

POPULAR Only 50p. Computing WEEKLY

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NEWS DESK

Amstrad outsells
IBM PCs

June launch for new
Commodore Amigas?

1986 best sellers:
Gallup's chart
of the year

Melbourne House sells out to Mastertronic

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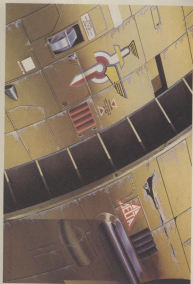
Chocks away
with Tomahawk
and Gunship

see page 15
for details

SOFTWARE

Locoscript errors
removed with
Locospell





DELTA

By Stavros Fasoulas

CBM64/128 Cassette £ 9.99
Disk £14.99

Produced and written by
Stavros Fasoulas
4199A/Burford Road, London W10 3PG

Published by CANTON COMPUTERS, Ltd 22, Redfern Way, Redford, Edinburgh EH1 2JF. Tel: 011 854 2288

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Mastertronic buys Melbourne House

MELBOURNE House, publisher of *The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings* files, has been sold to budget publisher Mastertronic.

The sale gives Mastertronic its first full price software label, which will continue to be called Melbourne House, and will operate separately from Mastertronic's own software activities.

Over £1 million

Melbourne House (Publishers) has sold Mastertronic over £1 million, but the Australian side of the company, Beam Software game developers and programmers and IBM Australia (distributor) is not included in the sale, and will continue to be run by Alfred Milgrom and Naomi Eisen, Melbourne House's founders.

However, the Australian holding company for the group, Melbourne House Pty, will change its name - rights to the title 'Melbourne House' were included in the sale.

Melbourne House staff are likely to move from their building in Hampton Wick, Surrey, to Mastertronic's offices in London, and some redundancies are inevitable.

"Melbourne House will remain editorially autonomous, and in some degree their products will be competing with ours," said Frank Norman, director of Mastertronic. He confirmed that Mastertronic would continue to source software from Beam in Australia, to be published by Melbourne House.

Norman is also considering the possibility of releasing

some of Melbourne House's impressive back catalogue at reduced prices. "The back catalogue certainly has value, not necessarily at a new budget price, although I'd love to see a £1.99 file - there's a lot of life left in that."

No books

Mastertronic does not intend to take over the book publishing side of the company.

For Melbourne House, director Alfred Milgrom stated, "Naomi and I will retain our full interest in Melbourne House Australia. We are simply selling the UK company, with which we will continue to have a close relationship."

He added, "This move will allow us to expand our licensing possibilities in the US and Japan."

PCW protector

SEAL 'N TRIP is a soft moulded plastic cover for the PCWB225, to guard against damaging the keyboard with spilled coffee or other liquids.

The clear plastic stretches over the keyboard to fit it exactly, and costs £7.50 (plus £1.25 p and p) from Radio Enterprises.

The company also runs a printer ribbon re-inking service. Details from Radio at Kingsway Court, 270 St Margaret's Road, Twickenham, Middlesex TW1 1PP, 01-892 0215.

Acorn OEM's grow

ACORN's OEM operations continue to grow with the news that the news agency Reuters has now taken delivery of its 2000th Acorn



Master circuit board

Processor Module, based on the BBC micro and based local area network.

Acorn's custom systems division is now making the BBC Master Series micro available in component form for companies who wish to have the machines customised for their specific needs.

US firms to join Microprose

MORE American companies are set to cross the Atlantic to establish their own UK divisions and offices, following Microprose's split from US Gold at the end of last year, and the set-up of its UK arm in Gloucestershire.

Microprose itself, the American simulation specialist, is on the point of announcing a joint venture agreement in this country with a "major American entertainment software company".

Microprose's UK manager,

Stewart Bell, would not name names but expects a formal announcement to be made this week.

"We have signed a long term agreement with them to joint venture in the UK. This company will have their own building and staff here, but we will be doing their sales and marketing."

The identity of the company has been variously suggested as Dassault, Mindscape, Eyras. However, Bell says categorically that he has had no discussions with Eyras, whose contact with US Gold still has some months to run.

Stewart Bell of Microprose



Amstrad topples IBM in survey

AMSTRAD ousted IBM in the business market during December, according to a survey conducted by market research company Ikonics.

The survey gives Amstrad a 26.7% of sales, with IBM holding 24.9%.

However, the survey did not restrict itself to sales of PC and PC compatibles. Amstrad's PCW machines were included in the figures, as were other IBM machines.

It also did not include consumer retail outlets, such as Dixons, nor direct sales from the companies themselves. These two factors may well go some way to cancelling each other out.

For Amstrad, a spokesman commented, "We are obviously delighted that our push towards the business and corporate market has paid off so soon - within three months of launch."

Mastertronic sets up coin-op label

MASTERTRONIC has had a busy week. While the UK side of the company was acquiring Melbourne House, the US division has been setting up an operation, called Arcade Systems, to produce games for the arcade.

Arcade Systems will be based in California's Silicon Valley, and is already looking for video games developers in the US.

1st word on PC1512

THE Amstrad PC1512 has gained another word processor: GST's for Word Plus, an implementation of its RT word processor.

GST's Chris Sotterbauer commented, "As Word Plus has been written specifically to make full use of the Amstrad's features, including the mouse and Gern windowing software."

The Word Plus will cost £76.95. Details from GST at Cambridge Science Park, Millis Road, Cambridge CB4 4WE, 0264 81981.

Modem House calls in police and liquidator

MODEM HOUSE, the Exeter-based communications equipment seller, has gone into voluntary liquidation, at a time when complaints are flying back and forth among UK modem manufacturers, which have led to two police investigations by Devon CID.

One allegation which is being followed up, has been made by Exeter-based Modem House against another company, the second

has been made against Modem House's director Keith Ross.

Detectives Sergeant Hooper, investigating the complaints, could not give any details: "It's early days yet, and it would be wrong to say anything now. I can't tell whether either complaint will be substantiated, but there is an inquiry."

"Two complaints are being investigated, one made by Ross, and one being made against him."

Keith Ross himself confirmed that Modem House had called the police in. "They've been investigating thefts from our company since December 14." However, he denied all knowledge of the second inquiry.

Modem House is the trading name of Sci-Tek Future Science and Technology which is being wound up under the 1986 Insolvency Act. A creditors' meeting was held on February 10.

Hubbard plays Delta

THE musical talents of Rob Hubbard can be heard on *Delta*, the second title from Thalamus, which scored a major hit with *Saxxon*.

