



Once inside the castle you get yet another change in view. You can move left and right, while pushing forwards and back takes you into and out of the scene, with your figure enlarging as it approaches the foreground.

Mason awakes to a surprise - his clothes have been transformed into those of a medieval peasant. Even worse, his car - and the road - have disappeared. Mason's troubles have only just begun...

Obitus is a fantasy adventure game with a more than a hint of arcade action. As Mason you have to find a way to get home from this strange and magical world.

You start the game in the woods surrounding the tower. The screen is split into two parts - the top is dominated by a *Dungeon Master*-like view of the woods in the direction you're facing with a status panel below.

All control is effected via a hand-like mouse pointer. By clicking on the compass you can rotate your view and travel down open pathways; the way the scenery scrolls past in impressively smooth 3D is truly stunning.

More complex interaction with the environment is possible using the small set of icons on the status panel, such as TALK, INFO and PICK. You can carry quite a few objects - the one currently held is illustrated in the window beside the compass and you can easily scroll through your inventory. Some icons act on the item in this window, i.e. select EAT with an apple in the inventory window and your health will increase.

When you eventually get out of the woods the game changes to a side-viewed run along a path infested with people bent on your destruction. Using the joystick you can run left, right, jump and duck their attacks (although this seemed to have no effect on preventing them hitting you). Eventually you'll reach a new location to explore. The most frustrating thing about this section from an adventurer's point of view is that although you may see an interesting castle in the distant background, you can't actually turn off the path and visit it.

There's a third game style, which comes into play when you enter a castle. Each room is shown in perspective and as you move Mason around he shrinks and grows according to where

Obitus

PSYGNOSIS release an RPG - but with arcade sequences?!?



The 3D graphics provide a very high instant 'pull' factor. Gameplay-wise, there's plenty to do, and the constantly changing viewpoints help keep your interest. However, changing viewpoints may be put off by the lack of real interaction with the people you meet and the slightly frustrating arcade aspects.

AGE RATING	AMIGA
830	The complaints with the graphics - the 3D system is absolutely gorgeous to look at, worthy to see (although it can require a bit of mouse precision at times). The other two game styles are fine, with some good parallels on the running action, but are a little disappointing in comparison. Sound is adequate but not special - a few groans, grunts and magical 'linking' noises are about all you get.

RELEASE DETAILS
AMIGA £34.99 OUT NOW



The journey between locations is depicted in sidewise, with three layers of parallaxed horizontal-scrolling background scenery. No ardo-wells occasionally poke their heads out from the bushes and attack you. No matter what you do it seems impossible to avoid taking some damage, although thankfully you start off with plenty of energy.

he is. Control is by both joystick (to guide Mason around the rooms) and mouse (to click on icons and interact with scenery as in the 3D section).

Obitus may sound like it could be a real dog's dinner but it actually comes together surprisingly well. RPG purists would no doubt find it's cross-breeding of game styles annoying, and it has to be admitted that the game lacks the depth and atmosphere of a *Dungeon Master* or an *Ultima*. However, gamers looking for something a little different with more depth than the typical arcade adventure but more action than a 'standard' RPG should give *Obitus* a whirl - I think they'll like it.

● David Upchurch



Can you trust this mysterious 'help'? With the icons in the bottom left you can pick up items, eat food or use the objects in your inventory box (open doors with keys, climb down hole with rope or, as here, attack with a knife), amongst other things.

DOUBLE DARE YOU.

Blue Max

ACES OF THE GREAT WAR

WWI Air Combat Simulation

Take control of one of eight classic WWI fighters and find out how good you really are. Fly with the best—Richthofen, Fonck, Mannock, Rickenbacker—and learn their tricks and techniques.

- Action dogfight, solo, and team missions for one or two players using a single computer with any combination of keyboard, joystick, or mouse.
- Strategy Dogfight: For the skilled jurist, Blue Max acts like a highly intelligent strategic board game, allowing you and your opponent to work out detailed battle sequences and play back the moves in "realtime" 3D.
- 8 airplanes to choose from, each with its own highly-detailed flying characteristics.
- Perform missions with, as, or against the Aces of the Great War.
- Dozens of historical missions around 4 different locations within France.

How strong are your nerves at 2,000 feet, with an armed Fokker DRI on your tail? Forget glory, friend. Think survival.



VGA color air combat sequence



• VGA 256
3D COLOR GRAPHICS,
• ORIGINAL MUSIC,
SOUND EFFECTS FOR GAME
BLASTER, ADLIB
SYNTHESIZER
CARDS

DAS BOOT

GERMAN U-BOAT SIMULATION

Winter, 1941. The icy waters of the North Atlantic. The deeper you dive, the greater the pressure. Depth charges explode around you, banging on the hull of your U-boat like iron fists. Nerve and cunning make you the terror of the Allied convoys.

- 3D submarine warfare: For the first time, a sub warfare game lets you deal with threats below and above the surface in a true three dimensional environment.
- Real communications: Use the German Enigma coding machine to send and receive information.
- Many missions to choose from—into the North Atlantic and Arctic, inland along the coast of Norway, into the Bay of Biscay, and through the Straits of Gibraltar.
- 3 different levels of difficulty, from beginner to realistic.
- 3D graphics in 256 VGA colors, with multiple internal and external camera views in a complete 3D world.

Do you think well under pressure? How about 300 pounds per square inch of pressure? Take a deep breath, captain....



VGA periscope view of enemy aircraft



VGA 256 color mine field under North Atlantic

Available
on ST
& AMIGA



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For further information on Mindscape products and new releases please call: 0898 234214

AMIGA - The BEAST in all its glory... nearly! Only one part of the monster machine remains mysteriously hidden behind smoked glass. Well, we couldn't want to spoil all your fun!

NIGHT SHIFT

LUCASFILM/US GOLD get on the job

Glenn T. Bingham has been described as a crank in the Toy Trade press, but men of vision are often ridiculed. Bingham, the founder and president of Industrial Might and Logic, scoured rubbish dumps for raw scrap and built his great dream - the 'BEAST', or Bingham's Environmentally Active Solution for Toys; a machine that could produce toys to his exacting specifications without wasting his money or the Earth's resources!

The BEAST began turning out high quality mini-dolls based on famous LucasFilm characters, such as Storm Trooper Toddler and Mini Threepo. But production was plagued by bugs - the BEAST was very idiosyncratic and needed constant maintenance. Then, furry lemmings started sneaking into the factory and hindering repairs.

IML managed to keep these troubles secret from their competitors. One problem, however, couldn't be covered up - the low output. Bingham decided to keep the BEAST running through the night to help increase production, and advertised for a suitable worker in the local paper...

This is where you come in. Taking on the role of Fred or Fiona Fixit, you have to keep the

BEAST running smoothly. Before each shift the Boss calls you into his office and shows you the night's production schedule. Fail to meet your toy quota and you get the sack. Succeed and you go onto the next shift, with any excess dolls resulting in a wage bonus.



IBM PC - The home for your dreams! Earn enough dough from bashing out toys and you can buy that little plane of your own you've always dreamed about.

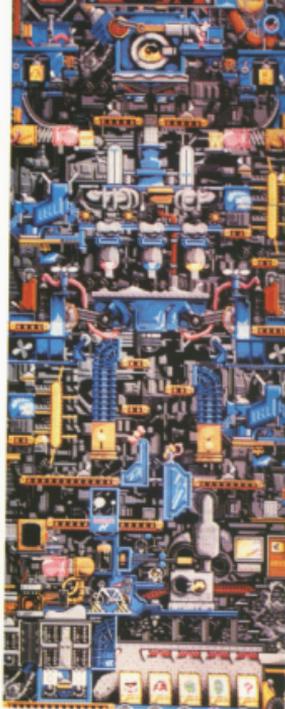
During the shift you have to leap around the BEAST (the screen scrolls vertically to keep up with you) fixing any glitches. Often this can be done straight away, such as pedalling the bike to generate power, moving levers to make the conveyor belts go in the right directions or changing the paint to the colour required for the current doll.

However, other situations will require you have a quick rummage around your tool box, which contains a variety of helpful widgets, such as wrenches for tightening bolts, matches for lighting the boiler, and (most bizarre!) hoovers and Venus flytraps for getting rid of marauding lemmings. Also available are umbrellas which let you drop long distances without knocking yourself out and balloons that give you a quick lift up the BEAST.

A quality controller checks every finished toy, and will discard any rejects. Once you've got the BEAST pumping out toys correctly you can begin to spend some time picking up the bonus tools that appear randomly about the BEAST, as well as hourglasses for extra shift time and dollar signs that up your wages.

The early shifts only require that you make a few dolls of one type in any colour. Later shifts introduce more machinery that has to be maintained and different doll types, each of which have to be painted a specified colour. As you can guess, things can get very complex. Complete 30 shifts and fame and fortune are yours.

● David Upchurch



The packaging and presentation are highly polished, but the program takes an awful long time to stop falling around with copy protection checking and disk accessing and let you get on with playing the game. Then there's a fairly long period of frustration as you find out the hard way what you can and can't jump on and fix. However, once you do your first discovery, the rest of the factory has never been so much fun and will keep you mutt tightfists for a long time.

AGE RATING	835	AMIGA
Excellent presentation, well-entertaining between-level animated scenes. Includes some 3D models but largely the appalling audio can get very annoying, especially during the long delay between games. If you can't turn these two aspects off, the graphics are great, with smooth fast scrolling of the well-annotated 'Boss' background. Special mention should go to the one screen tune - it's a clearly catchy jingle full of metallic groans and grinding noises that suits the game perfectly but which you'll either love or hate.		

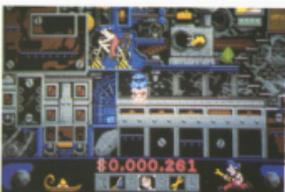
AGE RATING	835	IBM PC
The game's new identical to the Amiga incarnation in USA and UK, and offers the best value in C&A. And, for once, Post-BEASTer fun is remarkably bearable. Gameplay is very satisfying and highly enjoyable. The initially high learning curve is worthwhile. The biggest problem is the considerable amount of disk swapping in between games and levels, most drives, of course, will cope to such problems.		

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£24.99	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£24.99	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£24.99	OUT NOW
AMSTRAD CPC	£10.99c/£15.99dk	OUT NOW
C64	£15.99dk	OUT NOW
SPECTRUM	£10.99c	OUT NOW



AMIGA - Fall to meet your quota and it's back to the drole queen. Your dreams of riches beyond imagination are over.



AMIGA - On your bike! Fred has to peddle (and you have to wedge the joystick left and right) furiously to generate enough power to get the BEAST started.

Good, Great, Best,
Better

élite, n. The choice part, the best,
(Of). [F.= choice]
plus, adj. Additional, extra;
positive. [L.= more]



Good games come and go, and great ones last much longer. The best can win awards, but only one can claim to be Elite.

When the history of computer gaming is written, its name appears early on. And on. And on. Generations have played it; some have beaten it; but none have tired of it.

The original mix of space exploration, trading, and combat has endured imitators, pretenders and millions of hours of play. Now the best is to get better.

Rainbird have updated the IBM PC compatibles version to utilise the technology which has developed over the game's lifetime.

Amazing 3-D graphics, in EGA, VGA and MCGA modes bring even more life to cosmic combat; a redesigned icon-driven interface speeds trading, information gathering and map reading; support of Ad-Lib and Roland sound-boards enable your ears to share the vivid pleasures of life on the high seas of space; and brand new missions extend gameplay even further than before.

The classic six-year old recipe remains the same; new ingredients add to the flavour; treat your tastebuds to the best. Elite Plus.



Elite Plus will be available for IBM PC compatibles at £34.99.

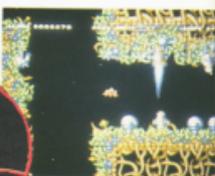
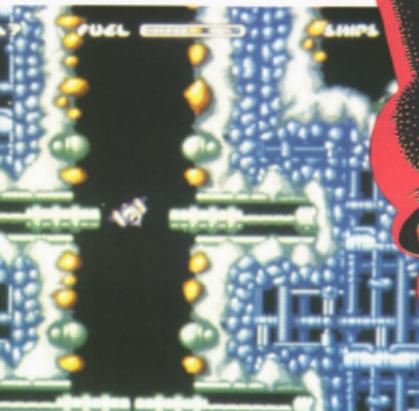
The original versions of Elite are available for Atari ST and Commodore Amiga, at £24.99.

Unit 1, Hampton Road Industrial Estate, Tetbury, Glos. Tel: 0666 504326



When collecting pods, it's all too easy to bail into the surrounding landscape. Use your combined tractor-beam to avoid such problems.

In later levels of the game, there are icy barriers to pass. Here, for example, you must clear the asteroids in the line of the chain to open the loggites. Be warned - they'll only reload upon for a few seconds!



Thermic venting units can frazzle your ship. Careful timing and a balance of fuel reserves are necessary if you're to avoid them.

Zarathrusta

It takes a reasonable amount of nerve to launch a 16-bit game based on *Thrust*, an 8-bit budget game from two years ago which - in turn - was a cross between *Asteroids* and *Lunar Lander*. Despite the enhanced graphics, *Zarathrusta* doesn't really denote much of a step forward.

You are the pilot of a tiny spacecraft, charged with the mission of locating and collecting Klystron pods from the surface of increasingly heavily-defended planets. Using your limited supply of fuel, you must battle your way through the defences and negotiate deadly underground caverns in order to collect the pods before returning to your mothership and traveling further into space, to pillage more remote worlds.

There are 10000 bonus points to be earned by shooting out the planet's nuclear reactor, thus permanently shutting down any alien activity and making the planet unstable. Then it's a race against time to collect the Klystron pods and escape before the planet collapses. Actually, there's little chance of running out of time, as your fuel reserves are likely to dry out first.

If you've played such inertia-driven games as *Asteroids*, *Thrust* or *Oids*, you'll know what to expect from your ship control: clockwise and anti-clockwise rotation, thrust and fire. There's also a tractor-beam/shield, which can be used to attract the Klystron pods and protect your ship from collision with the surrounding scenery. Unprotected encounters with the planet's surface will destroy your ship.

The further into the game you progress, the smoother the flying necessary in order to sur-

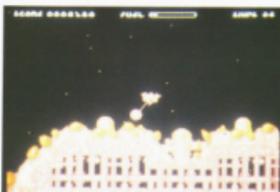
vive. Certain planets have stronger gravitational pull than others; and others have heavy defence systems.

With the game premise being so simple, the control the player has over the ship is vital. Here *Zarathrusta* succeeds pretty well. The difficulty of the early levels is pitched quite low, allowing the player enough time to get to grips with the control method, rather than being blasted out of the air every five seconds.

The landscapes of the planets vary from over-vegetated jungle areas, through mechanised zones, to icy wastes. Fuel in certain regions is extremely scarce, and rather than spending time blasting away at the reactor, it's best to simply collect the pods and run.

If you already possess *Oids*, *Thrust* or a similar game, it's unlikely *Zarathrusta* will hold many surprises. If you were a fan of similarly controlled arcade machines, you may find it fun.

● Jim Douglas



Shooting out the reactor will cause the planet to become unstable. There's 10000 extra points to be earned from this grandiose vandalism.

HEWSON'S latest is a simple affair; an attempt to reach back to those bygone days where gameplay was everything



Certainly not the most enthralling game, and pretty superficial actually. But *Zarathrusta* is the sort of game that you can keep coming back to - in small doses - for quite a while. Once you've got to grips with the ship control, and learnt how to negotiate the passages, it's great fun. Don't expect it to keep you at your keyboard forever, though.

<p>AGE RATING</p> <p>700</p>	<p>AMIGA</p> <p>See sound, and on first impressions, usually high quality graphics but there seems to have been some slight early space saving reserves for the alien backgrounds. Large areas of ice-roads, rocks or mountains are filled with blocks, but the block design is a bit iffy and you can see the joints. Apart from this, there's nothing to fault <i>Zarathrusta</i> on the technical front.</p>
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RELEASE DETAILS		
AMIGA	£24.99	OUT NOW
No other versions planned		

S P O **4D** R T S B O X I N G

"4D Sports Boxing is absolutely brilliant... the boxes move pretty much like their real-life counterparts...Here goes...Ooooooh! (Crunch)."
ZERO HERO 90%

"...This is the best game I have ever played."
Don Mottrick, President of Distinctive Software Inc.

"Seconds out...Round One! The crowd leap to their feet as the fighters rain down on each other...was that a stumble? YES! He's down...what a knock out. This is boxing as it's absolute best. What a brilliant fight!"

"4D Sports Boxing is simply one of the best sports simulations around...Superb." -The One 90%



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WINDSURFING ZOMBIES FROM OUTER SPACE



Is Activision producing a B-movie? Rik Haynes previews four new games from the veteran American software house...

DEUTEROS

What would you get if you expanded the strategy sections of *Elite* while erasing its arcade sequences? That's what Activision seems to have done with this sequel to *Millennium 2.2*, the successful science-fiction strategy game. The appropriately titled *Deuterios*, the Greek word for second, is an atmospheric follow-up to the surprise hit of 1989. At its core, *Deuterios* is a resource management game. Once you've got the orbital factories, space-ships and universal exploration nicely under way, the game expands into a dynamic adventure involving mysterious alien artifacts and deadly encounters with their creators.

Ian Bird, a 31-year-old programmer from Coventry, has created both *Millennium 2.2* and *Deuterios*, but he's no newcomer to strategy games. Bird produced the first strategic submarine simulation for



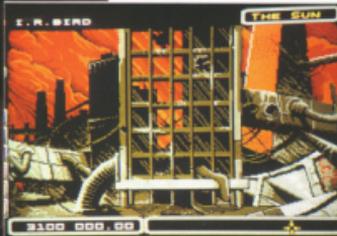
Howe you're ready to go where no person has gone before, but can this engine take it, captain?

the Sinclair ZX81 and since that time has written some six strategy games on various computer formats.

Similar in style to *Millennium 2.2*, but nearly ten times bigger, *Deuterios* provides a far greater challenge for your dedicated space strategist. It is set one thousand years on from where the original ended. The legendary *Millennium 2.2* galactic empire is waiting to be reclaimed, though a space-fleet has to be built from scratch before you can go forth and conquer. Space technology has been forgotten, so it's up to you to instigate research, production and training programmes for this epic project. Then the fun really begins...

Jai Redman is again providing the visuals, only this time the graphics have a bio-tech feel and more animation.

Activision is very proud of *Deuterios*, and quite rightly too, for the game has far greater potential than its illustrious predecessor. It has, in other words, the hallmarks of being a classic game. *Deuterios* is launched next month on the Amiga and ST. Let's hope it does the business.



You're looking at Planet Earth... at least what's left of it. This is where your space adventure begins.

HUNTER

He's tough, he can fly a helicopter or drive a tank, he's on a deadly sabotage mission behind enemy lines, he's totally 3D, he's Hunter.

Paul Holmes, an ex-CRL programmer, has written a game which uses some of the most innovative three-dimensional routines yet seen - thus creating a novel new style of arcade action game. Hunter is like a James Bond movie or Milk Tray advert displayed in glorious 3D running at a max of 25 frames per second.

Your on-screen character can go anywhere and do anything. Enter buildings and manipulate anything in sight. You see a helicopter laying idle. No problem. Just walk up to it and you're away, flying in the skies. The same goes for more mundane vehicles like bicycles and jeeps. You can even do a spot of windsurfing but there's no time to relax; the enemy is waiting for you and your fuel supply is fast running out. After all, who wants to walk into battle when you could smash through enemy lines



in a main battle tank.

Hunter can be played as a giant campaign game or split into smaller missions. The large game-map is randomly generated every time you play to help maintain long-term interest. So move over action man because Hunter is soon to be released on Amiga and ST. A new age of 3D combat adventuring is about to begin.

Hunter. The helicopter is one of the best vehicles to control in the game, though ACE has a soft-spot for the bicycle.



Hunter. And all because the lady loves Milk Tray... Hunter can go anywhere in this game.



R-Type II. Time to unleash The Force!

R-TYPE II

The evil Bydo empire is back and determined to subjugate the world (again). A desperate battle is about to be fought out in the limitless and unknown dimensions of space which have been contaminated and corrupted by this evil power. It's payback time. You're sent into eight different sectors of space in the sophisticated R-9 fighter. You're personkin's only defence against the enemy. You're all alone.

Arc Developments is handling the conversion of this Irem coin-op, a scrolling shoot'em-up filled with boss sprites, reflection lasers and shield orbs. Weapons are increased

or modified by shooting certain alien craft and collecting the jewels they leave behind. The first jewel collected also releases a special weapon, The Force, which can be attached to the front or rear of your R-9 fighter, sent ahead to clear a path, or behind as a rear-guard. The Force is equipped with its own lasers to take care of itself.

R-Type II is very much 'more of the same'. It has similar aliens and backdrops complemented by greater challenges and obstacles. Although the game will be finished within the next few months, Activision is holding back its release till September.



BEAST BUSTERS

Out of the mist, a horde of flesh-eating zombies rise up and come after you. Is it a nightmare or the latest cult horror movie from George 'Night of the Living Dead' Romero? No, it's a conversion of SNK's horrifying Beast Busters arcade game.

Another in the Operation Wolf style of mindless machine-gun shoot'em-ups, Beast Busters is a seven-stage search and destroy mission to end this zombie uprising. The game is a simple blood 'n' guts blaster with plenty of zombies, mad dogs and innocent bystanders to blow away. Beast Busters has the multi-directional scrolling sections and head-on down-the-corridor action as seen in Operation Thunderbolt. Your finger hardly ever leaves the fire-button during play, it's all down to 'don't think, just shoot'.

Images in charge of the conversions to Amiga and ST, which should be available before Easter. This games developer has previously converted Ninja Spirit and Super Wonderboy for Activision.

Beast Busters is the best game from SNK since Ikari Warriors so the computer conversions should be worth a look. Hopefully, the game will also be transferred to SNK's games-starved Neo-Geo console system, which is in desperate need of greater software support.

Beast Busters. Why does this remind me of Stock, Aitken and Waterman?



Beast Busters
Programming by Henry Clark
Graphics by Andrew Pang and Ken Jarvis

NARC

Join OCEAN's drugbusters and US GOLD's anti-terrorist squad in the never-ending fight against organised crime!



▲ You've busted! The profits amongst you will be pleased to read that you don't have to kill anyone. Stand next to a badley for a couple of seconds and you can arrest him for a big bonus.