Delta is a no-holds-barred shoot 'em up for the Commodore 64 at £9.99 (tape) and £14.99 (disc). It is due for release at the end of the month.

Heathrow on PCW

HEATHROW Software is converting two of its older programs to the PCW658.

Southern Delta, the two-motivie simulation, and *Heathrow Air Traffic Control* are due for release in the next two weeks, and will be able on a single 3 inch disc for £16.95.

Mike Mads - Heathrow author



Software Hotlines

Ever felt like trucking along the freeway with the top down and the requisite bludge in the passenger seat, complete with hair blowing in the wind? Then you ought to be playing *Out Run*, the latest cover-up hit from Sega.

The great graphics and sound track has got the California dreamers queuing up around here - the same cannot be said of the latest multi-player game, however. The gamers have given *Roll and Run*, a one to four player football game from Taito, the red thumbs down - and who can blame them with the USA rated as 'the best running team'. Maybe that should be a running joke.

All the America's Cup coverage on Channel 4 depicted a great way to spend the whole of January - on a beach down under. If only *Sailing from Antipodion* could simulate that.

What you have to settle for, however, is the most sophisticated ocean racing simulation to date, which allows you to race it in competition with someone other nations.

Worse by the ODE programming team, the sea effects are so good they ought to provide a bucket with the thing. My first impressions? If you like that kind of thing - it's swell.

Or should that be swell - which is how *CRJ* might well describe its latest foraging



Sailing on C64

deal, based on the deeply strange IFC comic *Dist!*

This license has been, shall we say, knocking about a bit, mainly because the comic is so bizarre, but *CRJ* has been brave enough to take up the challenge.

The actual game, *Publish After* lost on Commodore 64 late March, Spectrum and Amstrad after) will have you playing the part of Uncle Pig, in which you must build up pages of the magazine, collected from these sub-games, each featuring an infamous *Dist* character.

Delta Four is setting up a new Southampton-based adventure label called *Abstract Concepts*, headed by mystery woman, philosopher, satirist/romancer turned author, Anna Peoples.

Abstract has been specifically created to provide a medium for adventures that tackle 'more serious issues', like its first release *lost March-1st* *Enchantress* (see screen shot below), in which you control the destiny of a young lass, Adara, who is out to avenge the death of her family - violence being one of the issues being explored here, I'd guess. Sounds interesting.

John Cook

Enchantress - the serious side of Delta 4



Adara stood on the dreary plain, plans of dreams at the entrance to the castle. In the north, the city of the Targans and the towering citadel of Arion, crowned high above a granite ridge at the edge of the plain.

THE HOUSE WAS DARK - LEAVE THE HOUSE - THE HOUSE WAS DARK - LEAVE THE HOUSE



machines with over 250K Ram), line and box drawing, improved speed, and 40 programmable function keys.

Wordstar Professional Release 4 is set for release at the end of March, and will cost £288.95 (inclusive of Vat). Existing users of *Wordstar*, *Wordstar Professional* and *Revealer 3* will, however, be able to upgrade at £99 up to the end of July.

Yie Ar tops charts for 1986



MARTIAL arts have topped the annual charts for the second year running, according to Gallup's compilation of the best-selling titles for 1986.

While *Moby of the Exploding Star* was the runaway number one in 1985, last year's top game was Imagines' *Yie Ar Kung Fu*.

1986 was a good year for Imagines, the Ocean label. Its

Deer Hunt also appears high up in the annual chart, at number four.

Elite Systems matched up three out of the top six of 1986, with *Comcast*, *Ghost and Goblins* and *Paperboy*. While Mastertronics has 11 titles in the top 20, including the evergreen *Asterix One Simulator*, second only to *Yie Ar Kung Fu*.

The 20 best-selling games

last year were as follows: 1) *Yie Ar Kung Fu* (Imagines); 2) *Asterix One Simulator* (Mastertronics); 3) *Comcast* (Elite); 4) *Green Beret* (Imagines); 5) *Phant (Fantasy)* (Spectrum); 6) *Ghost and Goblins* (Imagines); 7) *Paperboy* (Both Sides); 8) *Parody* (Ocean); 9) *Alien Zone* (Mastertronics); 10) *Ninja Master* (Firebird); 11) *Wrestle Game* (Boys/US Gold); 12) *Spellbound* (Mastertronics); 13) *ACE* (Cassidy); 14) *Grues* (Atari); 15) *Kang* (Both Mastertronics); 16) *Zaxxon* (Atari/Stern); 17) *Cliff* (Firebird/Assesoft); 18) *One Man and his Dog*; 19) *Action* (Elite (Mastertronics)); 20) *Computer* (Elite (Boys)). 21) *The Last H8* (Mastertronics); 22) *King of the Mator* (Data East/US Gold); 23) *Speed King*; 24) *BMX Aces*; 25) *Night Archer* (all Mastertronics); 26) *Play Gold* (all titles this figure); 27) *Moby of the Exploding Star* (Imagines); 28) *Daughter* (US Gold); 29) *Dragon's Lair* (Software Projects); 30) *Cliff* (Stern/Newsday).

Incidentally, 1986's number one, *Yie Ar*, was number 21 on the 1985 chart.

Mirrorsoft has new strategy with PSS

THE Mirror Group, better known for its national newspapers, is expanding its interest in the software industry with the acquisition of a majority stakeholding in PSS, the strategy games publisher.

PSS will now belong to the same stable as Mirrorsoft and software wholesaler Mirrorsoft.

Gary May, co-founder and director of PSS commented that he felt little would change at the company as a result of the deal. "We will continue as a separate company, we are keeping our offices in Coventry, we're not losing any staff, in fact, the only real difference is that we and Mirrorsoft will be co-operating in joint marketing ventures."

PSS's next new titles will be *Blamrock* and *Fortress America*, both, of course, strategy simulations.

New Amigas set to appear in June

COMMODORE'S new Amigas, the A500 and A2000 (see *Popular Computing Weekly*, January 28) are now widely expected to be scheduled for launch at the Commodore show in June this year at London's Hooral.

No specific comment was available from the company about the launch dates, and the new machines will not be in evidence at next week's *Which Computer?* show, where Commodore will demonstrate new business software for the current Amiga, and a new range of PC AT compatible micros, the PC-40 series.

This follows the publication of improved financial results for the company for the quarter ending December 31, 1985.