▲ Bannhankal! Legs and arms go flying as you launch a bazooka shell into the crowd of criminals besetting your partner. Dr Frankenstein would have a field day!

Now here's a novelty: a scrolling shoot-'em-up with a strong anti-drugs message - although that does tend to get lost amidst the explosions and flying body parts. Not so much "Just say No" but "Just say Aaaaiieeeee!!".

You play yet another in the long line of over-muscled hunks with a mission - this time to infiltrate Mr Big's hide-out and put a satisfyingly violent end to his drug-peddling activities. If you want you can invite a similarly well-built mate along for some extra pusher-pasting power.

The game is split into twelve horizontally-scrolling levels viewed from a raised angle so that you get a pseudo-3D view of the action. In keeping with game convention you have to battle your way from one end to the other. You can move around freely using the joystick. Tapping up makes you jump while tapping down makes you crouch.

Each level is infested with a variety of scum just begging to be blasted with your machine gun or splattered to the four winds with your bazooka (accessed by holding down the fire

Crash! Bang! Wallp! 'Wot a picture! Take that, you kid-napping slime! Look out for the TV's (on the far right of the screen). Shooting them reveals hidden energy restorer - who said TV was bad for you?



Not a stunning product, and the relatively easy method of making progress means this is unlikely to be a game you'll be returning to in a month let alone a year.

AGE RATING
720



AMIGA

Should, disappointingly, the scrolling be smooth and there are a pretty large number of badies on screen at one time, but this looks suspiciously like an old game. The graphics design is good, with fairly un-related graphics floating around all backgrounds. Sound is adequate with a tedious sample-packed mix between games excepting the action. There are normally save files but a non-savable option doesn't really seem to improve the fun. If you're a big fan of the scrolling gun war genre, this, otherwise, think carefully before buying.

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£ 24.99	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£ 24.99	OUT NOW
AMSTRAD CPC	£ 10.99/£ 15.99/£	OUT NOW
C 64	£ 10.99/£ 15.99/£	OUT NOW
SPECTRUM	£ 10.99/£ 15.99/£	OU T NOW

No other versions planned.



in the subway, and the first appearance of the karate killers.

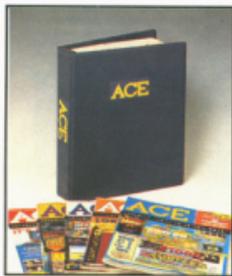
Yet more justice from the barrel of the gun! Have these people never heard of trial by jury? The King Pin, head of the MOB, has kidnapped President Cole's beautiful daughter, Brittany. Lucas McCabe, hardman extraordinaire, decides it's about time the King Pin was nailed - for good! Armed with a machine gun and a grenade-launching add-on he sets out through ** levels of horizontal-scrolling action. (Oooh, why do I get this terrible feeling of deja vu?)

Okay, let's not beat about the bush - this is a NARC clone. Like its inspiration there are hordes of baddies to blast, extra ammo and bonuses to pick up, and justice to be meted out on your way to rescuing the Prez's daughter. No arresting the criminals here - McCabe reckons taking prisoners is for fairies. McCabe also operates alone, so there's no two-player option.

ACE MERCHANDISE OFFER

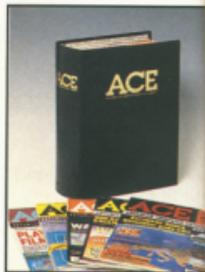


There can surely be nothing more sexy and fashionable than the ACE t-shirt. This latest item in the *Ace Clothing Collection* is what every self respecting computing genius will be wearing this season. The eye catching ensemble has been exclusively designed by ACE's own art editor, Jim "Gaultier" Willis, for the lover of fine things and the reader with good taste. The t-shirt is available in sizes small, medium and extra large and can be purchased at the ridiculously low price of £5.99



There is no better way of storing your copies of this, the world's finest computer entertainment magazine, than in an ACE binder. The binders are available in two designs - so as to satisfy even the most stalwart supporter of style and quality - and can be yours for the embarrassingly inexpensive price of £5.99

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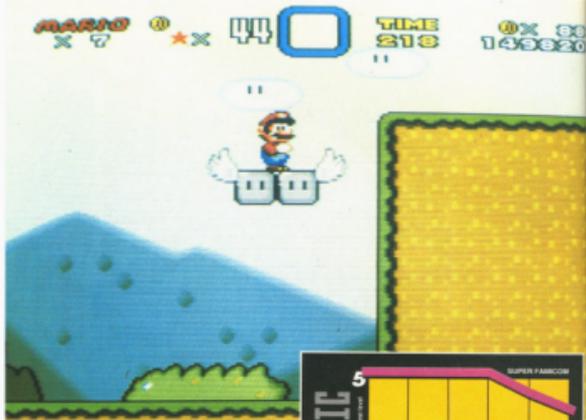
Mario comes bouncing back in the fourth instalment of NINTENDO'S platform pranks! Worth buying a Famicom for?

It's the latest Super Mario game and it's on Nintendo's Super Famicom. We've had Super Mario Bros I, II, III and now IV. Is Mario really worth yet another sequel or are Nintendo getting the Rocky syndrome?

All the action happens in - surprise, surprise - Super Marioland, a place that bears a suspicious resemblance to a 2D scrolling map. There are a 100 tasks for Mario to complete before he can rescue the Princess Wendy from an evil lizard. Each task resides in a sub-level, which is accessed via one of the transporters strewn around the pathways of Marioland. Guide Mario to one and a quick hit of fire zaps you into a scrolling world where the idea is to get from end to the other.

Sounds easy? You're right it does but you're locked out without the large array of platformy game obstacles getting in your way. Get through and Mario will return the map which'll change slightly, opening up new paths and allowing you explore further.

After completing a castle or ghost house on the Super Marioland map you get the chance to RAMsave your game onto the battery backed up



On a wing and a block! To get around Marioland you'll need every weird and wonderful means at your disposal - including flying platform!



Wagh-ho, Gooey, awag! With a baby lizard for a mount you can go either cackling using the giant Giga's sticky tongue.

ACE RATING
910

AMIGA

With its cast array of interesting characters to control, with amazing multi-layered parallax graphics and superb sound, Super Mario Bros IV is the most modern and polished of the series. It's a must for the series and the year. Add something to the list of the best games ever. The ability to save up to three previous games and it will give you the chance to play the early levels over and over. There's also a brilliant end-game sequence. I know, you'll be disappointed the game isn't as long as you'd like. Nintendo says 'Marioland' is such an incredible product that it will be sold in a separate box.

RELEASE DETAILS
SUPER FAMICOM Cartridge bundled with machine

SUPER MARIO BROS IV

(Super Mario Bros IV)

cartridge memory. When you plug in the next time there's your game on the title screen menu along with the amount of tasks you completed. It's great carrying around Super Marioland cartridge with an impressive saved game - it's like having 27-er conker!

There's a great many things to be picked up along the way, many of which add to Mario's repertoire of dextral skills: a cloak enables Mario to fly; a flower gives him atomic gob; and a star awards limited invulnerability. Best of all are the blocks containing eggs - hit one of these and out pops a rideable two-legged dinosaur hatches with a sticky fire-button-activated tongue that can eat up all sorts of annoying sprites.

This is a great game. The map structure over the top of the more traditional platform screens adds a depth not found in bland copy cats. It's blatantly obvious how much love and pride has been spent on the development of what is undeniably the state-of-the-art in entertainment software.

All-in-all Super Marioland rates as just about the best reason in the World for going out and getting yourself a Super Famicom. I know it's hard justifying a £200 splurge for a games machine but with a Super Marioland cartridge bundled into the deal I'd say it's well worth it. Check out your local console importer ASP.

● Gary Liddon



After all the block busting Mario performs with his tongue you'd think he'd have a headache.



Going underground is hot pursuit of Koop. The echo on the sound effects in the caves is excellent!



Emergency lighting kicks-in and the darkness fades away. Huge lifting machinery brings your fighter into view, the hangar bay opens and the dropship releases its grip on you. Cut to outside and your fighter launches into space, its engines open up in a flash of pure blue light. Your fighter takes you to a new planet at sub-light speed. Add a cinematic music score and sound effects and you have the impressive opening sequence to Gradius II, the first shoot'em-up released on the Super Famicom.

The aim of the game is to make your way through 10 stages of hostile environments populated by 22 different kinds of enemy machines and life-forms. The end of each stage is guarded by a massive boss who can take a severe battering before they're finally destroyed.

Once thoroughly toolled up, you can inflict untold damage on the alien hordes.



Prepare for battle.

GRADIUS III

Gradius II takes the concept of collectible weapon systems a stage further by allowing you to select the type of ordnance you can pick-up during the game. Your Special Air Fighter can handle 29 different types of weapon such as spread bombs, tail guns, ripple lasers and full barrier shields. You have a simple choice at the start of the game, go for a preselected group of weapons or edit your own suite of goodies.

When you destroy alien craft some of them leave pods which can be collected and traded for your preselected weapon system. A bar along the bottom of the screen splits these

weapons systems into seven categories (Speed Up, Missile, Double, Laser, Option, ? and I). As you pick-up an alien pod the next category of system is highlighted, this weapon can then be activated at any time with the flick of a button. A male American voice quietly confirming the weapons activation. This power-up process can be switched to full automatic if you can't be bothered to keep an eye on which weapon is currently highlighted. At the height of the fighting it's very easy to concentrate on getting a bigger laser rather than blasting a Bahh bionic bomber. This can prove to be a fatal mistake.

It's hard to believe this is only the first shoot'em-up to be released on the Nintendo Super Famicom. The Amiga has been around for over five years and nobody has produced a shoot'em-up that comes anywhere near this stormer from Konami. Gradius II is another reason to buy a Super Famicom... along with Super Mario World, Populous and F-Zero. And don't forget this £100 wonder machine has been on sale for less than three months. It's unbelievable!

● Rik Haynes

Special thanks to Shekhara Consoles (081 340 8565) for supplying the cart.

HARDCORE HARDWARE

With a choice of 29 different weapons to fit into your fighter, fatal mistakes can be made. Here's a guide to get you going...

Always edit your own suite of weapon systems, the preselected bunch is reserved for the foolhard and lazy.

SPEED UP

A fast fighter can get you quickly out of a tight spot. Don't be greedy or you'll go out of control.

MISSILE

Small Spread provides tight saturation ground bombing but requires support of fast forward-firing weapons. Back 2-Way Missile is a good all-rounder, unfortunately you have to move ahead of the target to strike it.

DOUBLE

Go for the original Normal Double on the 45 degree angled shot gives you superb fire support when attacking forward positions.

LASER

Energy Laser is a devastating weapon, though it takes valuable seconds to charge so its rate of fire is lower than any other system.

Cyclone Laser produces long bursts of fast laser fire.

OPTION

Rolling Option has the multiples rotating around your fighter therefore adding to all-round protection.

?

Force Field absorbs attack from all directions, its depletion level is easy to see.

I

Remain Option is a fast quickest way to build-up a formidable weapons platform.

So what's my recommended weapon systems set-up? Speed Up/L, Back 2-Way Missile, Normal Double, Energy Laser, Rolling Option, Force Field and Remain Option for clearing pilots or Speed Up/L, Small Spread, Normal Double, Cyclone Laser, Rolling Option, Force Field and Remain Option for a balanced no-cooperative fighter.

KONAMI introduces a Dark Force into the Super Famicom

5
0

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ADD RATING **880**

SUPER FAMICOM

While the Famicom may be tried and tested, the implementation of Gradius makes it stand head and shoulders above all other shoot'em ups of recent months. The graphics capabilities of the Famicom are, of course, a Good. Nevertheless, Gradius grabbed me from the start, and didn't let go.

RELEASE DETAILS

SUPER FAMICOM £34.99 OUT NOW

PRIME DIRECTIVES



CHASE H.Q.

Now here's a job. The Police want you to drive a fast sports car and capture some crafty criminal racers. Shift into high gear and speed down the twisting highway at 318km per hour. A turbo option gives you the edge over the competition, provided you use it wisely. All you have to do is avoid a few obstacles and out-drive everybody on the road. Taito's Miami Vice inspired racer chaser has been adapted to the Gameboy by a British software development team. Unfortunately, they haven't done as good a job as Ocean's conversion to the Spectrum. What used to be a simple but enjoyable game has been ruined by poor control, jerky scrolling and unforgivable pauses in the action. At this stage secondary lapses of quality start to show through and annoy you even further. David Whittaker's music, for example, is appalling. Even the redesigned text looks out of place. I'm surprised Taito allowed this game to be released. *Chase H.Q.* needs a serious amount of bodywork and possibly a new engine. Bring in those panel-beaters, quick.

GHOSTBUSTERS II

Oh dear, baby Oscar has been kidnapped by a spook called Vigo, an evil spirit from the past with an aim to rule the future. Who ya gonna call? This is your chance to be a Ghostbuster and drive these frightful ghosts from New York City. Start by choosing your busting two-man team from the four famous characters, played by Bill Murray and Dan Aykroyd in the two ghostly movies. One will use a Proton Beam to paralyse ghosts for a few seconds, the other carries the traps to suck these slimers up. Make your way through 16 levels of offices, subway mazes and trashed art museums but beware of nasty creepies like The Blob, Floating Head and Whirling Dervish. You'll also meet fellow Ghostbusters who can supply additional ghostbusting tools such as a wall smasher, super trap and moodslimer. If a ghost touches one of your characters they will stay unconscious for a moment and lose a trap or beamer. The game is over once you've lost all the beamers or traps. The graphics are especially cute as you'd expect. You can tell the game was created by Japanese designers, despite the fact that Activision has licensed it, because the characters have small bodies and exceptionally large heads. A trademark of oriental comic art. Fun for all the family, as they say in tacky adverts.

Robocop, Chase H.Q., Ghostbusters II, Contra... Rik Haynes previews four new Gameboy titles!

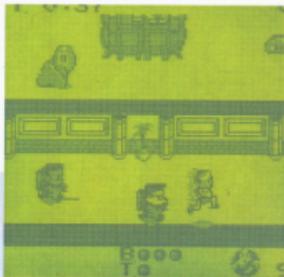
CONTRA

Nasty rebels are waiting for you in the jungles of South America. Rambo fought for honour, justice and the right to buy a fast-food franchise. Now it's your turn. Equipped with a suitably large machine gun, headband and no-shirt - what better way to show off your muscles - you must conquer five separate areas filled with enemy soldiers, gun emplacements, mines, tanks and submarines. These areas alternate between side- and top-views of the battle. Your commando character can jump and duck his way through some pretty hairy situations. Power-up pods provide three-way fire, homing missiles and a wide-area attack weapon. The action never stops, and neither does your determination to fight right to the end. Things get a little strange in area four, thanks to a horde of insects, and a few surprises lay in-store during the final area. The backdrops in *Contra* have a similar feel to those seen in Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles on the Gameboy. It's likely that these two games were written by the same programming team, though Konami is staying tight-lipped about 'who does what' in its Japanese software labs. *Contra* is easily the best of the bunch played here. It is recommended without hesitation by everybody in the ACE office. Now get off, it's my go!



ROBOCOP

The computer cop from a violent near future is ready to law down the law in downtown Detroit. *Robocop* from Ocean takes you through 10 stages split into three different gameplay styles. The main game has your metal man walking the streets of the city, taking out the criminal scum that infest the place. You avoid enemy fire by ducking and jumping. If you're hit you'll lose some precious energy - you're deleted once this is depleted. On the way, you'll discover objects to collect. Baby food increases your energy level for instance. Sub-games help to increase your interest in the game. The hostage scenes and shooting gallery are a hit the target with a cross-hair sight' affair. The later allows *Robocop* to recalibrate his aiming skills and gain some extra energy. The photo-fit sub-game has you matching faces, within a limited amount of time, by changing features like hair, mouth and ears. The game has a worthy variation of graphics and the thrummy soundtrack from the movie. *Robocop* on the Gameboy is a lot harder than its computer cousins. It should provide a lasting challenge for gamers with more than 20 seconds to comply.



Special thanks to PC Engine Supplies (0782 712759) and Shekhana Consoles (081 340 8565) for supplying the carts.

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SURF CHAMP



Somehow Surf Champ never managed to conjure up visions of bronzed surfers at Malibu... or even posy Englishmen in Cornwall! However Fistral's tides were accurately mapped, including the rip-tide which carried you out where the waves came from.

The sky was gunmetal grey, the Atlantic icy and hostile. I tugged on the zip of my borrowed wetsuit, took a firm grip on the surfboard, and strode manfully towards the ocean. The waves crashed on the pebbles with all the majesty that a three inch mush can muster.

It was hardly Hawaii but it was my one and only attempt at surfing. As I splashed hopelessly in the shallows, I realised why wave riding isn't indigenous to these chilly shores. In fact a computer simulation, played by the warmth of a Spectrum power supply, seemed a better idea each time I fell off the board.

SURFIN' CPU

The program which brought me to that chilly shore was the product of scientist and amateur surfer, Norman MacMillan, a man with a mission to introduce his sport to landlocked home computer users everywhere. Surf Champ wasn't just a game but a true simulation with real beaches and accurate wave behaviour.

Better still, there was none of the Track And Field-style joystick jiggling which was so popular around '84. Surf Champ came complete with a six inch surfboard which sat on your Spectrum's keys. You controlled your board just as a real surfer would.

There was, however, one problem with this concept. It was cr*p. Or at least, that's what most reviewers concluded. If only they'd known the exhilarating fear of going down, down, down while your board soared over your head, they too might have appreciated MacMillan's unique vision.

Departing Hall Of Fame curator John Minson drops in on the Shack Of Shame in search of the wild surf.



Your bespoke plastic surfboard featured special underside protrusions to punish those rubber keys.

The beach that came with the program was Fistral in Cornwall, one of Britain's more credible surfing spots with waves that provide an ideal learning environment. More challenging locations, including the notorious Pipeline were promised though these big wave bays never materialised.

Once you'd taken note of the day's weather and outfitted yourself accordingly (no Bermuda shorts if the temperature was sub-zero), you balanced the plastic surfboard on the Specie's rubber keys. Next you moved your surfer along the beach to find a place to enter the water. Only terminal bohos failed to exploit the rip-tide which carried you towards the horizon with minimal expenditure of energy. Every time you encountered an incoming wave you dipped the nose of your board to avoid being carried back to the shore. Eventually you reached a satisfactory starting point and waited, watching the wave patterns, until a promising set arrived. Then it was time to ride, ride that wild surf.

As you caught your wave the screen cut from the panoramic view of the bay to a close-up of your surfer. Resting your hand on the miniature board, you moved it from side to side or backwards and forwards to perform various radical manoeuvres. Scoring mirrored the system used in pro-surf contests, with maximum points for gnarly moves such as shooting into the air then jack-knifing back down.

You rode the wave for as long as possible, eventually trying to glide off without wiping out. If you had the energy left, and this depended on water temperature and the equipment you'd chosen at the start of the game as much as your acrobatics, you padded out again for another attempt.

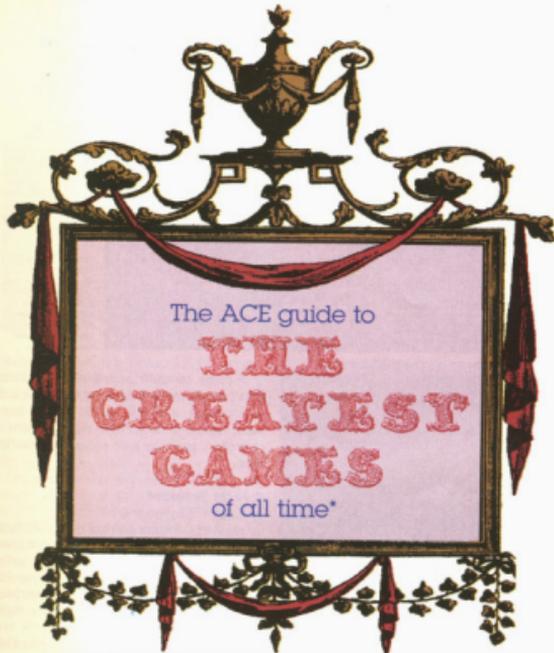
If everything had worked as described, Surf Champ would have been an indisputable classic. But the problems started with that unique selling point. Keeping the plastic board on the Spectrum's keys was a task only slightly more difficult than mastering the real thing. Then, to add insult to injury, Sir Clive issued the +2 with its inhospitable, hard plastic keys. After that the unattractive graphics and steep learning curve seemed almost minor quibbles.

SON OF A BEACH

Only dedicated California dreamers persisted with Surf Champ. But having swallowed half the Atlantic that chilly morning I was determined to contort my hand into the correct pose. And when I performed my first aerial and hot-dogged all the way to shore, I really started to appreciate the program.

So maybe Norman MacMillan was possessed of an unworly idealism. Undoubtedly Surf Champ did lack the graphic sophistication which was standard by the mid-eighties. But how sad that nobody noticed the complex calculations of wave behaviour, the ingenious keyboard reading algorithm, the novel attempt to create an accurate simulation of this exciting, esoteric sport.

Despite a grant from the Irish development agency, Surf Champ was destined to wipe out. But for all its irritating eccentricities and severe shortcomings, not to mention that bizarre surfboard, it remains a tribute to lateral thinking in game design and deserves a cult corner in the collection of any serious software archivist.



The ACE guide to

THE GREATEST GAMES

of all time*

PART 2

Batten the hatches and lock up your daughters! It's time for Part 2 of our pompous proclamations!

ORIGINAL GAMES

● 3D Monster Maze

J. Graye Software (ZX81)

You could hear the jaws dropping when this was unveiled. Viewed in chunky first-person 3D, you had to find your way out of a maze while avoiding the unwanted culinary attentions of a large Tyrannosaurus Rex. Didn't seem much cop initially, but when of Rexy lumbered into view...

● Ant Attack

Quicksilver (ZX Spectrum)

Arguably the game that literally added a new dimension to the way games were viewed, and probably the first truly non-sexist. Choosing to play either boy or girl, you had to rescue your partner from an isometric-3D city infested by giant ants. Stunning (for their time) graphics. Fondly remembered in ACE Issue 38.