Commodore International reached a profit of \$21.8 mil-

lion (£14.8 million) on sales of \$239.6 million (£180.5 million) over the three months. The company with a higher sales figure (\$339.2 million, £226 million), but a net loss of \$53.2 million (£35.5 million) for the corresponding period in 1985.

Commodore International's president, Thomas Barragan, commented, "These results further demonstrate a profit turnaround and have contributed to a significant improvement in the company's financial position."

On the subject of machine sales, he added, "Unit sales of the Amiga and IBM PC compatible computers rose at the highest quarterly levels since the launch of these products with the Commodore 64C and 128 continuing to comprise the majority of our unit mix."

Activision's losses increase

ACTIVISION, the games software company based in Mountain View, California, is continuing to show a financial loss, with the news that its third quarter results report a \$3.8 million (£2.6 million) deficit. This is despite an increase in sales from \$5.8 million (£3.8 million) to \$6.6 million (£4.4 million).

Apple tablet

THE Karta (K/100) is a cordless pen plus graphics tablet add-on which has been designed specifically to operate with the new Apple II/GS machines. Manufactured in the US, it will be sold in the UK by Techex, of Basing, London, for £295.

Techex also distributes Karta's *Mousemate Plus*, also a



tablet plus cordless pen, but for IBM compatible and EBCDIC equipped computers, at £235.

Details from Techex at Meriton House, 100 Hanger Lane, Basing, London W5 7EJ, 01-891 0121.

PC Gem graphics

KJUMA Computers has followed up the release of *K-Speed 2* with *K-Graph 2*, a Gem-based business graphics package for IBM compatibles, but targeted specifically towards the Amstrad PC range.

The program will display graphics data in the form of pie charts, bar and area graphs, and a variety of bar graph types. It will also integrate with the spreadsheet *K-Speed 2*.

K-Graph 2 costs £49.95. Details from Kuma at 12 Henslowe Park, Pangbourne, Berks, 07367 4335.

Sue Townsend THE GROWING PAINS OF ADRIAN MOLE

PROGRAM BY LEVEL 9



Virgin Games presents the computer version of "The Growing Pains of Adrian Mole!" Based on the best-selling novel series by Sue Townsend, this TV series that gains almost you to help Adrian achieve to day. You can play it on your computer with a joystick or mouse, and you will be shown a reward for as long as possible through a variety of multiple-choice questions. The four-year game series is available on the following treatment, software, and is available for 7 different computers.

TBC © versions not available.

Produced by Mosley Publishing Ltd.

The Growing Pains of Adrian Mole is available from physical software stores. If you have trouble finding one nearby, directly from Virgin Games.

Please enclose the software you require and send this to our office: Virgin Games Mail Order, 2-4 Victoria Yard, Parklands Road, Luton, MK1 1J 2EQ. Make cheques or crossed postal orders payable to Virgin Games Ltd. Please do not send notes or coins.

Computer Platform	PRICE	RELEASE DATE
Acorn 486/1000	£24.95	15 February 1997
Commodore 128/6400	£24.95	15 February 1997
Amstrad CPC 486	£24.95	15 February 1997
Amstrad CPC 640	£24.95	15 February 1997
Amstrad CPC 486/1000	£24.95	15 February 1997
Amstrad CPC 486/1000	£24.95	15 February 1997
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Money Enclosed

Star Wars licence won by Domark

DOMARK has chalked up another deal that is certain to catch the attention of the games playing public, the rights to produce Star Wars, The Empire Strikes Back and Return of the Jedi all multi-million dollar greasing movies, as home computer games.

The titles had already been released as coin-op machines by Atari (from which Domark bought the licence) and games cartridges by Parker, but this will be the first time they have appeared on a home computer in the UK.

Planned as a trilogy, the first release, Star Wars, will be based on the Atari arcade game, but "modernised and refurbished," for the home computer market.

Baird Domark's Dominic Wheeler, "Although it's quite old, it's a damn good shoot-em up... one of few I've actually played."

The personnel for the programming team have yet to be finalised, but the primary contender is described as "a Star Wars fanatic."

Domark is also hoping to incorporate digitised speech into the home computer version - a major feature of the original. The title will be released on Spectrum, Amstrad CPC and Commodore 64 - and Atari ST - "at the PCW show or beyond," priced at "£9.95 or less."

Apple cuts prices amid 'open Mac' rumours

APPLE has devalued a £300 price on its Macintosh Plus - but is giving no reason for the unexpected generosity.

However, the drop from £2,299 to £1,999 coincides with renewed rumours of the long-awaited 'open Mac' - a machine designed to be expandable in the manner of the Apple II and IBM PC.

A report in the latest issue of trade newspaper Microscope says that Apple has been showing the new machine to dealers, and tips a worldwide launch in the first week of March.

Microscope lists the provision of six slots to accept expansion boards, a 68020 processor (the full 32-bit version of the 68000), 4MB of Ram, a quadruple density disc drive giving 1.8 megabytes of storage, a colour display in A4 size, and a three-bay design.

At various times, all of these have been suggested as improvements to the Mac design. But the most recent reports from the US strongly suggest that Apple would be unable to implement all of them in the next Mac.

A more likely design open would include some kind of expandability, particularly for

an IBM-compatible board, enhanced disc storage, and possibly a larger screen.

Apple watchers have scored the idea of a colour Mac at this stage, although the inclusion of the 68020 processor is a strong possibility.

Microscope suggests a retail price "starting around" £7,000. This, however,



would make the machine the most expensive in the world, and Apple has already had its fingers burned with a computer with that distinction, the Lisa.

A more realistic price would be considerably less than £5,000.

Peter Worklock

Atari bids for wider availability

ATARI UK is currently in negotiations with a number of major high street retailers to improve the availability of its machines, from the newly announced 800X1 upgradeable

games machine to the STs, in larger stores.

"We are talking about the Atari range being available in the high street, in Dixons, WH Smith, Comet, Marks, Woolworths and so on, by the summer. We are also looking for stronger support from independent retailers," an Atari spokesman commented.

He stressed, however, that it was early days yet, and that talks would not be finalised until later this year.

He also mentioned that Atari will be introducing its Mega ST models - 2Mb and 4Mb models - at the Atari Computer Show which begins on April 24.