● Cosmic Osmo

Activision (Macintosh)

Used Hypertext to give you a (marginally limited) interactive environment. Not much of a game, as such, more of an enjoyable pastime. Each location in the game was depicted graphically. Mouse clicking on objects or people would elicit

some form of action (i.e. clicking on a door would take you through it) or response (i.e. clicking on a pumpkin makes it form a face and bite your pointer - ow!). Could this be the shape of games to come...? See ACE Issues 23 and 24 for full details.



ORIGINAL GAMES - Cosmic Osmo on the Macintosh. Uses Hypertext technology to generate an amazing level of interactivity.

● Driller

Incentive (All formats)

A puzzle-cum-adventure game where the environment was depicted in Freescape, a polygon-based 3D system allowing total freedom of view and movement. Later games improved the basic system, but Driller was the first. Reviewed way back in ACE Issue 4.

● Elite

Acornsoft (BBC B)

Probably responsible for selling many BBCs, this is the archetypal space fighting-and-trading game which has been much imitated but (many would argue) never surpassed. The intergalactic action, depicted in wireframe 3D, provided the immediate pull-you-in thrills but the trading at space stations, plus possible mission assignments, added the depth needed to make this an all-time Great.

● Little Computer People

Activision (C64)

On booting up the game for the very first time you were shown a cut-away sideview of a residential house. Wait a few seconds and your very own unique Little Computer Person would appear, explore, then move in, suitcase and all. Some even had their own pets. You could interact with him/her to a limited degree. Not much of a game, admittedly, but a truly unique landmark product.

● Rescue on Fractalus

Lucasfilm/Activision (C64)

A perilous rescue mission to save shot-down spacepilots forced to crash-land on barren



ORIGINAL GAMES - Elite on the Nintendo. One of the first games to generate the feeling of a huge universe, with beings living their lives irrespective of your actions.

Underfired by the hordes of angry torch-wielding villagers besieging Castle ACE following last month's controversial choices, here are the final Great Games lists! The criteria for nomination (in case you missed last month's issue or have simply forgotten) are as follows:

- (1) The game must have originated on a home computer - that's why games like Rainbow Islands and Flaxtonid (the definitive Defender clone on the BBC B have (regrettably) been omitted). However, games that have radically mutated an arcade idea are valid (i.e. Thrust, despite its obvious Asteroid and Lunar Lander roots, successfully mixed the two to make a totally different hybrid).
- (2) The game must be a 'landmark', in the sense that it introduced a new concept or technique into the gaming world and/or advanced the 'state-of-the-art' in its genre.
- (3) The game must be enjoyable - obviously! - and have long-lasting appeal.

We consider the games in this list to be essential components of any gaming buff's collection. If not for their gameplay, then simply for their place in history. Each game is described, and details provided on who manufactured it and on which format the game is best (n.b. 'All formats' indicates that the game was equally classic on all implementations).

Your ACE, what a load of crap!

We're always open to persuasion that components of any gaming buff's collection. If you have any suggestions, then write and tell us on a postcard at: ACE Great Games, ACE, Box 2, Priory Court, 30-32 Partridge Lane, London EC2R 1AD. Along with your (brief) arguments. A draw will be held on 24th March 1991. We will draw ten cards from the draw and send them a FREE place of software, as remember to add your name, address and computer format to the postcard.

Fractals. This involved flying down narrow rocky canyons whilst avoiding or destroying alien gun emplacements and ships. The 3D view was generated with fractals to give a convincingly rugged look to the terrain. And how could anyone forget the shock when you rescued an alien pilot by mistake for the first time?

● **Sentinel**

Firebird (All formats)

A massive challenge - 10000 levels! Every level is a battle of wits between you and the evil Sentinel on a large chequered landscape, as you try to absorb each other's energy to the point of destruction. Fast reactions and a clear mind are vital for success.

● **Splat!**

Incentive (ZX Spectrum)

Set in a scrolling maze viewed from overhead, the novel feature here was that the scroll moved independently of you! You had to move to try and keep up with it, else risk being Splat!ed against the edge of the screen. So simple, so addictive, so good.

● **Thrust**

Firebird (ZX Spectrum)

An overhaul of the old Lunar Lander idea. You fly a spaceship by means of rotate left/right and thrust, with the aim of finding a load pod somewhere in a series of treacherous, missile-base infested, caverns. Olds (FTL/Mirrorsoft) did it better, but *Thrust* did it first.

SHOOT-'EM-UPS

● **Jet Pac**

Ultimate Play the Game (ZX Spectrum)

Hard to believe it was really running on a humble Speccy when it first appeared. For the first time the adman's term 'arcade quality' rang true. Jetman flies around a screen teeming with aliens, trying to recover one of four rocket pieces and drop them off at an assembly point. Mega-tastic, mate!

● **Paradroid**

Hewson (C64)

Andrew Braybrook's next project after *Uridium*; another shoot-'em-up, but totally different. Robots have gone haywire on a series of giant starships. Your job is to beam on-board and destroy all the rogues, accomplished by straight blasting or 'taking over' other robots and thus adopting their abilities (vital if you were to destroy some of the heavier 'droids). Recently updated for the 16-bit machines, but the C64 version is the definitive one.

● **Uridium**

Hewson (C64)

First British shoot-'em-up on the C64 to feature impressive (fixed) light-source shaded graphics and ultra-fast, ultra-smooth sprite-based action as your ship soars to and fro above 12 vast Dreadnoughts, blasting the opposition. Programmed by code-wizard Andrew Braybrook. Still a game to fire up on a dark winter's evening.

● **Wizball**

Ocean (C64)

A Wizard and his Cat try to save their homework from grey drabness by metamorphosing into the



SHOOT-'EM-UPS - *Uridium* on the C64. Combines strategy and action in an incredibly addictive mix. Recently updated for the Amiga and Atari ST and called *Paradroid* 90.

STRATEGY GAMES

Populous: The Promised Lands on the Amiga. An icon-controlled classic from Bullfrog, who struck programming gold again with the recent *Powermonger*.



SPORTS SIMULATIONS - *Kick Off 2* on the Atari ST. Could this be the best two-player game ever? Without doubt it's the best footy sim - and you don't have to be a footy fan to enjoy it.

bouncing *Wizball* and the orbiting *Catelite*, travelling around the various levels of *Wizworld*, shooting aliens, picking up power-ups, collecting colour drops and mixing them together in the Lab. One of the most original and slick shoot-'em-ups ever. Sensible Software are apparently working on a (totally different) sequel.

● **Zarch**

Acomsoft (Archimedes)

Written by David Braben of *Elite* fame, the action took place on a 3D polygon-generated patchwork landscape being infected with red weed by attacking aliens. Flying a highly manoeuvrable fighter armed with laser and missiles, you have to hunt and destroy the invaders. Interestingly, you view the action in third person, with your ship hanging in the middle of 'space'. An incredible example of the power of the *Archimedes*. Reviewed in *ACE* Issue 3.

SIMULATIONS

● **Air Traffic Controller**

Hewson (ZX Spectrum)

Renowned as one of the largest and longest selling examples of early micro simulation and helped establish the sim as an important category.



SIMULATIONS - *M1 Tank Platoon* on the IBM PC. A whole platoon of armoured battlewagons at your disposal and a wide variety of missions to complete.

ry of home computer entertainment. ATC looks astonishingly primitive by today's standards and wasn't exactly a graphic stunner in its own time, but it reeked of authenticity and kept would-be controllers glued to their screens well into the night.

● **Flight Simulator**

SubLogic (PC)

Established the whole genre of micro-based flight sims with complete authority and has never been seriously challenged. The *Flight Simulator* series gives you authentic flying experience on your PC and although later versions include tremendous graphic detail, the emphasis remains on flight procedures and techniques. If you can fly this competently, you're on the way to a PPL. *FL2* was reviewed in *ACE* Issue 5.

● **M1 Tank Platoon**

Microprose (All formats)

Opened up a new dimension for tank simulations by introducing a platoon of vehicles and thereby vastly increasing the tactical and strategic interest. Microprose combined multi-vehicle control with an excellent 3D topographical landscape, mission variety, and incidental sequences to great effect. Reviewed in *ACE* Issue 27.

● **Sim City**

Maxis (All formats)

Easy. Build a living, breathing city. Just put a few roads and buildings down. But they need power, and food, and schools, and airports, and... all within a limited budget. Try and please all the people all the time. On second thought, it's not easy at all. Reviewed in *ACE* Issue 24.

● **Wing Commander**

Origin/Mindscape (IBM PC)

Although in essence another 3D space combat game, the presentation lifts it into new realms. The ships are ray-traced bitmapped graphics, scaled in real time, providing amazingly realistic combat scenes (akin to *Star Wars*). Between combat events are animated to an almost film quality level. The nearest to an interactive movie yet seen. Reviewed in *ACE* Issue 39.

SPORTS SIMULATIONS

● **4D Sports Boxing**

Mindscape (PC)

The first in the '4D' series of games from Mindscape. The most successful and entertaining version of the noble art to appear on the small screen. Boxers resembling *Dire Straits' Money For Nothin'* characters shuffle around the ring and clobber each other. The infinitely rede-



wargaming, though surprisingly they have engendered few clones. UMS gave complete control of the battle process and – its main selling point – even added a topographical map. Despite some shortcomings (the display in UMS I is horribly cluttered) these programs remain superb examples of dedicated wargaming software technology. UMS I reviewed in ACE Issue 4.

TURKEYS

● The Great Space Race

Legend (ZX Spectrum)

Eagerly awaited second title from the company that produced Valhalla, TGRS burst onto the market as a specially commissioned Bob Foss cover competition on Personal Computer Games and a game that was written almost entirely in BASIC, boasting animation that would have shamed a ZX80. Astonished phone calls to the Legend office by the PCG staff were greeted by floods of tears and threats of legal action against anyone and anybody. Barely weeks later, the £15.99 game was selling for 50p as retailers desperately tried to shift stock and Legend vanished from the face of the earth.

● Legion

Software Projects (ZX Spectrum)

A classic software bungle. This text and graphics adventure set in Ancient Rome soon required the player to go UP the stairs. Unfortunately the parser couldn't cope with the word DOWN, so the game ended at that point. 'Oh f**k!' screamed the software house MD to then-PCG-reviewer Steve Cooke on being given the joyful tidings.

● Catacombs

Anrog (C64)

A wonderfully unplayable graphic adventure which certainly belayed in tough puzzles. The first one was completely insoluble and gamers were therefore unable to play the game for more than a few seconds. The problem was that the graphics on the first screen were far from clear, and the required input was TRACE SYMBOL. Funny enough, no-one (except the programmer, who rang magazines frantically requesting them to print the solution) hit on this particular combination of verb and noun.

● 'Owzat

Virgin (BBC)

A fabulously awful cricket game that was probably solely responsible for giving Virgin, in the old days, the worst reputation of all games companies – a reputation they had to fight very hard to live down. 'Owzat had vile white on green graphics and – oh joy! – requested the user to 'EDIT line 100' if he wanted to change his team. 'Ooops! that one must have slipped through the net...' was the immortal message from Virgin's PR man at the time.

● Alice in Videoland

BugByte (C64)

A re-release of Audiogenic's disk-based Alice in Videoland on BugByte's tape-based budget label. Rather unfortunately, following the first graphically exquisite scene, the player was requested to insert the second disc... Play was thus shortlived, and mainly consisted of trying to throw a useless cassette tape in a bin.

finable camera angles, realism of the action and speed of the polygon-driven fighters make this a true classic. Reviewed in ACE Issue 40.

● Kick Off 1 & 2

Anco (Amiga & Atari ST)

Using an overhead scrolling view of the pitch and players, programmer Dino Dini produced what has to be the definitive computer footy games. When in possession the ball didn't stick to your feet as you scooted around (unlike most other soccer sims), so a high degree of skill was needed to get the ball in the net. Supremely playable, and the best two-player game ever. KO2 reviewed in ACE Issue 34.

● International Soccer

Commodore (C64)

The first footy game where you actually felt you had some control over what happened on the pitch. Large sprites moved swiftly over a scrolling pitch viewed from the side. So good, it's being bundled with the C64GS – and it's 6 years old!

● Way of the Exploding Fist

Melbourne House (C64)

Blood-curdling cries from the opponents, devastatingly fast action and excellent animation ensured Fist stood head and shoulders above other fight game. The variety of moves and the fight-a-friend options were genuine breakthroughs. And the sound from the 64 version added atmosphere.

● World Games

Eyex/US Gold (C64)

Eyex produced a whole series of sport sims, with this one arguably being the best. A wide range of varied events, such as log rolling, caber tossing, Sumo wrestling and cliff diving. Each required far more skill than the joystick-wagging antics of similar sims. Hugely enjoyable, especially when you got your friends around.

STRATEGY GAMES

● Balance of Power

Mindscape (IBM PC)

Chris Crawford's seminal 16-bit strategy game gave gamers a hand in global conflict and remains a classic of its kind. Later attempts to follow it up (even by Crawford himself) have all fallen short of this engaging game in which one or two players representing Russia or the US) battle it out for world supremacy, forging alliances, supplying arms and financial aid, and engaging in other devious geopolitical activities.

CENSORED

TURKEYS - The Great Space Race on the ZX Spectrum. Sorry, folks! The Editor deemed this screen shot too disturbing for younger readers and it had to be pulled out at the last moment.

● Lords of Midnight

Rainbird (All formats)

A unique technical achievement for its time, LOM offered Mike Singleton's revolutionary 'Landscape' technique, presenting umpteen thousands of graphic locations as you wandered about the map. A brilliant combination of very basic wargaming concepts with exploration and fantasy elements, the scale of LOM, its graphic excellence, and simple-to-master but difficult-to-triumph scenario make this an enduring classic and the clear forerunner of latter-day megagame Midwinter.

● Populous

Electronic Arts (All formats)

They say you can't play God. Wrong! Lead your followers to prosperity and victory against an opposing deity's believers. The landscape was viewed in scrolling isometric-3D, and could be raised and lowered at your whim. Become powerful enough and you could start inflicting volcanoes and earthquakes on the populace. Amazingly, all that was by a clutch of simple icons. Reviewed in ACE Issue 19.

● Powermonger

Electronic Arts (All formats)

Written by Bullfrog, programmers of Populous. You play a warlord with just 20 followers washed up on the shore of one of 200 islands, ripe for conquest. Instead in look to Populous, the landscape is now formed from polygons for far more flexibility in how it's viewed. Icons makes control very easy. Incredible attention to detail – a real living, breathing world in silicon. Reviewed in ACE Issue 39.

● UMS I & II

Rainbird (All formats)

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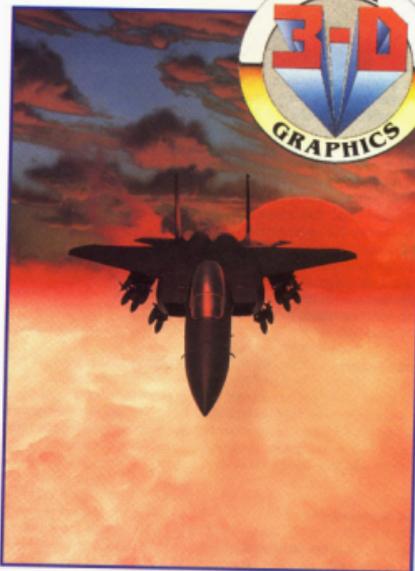
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The fact that there's plenty to do makes F15 II one of the most exciting simulations around...on screen presentation is brilliant...the graphics are utterly superb...it's certainly the most realistic 3D effect yet seen on a flight simulation.

C&VG 93%



F-15 Strike Eagle II is already available for IBM PC's and compatibles, and is coming soon for Commodore Amiga and Atari ST

IBM SCREENSHOTS SHOWN



LAWKS-A-LORDY! THIS MONTH THERE ARE MORE UPDATES ON MORE MACHINES THAN YOU CAN SHAKE A STICK AT! READ ON...

UPDATES

ATARI ST

POWERMONGER

Electronic Arts £29.99; Amiga version reviewed Issue 39; ACE RATING: 973

At last it's here! Lead 20 men across 195 lands, conquering and pillaging as you go. All control is by a clutch of icons. But be warned - a simple interface method conceals a game of huge strategic depth. For once the hype is completely justified.

Graphically identical to the Amiga version, Bullfrog have also done a fine job on the sound. The samples may be a little fuzzier but they're as good as could be expected - which is just as well considering the pretty important role sound effects play in the game as audi clues as to what's going on.

Gameplay, of course, is also identical - why mend it if it ain't broke? There aren't enough superlatives in the dictionary to do this game justice. Just go and buy it, will you?

ATARI ST RATING: 973



Powermonger on the Atari ST. In-depth strategy for the masses.

IBM PC

PRINCE OF PERSIA

Domark/Broderbund £24.99; Amiga version reviewed Issue 40; ACE RATING: 915

No complaints here; this is as good a version as you could hope to see. While the background graphics of *Prince of Persia* aren't astonishing even on the Amiga, consisting mainly of dungeon walls and platforms, the animation of the main character is superb, and fortunately this doesn't change for the PC.

The plot is, admittedly, completely unremarkable; the Prince has to fight his way through the evil Vizier's dungeons in sixty minutes, otherwise the captive princess will fall into the baddie's clutches. But rather than the usual selection of

splavering demons and gobins to fight, the Prince's challenge consists more of working out the strategies necessary to negotiate crumbling platforms, avoid mantraps and outwit sword-wielding guards (though there is plenty of sword-fighting too).

That being the case, the PC's graphics hold up perfectly well, and the sampled sound effects (portcullises opening, buttons clicking) give you useful clues to solving the problems. The music is also good, featuring several different themes and enough variation to keep you interested even if you are just using the internal beeper.

Supplied on a single 3.5" or 5.25" disk, the game can be transferred to hard disk, and all graphics modes are supported. There are keyboard and joystick control options and a save

game feature. Programmed by Broderbund in France, *Prince of Persia* is a triumph of animation techniques and game design, and should not be missed.

IBM PC RATING: 905

Prince of Persia on the IBM PC. Look out! Beware the Silvery Spikes of Doom!



It Came From the Desert on the IBM PC. This hairy of critter is a pain in the ass.

IT CAME FROM THE DESERT

Mirrorsoft/Cinemaware £24.99; Amiga version reviewed Issue 28; ACE RATING: 895

This epic graphic adventure/arcade game draws heavily on 50's sci-fi films like *Them* and *Tarantula* for its plot. The graphics, though, are anything but the grainy black-and-white of such low-budget gems; there's no CGA mode, but in VGA or EGA you'll enjoy the colourful animated backdrops. The graphics of the PC version doesn't quite measure up to the sophistication of the Amiga's, but the colourful detailed backgrounds and animated characters are the main joys of the game, and on the whole transfer pretty well to the PC.

The same cannot be said for the music. If you haven't fitted a Roland, AdLib or Soundblaster card, don't make the mistake of switching on the internal sound - the repetitive tunes, which seem to consist of the same four notes over and over again, will soon drive you buggy.

Taking the role of a geologist investigating strange happenings in the small town of Lizard Beach, you choose actions from scrolling multiple-choice menus, and find yourself thrown into arcade sequences such as 'Extinguish the Fire', 'Shoot the Giant Ant' and 'Knife Fight'. Most of these games

▼ IT CAME FROM THE DESERT continued

take the form of a view of the background and your target, together with your hand clutching a gun, knife or fire extinguisher in the foreground. The action isn't particularly fast or frantic on the PC version, but the element of skill is still pretty high.

More challenging are the strategy-based sections, where you use the scrolling town plan and overhead views to marshal your forces against the attack of the giant ants, and odd diversions like a game of motorised chicken with the local tearaways.

Supplied on four 3.5" disks, *ICFTD* requires a great deal of disk-swapping unless you transfer the whole lot to hard drive. There's a game save routine which is accessed through the map screen, and options for joystick or keyboard controls, which allow you to move diagonally by pressing two keys together.

Though the Cinemaware format, used in *Rocket Ranger*, *Three Stooges*, *Sinbad* and several others, is now becoming a little tired, *ICFTD* is one of the best of its type and the PC version is no disappointment.

IBM PC RATING: 840

AMSTRAD CPC

LOTUS ESPRIT TURBO CHALLENGE

Gremlin £10.99cs/£14.99dk; Amiga version reviewed Issue 38; ACE RATING 875



For some reason the Amstrad version fails to give the same impression of speed as the Spectrum; the roadway twists and dips nicely, but even at top speed you don't feel a sense of exhilaration - perhaps because collision with another car or an obstacle doesn't damage you, it just slows you down, as in the other versions.

Though the graphics are nicely designed, use of colour is pretty limited too, so despite good in-game music the whole doesn't add up to much more than any other road-racing game.

AMSTRAD RATING: 670

Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge on the Amstrad CPC. Better graphics, but they're far slower than the Speccy's.

C64

S.T.U.N. RUNNER

Domark/Tengen £9.99cs/£14.99dk; Amiga version reviewed Issue 41; ACE RATING: 480

Better sound and more colourful graphics than the Spectrum, which more accurately resemble the colourful filled-polygon tunnel backgrounds of the Amiga version, inevitably put the C64 version ahead of the Spectrum; but again the low speed of the program makes it pretty to look at but numbingly boring to play. Compared to the 16-bit versions, not to mention the impressive coin-op original, *S.T.U.N. Runner* on the C64 is a waste of disk space.

C64 RATING: 410



S.T.U.N. Runner on the C64. More colour, but still: oh dear, oh dear, oh dear...

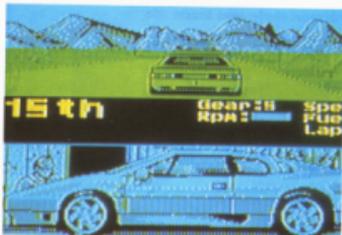
SPECTRUM

LOTUS ESPRIT TURBO CHALLENGE

Gremlin £10.99cs/£14.99dk; Amiga version reviewed Issue 38; ACE RATING: 875

Officially licensed by Lotus, this racing simulation doesn't offer a great deal not seen in dozens of other cockpit-view racing games, except for the two-player split-screen view - and even this brings back memories of the classic Pitstop II.

While the Amiga version features 32 tracks, the 8-bit versions have only 9; you still have a



Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge on the Spectrum. The trade off between colour and speed makes this version more enjoyable than the CPC incarnation.

field of 20 others to beat, with Easy, Medium, Difficult and Practice modes, featuring different numbers of races which have to be completed, and a choice of three in-game tunes. The Spectrum versions of these are pretty good, and the sound effects acceptable. You also have the choice of manual or automatic gears and two forms of joystick controls.