DIARY DATES

FEBRUARY

17-20 February
Which Computer? Show
 NEC, Birmingham
 Details: Mainly business exhibitors
 Price: £5
 Organiser: Culture Exhibitions,
 01 891 5851

MARCH

20-23 March
The Electron & BBC Micro User Show
 L8001, Manchester
 Details: Software, hardware and peripherals for Acorn's micro
 Price: £3 adult, £2 children, £1 discount for advance booking
 Organiser: Database Exhibitions,
 081 458 8835

APRIL

24-26 April
The Atari Computer Show
 Festival, London W6
 Details: First chance for Atari to show off exciting new software
 Price: £3 adult, £2 children, £1 discount for advance booking
 Organiser: Database Exhibitions,
 081 458 8835

MAY

3-5 May
First Micro Microcomputer Show
 Kensington Exhibition Centre
 Details: Software, hardware, peripherals for consumer users
 Price: £14
 Organiser: RAMSO International Exhibitions, 01 938 3382

8-10 May
The Electron & BBC Micro User Show
 New Hartshead Hall, London
 Details: Software, hardware and peripherals for Acorn's micro
 Price: £3 adult, £2 children, £1 discount for advance booking
 Organiser: Database Exhibitions,
 081 458 8835

Prices, dates and venues of shows can vary, and you are therefore strongly advised to check with the show organizer before attending. *Popular Computer* (which cannot accept responsibility for any alterations to show arrangements made by the organizer.



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PLOT THE BALL

COMMERCIAL • 128KBIT

Plot the Ball is a computer simulation of pool. It is designed to be played on a Spectrum computer. The game is played on a pool table with a cue ball and 15 numbered balls. The objective is to pocket the balls in a certain order.

ASIRUS SETTLER

COMMERCIAL • 128KBIT

Asirus Settler is a computer simulation of a space colony. It is designed to be played on a Spectrum computer. The game is played on a planet with various resources and a population of settlers. The objective is to manage the colony and expand it.

ASIRUS SETTLER is a computer simulation of a space colony. It is designed to be played on a Spectrum computer. The game is played on a planet with various resources and a population of settlers. The objective is to manage the colony and expand it.

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Not dead yet

With regard to Keith Alison's letter (January 29), attacking Mr Smith's letter (January 15), may I say that I too read Mr Smith's remarks and although I believe he could have been more tactful, I agreed with his sentiments.

I do not wish to get into one of those "My machine is better than yours" arguments. I would just like to put a few things into perspective.

Firstly, you will never see MSX games in the charts, as Gallup uses stores such as W H Smith and Manx to compile its chart, neither of which stock MSX games. Most of the MSX software in my area is bought at specialist retailers, or Woolworths (Electronic games), which are not on the Gallup list.

True, if you take the UK sales figures for MSX machines, it isn't the biggest seller, but MSX Computing, the latest, dominated the market to be about 280,000 units.

It is the European market which encourages software houses to convert titles to MSX (LJ Gold, Ocean, Mantic, etc). MSX worldwide has sold far better than many are willing to admit.

I class myself as a lucky owner of an MSX machine, and believe the British press has never given MSX a fair hearing.

Lastly, for a mere £85, I can upgrade my MSX to MSX 2 specifications - the bargain of a lifetime.

While MSX is being talked about, it proves it isn't dead.

Keith Neal
Simsbury
Luton

QL mathematics

I am a Sinclair QL owner and therefore very grateful for your support of this computer with regular publication of programs and small routines.

I noted the procedure to calculate factorials in Bytes and Pages in the issue for January 6 with interest. However, the author has used more code than necessary because one of the elegant features of SuperBasic is not used. The ability of a procedure to call itself (recursion) can be used to advantage in calculating factorials as in the first routine appended below.

But there is a price to be paid for elegance. The recursive routine takes about three times as long to evaluate 3000 as the one you published (six seconds in two seconds). The second routine below is almost as economical in program space as the first and evaluates 3000 at about the same speed as the published version.

The upper limit for all routines is the same (3000) since 3011 exceeds 1.67895E18, the maximum number for the

arithmetic evaluator of the QL.

W P J Daily
Purley
Surrey

```

10 DEF PROC FACTORIAL (N)
20 IF N=0 THEN RETURN 1
30 N=N-1
40 GOTO 10
50 END PROC
60 PRINT FACTORIAL (3000)
70 END

```

```

10 DEF PROC FACTORIAL (N)
20 IF N=0 THEN RETURN 1
30 N=N-1
40 GOTO 10
50 END PROC
60 PRINT FACTORIAL (3000)
70 END

```

A truly kind-hearted person

I should like to make some comments concerning your news item, "Public Domain Libraries order threat in UK" (Paper, January 26).

I am currently involved with CPUG (the Independent Commodore Products Users Group), where I am writing some articles on Pascal. CPUG has an extremely good range of its own PD software which is available free to members. Just send the 5-pence formatted disc and return postage and packing and they will then copy the software and return it quickly (normally within a week).

There is a full range of soft-

ware for all the Commodore machines: the 64 and 128 in native 128 mode and in CP/M. There is also a range of PD software which runs on Commodore's own PC compatibles.

The articles I have written on Pascal have formed the basis of a range of PD software written in Pascal. Normal CPUG library conditions relate to the supply of this software. There is absolutely no way I would charge for these discs.

The whole idea of PD software is that it should be free. As a programmer, I would not like anyone making money from programs I had donated to a PD library.

Mark Day
Aylesbury

Searching C64 musicians

I am setting up a programming team for C64 every day within the user group and am looking for talented programmers. Musical programmers are greatly needed, as are graphic designers, game programmers, etc.

If anyone is interested in joining a programming team, could they please contact me at 81 Meadow Road, Havering, near Waltham, West Yorkshire WF4 2PJ.

Stephen Suterfield
Commodore user group

Puzzle

Puzzle No 245

In the following crossnumber puzzle, numbers have to be fitted into the grid. Can you find the correct values for 'A' and 'B'?

Across
1 A * B
4 2A + B²
5 A²

Down
2 B, C
3 B
6 A

1	2	3
4		
5		

Solution to Puzzle No 240

The symbols are [B * B + 1 / (B + 1) representing 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 respectively.

The main clue is in the multiplication, and the relative positions of the various digits. So

substituting letters for the symbols we get

A B C times D C E equals B A A D A

These variables are used in the MacAberlogos in the program, the resulting product being identified to determine if the various values correspond with the values outlined in the letters. The product is also tested to check that the product (third) and fifth digits are alike. From this, the first digit D, 1, 3, 7 and 9 are identified. In the test there is a two-stage date given, the first digit must be a 2 since both 1 and 3 have already been identified.