In one-player mode the lower half of the screen is taken up with a nice illustration of your car. While you're racing, although the nicely-designed graphics are understandably mainly monochrome, the animation is fast; the road twists and dips convincingly, and even when you are in two-player mode and there are several other cars on the screen, you get a decent impression of speed.

A fair game, but not an original enough basic idea to compete successfully with the dozens of other road racing games for the Spectrum.

SPECTRUM RATING: 789



S.T.U.N. RUNNER

Domark/Tengen £9.99cs/£14.99dk; Amiga version reviewed Issue 41; ACE RATING: 480

With a rating of 480 for the Amiga version, you'd be right to expect very little from the 8-bit versions of *S.T.U.N. Runner*. In the Amiga version, though the speed of the filled-polygon animation is low, at least it looks pretty; in the Spectrum version, the colourful tunnels through which you race your space-motorbike are replaced by spider-webs, roadways and tunnels which are plain in design, lacking in colour and devoid of real animation.

Since the action consists solely of steering your bike around the walls of the tunnels, following the trail of stars to achieve the highest speed and aiming for boost pads, some nicely-designed enemies would not go amiss; but the alien ships here are poor little sprites which you're almost ashamed to blast.

Sound is poor, and the between-screen map displays add nothing to the action. On the whole it's hard to find anything to recommend in this effort, unless you're looking for a birthday present for someone you really dislike.

SPECTRUM RATING: 350

S.T.U.N. Runner on the Spectrum. Monochrome graphics and angular tunnels lose the look of the coin-op, while the lack of speed loses the speed.

REVIEW THE COULON FOR THE COULON RIVER

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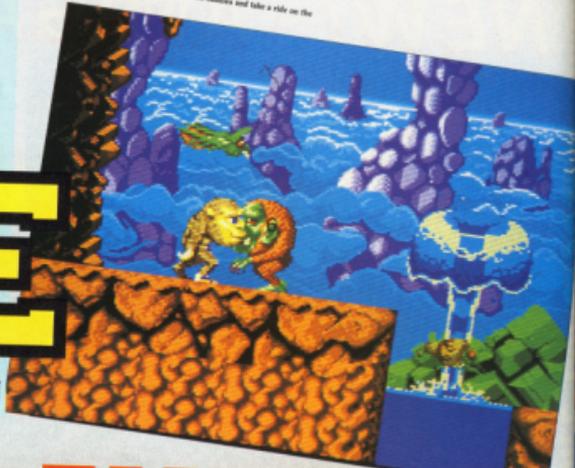
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Out of the caves at last. Dodge more badies and take a ride on the water spout!

ACE

COMPETITION



WIN A FANTASTIC TOKI COIN-OP...

Toki, brave and muscular hero of a colourful and magical world, has been turned into a super-cute monkey by an evil wizard. As if that wasn't bad enough, the evil mage has spirited away Toki's girlfriend to his mountain-top castle. Toki must use his newly-acquired primate powers to the full if he is to scale level-upon-level of multidirectional scrolling mayhem.

Climbing vines, scaling rock-faces and avoiding traps - it's a dangerous life being a monkey, especially when every creature in the jungle is out to get you. The meanies fly into you, fall onto you, drop things on you and fire things at you. And all the time you're having to climb up, up, up!

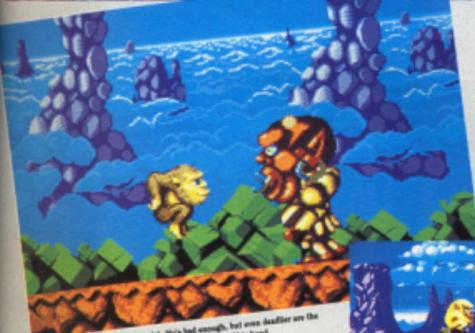
Toki is one of those infuriatingly addictive games which mixes all-out arcade action with simple puzzles and fantastic graphics.

It has to be the dream of every arcade fanatic to have a coin-op in their own home. Imagine: constant freeplay and the envy of all your mates! Well, now your dreams can come true! Along with Ocean, ACE is offering you lucky readers the chance to win the super Toki coin-op, all crammed into a handy, portable camera case!



Portable, portable and 'petty' (that's only small to you). Become the winner of our prize in contest and you'll become the proud owner of this fabulous 'coin-op-in-a-case'.

...COURTESY OF OCEAN!



The great graphics at the end of Level 1. He's not enough, but even deadlier are the terrors of swimming between his enormous wings.



No rest for the bats. Flying owls and tiny insects are just some of the foes you'll need to slay.

PRIZES GALORE!

The first prize winner will receive the Toki coin-op, an Ocean baseball cap and a copy of the game for their computer.

Twenty runners up will receive baseball hats and copies of the game for their computer.

TAKING A LOOK AT TOKI

The screenshots on these pages were taken from the Amiga conversion of Toki, which is being programmed by Ocean's French division who recently converted *Pang* so successfully. So far, it's looking excellent. The fast parallax scrolling graphics are big, well-detailed and very colourful. Sound, too, is excellent, with a jolly tune to spur you on to greater efforts. The version we saw still had a fair bit of work to be done on it, but so far it's looking like it'll be a near identical home version of the coin-op. More news soon!

HOW TO ENTER

Couldn't be easier! All you have to do is dial the ACE Interactive Phoneline and answer the questions posed by the mystery man at the other end of the line. Answer all the questions correctly and you'll be informed whether you've won or not.

COSTS AND CONDITIONS

Calls cost 33p per minute cheap rate and 44p at other times. No employees of EMAP Plc or Ocean Software Ltd are eligible for entry. The Editor's decision is final, and no correspondence will be entered into. Entry to this contest signifies understanding and acceptance of these rules.

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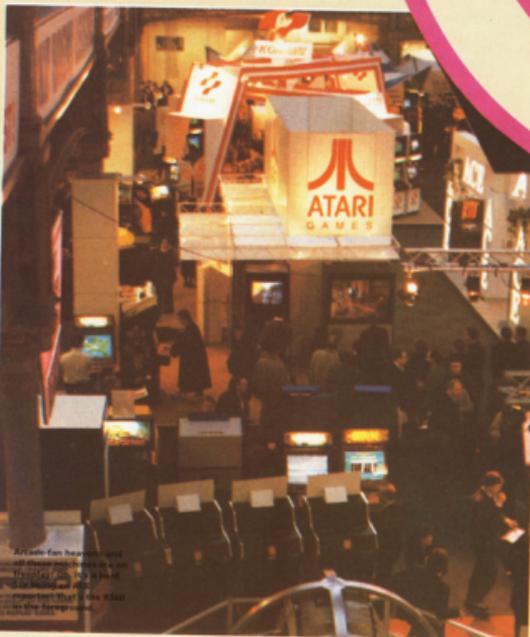


The R360 in stobview. It's real Rock 'n' roll, folks!

R360?

No thanks - I just ATE!

The Amusement Trade Exhibition forms a keynote for the whole of the European Coin-Op year - John Cook was there to make the most of the freeplay



A Coin-Op fan heaven, and a well-thought-out event in a well-located, well-lit and well-ventilated hall. The R360 is the highlight.

Golly, Arcades are getting almost respectable. This year, the ATE was graced by the presence of Peter Lloyd MP, Under Secretary of State at the Home Office, who opened the proceedings of arguably Europe's most prestigious arcade event, with a whopping 210 exhibitors.

The money that accrues to the Treasury as a result of the AWP trade is enough to warrant the wheeling out of a junior Minister on occasions like this, just to keep the trade happy - although whether the House of Commons will ever open an Arcade Annex (presumably just off from the Tea Room) is open to debate.

Whatever, Mr Lloyd's eye might have stopped on the R360, which looked as if it could prove a useful tool for disciplining the more independent minded hackbenchers. Strap 'em in, start the game and before you can say, "Did I just throw up, or is that last night's pizza on my trousers," they'll be jumping through the lobbies on a three line whip, no worries.

That's right, the R360, the most talked about piece of arcade equipment in dry-cleaning circles made its Western Hemispherical debut here and boy - did it go down a treat. Up, down, left, right - the works, and impressively fast too.

It's undoubtedly the most significant piece of arcade equipment to appear for a number of years, if only to emphasise to the home market that instant hit coin-op licences are now a thing of the past.

It doesn't matter who licences any game that specially written for the R360 (G-Loc is running on it at the moment) - putting it on home format



The bizarre new puzzle game from Sega: Runch or just Roring? Yes, the penny-paying jury, decide!



Reckon yer 'ard? Try taking on Taito's Sonic Blast Man and see who comes out top.



"Shouldn't three-oh-one two-player Race Driver be a good idea?" ponders the Cook. "Your wish is our command, uh master!" booms Atari!

is going to be next to useless because (a) you probably couldn't do a very good version and (b) you wouldn't get any of the motion effects.

Several years ago, coin-op licences were price-less because home computers had virtually the same technical capability of the hardware in the coin-op. You could do a near perfect version for home format - great stuff!

Then, in following years, licences were useful because the coin-op manufacturers were coming up with most of the good ideas - Operation Wolf, for example.

With the present climate, in an arcade industry that is paranoid about the incursion of the home market into its income, there seems to be little innovation (if the sequelmania at AMOA this year) and a ghoulish interest in profit margins. It's just not worth spending the big money on what's out there right now on PCB.

What are making headway are the games that are trying to maximise the use of the unique aspects of arcade play - multi-player capability, real motion effects, hard-wired routines. The success of the R360 is that it can deliver what a home system can't - upside down gameplay! Try licensing that!

Of course there will always be a place for the odd coin-op licence, but it's domination on home format has gone forever - but rather than being replaced by quality original product, it appears that by and large the money is now being spent on film and TV licence tie-ins. Will they ever learn, eh?

There were plenty of new coin-ops on display but there was also a fair amount of totally silly stuff that can make this business great, from

time to time. For example, Crazy Golf, with plastic turf that reforms to a new configuration on each hole and inflatable bouncy things in all shapes and sizes. You tell 'em what you want, and they'll make it. Yes, really - anything!

But my favourite was computer palmistry. Put your hand on this scanner and 10 seconds later, there are your innermost secrets being hammered out on a dot-matrix printer. Apparently, I have a very pronounced Mound of Venus...

The latest SWP innovation is one you're not going to believe - so sit down and get yourself a glass of water before the read the next sentence. After playing Tetris for money and Loopy for money, now you can play... Space Invaders for money! Obviously the coin-op business has come under the influence of the Green movement at last - with (presumably) recycled coins being used to run the software on this one.

Feeling frustrated? Then try Sonic Blast Man from Taito. Protect your hands using the boxing gloves supplied with the cabinet, read the disclaimer (if you break your hands, we break our hearts, but not our bank) then hit the unit as hard as you can. Depending on your cumulative performance over three hits, you either knock the teeth out of this hard-looking b*stard and get the girlie, or get a free Bullworker. Well, something like that, anyway.

OK - so much for the novelties, but what was new otherwise? Quite a bit, as it happens, with more new releases on show than were at the recent New Orleans AMOA.

Jaleco must be pleased with the reception for 'Disco Heat' - best driving game of the moment -



Giant Gekkos and awesome apes abound in SNE's King of the Monsters.

but the new one they were pushing this time was a futuristic four-player motorbike/combat game called Cycle Warriors. With distinctive and stylish graphics, it's an eye catching unit that is bound to appeal to the younger player.

Likewise Rad Mobile: another superb demonstration that Sega's got the best software engineers in the world, if not the best game designers. It's a 20-level driving game that has you cruising across continental USA which is high on visuals and low on gameplay. One day, Sega will come up with something high worthy of its excellent sprite-manipulation techniques - until then, sit in the unit and marvel how they do what they do.

An interesting PCB game from Sega was called Borenoch. It's an isometric-view arcade puzzle game. Initially seeming a bit dull, continued play suggested it might have some hidden depths - we'll give you the definitive view next month.

Atari. What can you say about Atari that hasn't been said before? Sometimes they seem completely barmy - however, occasionally you pick up a flyer on something and just hope it inspires the public consciousness.

You could almost see the crossed fingers on its stand, when the new game Ramparts was on show. Go meets Missile Command meets Tetris. It's that strange. Again, continued play suggested there was more to it than the initially met the eye. You'll either be intrigued by it, or feel moved to send Atari a "Get Well" card.

However, the firm has been clever enough to grab the rights to a video disc game, Mad Dog McCree. Shoot at the screen with an electronic six-gun - but with added good storyline and a rudimentary adventure structure. It's good, very good. Play it if you can.

Meanwhile, there was a three-screen deluxe version of the Race Drivin' machine, plus one that you can link up to another unit, racing in true one-on-one style and thus fixing my major gripe about the game as exhibited a couple of issues ago. Thanks, guys!

Two great sporting games showed up, one from Williams, high on the success of Smash TV, and another from Konami, looking for something to supplement the phenomena of Turtles.

The Williams game is called High Impact. Based on American Football it can be played by one to four people. Simply the best, this is one game that's going to be snapped up by the home software companies. Then there's Konami's Golfing Greats. At last Konami have found a good use for its sprite technology in this wonderful PCB game. Impressive effects, great playability - if golf games are your thing, start saving up!

Finally, software support for the Neo Geo continues to get better and better; King of the Monsters being outstanding both creatively and technically. And good news for all you Street Fighters: now you can do it all again, only more so, thanks to Capcom.

That was ATE - some in-depth examination of these and other new releases next month, including possibly the best pinball table ever.

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The Nintendo Entertainment System tries to afford its 'portable video game' image with the advent of peripherals such as the Miracle keyboard. To decide which console you should go for, check out pages 87 to 89.

82 ACE Charts

If you want to add top quality software to your collection, check out the ACE Charts every month – they're the only listings in the country that tell you which games are getting the highest review marks in ALL UK magazines. If it's number one here, it should be number one on your list. And you can also win free software by predicting next month's entries.

103 Hot off the Shelf

This issue of ACE tells you what's hot NOW – but what about those other titles still sitting on the shelves? Our software buyers' guide pinpoints the games we've tipped for the top in the last few months and which should still be available.

87 Hardware Buyer's Guide

Our definitive tech listings and buyer's guide. This month: consoles.

91 Direct Line

...to YOUR micro. If you own one of the ten major micros or consoles, there's a section for your computer here as ACE correspondents talk man to machine...

119 ACE Crossword

The infamous ACE Crossword – crack it and win a prize.

113 Adventureline

Pat Winstanley with her regular section for dedicated adventurers.

109 The ACE Diary

Our monthly guide to what's on where and what's out when

111 ACE Deals

ACE rounds up some of the latest freebies you can get at your local dealer...if you go down to the shops today, be sure you check this column out first.

120 Encyclopaedia Micromannica!

If you've missed a vital issue, check here...

85 PD Update

Mark Smiddy with another selection of cheap software

112 ACE Readers Pages

Small ads, big sales. Your chance to buy, sell and tell the world.

101 Bookmarks

There's a whole month to wait until the next ACE issue, so why not pick up a book in the meantime? Sandra Vogel turns the pages of the latest titles.

in the

U J E A



ACE has brought you over 40 issues, all packed with info on games technology. If you're missing any back issues – such as this one, which breaks the news of the CITY in the UK – then check out page 120

ACE CHARTS

The ACE Charts give you the definitive list of top scoring games EVERY MONTH - as reviewed by ALL British games magazines.

DIID YOU WIN LAST MONTH?

ACE readers are developing chart prediction into a fine art. Every top game was spotted by at least one reader and one - Powermonger on the Amiga - was tipped by almost everybody. First off, **Pete Earnshaw** of Rotherham managed to pull *Wheels of Fire* out of the hat for the CPC. **Andrew Watson** of Edinburgh was one of the very few who managed to guess *Golden Axe* for the C64. A lot of people came up trumps with *Speedball 2* for the ST, but **Eric de Loos** from the Netherlands was first out of the hat. **John Shearing** of Godstone was first past the post with *Powermonger* for the Amiga. **Luke Smith** of Birmingham hit gold with *R-Type* for the Spectrum. **Ricardo del Greco** of Saltscoats took to the skies with *Wing Commander* on the PC. And finally, a special mention to **Phil Maxfield**, who got every game right but missed the draw every time. Tough luck **Phil** - but at that rate you're going to be winning as often as not.

What you can win...

You'll get a mystery game worth up to £25 for your machine if you can pick out NEXT MONTH's top chart entries. Get all five right in any category and you'll get £150 worth of software! Entry instructions are opposite.

THE STOCKMARKET

In addition to our games charts, we also have a bit of fun with the figures each month when we produce the ACE Stockmarket. It's a list of the top 25 softcos as determined by the ratings their games are currently receiving. You can see their fortunes rising and falling in each issue...

Having collated all the games reviewed in the latest issues of computer magazines, we calculate the average mark that each publisher received for every one of its games on each format. This is the rating that you see in the second column. So, for example, if the company is great at sourcing 16-bit games but botches up its 8-bit conversions, that will pull down the average mark, even if you can see one of its titles heading up the Amiga, ST or PC chart printed over the page. If all the games are excellent, or if the company has just one brilliant program doing the rounds at the moment, it will consequently have a high rating.

The last column shows how well a company's games have fared compared to the Software Index. This single figure represents the average review mark (expressed as a percentage) that all games, all formats, received during the last month. It's a quick guide to how good the current crop of titles is, and each company's index score shows how well their games compare to the norm. For example, in this month's chart, **Pygmysoft's** current titles are worth 6.83 percentage points above average - according to the industry's reviewers.

We print only the top 25 companies each month. In fact, we keep tabs on all of them, but you don't want to read through a list of over 100 names in every issue. Occasionally, a new company will enter the listings, in which case its name is marked with an asterisk.

Finally, we take care that the information here is genuinely useful. To that end, we don't count companies which have only received a single solitary review.

PUBLISHER	SCORE	+/-	INDEX
Origin	98.25	n/a	23.13
Micro Style	90	+3.52	14.88
Audilogic	89	+8.67	13.88
Gremlin	86.96	+1.69	11.24
Novagen	84.75	n/a	9.63
System 3	84.67	+5.67	9.55
Core Design	82	-4.42	6.88
Pygmysoft	81.95	+5.77	6.83
Dynamic	81.67	n/a	6.55
ARC	81.6	+10.64	6.48
Ocean	81.29	+4.91	6.17
Electronic Arts	80.89	-2.64	5.77

Software index: 75.12
Down slightly, but over 3.5 marks up on the figure for this time last year.

Microprose	80.88	-0.93	5.76
Activision	80.75	-1.23	5.63
Players Premier	78.8	-15.23	3.68
Empire	78.56	-5.02	3.44
Mastertronic	77.84	+13.34	2.72
Virgin	77	-5.28	1.88
Rainbow Arts	76.44	-5.09	1.32
Milennium	76	-0.61	0.88
US Gold	75.06	-1.37	-0.06
Action 16	74.6	-7.4	-0.52
Accolade	74.07	-1.68	-1.05
Electronic Zoo	73.76	+10.05	-1.36
Digital Integration	73.7	-0.47	-1.42

AMIGA

Prince of Persia	Domark	91
Battle Command	Ocean	89.9
Powermonger	Electronic Arts	88.2
Masterblaster	Rainbow Arts	88.2
NARC	Ocean	87.2

Powermonger is firmly dethroned by two brand new titles: *Prince of Persia* has been highly rated for its graphics and animation.

C64

Rick Dangerous 2	Micro Style	89.6
California Games	Kixx	87.2
Amazing Spiderman	Empire	86.2
Nightshift	US Gold	84.5
Platinum	US Gold	81.5

Last month we said *Rick Dangerous* deserved the top slot in the C64 chart - this month the reviewers agreed. Budget offering *California Games* shows the old can still hold their own against the new.

AMSTRAD CPC

Shadow of the Beast	Gremlin	85.94
Target Renegade	Hit Squad	83
Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles: Image Works		82.2
Ivan 'Ironman' Stewart	Virgin	77.3
Motorcycle 500	Cult	59

The Turtles have made it into the top five, but *Gremlin's* version of the 16-bit *Shadow* is a clear winner on points. *Ivan Ironman Stewart* continues a long run in the charts and there's a big gap between it and *M500*.

IBM PC

Wing Commander	Origin	96.5
Wonderland	Magnetic Scrolls	94
Knights of the Sky	Microprose	89.5
Interphase	Image Works	85.5
It Came From The Desert	Cinemaware	85
Covert Action	Microprose	85

Wing Commander improves its rating and *Wonderland* reappears at number two.

WHAT THE FIGURES ABOVE MEAN.

First, of course, you've got the game. Then it's software house and - in the last column - the average score (converted to a percentage with typical ACE precision to two decimal places) that game received in ALL reviews during the last month. Don't forget that the review ratings are taken from all UK magazines, not just ACE, so we don't necessarily agree with some of the judgments here, but all review ratings are, to a certain extent, subjective.

SPECTRUM AND ST CHARTS
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FREEBIES

ACE roving reporter MARK SMIDDY returns from another voyage of discovery and debate into Shareware land...

This month has seen an interesting, some would say inevitable, turnaround from the commercial software scene. Not only have some houses recognised the existence of PD games, they have gone as far as banning two altogether because they feel their intellectual (design) copyright has been infringed. According to one source, the first threatened with the might of copyright lawyers were the numerous Tetris "clones" appearing almost daily.

More recently, distributors of Pipe Mania-inspired Plumb Crazy were "asked" to remove the game from their shelves. An inside source commented: "They were very polite about it. They just said they were planning to give Pipe Mania a budget release and felt Plumb Crazy might jeopardise sales." So the message to all PD libraries carrying Plumb Crazy is, stop now and destroy all copies.

In my opinion this seems a shame – both games have their strengths. But this brings the whole ugly question of intellectual copyright to the fore. If the whole world had been really pedantic, arcade games would probably have stopped at Pong. Also, if IBM had adopted a similar attitude, the PC would probably have died out long ago. But enough of that – on with the show.

DYNAMITE DICK

Amiga £2.50 - Joystick

With four-directional scrolling and a character furiously burying his way for hidden treasures, the uninitiated could be fooled into thinking this is just a Boulderdash clone. Nothing like it folks. It bears passing resemblance to the

ACE FREEBIES WORKS!

ACE knows this column actually results in more sales for participating libraries – at least one has had to be rescued from under the deluge of extra mail. So why, we wonder, are all of those nice PC people sitting back and saying it's not for us? Come on folks – if you don't hurry your boat will get sunk by the ST and Amiga crowd. Are you really going to suffer that outrage?

overplayed Repton series on the BBC and Electron – remember those? But for once this seems largely like a game in its own right.