The letters A, 5, 8 and 6, A + plus + equals +, the + can only equal 4 and the + must be 6. Therefore in the line given the double bracket which indicates the minutes must equal for 58. Only the 7 remains which is the 5.

Winner of Puzzle 240

This week's winner is George Gledhill of Yorkisbary, Shrews, who will receive £10.

Notes

The closing date for Puzzle 245 is March 6.

Answers should include a program listing if possible.

1	20 200 200 20 0
2	20 200 200 20 0
3	20 20 200 200 200
4	20 200 200 20 0
5	20 20 200 200 200 200 200
6	20 20 200 200 200 200 200
7	20 20 200 200 200 200 200 200
8	20 20 200 200 200 200 200 200
9	20 20 200 200 200 200 200 200
10	20 20 200 200 200 200 200 200
11	20 20 200 200 200 200 200 200
12	20 20 200 200 200 200 200 200
13	20 20 200 200 200 200 200 200
14	20 20 200 200 200 200 200 200
15	20 20 200 200 200 200 200 200
16	20 20 200 200 200 200 200 200
17	20 20 200 200 200 200 200 200
18	20 20 200 200 200 200 200 200
19	20 20 200 200 200 200 200 200
20	20 20 200 200 200 200 200 200
21	20 20 200 200 200 200 200 200
22	20 20 200 200 200 200 200 200
23	20 20 200 200 200 200 200 200
24	20 20 200 200 200 200 200 200
25	20 20 200 200 200 200 200 200
26	20 20 200 200 200 200 200 200
27	20 20 200 200 200 200 200 200
28	20 20 200 200 200 200 200 200
29	20 20 200 200 200 200 200 200
30	20 20 200 200 200 200 200 200

Leviathan: bigger and better

At first glance Leviathan looks like Super Jason, which it is only because it's a squallion times better.

Taking the Gullam-style concept of scolding backgrounds and fierce opponents to new and dizzy heights, Leviathan features great music and sound effects by David Whittaker, along with stylish design and programming by English Software's in-house team.

There are three landscapes to explore, each so complex

that they have to be loaded in separately from cassettes, taking about a minute for each new load. The Greekscapes with its impressive statues is particularly worth seeing.

Each stage starts with a display of the ten types of baddies you have to defeat to complete the level, and each landscape features revolving radar, vicious anti-aircraft projectors, lots of facilities, fuel cubes, landing strips, and some nice perspective and sprite priority work.

Your fighter flies and spins



and swings, and since you can fly and fire to either side as well as backwards and forwards in search of the rapidly-moving enemy, this game is a lot tougher than any similar shoot-'em-up. Think you're clever because you've finished Gullam? Just try this one!

Popular Appeal ★★★★★
Chris Jackson

Program Leviathan
Media CDM 64
Price £9.95
Supplier English Software, 1 Ports Passes, Manchester M3 2PL (061-809 1000).

Get writing – get Popular

Popular Computing Weekly always welcomes contributions from its readers for articles, features, and program listings.

Whether you want to write articles, see your programming masterpieces in print, pass on some words of wisdom, or simply let off steam, there's space in the magazine for you.

Ideas for feature articles, or completed articles, should be sent to Christina Enskine. All aspects of home computing are considered, but we cannot feebly accept anything longer than 2,000 words, so brief is best. It's worth checking by phone or letter first that your article will be suitable. Payment is normally £20 per published page.

Technical editor Duncan Evans looks after the **program listings**, and articles on programming. We rely on you for our Programming section, so earn yourself a place in the Popular Hall of Fame (and £25 for each page we print) by having your program published. Even if it's not 100% of K of pure machine code, but a short snappy routine, this may well be a place for it in **Bytes and Pieces** (£10 a shot).

Articles on any aspect of programming are also welcome – with short listings included if relevant.

Got something you feel needs saying out and clear? Your opinions on any aspect of the computer industry are welcomed, so why not write in to the **Ziggurat** section? No more than 600 words, please. If published, we'll pay you £15.

So maybe it's not the money you're after, but you'd just like to have some say in the magazine.

For shorter comments, general observations or queries, there is of course the **Letter page**, with the tempting offer of a year's supply of Popular binders for the Star Letter each week.

For more specific points, our team of columnists are always willing to answer questions, and keen to hear the latest information. Drop your lines to **Terry Briggs** (adventure hints always gratefully received); **Tony Kendall** (who wants as many Arcade games, maps, solutions, etc. as possible); **David Wallin** (communications); **Ken Garroch** (programming problems); **Mark Jenkins** (music queries and sample tapes); and **Martin Bryant** (computer chess comments). All letters should be addressed to Popular Computing Weekly, 12-13 Little Newport Street, London WC2H 9PP. If you mark your letters with the department you want, things get processed much more quickly.



Left: the adventurous Terry Briggs.
Right: the active Tony Kendall.



Not such a hard guy

You know it from the cover, this is one hell of a urine collection. "Who cares who wins?" it says. "Butch makes Flare!" Look like Mary Poppins? Or should that be M'ry P'p'ins'?

Anyhow, by giving you the cover lines, I've spared you the need to buy the game, because they've let the best thing about it. And I don't care if Butch comes round and rips out my gutted for saying so.

Butch Hard Guy is a simple platformer and combat game, with only two moves. You have to thump the robots in the wallet, then look them in the head. Seems they've got glass eyes as this causes them to explode. You then avoid the platformer bits, kicking and dodging until you've smashed all of the cages containing the PGDs's.

before you're off to the next screen.

It's all very congenial, but never anything more than that. As a budget game it would be okay, but compared with *Cobra* — which also looks a lot less serious approach to *Be Brawler* — it's positively bone-headed.

"When the going gets tough, Butch gets going," the blurb warns you. He should have gone a lot further, if he wanted to appear in a half-dozen games!

Popular Appeal ★★
John Minson

Program *Butch Hard Guy*
Media Spectrums
48K/128K Price £7.95
Supplier Advance Software Ltd, 17 Staple Inn, Harlow, Essex CM18 7LR.



The Fist strikes again

Let's fist again, like we did last summer... and autumn, spring and winter! *Fist*, *Yie-Ai-King* (a seasonal *Karate* and the rest — two the combat games blood-guzzled you into submission!

To beat the boredom factor, *Fist* has to be something a bit special, because about the only market art that hasn't ended up in the computer is championship kickboxing. But despite their rather dodgy Egyptian entry into the cash-in stakes (*Fighting Warrior*), Melbourne House has redeemed itself with the official *Fist* sequel.

Fighting Warrior boosted a minimal plot in the land of the pyramids, but not enough to stop it getting swamped by quicksand. *Fist* if it has added a

proper quest, and suddenly all that head kicking and insect stomping has an aim, other than satisfying sadistic desires.

There are lots of screens to get lost in, which is quite easy because there's not much to distinguish one Japanese cartoon scene from the next, and the same goes for their deserts and houses. But these does seem to be a lot of the Land of the Rising Sun in your RAM, from its caves to mountain plateaus.

Now, have you got the sword? No, my parents always walk this way! Actually it's a double-edged question, because not only does the screen scroll, but you're in search of scrolls, which contain triggers. These oriental

It could be a some straight out of Apocalypse Now — your Apache gunship comes streaking over the jungle canopy, dodging to avoid ground-based machine guns.

Off to your left, a SAM missile battery is tracking you and a string of radio-controlled anti-aircraft guns is coming up fast.

You're low on fuel, but there's just enough to see the mission through. And your target, a supply depot, is in your sights when... bang! You take a hit and your forward fuel tank ruptures.

No explosion, but only a few minutes fuel left. What now, Ace?

This is the kind of scenario that awakes you every time you boot up *Strike*, the latest and greatest simulation from US horseshots Microprose.

Strike puts you in the controls of an AH-64A helicopter, affectionately known as the Apache, and this thing really flies.

You've got laser-tracking, radar and infra red warnings and jammers, rockets, missiles, chain guns, and the amazing computer-control weapons system. *Strike* gives you it all.

Start as a rookie sergeant in your first training flight in the US, then move on to the soft combat option — Vietnam where your enemies are fre-

quently armed as your Apache gives you the edge.

After that it gets tougher all the time — Central America, the Middle East, and finally the hypothetical confrontation against the Russians in Western Europe, the toughest opponents of all.

When each combat scenario you have the choice of three levels of opponent, Regular missions are the easiest, "volunteer" jobs are risky, and "volunteer hazardous" is near suicidal.

Successful missions on succeeding levels of difficulty earn you promotions, campaign ribbons and medals, with your ultimate ambition to reach Colonel and win the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Missions are assigned randomly and if it looks too tough you can chicken out by going sick. But you'll get a replacement, and promotion will be harder thereafter.

Before the mission you can check an on-screen map, and read an intelligence briefing on the kind of opponents you'll encounter. You can also modify the fueling and armament of your Apache. The scene then switches to the landing pad. From then on, you're on your own until you touch down again.

The actual flight simulation is superb. Controls are very responsive, and the animated

symbols can be used in various mysterious ways, but it's up to you to find out how. No Tourist Information bureau in this game, but you could find some cryptic clues by prying at a shrine, where you'll also regain strength.

If all this plot sounds like it might be keeping you from the real business in hand — a, knocking the stuffing out of some nasty brip — don't worry. They crop up all over the place, though not so sensitively as in *Fighting Warrior*, and each of the five human types has different strategies. There are also big meaty juicy rats, but don't try shooting them — most out of ten gamers prefer *Fist* lights on to lunch!

The combat works fairly well, though the scrolling has to freeze, and this can cause

problems if a large amount of the screen is taken up by a foreground object, obscuring the action. There's also a slight problem when you face your opponent to the edge of the screen. He can vanish into the masking and sometimes seems to freeze, letting you knock him into oblivion.

Fist if isn't perfect, but it puts a ton of the kick back into an old game. Go to it, little grasshopper!

Popular Appeal ★★★★★
John Minson

Program *Fist II*
Media Spectrums 48K/128K
Price £8.95
Supplier Melbourne House, 60 High Street, Hampton Wick, Kingston-Upon-Thames, Surrey KT1 4DG.

Blown away!

view out of the cockpit is detailed, colourful and smooth.

When you land you're rated on your mission. Taking too long counts against you, as does shooting friendly troops. Do well and you'll win that first medal and maybe a promotion.

Gunship's presentation is flawless. Weapons systems are realistic, the chopper looks real when you fire, there are day and night missions, wind factors to take into account, and there are graphic scenes for important events – medal presentations or crashes.

The accompanying manual is over 80 pages long and

includes a full guide to game controls, flight controls, the theory and practice of helicopter flying, and discussions of weapons and tactics.

When it comes to combat flight simulators, Gunship blows everything else out of the sky. Yes, it's expensive but it's worth every penny.
Popular Appeal ★★★★★
Peter Woolcock

Program Gunship Micro
Commodore 64/128
Price £18.95 (incl.)
£14.95 (suggested) **Supplier** Microprose Software, 2 Nether Place, Tetbury, Glos GL8 5DA.

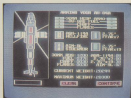


Congratulations Jinks! John Cook.
Your performance during training was excellent. You earned the Bronze Service Medal.

CONTINUE



Above: main playing screen for Gunship. Below right: the armament screen. Below left: the hero returns to base.



Apache performance

It is unfortunate for the C&A version of Tomahawk that it arrived at the same time as Gunship. A few weeks ago it would have rated it highly. Alas, no longer.

Despite the name, Tomahawk is another Apache simulator and although pretty good in its own right, it suffers in comparison with Gunship in just about every department.

For example, the animation is noticeably jerky, the graphics are nowhere near as detailed or as colourful, and it lacks all of Gunship's "blowing up" – so mission briefings, no chance to tailor your weapon load, no promotions

or medal ceremonies.

Tomahawk is more of a game in terms of combat – three hits and you're dead. In Gunship hits are likely to knock out various systems, or one hit from a missile might take out your rotor's immediately.

Unfortunately, Tomahawk doesn't actually play any better. It is easier to fly and to get into combat in the early stages, but you are limited to three scenarios; capture four map sensors; capture all map sensors; or support ground troops – although there are four levels of difficulty.

Overall, Tomahawk lacks the overwhelming sense of

realism that makes Gunship so outstanding. It is five quid cheaper than the Microprose offering, but it also lacks five quid cheaper.

Popular Appeal ★★★★★
Peter Woolcock

Program Tomahawk Micro
Commodore 64/128
Price £14.95 (incl.)
£9.95 (suggested) **Supplier** Digital Integration, Wynchmore Trade Centre, Wynchmore Road, Camberley, Surrey GU16 3AJ.



Digital Integration's Tomahawk.