Dick is a miner, a subterranean explorer or, as some would have it, a one-man demolition team. In pursuit of happiness and a Skoda GTI, Dick has decided to do a bit of prospecting. Anyone in their right mind would just plug their local gold mine or perhaps rob Fort Knox. Dick is a man who enjoys challenge – armed guards and security cameras are not his scene – he prefers to do battle with vampire bats, runaway railcars and homicidal moles.

So, armed with only a battery-powered miner's helmet (and a few sticks of trinitrotoluene for good measure) he enters an abandoned smuggler's cave ready to make his fortune. Viewed from overhead, you take on the task of guiding Dick through the mine, collecting as much gold as possible, blowing the odd bat away, collecting the key to the next level and making a swift exit. Maintaining the furious pace is a timer indicating the level of battery power in the helmet. Even if the lamp does run out another battery appears – the trick is finding your way to

SHAMELESS PLUG

Thanks to the following:
AMOS PD Library - 0942 495261
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it in the dark.

Dynamite Dick is another AMOSed game, but its quality owes more to its design and superior graphics than the AMOS package. Everything from the hypnotic title screen to the animated death sequence is so polished, the only thing distinguishing it from a commercial release is the limited number of moving graphics. This is an obstacle AMOS programmers have yet to overcome – no doubt they will though. This highly addictive game is easy to get into, and devilishly difficult to put down. At this pocket-money price every arcade-adventure nut should have a copy.

MR DIG

ST/Amiga £3.00 - Joystick

Time now for a bit of nostalgia. Old-timers like me still remember the days when 2MHz 8-bits were fast, 16K was a massive amount of RAM and colour was a pretty neat idea. To this day, I can still recall lusting over the Atari 400's 256 colour palette and superb sound. So what? Well, there was something indefinably warm about the Atari's display and chunky fonts; and these fond memories come flooding back when Mr Dig boots up. Only the hackneyed (but nicely done) scrolltest gives away its Amiga identity.

Mr Dig is undeniably 'inspired' by the arcade classic, Dig-Dug – like all the oldies it's simple to play but very addictive. The idea is to guide Mr Dig around the screen digging tunnels to the bonuses and buried treasure – collect all the items and Dig moves to the next level. During his excavations Dig is relentlessly pursued by some nasties – but these can be killed either by "smart bombs" or being flattened with oversized mutant apes. Although I have yet to see one, later screens offer the promise of mutant baddies – who, if memory serves, can dig tunnels themselves.

Graphics and sound are at least up to the standard of a budget title (surpassing some). Play is fast, furious and addictive – as one might expect from a title which had to rely more on playability than technology when it was introduced. Mr Dig was converted by Robin Edwards of Space Blob Infamy (see below). At this price, every home should have one.

SPACE BLOB

ST/Amiga £3.00 - Joystick

Space Blob is one of those daft games where you guide a cute little character around gathering toys, while trying not to get impaled, shot, dripped on, marmalised, squashed or any one of a number of ways of dying. Space Blob is an early game and fails to make use of available graphics. However, like Robin's later offering, Mr Dig, it is undeniably addictive and has a help feature to get you past some of the worst levels. Reminiscent of a magazine listing, Space Blob isn't going to win any prizes for technical excellence, but nevertheless is still worth a look.

See you next month – and don't forget to keep me informed about your PD entertainment releases.

ABOUT PDSOFT LICENCEWARE

Not another variation on the same theme - what will they think of next? The idea here is an interesting one because it aims to maintain the spirit of PD or Freeware BUT prevents libraries making a profit from someone else's work. The idea is simple, if you buy a game from a PDSOFT vendor, then you can give copies away to your friends for free. If, however you want to sell the title - even charge a copying fee - then you must charge a 50p royalty which is payable to the author. Sounds like a neat idea - let me know what you think. Write to me at c/o ACE, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, LONDON EC1R 0NE. I am particularly interested in hearing from the authors themselves.

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HARD SELL

Handheld gaming looks set to get a big boost in 1991 with the continued success of the Game Boy and the Lynx price cut. In fact, the encouraging news of Lynx sales in the States plus rumours of a further price reduction has prompted us to revise our predictions for this hitherto overpriced and under-supported machine.

To help you make that all-important decision, here's a full run-down on all the major contenders. These packages and prices are the ones you'll find on the shop shelves.

Generally, local dealers should be the first place to make further enquiries, although we've provided company contact numbers in case you're having real problems.

The Star Ratings are there as a rough qualitative guide; the more stars the better.

AMSTRAD GX4000

Package: GX4000 console, 2 controllers and Burning Rubber game.
Processor: 4MHz Z80A
Console Memory: 64K
Recommended Retail Price: £99
Contact: Amstrad 0782 566344

IN BRIEF

Amstrad have partly gone up the Commodore path, but have wisely taken the opportunity to upgrade the hardware. The palette is increased, with multitasking hardware scrolling and 16 hardware sprites increasing to 32 with interrupt tricks. Unfortunately the sound chip is the same old tinny one used in the CPCs, albeit in stereo - you can't have everything, I suppose. While some software houses express reservations of the machine being a success outside Europe (and hence reticent about committing support to it), many are working on titles for the machine.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: Same as Amstrad CPC.
Palette: 4096
Colours: 32
TV: Yes

Monitor Output: Yes.
Monitor Supplied: No.
Monitor Options: SCART, Amstrad socket.
Sprites: 16, 32, with hardware interrupts.
Speed: Pretty good for 8-bit technology.

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on TV/monitor.
MIDI: No.
Stereo Output: Yes.
Performance: Unimpressive 3 channel chip as on old CPCs, but now runs independently of main processor.
SOUND

HARDWARE

Joystick: 2 game controllers supplied.
Ports: Monitor/TV ports, stereo headphone socket, 3 joystick ports (2 digital, 1 analogue).

SOFTWARE

Price: Around £25.
Cartridge Memory: 128K
Existing Software Base: Small but growing fast.
Current Releases: Thirty titles due by January 1991.
Prospects: Very good, with several software houses working on titles.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP.
Second Hand Availability: None as yet.
Maintenance: One year guarantee.

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ★★★
Sound: ★★
Expansion: ★★
Overall: ★★★

ATARI LYNX

Package: Lynx with California Games.
Processor: 16MHz 6502
Console Memory: 64K
Recommended Retail Price: £129.95
Contact: Atari PR 071 388 9871

IN BRIEF

The Lynx was designed by a team including RJ Mical, one of the men behind the Amiga. If that doesn't convince you consider it runs a fast 6502, has 8Mb of game storage on its cards and supports multi-player games. The graphics hardware has built in hardware scrolling and image scaling. Software is a little thin at the moment but bound to increase during 1991.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 160 x 102
Palette: 4096
Colours: 16

TV:

No
Monitor Output: No
Monitor Supplied: Yes - 3.5 inch backlit colour LCD
Monitor Options: None
Sprites: Special graphics hardware effectively treats ALL screen objects as sprites!
Speed: Fast
SOUND

Speaker Quality: Very good
MIDI: No
Stereo Output: Yes
Performance: 4 channel, 5 octave stereo sound has to be heard to be believed.

HARDWARE

Joystick: 4 way joystick.
Ports: Cartridge port; multi-player port; stereo headphone mini-jack.

SOFTWARE

Price: £30-35.
Cartridge Memory: 8Mb
Existing Software Base: Very small.
Current Releases: California Games is a great freebie.
Prospects: 200K sales in the States and increased interest means this machine is perhaps the best colour portable bet at the moment.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP
Second Hand Availability: Very few
Maintenance: 1 year's guarantee.

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ★★★★★
Sound: ★★★★★
Expansion: ★
Overall: ★★

ATARI VCS

Package: Both VCS2600 and VCS7800 come with controller and free game.
Processor: 6507 (2600)/6502 (7800)
Console Memory: Not known.
Recommended Retail Price: VCS2600 £39.99; VCS7800 £69.99
Contact: Atari PR 071 388 9871

IN BRIEF

The VCS2600 is a rebboxed version of the original Atari games console which, until a couple of years ago, remained the best selling home video games system of all time. The VCS7800 is a revamped version of the VCS2600 with a faster processor,

slightly better sound and vastly improved graphics.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 192 x 160 (2600); 320 x 242 (7800)
Palette: 16 (2600)/256 (7800)
Colours: 4 (2600)/16 (7800)
TV: Yes

Monitor Output: No
Monitor Supplied: No
Monitor Options: No
Sprites: N/A/64
Speed: Slow

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on TV
MIDI: No
Stereo Output: No
Performance: Limited to 1 channel on 2600 and two on 7800.

HARDWARE

Joystick: Supplied
Ports: 2 x 9 pin D for joysticks; TV; cartridge port.

SOFTWARE

Price: £7-13.
Cartridge Memory: Not known.
Existing Software Base: Small
Current Releases: Rare
Prospects: Unsure in the light of new competition from Japan.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP.
Second Hand Availability: Worth looking
Maintenance: One year's guarantee.

STAR RATINGS

	2600	7800
Graphics:	★	★★
Sound:	★	★★
Expansion:	None	None
Overall:	★	★★

C64 GAMES SYSTEM

Package: C64GS console, controller and 4 games (Klax, Fiendish Freddy, Flimbo's Quest and International Soccer).

Processor: 1MHz 6502
Console Memory: 64K
Recommended Retail Price: £99.99
Contact: Commodore 0628 770088

IN BRIEF

Take a Commodore C64 computer, remove the keyboard and stick it in an unattractive slab of a box and what have you got? A "new" console! It's an unusual move, and the signs are that Xmas '90 sales were not encouraging.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 160 x 200 in multi-colour mode.
Palette: 16
Colours: 16
TV: Yes
Monitor Output: Yes
Monitor Supplied: No
Monitor Options: RGB
Sprites: 8
Speed: Slow CPU, helped out by custom graphics and sound chips.

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on TV/monitor

MIDI: No

Stereo Output: No

Performance: 3 channel SAM - one of the best 8-bit sound chips.

HARDWARE

Joystick: Joypad supplied.

Ports: None

SOFTWARE

Price: Around £25.

Cartridge Memory: 4Mbits.

Existing Software Base: Potentially huge, but small at the moment. Commodore anticipate around 100 titles by Xmas.

Current Releases: Plenty forthcoming from various software houses.

Prospects: Uncertain. Do people really want a console version of an ageing, though admittedly good, computer? Software support is likely to be pretty good for a while at least.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP.

Second Hand Availability: None

Maintenance: One year guarantee.

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ***

Sound: ***

Expansion: *

Overall: **

NINTENDO NES

Package: Standard Pack includes console, plus 2 game controllers and *Super Mario Brothers* game. Mutant Machine pack as above but substitutes *Turtles* game for *Mario*. Action Pack as Standard, but includes *Zapper* gun and *Duck Hunt* game.

Processor: Not known.

Console Memory: 2K.

Recommended Retail Price:

Standard Pack £79.95; Deluxe Pack £99.95.

Contact: Deighton PR 071 836 2973

IN BRIEF

The world's largest selling console, largely because of the playability of some of its games rather than its hardware specification, which is 8-bit average.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 256 x 240

Palette: 52

Colours: 16

TV: Yes

Monitor Output: No

Monitor Supplied: No

Monitor Options: None

Sprites: N/A

Speed: Average

SOUND

Speaker Quality: N/A

Stereo Output: No

Performance: Average

HARDWARE

Joystick: 2 dedicated controllers supplied. IR wireless controllers with 30ft range available for £39.95.

Ports: None out of the ordinary.

SOFTWARE

Price: £20-40.

Cartridge Memory: Not known.

Existing Software Base: Over 50 titles available here. Many more available in Japan but these require a converter to run.

Current Releases: Nintendo predict about 2-3 titles per month.

Prospects: In the UK, improving due to increased support - but this is yesterday's technology.

Software Loading: Instant

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP.

Second Hand Availability: A few.

Maintenance: One year's warranty dealer. Faulty machines return to dealer.

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ***

Sound: **

Expansion: ****

Overall: ***

NINTENDO GAMEBOY

Package: Main unit with Tetris game.

Processor: 1MHz customised 8-bit Z80A.

Console Memory: 16K

Recommended Retail Price:

£69.99.

Contact:

Deighton PR 071 836 2973



IN BRIEF

Nintendo were the first company to produce a dedicated handheld console and now it seems everyone wants to get in on the act. On reflection even the Game Boy was a long time coming since the technology employed by the display is starting to look dated. Not to be dismissed simply because of mono graphics - this machine has some superb titles and the two-player link-up option has tremendous potential.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 20 x 18 characters.

Colours: 4 grey shades.

Monitor Supplied: Yes - LCD display is lit by ambient light.

Sprites: 40 x 8 pixels.

Speed: Fast for what it is.

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on headphones.

Stereo Output: Yes

Performance: Plays a lot better than it looks.

HARDWARE

Joystick: Built-in 8-way joystick.

Ports: Headphone socket; dual-machine interface.

SOFTWARE

Price: £20-25.

Cartridge Memory: 64K

Existing Software Base: The best for any handheld.

Current Releases: Increasing

Prospects: Excellent

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP

Second Hand Availability: None.

Maintenance: One year's warranty

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ***

Sound: ****

Expansion: Dual machine interface has lots of potential.

Overall: ****

NEC PC ENGINE

Package: Console unit, controller and free game

Processor: Customised 8-bit.

Console Memory: 64K internal, 8K video. (Turbo-graphic: 128K internal, 32K video.)

Recommended Retail Price: N/A (US price around \$199)

Contact: Local dealers

IN BRIEF

Sadly, it now seems unlikely that this machine will ever be officially supported by NEC in the UK. Its CD-ROM add-on drive is now the largest selling CD unit on the market and is responsible for much of the recent increase in CD development. There's also a 16-bit version, vastly more powerful, called the Turbo-graphic, but this is only rarely available through importers and at a price - usually around £300. NEC also have a handheld version of the Engine which is software compatible with its larger brother.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 256 x 216

Palette: 512 (Turbo-graphic: 1024)

Colours: 32 - 16 background and 16 shared by sprites.

TV: Yes

Monitor Output: N/A

Monitor Supplied: No

Monitor Options: N/A

Sprites: 64 (Turbo-graphic: 128)

Speed: Very fast considering this is an 8-bit!

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on monitor.

MIDI: No

Stereo Output: Yes

Performance: 6-channel stereo

HARDWARE

Disk Format: CD ROM at extra cost.

Disk Price: Read-only so N/A

Disk Performance: Super - the CD ROM adds a new dimension.

Joystick: Supplied with dedicated controller.

SOFTWARE

Price: Around £25-40 imported.

Cartridge Memory: Not known.

Existing Software Base: Large

Current Releases: Increasing.

Prospects: Good.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: Currently grey import.

Second Hand Availability: V Rare

Maintenance: Watch out - grey imported machines rarely have any retail warranty.

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ****

Sound: ****

Expansion: ****

Overall: ****

SEGA MASTER



Package: Console using cartridge smart card plus game controller and *Alex Kidd* in *Miracle World* game.

Recommended Retail Price: £79.99; £99.95 (+ light gun); £129.95 (+ light gun and 3D glasses).

Processor: Z80.

Console Memory: 32K.

Contact: Virgin Mastertronic 071 727 8070

IN BRIEF

Japanese software base is not as good as Nintendo's but more titles reach UK. Mastertronic have given good support to the machine so the prospects look good. Like the Nintendo, however, this 8-bit machine uses established but dated technology.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 256 x 192

Palette: 64

Colours: 16

TV: Yes

Monitor: No

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on TV.

Performance: 3 channels.

HARDWARE

Joystick: Game controller supplied.

SOFTWARE

Price: £10-40 (typically £25)

Cartridge Memory: Not known.

Existing Software Base: Very good

Current Releases: Good

Prospects: As good as any 8-bit console.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP

Second Hand Availability: Some

Maintenance: One year's guarantee. Faulty machines return to dealer.

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ***

Sound: ***

Expansion: ****

Overall: ****

SEGA MEGADRIVE

Package: Console unit, controller, and *Altered Beast* game.

Processor: 68000 - Z80B support.

Console Memory: 74K main, 64K video.

Recommended Retail Price:
£189.99.
Contact: Virgin Mastertronic 071
727 8070

IN BRIEF

Excellent example of the new 16-bit console technologies. The first decent 16-bit console to receive official support in the UK.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 320 x 224
Palette: 512
Colours: 64

TV: Yes
Monitor: No
Sprites: 80
Speed: Very fast

SOUND

Speaker Quality: N/A
MIDI: No

STereo Output: Yes

Performance: 12 channel stereo sound is produced by a custom FM chip and sounds fantastic.

HARDWARE

Joystick: Dedicated controller supplied.

SOFTWARE

Price: £30-50 (typically £35).
Cartridge Memory: Not known.
Existing Software Base: Good
Current Releases: Few in UK at present

Prospects: Very good.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP
Second Hand Availability: N/A
Maintenance: One year on UK

machines.

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: *****
Sound: *****
Expansion: *****
Overall: *****
Package: Console unit, controller

SNK NEO-GEO

unit and memory card (can store 27 games scores).

Processor: 12MHz 68000 + 4MHz Z80A support.

Console Memory: 64K work RAM, 64K video RAM.

Recommended Retail Price: £399

Contact: Active Sales 081 752 0260

IN BRIEF

Technically the most advanced console currently available, the games are of arcade quality, with huge sprites and excellent sound, although the gameplay is a little lacking in the current crop of titles. The game cartridges can store up to 330 Mbits of data, but this is reflected in their price - £199.99! All is not lost, since Active Sales have launched a club where members can rent software for £25 a month. Definitely the system to have if you want to pose, and to be very poor!

GRAPHICS

Resolution: Arcade quality.
Palette: 65536

Colours: 4096

TV: Yes

Monitor Output: Yes

Monitor Supplied: No

Monitor Options: RGB, SCART

Sprites: 380

Speed: Remarkable

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on TV/monitor

MIDI: No

Stereo Output: Yes

Performance: 13 channel stereo.

HARDWARE

Joystick: Supplied, second available for around £70.

Ports: Walkman socket

SOFTWARE

Price: £200.

Cartridge Memory: 330 Mbits.

Existing Software Base: Few at present.

Current Releases: 12 planned by the end of the year.

Prospects: Uncertain, but the members' club could help swing chance in its favour.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP.

Second Hand Availability: None as yet.

Maintenance: One year's guarantee.

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: *****

Sound: *****

Expansion: *

Overall: *****

HARD MAN AWAITS CALLS

Following David's promotion to Production Editor, the team have persuaded me to step into his shoes and manage the ACE hardware section. If you have any suggestions regarding the section then write to me at the usual ACE address or call during the Hotline hours.

Steve Cooke



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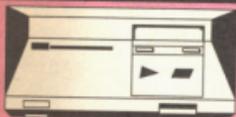
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SEGA MASTER



Virgin Mastertronic have a bevy of beautiful new games lined up which should be hitting the shelves of your local Sega stockist now or very soon.

MOONWALKER

Moonwalker, based on the special FX laden movie of the same name, gives you the chance to guide everybody's favourite warlock Michael Jackson around unpeep levels of platform beat-'em-up action in a quest to put an end to the antics of the evil 'Mr Big'.

Although Moonwalker may sound a little so-so, it has several features that lift it above other beat-'em-ups. For one, the graphics are superb; highly detailed and colourful the casual viewer could easily mistake them for those of a Megadrive - and that's high praise indeed! Also, some of the lighting moves - twirls and hat-throwing - are amazingly unusual. The only dark cloud is that the gameplay is a little easy, maybe because the game is aimed at the younger Sega owner.

DICK TRACY

Yet another film spin, but a little more up-to-date this

MEGADRIVE



Virgin Mastertronic are pulling out all the stops to try and reduce the annoying gap between the Japanese cartridge release dates and those of the UK. There's nothing more annoying than reading about some juicy new game on the shelves in Japan and then having to wait for what seems like an eternity for the official UK release. So what can we expect to see soon?

PLEASE RELEASE ME, LET ME GO

Strider has been out for quite a few months on grey import, but now it's finally due for UK release. I've raved about the game before in this column, so I won't go on too long. Suffice to say this has to be one of the most accurate conversions ever seen. Every aspect of the original coin-op has been squeezed in this truly astonishing cart, and since the coin-op was brilliant anyway, you've got one of the best Megadrive games currently available! Definitely a 'must buy'!

Arrow Flash is another in the long line of shoot-'em-ups, this time horizontally scrolling. You know the routine - shoot baddies, collect power-ups and kill the end-

time. Dick Tracy was a big hit in the US and UK last year (although I can't understand for the life of me why - apart from the amazing set design there was very little to hold your attention. I wished I'd stayed at home and put the money I saved towards a new Master game - they're much more fun!). Basically a scrolling shoot-'em-up, interspersed with bonus levels at a shooting gallery, it's not bad fun. The graphics are a bit small but well-detailed and animated. Look out for the full review soon in ACE.

MICKEY MOUSE

Who's the leader of the gang that's great for you and me? M-I-C-K-E-Y M-O-U-S-E. (As if you hadn't guessed from the heading!) Disney's rodent rascal makes his first appearance on the Sega in a fantastic platform game. Virgin Mastertronic hope to have this on official release in the next couple of months. And let's hope they do because this is one cracking game. The authors have managed to cram every ounce of cuteness and humour from the original cartoons into this silicon masterpiece. Full of puzzles and playability, and sporting graphics and animation of the highest order, this is one cart you really can't afford to miss!

There are no fixed release dates or prices as yet. As soon as I know more I'll let you know.

One thing these releases show is that there's still lots of life in the Master system yet - witness the graphics of Mickey Mouse and Moonwalker to see just what the console can do when pushed.

Phew! That's just about it for this month. Good games playing until next time!

of level bad guy. It's okay, but not overly inspiring let 'Weedy Seed' overview of Dangerous Seed in this column for more of the same).

Shadow Dancer is a so-so multidirectional scrolling beat-'em-up/come-shoot-'em-up and was reviewed in last month's ACE. Basically 'One Ninja and his Dog'.

Dynamite Duke is a horizontal scrolling beat-'em-up in the style of Street Fighter. I haven't actually seen it so I can't give you my opinion on it. Look out for the ACE review soon.

WEEDY SEED

And what's this plopping on to my mat? Why, it's an imported copy of Namcot's Dangerous Seed. Guide your spaceship over vertical parallax scrolling alien worlds killing the manic micromen, collecting multiple-level power-ups and slowly making your way to your final confrontation with the end-of-level mother alienssssszzzzzzzzzz.

Oops, sorry, fell asleep on the job there. I'm afraid to say that Dangerous Seed is a very exciting release - this style of game has been done elsewhere loads of time and generally much better as well. The sprites are small, the power-ups uninspired and the scrolling less than perfect. Unless you're really desperate for a new shoot-'em-up and you've bought all the good ones then don't make the mistake of parting with your cash for Dangerous Seed.

SEGA STATES

Electronic Arts, not resting on the success of their excellent John Madden Football game, unveiled some very interesting new releases at the Las Vegas CES (see report elsewhere in this issue).

Sega owners who are also fortunate enough to own an Amiga or Atari ST may be familiar with the exploits of

DIRECT
LINE

To YOUR micro...

Monthly machine specific columns for the users of the ten most popular machines, written from a personal viewpoint by other users...

James Pond, the fishy superspy from Milenkam. I remember thinking at the time how suitable for conversion to console the game was. Great minds obviously think alike because EA are due to bring out the game on the Megadrive (or Genesis in the US) in March.

More puzzle and platform antics are the order of the day in Dark Castle. Originally written for the Apple Macintosh, the conversion promises improved animation and sound effects, and full use of the Megadrive's expanded palette. It's due for a Spring release.

Sega owners starved of RPGs will be pleased to hear that Might & Magic II is also due for conversion. Naturally the conversion will take advantage of the Megadrive's advanced graphics and sound capabilities and have a new user interface to allow input by pop-up menus. Expect a Spring release.

CONTROVERSY CORNER

Now don't get me wrong, I think the Sega Megadrive is the best thing since Michelle Pfeiffer. However, it seems to me that there's been a bit of a decrease in the consistency of Megadrive releases. Whereas in the early days every cart was a scorcher (Altered Beast, Golden Axe and Ghouls n' Ghosts spring instantly to mind), recently it seems that for every Strider we have to make do with a Hellfire, Dangerous Seed or Sword of Sodom.

I suppose this phenomenon is inevitable as more and more is produced for the Megadrive - not every cart can be a classic. Of course this is just my personal opinion - what do you think? Am I just talking out of my... er... rear entrance? Write and tell me what you think at the normal ACE address - and considered debate only, please, no mindless abuse!

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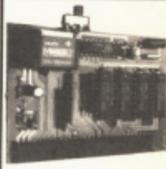
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AMIGA



This has to be the most depressing part of the year. Christmas is already a fading but happy memory and there's nothing but cold, wind and rain for a good four months.

But that's not to say it's a dull time. Indeed, this March could go down in computer entertainment history as the month when the long-anticipated CD revolution started - at least if things go according to Commodore's plans! Yes, the CDTV is nearly here - honest!

At the recent Las Vegas CES (see the full report elsewhere in this issue) Commodore unveiled the much-awaited CDTV to the waiting pack of media wolves (again) and announced that the machine would retail at \$999 in the US and £599 in the UK, with the first stock hitting the shelves in mid-March. However, there are reports that Commodore are quietly confident that they can get the CDTVs price down to around £600 - which would obviously make the machine more likely of achieving the projected minimum 50,000 UK sales. Commodore are understood to be hoping for by December.

In addition, Commodore are apparently hoping to bundle some software with the package in addition to the 'Welcome' disc so you'll have something to play with when you first buy the CDTV, which should make it a more attractive purchase.

Availability shouldn't be a problem, because Commodore have signed a deal with Dixons, the high-street consumer electrical goods retailers. They'll be selling the CDTV from 100 of their stores nationwide including the videos and TVs (a move obviously designed to separate the machine from the computer 'ghetto').

But what of that all-important (to us Amiga owners anyway) CD add-on that'll upgrade the Amiga to a full CDTV? Well, that was on display too (below). No news as to how much it'll cost yet, but rumours are it could be a little expensive. The only thing that doesn't come with it is a remote-control unit, but we can live without that, can't we?

As with any computer hardware, it's only as good as the software available for it, so what was the product on display like? Well, reaction was mixed - but it was obvious that the developers were trying hard to use the advanced capabilities of the CDTV and it had to be remembered that quite a lot of the software on display was very pre-production and could change significantly by the time it's eventually released.



PSYGNOSIS IN CD SHOCK

I managed to get a sneak look at Psygnosis' CD product in development during a recent visit to their Liverpool

middle of the screen. This contains a 16-colour palette from which you select your chosen colour, and icons representing functions such as line, brush, polygon, text, zoom and so on. As you click on each icon a further option box appears on the right hand side of the screen; this contains brush shapes, disk operation selectors and so on.

At the bottom left of the screen is the zoom box which shows the centre of the current working area in close-up. To get at your work, you can either scroll the display screen, or hide the toolbox and palette bar. So far, so what. All these facilities are available in Neochrome or DEGAS. But DPaint's facilities go much further than either of these. For instance, when drawing freehand you have the choice of continuous or dotted lines; you can also freehand draw filled objects. You can define your own brush shapes by "grabbing" areas of the screen, then stretch and distort them to any shape you want, and save them either individually or in "libraries" of brushes.

Drawing irregular curves, practically impossible on Neochrome or DEGAS, is easy in DPaint; the Curve tool lets you define a start point, end point, and two control points, so even the most complex curved shapes can be drawn. Although there's a standard Undo tool for erasing mistakes, there's also a useful Stencil function which lets you fix a picture in memory, then, no matter what you draw over it, you can restore the original by "scraping off" the overlay.

More exotic functions include colour cycling, graduated fills and a Filter mode, which changes a range of different colours into a single colour with a range of brightnesses. Apart from the standard system fonts, DPaint comes with a number of more exotic type styles and the facilities to create your own fonts. But DPaint's most impressive features are the animation functions.

Unfortunately I'm sworn to secrecy and can't give you full details (just like a spy film, isn't it? - "No," cry the readers). However, what I can tell you is that it's absolutely stunning. Take my word for it, if future CD product is all like this then the chances of the CDTV being a hit are assured. Look out for the full ACE report on this exciting new work in a month or two.

I CAN SING A RAINBOW

Okay, enough of this mouth-watering news about the future, what of the stuff that's out now?

Well, we've just had a copy of Turrican II in for review, but unfortunately it arrived too late to get into this issue. However, platform shoot-'em-up fans will be pleased to hear that Rainbow Arts have skillfully avoided the fate of most sequels and produced a stunning game that improves on the original in every way ("Not possible," I hear you cry). Over the past four days when I should've been trying to reach deadlines I've been more worried about reaching the end of Level One. Do these Germans know how to program the Amiga or what? Brilliant! Look out for a full ACE review next month. I wanna write it, me, me, me!

The latest release from US Gold is Super Monaco GP. The Megadrive version was great, but lacked the giant roadside objects of the excellent coin-op. The review of the Amiga version I saw had managed to retain these, and the speed and smoothness of the screen update was stunning. Oh dear, I can feel that word old phrase "arcade perfect" rearing its ugly head. Unfortunately the version we saw had only one (admittedly quite long) track but US Gold assure us they are adding more. Again, look out for the ACE review next month.

● David Upchurch

ATARI ST



This month our ST software update is devoted to a look at Electronic Arts' sophisticated graphics package, Deluxe Paint ST, recently released at £59.99. Why is Deluxe Paint ST such an important release? There are several established ST graphics packages such as Neochrome, which was at one stage given away free with STis, and DEGAS, which offers better facilities.

But both look extremely aged up against more recent packages, particularly Deluxe Paint which is now up to V3 on the Amiga. DPaint ST includes picture distortion and animation facilities developed for the Amiga version, which make it much more than just a paint package. DPaint ST is not copy-protected and can be transferred to hard disk, and doesn't need more than the 512k minimum to run, though unlike DEGAS it demands a colour monitor or TV since it has no mono mode. It comes with a 200-page ring-bound manual, a keyboard control reference card and three disks; one of the program, one contains animation utilities and the last has example graphics files.

The main display has a toolbox stretching across the

The animation sub-menu allows you to define the number of frames in your animation, and automatically creates inbetween frames based on the position of the objects in your start and end frames. Because X, Y and Z co-ordinates can be defined, you can make objects appear to approach and recede into the picture, as well as moving up/down and left/right. Combining several kinds of rotation at once can create impressive Top of the Pops-style special effects! The number of frames available is limited only by the memory of your machine; you can cut and paste between drawings too. The "twining" process takes all the hard work out of creating displays of moving images, though of course for complex lifelike Disney-style animations there's no substitute for a pencil and paper and lots of sweat. DPaint supports the STE's extended palette of 4096 colours, and a wide range of mono, colour and laser printers connected to either the serial or parallel port. A Viewer utility allows you to display DPaint pictures or animations without running DPaint.

Apart from being able to load DEGAS low-res ordinary or compressed and Neochrome files, it's interesting to note that Amiga DPaint animations (in 16 colour 320x200 format) can be converted to run on the ST, and any ST animation can be converted to run on the Amiga. DPaint Amiga is supported by several third-party companies providing clip art and animations, and there's some indication that the same will happen for DPaint ST. If that's the case, there's no reason why this powerful and economical program should not become the standard graphics package for the ST. For more information contact: Electronic Arts, Langley Business Centre, 11-49 Station Road, Langley, Berks SL3 8YX. Tel: 0753 49442.

● Chris Jenkins

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GAMEBOY

Hope you enjoyed the Gameboy roundup in the console section this month. From the next issue, you'll be pleased to know that we're giving the gameboy a lot more space in the magazine.

The quality of Gameboy titles does seem to fluctuate a lot doesn't it? I mean, one month there will be nothing like high-quality releases, and then games which really aren't suited for the machine appear. This month was an especially good example, with big-name low-fun games like Ghostbusters and Chase HQ disappointing fairly comprehensively. Maybe Nintendo should toughen up their approval system again. How do you feel about it? Would you be prepared to see a reduction in the number of titles if you were assured of higher quality?

TIPS

More excellent tips flooding in from all around the globe. This month, Nicholas Cope from Manchester comes to the aid of gamers with **Nemesis** and **Mickey Mouse**.



MIKEY MOUSE

Here are 40 passwords:

41 PSRW	61 PPMX
42 PSFW	62 PYCX
43 YSNW	63 YPAX
44 YZKW	64 XYOX
45 PWNW	65 S352
46 PXCW	66 S1W2
47 YWAW	67 Z322
48 YXOW	68 Z1P2
49 Z25X	60 YTKY
50 ZTWX	70 SHE2
51 T22X	71 ZE42
52 TTPX	72 ZH92
53 ZP3X	73 W3R2
54 ZYEX	74 W1F2
55 TP4X	75 X3J2
56 TVAX	76 X1K2
57 P2EX	77 WEM2
58 PTFX	78 WHC2
59 Y2JK	79 KC92
60 YTKY	80 KHO2

NEMESIS

If you're having trouble, you can gain ultimate fire power by pressing up, down, down, left, right, left right, b,a,b,a while the game is paused. Now you can exact some revenge on the alien hordes.

Antipodean correspondence now, from Christian Bassos from New South Wales. He sent us a

massive tome of Gameboy facts and opinions. He also included some tops on the Aussie favourite, Solar Striker. So here they are!

SOLAR STRIKER

Level 1 boss: Epikhan

This big spaceship moves left an right across the screen firing bullets in three directions. To kill it, move along with it left and right, while firing, avoiding the bullets which rain down.

Level 2 boss: Destructor

The destructor spaceship moves over the whole screen releasing large bombs. Don't panic. The bombs can be easily shot down. To destroy the ship, follow it around the screen firing. At some point, the destructor will move down the screen and then across towards you. To avoid both it and the bombs, stay in the extreme left corner until it moves up again, when you can resume blasting.

Level 3 boss: The Crusher.

The crusher tank can be defeated by sticking to the left hand side of the screen and firing at it when it crosses to your side. Watch out for its lazer beams and bullets. As the Ultra Crusher descends, move to the left and shoot it.

That's all we've got space for. Keep the letters coming!

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IBM PC



Although it may have come on in leaps and bounds in recent times, there are still precious few reasons for PC owners to feel smug about their choice of games machine. However, there is one place where your business-based machine scores highly over both the ST and the Amiga - and it more than makes up for the disadvantages... that reason is Sierra On-Line. Since its birth on Ken and Roberta Williams' kitchen table more than 10 years ago, Sierra has grown into the largest single games publisher in the United States - and it's nowadays not only the most productive, but also the most innovative of developers for the IBM and its compatibles. Sierra has become such a by-word for PC adventuring that there's now hardly a PC owner out there who hasn't trawled the seedbed of bars with Leisure Suit Larry, helped good King Graham in his seemingly reverending *King's Quests* or gone on the beat with Sonny Bonds in one of the first two Police Quests.

But the company's development of landmark games is only the beginning of it: having been one of the first to spot the potential of the sound

add-ons which first began to appear in the late '80s, Sierra quickly decided to include sound support in all of its software. Then, having done that, it also offered the hardware to Sierra software users at competitive rates in order to speed up the emergence of the PC as a leading games machine. And now that AdLib and Roland sound have become established (Stateside at least, where nearly 70 per cent of home PCs have either one or the other peripheral installed), Sierra has turned its attentions to the fledgling CD-ROM format and is hoping to perform a similar 'support of the word' by bundling its Compact Disk version of King's Quest V with a CD drive in yet another low-cost bundle.

And so, to the point...

All of this was impressive enough when Sierra On-Line was just some vague US-based developer who sent over the occasional game (via its Activision link-up) to keep its slobbering fans happy, but now it's about to move up a gear by opening a European base in one of the continent's more romantic urban centres - Reading. So now British Sierra addicts, this doesn't only mean that you'll be able to keep up with the quests, quicker and more frequently, you'll also be able to avail of Sierra's acclaimed customer support service (this has always been possible, but up until now it meant making a troublesome and costly transatlantic phonecall).

Sierra plans to introduce a fully automated service to dish out tips, technical support and sales advice, but until this is up and running call 0734 303171 to talk to one of Sierra's two full-time customer service chaps.

The quest has never been easier.

Speaking of quests, by now you should have seen the guide to *Prince Of Persia* in this month's Tricks 'N Tactics supplement (if you haven't, get

straight back there and catch up with the rest of us later). For those of you who are still with us, here's another advantage to owning a PC, because while Amiga and ST owners have to content themselves to following that guide, you can make things simpler still by using this built-in cheat mode as discovered by one Michael Battersby of Pakenham in Australia (g'day cobbler, may your billy never boil over).

The reason that these tips are only for PC owners is that they are accessed through DOS: all you have to do is, when starting the game, instead of typing 'Prince' <Enter>, type 'Prince Megahit' <Enter> and then the following options come into play:

Pressing <Shift> and W allows you to float down any distance, but this only lasts for a limited period (a similar effect to that achieved by drinking the green potion on one of the earlier levels); press <Shift> and T to gain an extra point of health; <Shift> and I toggles the inverted screen; <Shift> and S heals a lost point of health; <Shift> and L allows you to go up a level.

And as if all of that wasn't enough, the plus key increases your available time (and for those who insist on making things difficult for themselves, the minus key loses time), while pressing T, H, J or N allows you to view what's ahead on the next screens up, left, right and down respectively. There's now little need for you to make a map, as using these little helpers should allow you to be off in dreamville with your fair princess while all of your usually smirking Amiga and ST-owning chums are still back down in the dungeon marveling at how many colours they have on screen (the poor chumps).

©Claran Brown

C64



The cartridge sword, is of course, double edged. While 64 owners have been looking forward to the numerous benefits which cartridges offer them, many perhaps have realised that with the faster loading times and "enhanced" games comes the end of budget 64 material.

Commodore are phasing out the trusty C2N tape decks, and soon there will be no more 64s made to run from tape based loading systems.

This move is obviously intended to bolster support for cartridge software. Fine. However, this move spells the end of tape games and - of course - budget software.

With no new machines being easily able to run tape software, the incentive for game producers to continue to support the system will be slight. Since such a large portion of C64 software sales are budget games.

The higher unit price of cartridges means an inevitable minimum price of around £16.99

Of course, many of the cartridges will feature enhanced front ends, extra levels and an end to loading difficulties. But at the expense of variety?

Perhaps Commodore are expecting a new breed of owners to emerge. Maybe they are right and the all-cartridge playing gamesters will be happy to pay these sort of prices and will be happy with a much smaller catalogue of games. However, such a large user base of existing tape-based machines should not be ignored.

What do you think about this situation? Do you welcome a technological step forward which will yield larger (if more expensive) games. Or would you rather have the continued variety of budget software? Write to us and let us know your thoughts.

PUBLIC DOMAIN

We've had a good response to our enquiries

about public domain software. Demos in particular seem to still be the thing of the moment. So, special thanks go to Chaz Bradshaw from Sheffield for sending us the following addresses. For more information, try writing to the following people.

PDW, 42
Chesterfield Road,
Worthing, BN12
6DD.

D. Walton, 18 Heysham Park, Heysham,
Lancs. LA3 2UD.

Silver Wing Software, 185 Callowbrook Lane,
Rubery, Birmingham, B45 9TG.

Disk owners can also get their mitts on some
breedies from:

Adam, Crystal Unicorn, 'Redways', Harps Hall
Road, West Walton, Nr Wisbeck,
Cambridgeshire. PE14 7DJ.

Unfortunately, that's all there's space for this
time, but keep your 64 mail coming!

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BOOK MARKS

Sandra Vogel checks out the bookshelves in search of literature suited to the intellect and refined taste of the average ACE reader...

STAR TREK: THE LOST YEARS

J M DILLARD.
Pan Books, £3.99
Science Fiction

Have you ever wondered what happened in the time between the last episode of Star Trek the TV series and Star Trek I The Motion Picture? Well, you need wonder no more. The official version of events has been put on paper by Jeanne Dillard. The book has the backing of Paramount Pictures.

The action starts when the 'five year mission to seek out new planets...' comes to its end, and the officers of the Enterprise move on to other things. Read the book and you will find out why Kirk changed from star ship captain to the paperpusher we meet in the first of the movies, chart Spocks life as he returns to Vulcan, and watch McCoy as he gets into an almighty scrape.

The idea behind the book is a good one, though I'd like to have seen more of the TV series characters covered. Perhaps they will crop up in 'A Flag Full of Stars' and 'The War Virus' - forthcoming sequels - watch this space.

GENERAL COMMENTS

For real trekkies this is an absolute must. For the rest of us it is probably a 'one read only' book.

IQ FACTOR	6/10
SHELF LIFE	4/10
VALUE FOR MONEY	7/10
OVERALL	7/10

MONTY PYTHON'S FLYING CIRCUS: JUST THE WORDS VOLUMES 1 AND 2

Mandarin Books £6.99
Humour

Yello, I'd like to talk to you tonight about a minority group of people who have no mental or physical handicaps, and, who, through no fault of their own, have never been deprived, and consequently are forced to live in conditions of extreme luxury.

This is a quote from episode 45 of the Monty Python series. No, I haven't memorised all the episodes ever

broadcast - I've got hold of a copy of volumes 1 and 2 of the scripts, which cover every word spoken in episodes 1-45. They're bound together in a single volume complete with picies, which any Python fan would be proud to possess. One word of warning though - don't go, looking for the Dead Parrot - it 'aint there!

Hours of fun for all the family can be had just picking a sketch at random and assigning parts. Entertainment the way the Victorians used to do it (well, OK, not quite!).

GENERAL COMMENTS

Government Health Warning: Reading more than two sketches a day from this book can seriously damage your mental health.

IQ FACTOR	6/10
SHELF LIFE	5/10
VALUE FOR MONEY	7/10
OVERALL	5/10

TALES FROM THE PLANET EARTH

ARTHUR C CLARKE
Arrow Books £3.99
Science Fiction

This is a collection of Arthur C's best short stories. Most of them have been published before, but are difficult to get hold of. There are a number of older stories - The Road to The Sea, for example, the first story in the collection, was completed in 1949. This story contains one of Clarke's amazing predictions - for portable personal hi-fi systems, known today as the 'Walkman'.

There are sixteen stories in this 300 page book - which works out at excellent value for money. Each of them has an introduction by Clarke himself, specially written for the volume, and the book has a short preface by Isaac Asimov.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Clarke fans should rush out and buy this now. Science fiction fans should put it on their 'wants' list.

IQ FACTOR	7/10
SHELF LIFE	8/10
VALUE FOR MONEY	8/10
OVERALL	8/10

THE COMPUTER HOBBYISTS HANDBOOK

RA & JW PENFOLD
Bernard Babani £5.95
Technical

If you, or anyone you know, has just got their mits on a computer, and want to know more about how it works etc, the first thing people will tell you is 'don't bother with the manual - it's useless'. The Computer Hobbyists Handbook could be just the answer to this dilemma. In a little over 100 pages it covers everything the beginner needs to know, from explaining processors (what's the difference between a 8080, 286 and 8086? (answers on a post-card please), interfaces (MDI, printers, monitors, etc), languages, number bases, operating systems, graphics. It also has the standard appendices covering ASCII charts, decimal binary and hex conversions, computers abbreviations and a bit of stuff about support chips.

The book is well illustrated with black and white photographs and graphics to explain things, and it is written in language which won't put the beginner off. Worth buying at the same time that you get hold of your first computer.

GENERAL COMMENTS

A useful non machine specific starter book.

IQ FACTOR	5/10
SHELF LIFE	6/10
VALUE FOR MONEY	7/10
OVERALL	7/10

IT'S A FUNNY THING

COLLECTED BY ROGER FRAMPTON
Hale, £4.95
Humour

This is a collection of funnies from the world of IT. Many of the pieces have been contributed from computer users, suppliers and publishers, though few are actually attributed. Most of the jokes are from the business rather than the home computer world. There is also a good smattering of cartoons - for my money many of these are better than the written parts.

Memorise just a few of the stories from this volume, and you will be able to amaze and astound your friends at social gatherings with vast range of computer small talk. Or, bore them to death!

GENERAL COMMENTS

Proceeds from the book go to the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children.

IQ FACTOR	5/10
SHELF LIFE	8/10
VALUE FOR MONEY	7/10
OVERALL	8/10

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It's a cold and grim Monday morning in February. What a downer! You need some hot 'n' spicy new software to bring some sunshine into your life. Where better to find the best games than here on the Shelf?