Follow the stainless steel road

Tony Bridge reviews two new adventure games: Satan's Servants on the Spectrum, and the latest from Asclepius on the Amstrad CPC

Satan's Servants. That really makes you sit up and take notice, doesn't it — it's short and sweet, but to the point and grabs you by the adventure-playing pants. And it's also the name of a new two-part adventure from a new author, K Marshall. Surprisingly for a new start, this one isn't (obviously) Quaff's which says a lot for the author's determination.

The aim of the game, which is available for the Spectrum is simple — all you have to do is to defeat the evil Akas and his pals (the servants, naturally) and then retrieve your book of magic before he uses it to turn the world into darkness.

These servants come in several sizes of 'yevich', including giant crabs, gargoyles, roning toads, grimbles, rannies, Pheen Jack, laughing heads (Boned Bone), I presume) and 'other fiendlike' including 'stock horror, hairy acid-gobbling frogs, and you'll get your chance to do battle with each and every one of them.

The mechanics of the game are simple really: explore the landscape, pick up objects and use them in your fight against the Asclepius, the oracles, and finally against Akas himself. The pictures, which may be turned off, are nothing special (imagine an artist who failed the Level 8 interview and you've got the idea), but they are quickly drawn and are rather neat.

The detailed multiple-verb input can be used, which means that you can use things like 'Use the rope and then go North, which is unusual for a home-grown adventure — but you must be careful with your typing finger; the usual first four letters of a word will be recognised (and sometimes three or even two), but type a fifth letter incorrectly, and the program refuses to recognise the input.

Help isn't recognised or given, but examining most objects will give a more or less outright clue as to its use, so the player shouldn't be stumped for too long. The biggest problem is actually surviving long enough to use the object; many of the fight situations are time-related, and you must make the exact number of moves in exactly the right sequence in order to escape the immediate consequences of your blundering.

The pricing of this one is interesting, although bearing in mind that the adventure is a two-parter and that there is a lot

to do, the original price of £7.50 was still much too high. The author tells me that this price was arrived at on the advice of local retailers.

However, I'm glad to see that K Marshall has thought twice about all this and set a new price of £4.50, which includes Postage and Packaging. This will be further reduced to just £3.90 on the production of this Corner. For two adventures, it's a steal.

To be perfectly frank Satan's Servants is not the most original of adventures; the puzzles are given away too cheaply by the program itself, the graphics are hardly stunning, and the concepts has been done a million times before. But for all this, I have a great deal of admiration for this adventure-writing system.

There is quite a good atmosphere created by the text, although the location description are generally rather short, and I feel that a bit more imagination applied to the basic storyline might pay vast dividends. In fact, I'm told that a second story is already in production — let's hope that this will be even better.

Available from K Marshall, at PO Box 18, Redier, Cleveland TS10 3YS.

From a non-Quaff'd adventure to a Quaff'd adventure on the Amstrad CPC from Asclepius Software. Of course, you'll know who Asclepius is, but I had to refer to the instructions to this one, wherein I am told that old Asclepius is the Greek god of healing. Lee Poord, who is Asclepius Software, tells me that he chose the name because it gives an atmosphere of being really laid back and peaceful! (Maybe Neil Software would be a good choice next time).

The story really starts with the accidental release of a deadly virus on a remote planet, some 600 years ago. The resulting 12 million infected people were rounded up, shoved in a spaceship and shoved off in the direction of the planet Segastra. Unfortunately, things go wrong (don't they always?) and everyone dies on the way — meanwhile, the robot assigned the task of preparing the planet get close above their station and decide to conquer the universe in the disease-ridden spaceship. It's your task to stop them.

The game itself is quick, thanks to the Quaff and there is a fair amount of atmosphere as you explore the planet and view the robotic population. There are lots of objects to pick up, though their use is not immediately apparent and you are given no obvious clues. There are quite a number of interesting images, including 'stainless steel rivers' (roads to you) which suddenly lead up towards the sky, and a new system of measurement which includes 'meters' and 'seconds'.

The puzzles are fairly straightforward, or at least straight-ahead (leave this one and then solve the next one) rather than circuitous, and this shows a lack of imagination — but the whole thing is fairly humorous and for the asking price of £1.20 is going to help you while away several hours (and I don't want to hear from you if you stay up all night and solve it in one sitting, there's certainly more to Asclepius than that). Asclepius Software is at 84 Skewtonale Road, Carwater, Surrey SM6 1BX.

Adventure Helpline

Three Weeks in Paradise on Amstrad CPC4128. How do you sharpen the blunt axe, if at all? How do you use the bottle and corkcrown? T Small, 88 Sweeney's Road, 188 Farm Estate, Shaftesbury, Dorset SP7 8JH.

Questing on Atari. What's the trumpet and how do I get it? Ian Breaker, 183 Unity Crescent, Carfax Heath, Poole, Dorset BH17 7TX.

Mindshadow on Atari 800XL. How do you steal the car at the airport? I have the car ID, Gates Freeway, 95 Buntingford Road, Oxford OX4 1DQ.

Sphinx on Electron. I can't find the boat or the mired thing — have I supposed a lot of hair up to now? Stephen Mellor, 139 Langley Drive, Galashiels, Scottish Borders TD1 2EA.

Searching for Mr (word) Perfect



Above: Fig. 1 shows the text window menu. Below: Fig. 2 consists the dictionary.



When looking at Locomotive for the first time, it was obvious that it lacked two major features — a real range facility, a word count and a spelling checker.

The first was corrected with Locomat — and now the last two gaps have been filled in with Locomat.

Far from being released in a blaze of glory, Locomat seems to have almost slipped out — although Amstrad's Locomotive targeted the audience well by contacting POW owners by mail and of-

fering the package as soon as it was finished.

Now it's generally available, and here at *Apparel* it's been greeted with open arms by those individuals who always talked in the back of class during English Language lessons.

In operation, it's as simple as you could hope for. You boot up using the new Locomat disc, which includes Locomat version 1.4, containing an extra 8K of code for the Locomat facilities.

It also has on a disk of specially selected dictionaries,

made up of 32,000 words. This is automatically copied to the memory drive.

You create/edit documents as usual, but on pressing F7, a new window menu appears that gives you the option to check spelling (see Fig. 1).

The program will now go through the document, and stop at a word it doesn't recognise — suggesting a replacement word, or giving the user a number of other options (Fig. 2), including the opportunity to consult the dictionary itself if you are

together with the option of updating the User Dictionary if you have added any new words in that session.