Fully revised and featuring all the highest-rated titles featured in ACE over the past three months, as well as older but essential buys. All you see here should be available from your local dealer now.

AWESOME

Pygnosis ● Amiga £34.99
A shoot-'em-up where you'll need to master four different gameplay styles if you're to survive. The first is similar to *Asteroids*, except that here your ship stays stationary and the

aliens and rocks rotate about you. Next is a *Space Harrier*-like battle against a giant space dragon. After that you pilot your ship over the multi-directional parallax scrolling surface of an alien world, shooting aliens and searching for the landing bay. The final style is a *Gauntlet*-style run around the starbase looking for the entrance to the space station. The graphics for all sections wouldn't look out of place in an arcade. A stunning game, if a little derivative, and well worth its ACE rating.

* ACE RATING 900 ON AMIGA

B.A.T.

Ubisoft ● Amiga £34 ● Atari ST ● PC ETBA ● C64 ETBA/cart
Set in the 22nd century, you play an agent of the Bureau of Astral Troubleshooters, or B.A.T. for short. The arch-criminal Vrangor (made-up name!) is holding the planet Selenia, home of the Galaxy's major businesses, to ransom with chemical weapons. There's no time to spare - you've got to find Vrangor and stop him, pronto! Two years in the making, all that effort shows in this graphic adventure *par excellence*. Every location and event is depicted graphically, with all game interaction carried out using the mouse. Not so much a game, more a way of life. As an added bonus, there's a plug-in sound card to give the humble ST Amiga-like samples.

* ACE RATING 908 ON ATARI ST

BATTLE CHESS 2

Electronic Arts ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST £24.99 ● PC £29.99
Sequel-itis spreads from Hollywood to the computer industry! This time round the rules are based on the Chinese variant of Chess, which introduces some new moves, has a river bisecting the board (which some pieces can't cross) and limits the King's movement to an 'Imperial Palace'. As before the board is viewed in 3D, with all the pieces 'taking' each other in a variety of amusing and well-animated ways. While a bit slow and irritating running from floppies due to all the disc swapping, a hard disc shows the game to be far faster and more lethal than normal Chess. A good purchase for jaded Chess fans.

* ACE RATING 895 ON IBM PC

BATTLE COMMAND

Ocean ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST ● PC £29.99

The latest solid-polygon epic from Realtime. You control a Mauler tank through 16 tough missions, varying from straightforward seek and destroy to escorting a convoy of supply trucks to picking up a downed satellite in enemy territory. Although the accent is on action, several of the missions require quite a bit of thought to complete. During your travels you'll encounter a wide variety of enemy craft, all rendered in exceptionally fast 3D. A tad more

originality and it could've been a Trailblazer.

* ACE RATING 899 ON AMIGA AND ATARI ST

BUCK ROGERS: COUNT-DOWN TO DOOMSDAY

SSI/US Gold ● Amiga ETBA ● PC ETBA ● C64 ETBA
The year is 2456, and Buck Rogers, tactical genius and fearless defender of freedom, is defrosted from cryogenic suspension to help lead rebels on a ravaged Earth to victory and freedom from a tyrannical government. An RPG with similarities to the SSI *AD&D* games, the action is viewed in familiar pseudo-3D. All interaction is menu-driven, with selections made by clicking the mouse. The number of locations are many and varied, and most are introduced by an attractive picture. Fans of this genre should be more than happy with this, and the space setting makes a welcome change from the usual medieval setting.

* ACE RATING 885 ON AMIGA

CAPTIVE

Mindscape ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST/E £24.99 ● PC £29.99
Another in the ever expanding number of RPGs portrayed using first-person perspective. *Captive*, written by veteran programmer Tony Crowther, pits you against hordes of rampaging aliens, with nothing to defend you but a briefcase. This briefcase, however, contains a computer giving you remote control over a four-droid team with which you must free yourself from the fortress where you are imprisoned. Excellent bitmapped graphics, atmospheric real-time stereo sound and a total of 65000 levels to explore place *Captive* very much in the ACE-rated category.

* ACE RATING 930 ON AMIGA

COVERT ACTION

Microprose ● PC £39.99
Yet another secret agent game! You play Max Remington, ex-CIA man, who is now earning a crust as a undercover investigator. However, Max is known to waive the fee for the President of the United States. On offer are four skill levels, three mission areas, three crime types and over a dozen enemy operatives to contend with. As you would expect from Microprose

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there's a wealth of detail and the tasks on offer are going to require many months of work to crack. Go to it, Max.

* ACE RATING 902 ON IBM PC

CORPORATION

Core Design ● Atari ST £24.99 ●

Amiga £24.99 ● PC £29.99

This role-playing cybernetic

extravaganza from CORE pushes

the limits of previous RPG's just

that bit further. Corporation is a

3-D exploration, puzzle-orientated

arcade combat game (?) in the mould

made traditional by the original

Dungeon Master RPG. Your objective is to

find and remove an embryo belong-

ing to the ultimate biogenetic

machine, bred by the UCC Corp.

Light-source shaded

graphics and sound of film-like

quality, along with excellent

playability and an intuitive con-

trol method all contributed in

pushing Corporation over the

900 mark.

* ACE RATING 945 ON AMIGA

DAMOCLES

Novagen ● Atari ST £24.95 ●

Amiga £24.95 ● PC £TBA

This unusual combination of

flight sim and adventure game,

and sequel to the well-received

Mercenary, has been in develop-

ment for a couple of years

now, but the resulting game has

been worth the wait. The wire-

frame graphics of the original

game have been replaced by

solid 3D vector graphics, but

they are just as fast. There are

now nine planets to explore

instead of one city, so there is

plenty of long term challenge

here.

* ACE RATING 935 ON ATARI ST

F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER

Microprose ● Atari ST £29.99 ●

Amiga £29.99 ● PC £39.99

A program that could well be

described as the Flight

Simulator's Flight Simulator. The

PC version has enjoyed much

success since its launch year ago,

and now released on the ST and

Amiga. The sim is based around

the much talked about (or per-

haps that be whispered about)

Stealth Fighter. It boasts four

huge scenarios with hundreds

of missions, and plenty of

detail. If you are looking for the

definitive flight sim, then you

can't go far wrong with this

one.

* ACE RATING 935 ON IBM PC

4D SPORTS BOXING

Mindscape ● Amiga £24.99 ●

Atari ST £24.99 ● PC £24.99

This violent clash between two

solid-polygon generated

pullists is the best rendition of

the 'noble art' yet seen on a

home computer. The use of

polygons allows the action to

be viewed from absolutely any

angle, and a video playback

option allows you to watch that

decisive upper-cut again and

again. Highly realistic, with a

huge range of moves and a lot

of work to be put in if you're

to become World Champ!

* ACE RATING 900 ON IBM PC

4D SPORTS DRIVING

Mindscape ● Amiga £24.99 ●

Atari ST ● PC £24.99

A 3D polygon racing game - and

arguably the best yet, providing

far more depth than its nearest

rival, Indy 500 though how it

compares to Hard Drivin' 2 has

yet to be seen. Can be played

against the clock or against

another driver, in which case

each designs a course, trying to

exploit the weaknesses of the

other player (i.e. fear of

heights!). Both drivers then race

on the two tracks. Spectacular

wins and crashes can be viewed

from any angle in the playback

option. A successful mix of sim-

ulation and knock-about fun.

* ACE RATING 900 ON IBM PC

presentation is something else. An isometric-3D angle is used to view the events, and your character moves around it freely, combating monsters and so on. Every move is beautifully animated. There are only 50 locations to visit, but every one is going to take a lot of work to puzzle through. **WARNING!** - this program only works on 1Mb machines!

* ACE RATING 910 ON ATARI ST

IVAN 'IRONMAN' STEWART'S SUPER OFF ROAD
Virgin/Mastertronic • 16-bit formats £24.99 • 8-bit formats £10.99c/£14.99dk

A hugely enjoyable rollicking romp through 8 courses of rough 'n' tumble driving action, viewed in the overhead style championed by Atari's *Super Sprint*. All boy racers should look no further. Another stunning game from the consistently excellent Graftgold, authors of *Simulcrum* and *Paradroid 90*.

* ACE RATING 870 ON IBM PC

KINGS QUEST V

Sierra • Amiga ETBA • Atari ST ETBA • IBM PC £39.99(EGA),

£44.99(VGA)

The latest in the popular series, and typing is now a thing of the past because all interaction is via a series of multiple-choice menus. You have to guide King Graham of Davenport through yet another fantasy land in search of his castle, kidnapped by the wicked magician Mordack. However, the messages are sickeningly cute at times, and those with a low sweetness threshold may choke on *KQ5*. Others should enjoy this romp through 9.7 Mb of excellent animated graphic adventure.

* ACE RATING 850 ON IBM PC

MYTH

System 3 • 8-bit formats £8.99c/£14.99dk

The game that pushes the C64 and Spectrum further than they have ever been before. Fight your way through several time zones to reach the ultimate confrontation with the god Dameron. The game is captivating not only because of its size and depth but also because of the superbly animated sprites and sheer playability.

* ACE RATING 925 ON C64

POWERMONGER

Electronic Arts • Amiga £29.99

• Atari ST £29.99

A new computer classic, with the highest ACE rating ever. You play a warlord, exiled from your homeland along with twenty followers, who has just landed on the shores of 200 islands, ripe for conquering. Unfortunately the current residents are not quite so keen on your enforced leadership, and will do all they can to resist you. Using a similar viewpoint to *Populous*, the landscape is here polygon-based and thus can be manipulated in just about any way you require. The excellent visuals are supported by highly atmospheric sound. All control is by mouse, and couldn't be easier. To play it is to worship it. An absolutely essential buy.

* ACE RATING 973 ON AMIGA

PRINCE OF PERSIA

Broderbund/Domark • Amiga £24.99 • Atari ST £24.99 • IBM PC £24.99

A game that could so easily go unnoticed and unloved by the shelf-scouring hordes looking for the latest licence. The graphics, when static, are fairly

unimpressive (although they do get better on the later levels), but when they move... The animation as you guide a young Prince through umpteen levels of platforms, pits, spikes and swordsmen is quite excellent and life-like. And the gameplay, although it may sound uninspired, is as good as the graphics. Some of the action has a real cliff-hanger aspect to it. A gem.

* ACE RATING 915 ON AMIGA

SAVAGE EMPIRE

Origin/Mindscape • PC £34.99

• Amiga ETBA

Using the *Ultima VI* interface, Origin have taken a side-step from the medieval world of their previous games, and now plunge you into a nightmare scenario where you control a party of characters mysteriously transported to a dinosaur-infested Lost World. A good yarn well told and actually better than *Ultima VI*.

* ACE RATING 955 ON IBM PC

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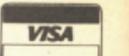
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ACE DIARY

FEBRUARY 1991

10-16 FEBRUARY SOFTWARE RELEASES

Electronic Arts: *Warlords* (ST, Amiga £24.99).

Coktel Vision: *Cougar Force* (ST, Amiga £19.99; PC £24.99). James Bond-style shoot 'em up.

Empire: *Amazing Spiderman* (Spectrum, CPC £9.99 tape, £14.99 disk). Run, jump, climb walls and fire deadly webs in comic character-based game.

Readysoft: *Dragon's Lair II - Time Warp* (PC £44.95). Return of Dirk the Daring in interactive cartoon spread over six disks. *Wrath of the Demon* (PC £29.99). Defeat countless monsters to a background of superb graphics and smooth animation.

Dinamic: *Narco Police* (Spectrum, C64, CPC £9.99 tape, £14.99 disk). Defeat the drugs barons in horizontal shoot 'em up.

Novagen: *Damocles Mission Disk II* (ST, Amiga £9.99). Accessory disk to original *Damocles*; gives you five extra missions.

Thalton: *Dragonflight* (ST, Amiga £19.99, PC £24.99). Limited edition version including T-shirt and badge in the box. *Tower FRA* (ST, Amiga £19.99, PC £24.99). Flight sim. *Enchanted World* (ST, Amiga £19.99, PC £24.99).

Sunday 10
 Birthday of Greg Norman, star of golf course and computer screen, in 1955.

Monday 11
 Nelson Mandela released from prison in South Africa on this day in 1990.

Tuesday 12
 Shrove Tuesday: the day before

Lent begins, when pancakes should traditionally be eaten. Yellow lines forbidding parking were introduced on this day in 1956 in Slough.
Wednesday 13

Ash Wednesday: first day of Lent
 Cricket: England play one day international vs New Zealand in Wellington.
Thursday 14
 St Valentine's Day

Friday 15
Saturday 16
 Cricket: England play one day international vs New Zealand in Auckland; Rugby Union: England vs Scotland at Twickenham; Wales vs Ireland at Cardiff.

17-23 FEBRUARY SOFTWARE RELEASES

Accolade: *Gunboat* (Amiga £24.99). Take on various missions around the world in your river patrol boat. *Conspiracy - the Deadlock Files* (PC £29.99); *Test Drive 2* accessory disk (PC £11.99)

Empire: *Gazza II* (PC £29.99). Distinct improvement on all formats from the original Gazza football game - should have him crying all the way to the bank.

Ubi Soft: *Pro Tennis 2* (ST, Amiga £24.99). Sequel to last year's well-received *Pro Tennis Tour*. *Jupiter's Masterdrive* (Amiga £24.99). Space racing in various weird and wonderful vehicles.

Sunday 17
 Birthday of Barry "Dame Edna Everage" Humphries, in 1934.

Monday 18
 National Day, Nepal
 Independence Day, Gambia
 Washington-Lincoln Day, USA
Tuesday 19
 The first episode of EastEnders was broadcast on this day in

1985.
Wednesday 20
Thursday 21
Friday 22
Saturday 23

24 FEB - 2 MARCH SOFTWARE RELEASES

Accolade: *Star Control* (C64 tape £10.99, disk £16.99)
Euro Challenge (ST £11.99). Europe-based scenery for *Test Drive II*. *Muscle Cars* (ST £11.99).

Coktel Vision: *Geisha* (ST, Amiga £19.99, PC £24.99). Somewhat risqué title by the programmer of CV's earlier offering, *Emmanuelle*.

Readysoft: *Wrath of the Demon* (C64 cartridge).

Sunday 24
Monday 25
 National Day, Kuwait
Tuesday 26
Wednesday 27
Thursday 28
 Birthday of Finbar McGuigan, better known these days as Barry, in 1961.

MARCH

Friday 1
 St David's Day. St David is the patron saint of Wales.
Saturday 2
 The Bristol Computer Fair, a one day show covering most formats, is being held at the Holiday Inn, Lower Castle St, Bristol. Rugby Union: France vs Wales in Paris; Scotland vs Ireland at Murrayfield.

Don't forget!

ACE is now on sale on the 8th of every month. If you have an event, software release, or other bona fide announcement you'd like to make on this page, contact the diary editor c/o ACE Pink Pages at the usual address.

3-8 MARCH SOFTWARE RELEASES

Coktel Vision: *Galactic Empire* (ST, Amiga £19.99; PC £24.99). Space flight game involving different gameplay styles - some martial arts, some arcade action, some trading, etc. Empire: *Mega Traveller 1* (ST, Amiga, PC). Trading and exploration in deep space.

Ubi Soft: *Music Master* (ST, Amiga, PC, prices TBA, expect around £49). Composition and music editing utility, MIDI compatible.

Rainbird: *Betrayal* (C64 disk £19.99; ST, Amiga £29.99; PC £34.99) *UMS II* (ST, Amiga £29.99, PC, Mac £39.99). Follow up to the acclaimed wargame generator.

Image Works: *Back to the Future III* (Spectrum, C64, CPC, ST, Amiga, PC). Rejoin Marty McFly for adventures in the Wild West.

Sunday 3
 National Day - Anniversary of the Throne - in Morocco.

Monday 4
 Birthday of Kenny Dalglish, in 1951.

Tuesday 5
Wednesday 6
 Independence Day, Ghana.

Thursday 7
Friday 8

Saturday 9
 FA Cup sixth round matches to be played today and tomorrow. April issue of ACE hits the streets!

MEGA TRIVIA!

Our crossword missed the press this month, so to make up we're giving you a mega-quiz. Don't miss it on page 111. page

MEGA QUIZ!

JUST HOW HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT GAMES?

Shart Neil Hardy sent us in a massive and highly entertaining quiz a few months back. We haven't got space to fit it all in, but here are some of the toughest questions to sort out the goats from the gamesters, the answers will be printed next month - let us know how well you do. Meanwhile, there's a cheque in the post for Stuart, and why don't some of you after our lazy so-and-so's write in with material for the Pinks? It could be worth your while...

ROUND 1

1. What do Eagle's Nest, Druid, and Garrison have in common?
2. Who must be killed to complete the Tower of Despair?
3. Battlehawks 1942 recreates 4 historical naval encounters. What are they?
4. Why were games like Indiana Jones, Rocket Ranger, and Their Finest Hour: Battle

- of Britain banned in Germany?
5. Who created such a title as Ancipital, Sheep in Space, and Attack of the Mutant Camels?
 6. Name the 4 Melbourne House games featuring Bilbo, Frodo, and Gandalf if they travel through the land of Mordor.
 7. Who is the giant villain of Bubble Bobble?
 8. What are the only words spoken in Theatre Europe?
 9. Who is the hero of Fairlight?
 10. What do Guardian, Star, Ray, and Droptone have in common?

ROUND 2

- Name the principal animals which appeared in all these games:
- Star Power, Saving Pond, Rara Rams, Crystal Castles, Venus, Sting 54, Samura Warrior, Monty on the Run, On the Tiles, Tower of Babel

ROUND 3

1. Who are the 2 battling brothers in Lords of the Rising Sun?
2. Which Ocean game recently on budget caused an outcry because it involved drug-computer scientists in order to complete the mission?
3. Name the 7 characters from 2000AD who have appeared in computer games.
4. How many Frenchmen are featured on the cover of Dr Peter Tuncan's Auszeit/2?
5. Why are the teams in Kick Off unrealistic?
6. Which company produced such classics as Ik, Last Ninja, Tasker, and Myth?
7. What do both Tank Attack and Brian Clough's Footballing Fortunes have in common?
8. What must Wiz do to complete Wizball?
9. Who is the Angel of Death?
10. Gary Lineker has had 3 licensed games so far. Name one other sporting game who has achieved this.
11. Johnny Reb was one of the first successful wargames, with armies consisting of Infantry, Cavalry, and Artillery. It's sequel featured a new type of unit. What was it?
12. What currency is used in Battlech??
13. Conqueror is an excellent tank sim, featuring vehicles from which countries?
14. Name the 4 'Outrun' games by US Gold?
15. Which superheroes appear in Dr Dooms Revenge?
16. How many Ocean games has Batman made an appearance in?
17. What does PD stand for?

18. What was the original music used in Ella's con-op conversion 1942?
19. Old Atari 2600 cartridges come in boxes displaying a number in the top right hand corner. What does it signify?
20. Which 2 companies have produced a game called 'Barbarian' and later a sequel?

ROUND 3

Match the characters on the left with the relevant games on the right:

Leonardo	Dungeon Quest
Dirk the Daring	Laser Squad
S.Screch	Short Circuit
Goem	Austerlitz
Luigi	Dynasty Wars
Android Blake	Sm City
Norman	Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles
Marshall Sout	Droids
Borf	Kick Off
ED-209	TV Sports Football
Chaos	Pipeline
Don Radden	Escape from the Planet of The Robot Monsters
Berk	Zoids
Gozilda	Sherlock
Number 5	Escape from Singer's Castle
8202	The Lord of the Rings
Fred	Greyyell
Spinback	Robocop
Dr Watson	Super Mario Bros
Shang Fei	Trap Door
Jake	Space Ace

Answers and ratings next month!

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- 02-028 BONES STE Featuring a 800 bouncing ball (2D)
- 02-029 JUNGLE DEMO Great graphics and screen sound effects
- 02-030 PITCHER'S HOUSE No, not a pitching arm, it's KICKER

REMEMBER TO STATE ATARI PD

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WILL anybody please help me in getting off Level 5 "the office" on last Ninja 2 and what to do for levels 6-8 Help greatly appreciated Write to B.D'Shea, 12 Summers town Rd, Wilson, Cork, Ireland.

ATARI LYNX owners help is at hand. Fed up with no-one reviewing games for your machine then send SAE to Andrew Reid, 63 Croftway, Selby, North Yorks. Please write and support.

C64 Frank Brunos Boxing codes wanted Pay £1.50 for all of the eight codes Tel: 711817 Earldon as soon as possible. Has anyone got a poke for the C64 version of Operation Wolf or any tips to get past the third level Urgently needed. Address Mr Taylor 125 Kingston Rd Earldon Coventry.

Hints and Tips wanted on any Sega Master System game. Contact Ryan on 0924-252825 after 6pm.

I can help you with the following games :- Ultima 4, Leisure Suit Larry 1,2,3 Police Quest 2, Kings Quest land 4, Space Quest land 3, and Dungeons Master. Also can someone please supply me with some hints for Champions of Krym and Ultima 5. If anyone is needing help send SAE to Greg Johnson, "Queenie" Roma, PO Box 138, Norrendland 4455 Australia.

Help the Paws has me up the wall. Can anyone help me with this plus San Dog and Catch 23. Write to C.Leah, 70 Pargrovet, Birchills, Walsall, WS2 8RP

USER

Got an IBM Combat? Fly the Simfly Club SAE please for info@pe 2 Hensley Manor, Raincliffe Ave, Scarborough YO12 5BU.

NOTICE!

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ADVENTURELINE

Stuck in an adventure? Write in with the name of the game and the nature of your problem. Be as specific as possible and I'll do my best to answer (on these pages only so no SAEs please), and if I don't know the answer, I know a man who.....! News, tips, gossip, anecdotes and adventuring trivia are also all most welcome. Write to me, Pat Winstanley, Adventureline, Pink Box, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU

NOW HEAR THIS!

If you want to contribute to these pages, get your pen out and start scribbling! Particularly welcome are short, self-contained hints and simple problem solutions. I'm also interested to hear of PD and Shareware programs - the best will be reviewed (space permitting), and that could win you undying fame...or shame! Take the risk!

LEISURE SUIT LARRY 2

Continuing Augustus De Silva's solution

Having visited the barber your hair should go long and blonde. Go west to the nudist beach, get the bikini bottom on the rock then go east and south. Wait once in the restaurant then leave. Wait then go to the guest room and to the dressing area near the window (this is embarrassing).

Wear the bikini and put either your money or the soap in the bikini top. Go to the barbecue to be waxed. Pass the KGB agents (they won't recognise you). Now go east to the edge of the cliff and change back to normal. Once at the aeroplane drop the flower for the KGB agents then enter.

Go west then north and sit inside the barbers. If you bump into a woman don't go with her. Get your hair cut then go east and east again. Wait at the baggage hall then pick up the bag with the bombs in it. After the explosion buy a ticket then show your passport and go east again. Read the sign and order a blue plate special, getting the hairpin from the meal when it arrives. Eat the food then use the machine on the right to get a parachute.

Go north and take the pamphlet, give the ticket in and go east. Once you sit down get the sick bag then give the pamphlet to your friend Ken. Stand up, go east, put on your parachute, use the pin on the right then push handle to open door.

CAPTIVE

A few hints to get you started.

Last month we looked at general tips and techniques to get started, and some of the pitfalls to avoid. This time we'll examine some of the goodies you can buy and find and how to use them.

Codes:

Two types of men, professors and guards, wander around the bases carrying clipboards. Both types of men are quite easy to kill - they won't attack you unless they are hurt first, at which time they become vicious. The professors drop codes for probes while the guards drop those for the gates and wall openings.

Not all codes are found near their point of use, some are even on different floors. Every time you find a new code, write it down CAREFULLY. There's nothing more frustrating than selling a clipboard only to find your notes are incorrect - yes, it did happen to me! Codes used to open gates or remove walls can be re-used to close them again (for word codes simply retype the code while for patterns simply spoil the arrangement).

Maps and Optics and Cameras:

As soon as possible, buy optics II, III and IV and a camera. Used in combination you will have a powerful method of finding your way around and spotting trouble before it hits you. To set up the camera, simply drop it on the floor ahead of you and it will spring to life.

Make sure the monitor is connected then simply click in its centre to move the camera forward and click on the arrows to swivel left or

right. Doors and walls will stop it but it can cross fire and water and walk through most monsters. (In some places there are invisible walls which block your progress. If you appear to be stopped by a glass wall simply smash it.)

Using the camera you can check out a new area with no risk. Pressing the green button changes the display and shows a small picture of the camera's viewpoint as you would see it. Pressing the red button detonates the camera which then damages any monster on the same square.

The Route Finder is used in the open to point to the base door or your lander, while inside the base it points the fastest way to the exit - wear it before you blow up the generators. The Radar gives early warning of monsters by displaying the floor ahead with any monsters shown as light squares. This is especially useful for the economical use of ammunition when shooting through holes.

The Mapper is VITAL although it takes some getting used to. As you move around it shows areas you have visited in some detail while unvisited and areas of darkness are black. One thing to watch for are holes in the floor and ceiling which don't hold a ladder. The upper ones are extremely difficult to spot by eye but show as stairs on the mapper.

The display can also be marked by clicking

LET ME KNOW!

If there's any special subject you'd like to see covered in Adventureline, then let me know at the address in the panel on the left. I'm particularly interested in any comments on the newer adventures, such as Sorcerers Get All The Girls, Wonderland, and Timequest. Is there ANYBODY still playing the old, traditional adventures?

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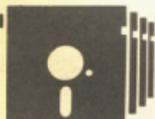
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ACE DEALS

Sales are in full swing throughout the **Virgin Megastore/Games Centre** chain, with some appetising reductions on a number of game

Spectrum Holobyte's *Falcon*, £19.99 on the Amiga - a cut of £10 from the original price. Similarly, *Dungeon Master* is also being sold at £10 off for both ST and Amiga versions, while *Harpoon* on the PC is going for £29.99.

Other titles from the Mirrorsoft stable are also going for a song, although stocks were limited when the sale began, so you may have to hunt through a couple of Virgin Games Centres to find them. There's a fiver off *Cadaver* (ST and Amiga, now £19.99), *TV Sports Basketball* (PC, £24.99) and *Wolfpack* (Amiga, £24.99), with £10 off the PC version of *Wolfpack* at £24.99.

Or perhaps you fancy some Accolade titles for less than £5? Virgin has limited quantities of the following: *Fast Break* (Amiga), *Day of the Viper* (Amiga), *Third Courier* (PC), *Don't Go Alone* (PC) and *Steel Thunder* (PC) - all selling for £4.99. And these Accolade games are going for £9.99: *Grand Prix Circuit* (Amiga), *Test Drive II* (Amiga) and *Jack Nicklaus's Golf* (Amiga and PC). These are just some of the items currently discounted in Virgin's Games Centres - and there are plenty of non-software sale items in the stores as well.

HARD SELLS

If it's hardware rather than software bargains that you're looking for, take a trip north to the **Computer Store** chain (details of branches below). Here you'll find the Commodore Amiga Screen Gems pack has been reduced to £39.99, plus all buyers will get 10 software vouchers at £1 each to be spent in the store.

If you buy a Sega Megadrive at any Computer Store outlet, you'll be able to pick up a free game of your choice to the value of £34.99 - that's in addition to the game already bundled with the Megadrive. And Sega Master Systems have been reduced by £10 in all Computer Store branches.

Further north still, in the **ComputerShop/Byteware** chain of stores, there are special promotions

Our crossword went missing this month - many apologies. There's a quiz on page 111 to make up for it, and here's our regular bargain spotters section...

going on throughout February concerning Gremlin's *Team Suzuki* and Psygnosis's *Lemmings*. Check your nearest ComputerShop outlet for full details.

WHERE TO GO TO FIND THEM

You can find Computer Shop outlets in the Arndale Centre, Manchester; Newcastle, Leeds, Preston, Sunderland, Stockton and Nottingham. Also part of the Computer Shop chain are the two Games Store outlets in Carlisle and Middlesbrough, which stock role-playing games as well as computer software.

Virgin has its Games Centre outlets on London's Oxford Street (at Marble Arch, within the Megastore, and at no 100), Bristol, Kingston and Oxford, and also in Megastores in Belfast, Birmingham, Brighton, Cardiff, Dublin, Edinburgh, Glasgow (at Union St and Argyle St), Leeds, and Nottingham.

The Computer Store chain is based in Yorkshire, with shops at Printing Office St, Doncaster; Ipegate, Bradford; Trinity St Arcade, Leeds; Market Place, Huddersfield; Westmoreland St, Wakefield; St Sampson's Square, York; The Woolthos, Halifax; Market St, Barnsley; High Street, Scunthorpe; Pinstone Street, Sheffield, and the Broadmarsh Centre, Nottingham.

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SHOP WATCH!

Software seller Dirk Longhorn looks back on the good old, bad old days and offers a small prize to nostalgic freaks...

While clearing out an old desk from the office recently, I came across a collection of photographs from Autumn 1986. Initially my attention was focused on the way the shop itself had changed: most of the posters around the walls seemed to be promoting Ariolasoft products such as *Stealin*, *Archon*, *Racing Destruction Set* and an early icon-driven adventure, *Wild West*.

At the time I thought that those products were state of the art and essential purchases, but they sold like the proverbial sack of dead leaves dipped in urine, which is a shame. The software titles that really were doing the business were *Gauntlet*, *Jack the Nipper*, *Footballer of the Year*, and *Gunship*. Amazingly - or not - *Gunship* still sells well today on all formats, while the others have long since joined the budget boys on the bottom shelf and (quite right too) are submerged beneath the ever-increasing amount of £2.99 simulators.

The joystick section was dominated by one range: Cheetah. Even now, their two models (125 and Mach 1) still sell well, but nobody could claim the range has evolved in any way. Consequently their 'sticks appear (unfairly) dated in compari-

son to some of the 'triumph of the stylists' art' that are currently dominating that section.

The peripherals section was largely taken up with add-ons for Spectrums: replacement keyboards, joystick interfaces (three different types!), sound samplers, printer interfaces, MIDI interfaces, light pens, drum machines, Microdrives etc etc etc. The gob-smackingly staggering thing is how few of these devices actually worked adequately (or at all, in some cases).

By far the biggest change, though is in the choice of machines we offered for sale. In those days, you could buy the Sinclair Spectrum +2 for £149, the C64 'Connoisseur Pack' for £249, the Sinclair QL (a few left at £19), the C128 for £299 and two new kids on the block, the Atari 520STFM for £469 and the Amiga 1000 for... gasp...£1195. We don't appear to have stocked consoles in any form!

Nowadays of course the choice is huge and far more reasonably priced, but isn't it disturbing that so many of the class of '86 are still with us? Albeit at reduced prices? Where are the class of '90's Young Turks? Desperately promising to kick ass, was the ST and the Amiga were back then?

Sadly, the only new kids are coming from the console streets: the Megadrives, Super Famicones, Neo-Geos, PC Engines and the hand held delights of the Lynx, Game Boy, Game Gear, and Game Mate (try yelling that in certain pubs - 'Who wants to see my Game Mate!').

Unless one includes the PC clones, there has been NO new computer either readily available or waiting in the wings to replace some of the older examples in the public's affections - bad news for those of us who prefer a more complex user interface than a couple of buttons and a rocker pad:

One last thing - there was a game released at this time (at £49.99) called *Defender of the Crown* - I played it again before I wrote this piece and it really is time Mindscape (or whoever) re-released this little gem at a budget price. It's far too good to languish in a 'waiting room of fame' waiting for ACE to do a feature on it. Talking of which, John Minson's excellent review of *Ant Attack* stated that the follow-up by Sandy White was called *I of the Mask*, but it was actually *Zombie Zombie*, which had one of the most user-unfriendly loaders of all time: the volume AND the azimuth had to be spot-on for the average Specy to load it, which is possibly why it disappeared without trace.

In those days, Sandy White's programming feats were always credited to 'Sandy White &...' - who? A CDTV shirt to the sender of the first postcard to the shop address, marked Pink Pages Uploadwatch Compo, with the right answer.

ENCYCLOPAEDIA MICROMANNICA

Here it is...a list of those vital topics that every up-market gamer needs to have at his command. Just because you thrashed the host at two-player Tetris doesn't mean you'll be the star of the party. No chum, you need know-how. And here's where to find it....

Each entry has a brief explanation, followed by a reference to an issue, so that you can hunt down the full lucid, in-depth, ACE assessment.

At the time of writing, back issues are available for all issues from ACE 4 onwards except Aug88/11, Mar90/30, May90/32, Aug90/35 at the giveaway price of £2.50 each in the UK and £3.50 each for overseas. These prices include post and packaging (surface mail). Overseas readers wanting airmail delivery should enquire as to the cost at the address below, listing the issues required.

To order, clearly list the required issue numbers and send them, along with your full name and address and a cheque or postal order for the full payment made payable to ACE magazine, to the address below. If the issue you require is not available, the return of your payment may take some time - you are therefore strongly advised to telephone 0858 410510 before sending your order to check that the issue you require is still available.

ACE Back Issues, PO Box 500,
Leicester LE99 6AA.

• **ASAT (AVIONICS SITUATIONAL AWARENESS TRAINER)**, combat flight simulator for the

ACE Back Issues can expand your collection - and your mind. Here's a checklist of topics covered in previous mags...

US Air Force by Perceptronics. Uses Falcon software by Spectrum Holobyte/Mirrorsoft. Features include: networking for multi-player action, tactile feedback and fingertip weapon selection. [ACE14]

• **BATMAN DIGITAL JUSTICE** is the world's first interactive hypercomic by Pepe Moreno. "Digital is the art medium of the future." [ACE30]

• **BATTLETECH**, "the world's first complete computer simulation for play", featuring multi-player cockpits equipped with 40Mhz 16 million colour graphics processors, stereo spatial sound and lifelike controls as you command 31st century Mechs. [ACE28]

• **BIT BOPPER**, the world's first total audio-visual entertainment system by Technation. Alex Blok's cyberscratch bit-tripper packs twin 32-bit decks, Sony erasable optical disc and custom-made video samplers. [ACE19]

• **CD-I (Compact Disc Interactive)** is destined to become the entertainment and education medium of the 90's. [ACE9/21/22/24/32/33/35]. Check out Issue 30 for multi-media principles (hypermedia in particular) and issue 24 for a preview of the Philips CD-I system.

• **CDTV**, Commodore's attempt to bring multi-media to the mass-market. An Amiga with built-in

CD-ROM drive and CD-audio capability, redesigned to look like a VCR. [ACE34]

• **COSMIC OSMO**, the world's first hypergame courtesy of Cyan Software/Activision. Check out issue 23 for the first review, issue 24 for a feature on hypergames, and issue 30 for general hypermedia coverage. New Osmo CD-ROM version featured in issue 36.

• **FLARE TECHNOLOGY**, trio of talented Cambridge-based games hardware engineers. Their custom-designed Flare One micro formed the basis of the Konix console. [ACE11]

• **FUJITSU FM TOWNS**, a 32-bit 16 million colour computer with built-in CD-ROM drive. If you bought ACE 31 you could have won one! [ACE27]

• **HYPERGAMES** like Cosmic Osmo and Batman Digital Justice are paving the way for CD-I entertainment. [ACE24/30]

• **INMOS FLIGHT SIMULATOR**, the world's first multi-player Transputer game running at 23 frames per second on 11 Transputers. [ACE7]

• **INTEGRATED FLIGHT AND ENTERTAINMENT SERVICES SYSTEM**, Plessey's answer to boring plane journeys - video games displayed on the seat in front of you. [ACE25]

• **INTERACTIVE VIDEO TAPE**, an alternative to CD-I. [ACE26]

• **KONIX CONSOLE**, a powerful British console with revolutionary built-in joystick controller which could change into a steering wheel, motorbike handle or aeroplane yoke. Ultimately failed due to a lack of marketing money. Rumours suggest a new buyer is interested. [ACE18/25]

• **LIGHTSPEED SPRITES**, three researchers from Carnegie Mellon University, USA have developed an algorithm enabling them to generate graphical simulations of objects seen travelling at 99% of the speed of light. [ACE34]

• **MEDIA LAB**, Boston-based research institute with one simple brief - invent the future. People at this Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) facility are working on computer generated holograms, interactive computer newspapers and virtual reality man-machine interfaces. [ACE9]

• **NEO-GEO**, a new home- and arcade-based games console from SNK in Japan, with storage capacity for 64Mb games cartridges and IC card capability. ACE gave you an exclusive chance to win one in issue 34. [ACE32/34]

• **RENDERMAN**, the unique 3D graphics system by Pixar which creates polygons with photorealistic detail. [ACE35]

• **TURBOEXPRESS**, currently the best colour handheld console - a portable version of the NEC PC Engine, fully compatible with existing games cartridges. [ACE35]

GAMESBUSTING WITH TNT BACK ISSUES

If you're looking for game solutions, here's a reminder of some of the games we've carried solutions to in past issues of ACE. We'll update this list next month and also be giving you a more comprehensive listing of topics covered in back issues.

ISSUE 29
Dungeon Master Guide (part one) - Les Rigden
AD&D and Bard's Tale - Colin Taylor
Batman - the Movie - Adam Morley

ISSUE 30
Dungeon Master Guide (part

two)

ISSUE 31
Space Ace - David Williams and Chris West
Dungeon Master Guide (part three)
Future Wars - Phil Thompson

ISSUE 32
Dungeon Master Guide (part four, final part)
Complete guide to Y's - Jojo Cicero and Mark Cook

ISSUE 33
No guides or solutions, but loads of shortsies

ISSUE 34
Castle Master - Incentive
Midwinter - Microprose

Guide to hacking on the C64 (part one) - Jon

ISSUE 35
Drakken Guide (part one) - Adam Morley
Xenomorph (part one) - Alan Coates
Guide to hacking on the C64 (part two)

ISSUE 36
Defender of the Crown (mini players guide) - Paul Thomas
Lots of shortsies

ISSUE 37
Drakken (part two)
Xenomorph (part two)
Guide to hacking on C64 (part three)
The ACE guide to solutions.

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THE W A S T E E N D

CAN'T WE DO BETTER THAN CD ROM?

It could only happen in the computer business. We either spend our time and money trying to squeeze our games onto floppy disks, which are relatively expensive to produce when your game needs eight of them, and which can easily be copied by the unscrupulous, or we try and cram them into cartridges which cost a fortune and have limited capacity. And all the time we're sitting around telling each other that all will be well because soon we'll have this optical disk thingy called CD-ROM which can't be copied, carries oodles of data, and costs pennies to produce.

Unfortunately CD-ROM is a rubbishy standard based on a system devised by the music industry and quite incapable of delivering data fast enough to animate the complex screens of today's games. Instead of everyone getting together to produce a new CD standard, everyone is going off on their own to try and find ways of making CD-ROM go faster, using either add-on hardware like DVI that costs more than the drive itself, or else spending huge amounts of money trying to solve the problem in software and, as likely as not, getting nowhere fast.

The hideous truth is that CD-ROM just isn't good enough for gamers. We're still waiting for CD entertainment because everyone is still trying to make something of it. CDTV is a brave attempt, CDI an expensive one. Bitter reckons that the best thing to do would be to start all over, and design a basic optical storage system that gives us what we want. It wouldn't be a problem to produce - in fact one Lucasfilm employee claims he's already designed such a system on paper, giving the impression he did it during a lunch break.

But it won't happen. We'll still get those glorious CD games and yes, they will be everything they've been promised to be. They'll just cost us far more than they need have done because, at the heart of the system, that cranky old CD-ROM drive will be spinning away and the rest of the kaboodle will be straining to overcome its limitations.

You expect to hear a few sick stories in Las Vegas, but this one really takes the biscuit. Members of a UK software house booked into a hotel and demanded to see their room. It stank.

On closer inspection, the smell appeared to be coming from a dead body, stuffed between the mattress and the bedframe. I say, remarked one of the lucky lads, while the other was being sick in the bathroom, 'you obviously don't air your rooms nightly.'

The ASA (Advertising Standards Authority) has rejected a claim against ACE which alleged that

the FAST ad encouraging youngsters to grass on their criminal colleagues is neither indecent nor encouraging greed. 'We do not object', say the ASA, 'to the advertisement which in our view presents a light-hearted story to draw attention to a serious issue.' Thanks and, by the way, ACE does pass on the addresses of all those trying to 'swap lists' through the magazine to FAST.

Finally, our condolences to Ian Richardson of Gremlin, who was unable to fit into his Formula First car at the company's recent Brands Hatch launch. Rumour has it that the next Gremlin game will be...Range Rover Rally.

Blit blit

NEXT MONTH'S SHOCK HORROR

Can you take it? Next month's ACE features a red-hot exclusive report on a new form of games technology that's going to turn the entertainment world completely on its head. Going one step BEYOND virtual reality, ACE will be revealing in detail the extraordinary developments being carried out by Apollo Technology in Wales. If you thought VR was out of this world, this is going to blow your mind!

In a lighter vein, we will also be bringing you another of our 'Temporal Fax' features (remember Gamesworld?), this time reporting on the unusual - and mildly disgusting - biology of extra-terrestrial gamers. You have been warned....

You'll also be faced with some numbing facts about who gets your cash when you buy a game. Spending those pennies may never be the same again.

ACE April 91 Issue 43
On Sale March 8th

GIVE THIS FORM TO YOUR NEWSAGENT!

Dear Newsagent,
I am highly intelligent, refined, sophisticated, modest, truthful, and hold the world high score record on Defender. I understand that there may be a massive rush for copies of ACE next month due to their world exclusive feature on Apollo Technology (Wales). I must NOT miss out!

Please therefore reserve me a copy. I shall be eternally in your debt and promise not to report you to the Customs and Excise department for alleged VAT fraud, involving you in endless paperwork and probably resulting in a terminal double-ouster.

My name: _____
My address: _____

OOOPS!

Our monthly crossword took a dive this month and missed the press, for which many apologies. It will be back again next issue. This has meant some minor rearrangements in this month's Peak Pages: the Dealers section is now on page 119 and on page 111 you'll find a very tough quiz set by Stuart Hardy. If you reckon you know about games, this could change your mind very quickly! The answers and ratings will be published in next month's Pinks.

SCHWARZENEGGER

STARS IN THE MOVIE.
NOW YOU STAR IN THE GAME...

TOTAL RECALL

AS DOUG QUAID YOU HAVE BEEN HAUNTED BY RECURRING DREAMS OF ANOTHER LIFE ON MARS. YOU ARE DRAWN TO RECALL INCORPORATED, A UNIQUE TRAVEL SERVICE SPECIALIZING IN IMPLANTING FANTASIES INTO THE MINDS OF THOSE WHO DESIRE TO TURN THEIR DREAMS INTO REALITY.

THE EGO TRIP OF A LIFETIME

EXPERIENCE THE HORROR AS YOUR DREAMS TURN INTO HIDEOUS NIGHTMARES. SUDDENLY YOU'RE EVERY MOVE IS MONITORED BY WOULD-BE ASSASSINS. YOU DISCOVER THE SURREAL TRUTH.

YOU'RE NOT YOU - YOU'RE ME

YOU MUST TRAVEL TO MARS TO DISCOVER YOUR TRUE IDENTITY - YOUR MISSION IS NOW A JOURNEY OF NON-STOP ACTION, STRANGE MUTANTS, FUTURISTIC VEHICLES AND A STARTLING ARRAY OF WEAPONRY ALL CAPTURED IN SUPERBLY EXECUTED GRAPHICS AND A GAME PLAY THAT COMPLIMENTS THE SUCCESS OF THE

YEAR'S TOP MOVIE



...A NIGHTMARE
JOURNEY INTO THE
21ST. CENTURY

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NO-ONE HAD THE GUTS UNTIL NOW!

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Arcade action and a BIG finish. Infiltrate the criminal underworld - your mission is to seek and destroy the king pin of the MR BIG CORPORATION - if you get that far.

You'll have to outwit his enormous army of body guards... gangs of charisma-bygones in trench coats, the bullet brain with the build of a rhinoceros and the breath of a dung beetle; packs of vicious canine yuppies, the psychotic clown with an evil sense of humour - you'll die, but not laughing! Then there's the gas guzzling cadillac jock - a cool specimen, elbow hanging on the door rail - a serious looking piece in his hand and ready to blow you away as he rolls down main street leaving you coughing lead.

It's not all bad!... You've got a chopper to back you up, a mean, shiny street machine, some heavy metal hardware and some pretty neat moves. And what about the king pin... did I say he was Mr. Big? No, he's **MR BIG!**