Locomate is an excellent program — although it does have a couple of drawbacks, the major one being speed. Around three and a half minutes for a thousand word document is not fast, and that's using the large dictionary in the memory drive. An option not open to inexperienced PC/XT owners who, in order to use it, must copy the document to memory and hit

"In operation, it's as simple as you could hope for. You boot up the Locomat disc, which includes Locomat version 1.4"

hopelessly lost.

Here the word is displayed at the head of a drop-down menu, with a selection from the dictionary displayed in the body of the window (Fig. 3). One particularly useful feature is the ability to simply construct User Dictionaries of uncommon words that are not included in the 32,000-word job (or the 77,000 one found on side B of the disc), but you find yourself using for your own particular needs.

Finally, at the end of checking a word count will be given, the dictionary from the floppy

is slow.

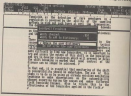
But for all that, it is fully integrated with the word processor you are likely to be most used to working with, Locomat, and very easy to use.

If you are serious in using your POW for writing, this program will spot those embarrassing spelling mistakes and topics that you so often kick yourself for after the event. So unless you're Mr Perfect — it's invaluable.

John Cook (Mr Imperfect)



Fig. 2: the dictionary itself.



Double-checking at the end.

The beginning of the end

Tony Kandle passes along Equinox tips from the inimitable Hackers Unlimited

For the next couple of weeks we are going to be concentrating on another very welcome letter from our regular and invaluable correspondents, Hackers Unlimited — Julian "JT" Lynch-Smith and "Bugger" Johnson.

It's a slight change of form from their usual contributions in that the bulk of the letter consists of tips rather than jokes, but the jokes that are there are essential.

"Here is our complete guide to completing Equinox on the Amstrad. The guide is intended to be used with our joke that not only gives you more punch but also prints a room number at the top right hand corner of the screen. This is an

adaptation of a listing we have previously sent in to you. It will give the player infinite thrust and infinite laser charge as well as the room number."

For those that aren't familiar with hacker's tricks, finding infinite lives, poles can be fairly easy if you look for the familiar routines that most programmers used to count lives, etc. Trying to find obscure parts of the program, such as that which causes the room numbers, can be much more of a challenge and a slog.

The jokes, with maps and tips for the remaining Equinox levels, will be ran next week. In the meantime, save this page — it will come in handy!



Anyone who can come up with a similar collection of jokes for the Spectrum version will earn undying gratitude.

"The guide to the game will take the player step by step through each of the eight levels of Equinox with the exception of the first level which you have already pointed the solution for.

"Please note that the player must follow the guide strictly — if any instruction is ignored it may mean that the particular level will not be completed in the required time. Owners of other computers may be able to use the map and clues that are given here — but we don't know if the game play will be the same." I think it should be.

Level Three

33--33 34

| | |

| | |

35--35 37

| | |

| | |

38--38--40

| | |

| | |

41--42--43

| | |

| | |

44--45--46

| | |

| | |

46

1: Get key in room 35 and unlock door in 45.

2: Get fuse in 46 and turn off beam in 32.

3: Get credit in 32 and pay teleporter in 47.

4: Teleport from 47 to 34.

5: Get radiation canister from 34 and deposit in 44 (do not teleport).

6: Teleport from 47 and get the level 4 pass from room 37.

7: Go to room 43.

8: Proceed to level 4.

9: Proceed to level 4.

10: Proceed to level 4.

11: Proceed to level 4.

12: Proceed to level 4.

13: Proceed to level 4.

14: Proceed to level 4.

15: Proceed to level 4.

16: Proceed to level 4.

17: Proceed to level 4.

18: Proceed to level 4.

19: Proceed to level 4.

20: Proceed to level 4.

1: Get the credit in 33 and pay the teleporter in 34.

2: Get the credit in 32 and pay the teleporter in 34.

3: Get fuse in 31 — teleport from 34 to 46.

4: Get the drill in 49. Leave the fuse.

5: Teleport from 49 to 34.

6: Drill the obstruction in 55 and get the dynamite.

7: Teleport from 54 to 42.

8: Blast the blockage in 56 and get

the credit.

9: Pay the teleport in 57 and teleport to 56.

10: Get the radiation canister from 58 and deposit in 49.

11: Get the fuse from 49 and teleport from 57 to 56.

12: Turn off the beam in 51 with the fuse.

13: Get the level 5 pass from 60.

14: Teleport from 48 to 54.

15: Go to 62.

16: Proceed to level 5.

the credit.

9: Pay the teleport in 57 and teleport to 56.

10: Get the radiation canister from 58 and deposit in 49.

11: Get the fuse from 49 and teleport from 57 to 56.

12: Turn off the beam in 51 with the fuse.

13: Get the level 5 pass from 60.

14: Teleport from 48 to 54.

15: Go to 62.

16: Proceed to level 5.

Charts

Top Twenty

- (1) Gemini
- (2) 190
- (3) Paperboy
- (4) Ollie and Lee
- (5) Ninja
- (6) Kusumi's Coin-op Hit
- (7) Footballer of the Year
- (8) IBM Simulator
- (9) Computer Hit No 3
- (10) Space Harrier
- (11) Trivial Pursuit
- (12) Hi Pack
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Draw your own conclusions with Eidersoft

For many professional artists and CAD users, using a mouse as a drawing tool with their ST is simply not good enough. Something like a graphics tablet is required for greater accuracy.

This can be used in either of two ways, first by simply replacing the mouse with a stylus or more usefully by enabling drawings traced on the tablet to be accurately placed and repositioned on screen.

The Pro Draw graphics tablet from Eidersoft has a nine by six inch drawing area and comes supplied with software, wedge, stylus, power supply and interface.

Connecting all the equipment up is perfectly straightforward, with the mains transformer supplying power via a lead going into an interface connected to the serial port. The very same interface has a lead coming out which connects up to the graphics tablet. On the underside of the tablet is a socket into which the stylus or puck can be plugged and also a detachable ergonomic aid.

Unlike most graphics tablets in the home computing market, Pro Draw is not a pressure sensitive pad, but of the more expensive and professional electro-magnetic type. Indeed, the stylus can be as much as two inches away from the tablet's surface before contact is lost.

The design of the tablet is such that it can cope with screen resolutions up to 1000 pixels square so if the ST undergoes a graphics upgrade then Pro Draw will be of even greater value. Also, should you taste in your ST in the future then you should be able to use the tablet with other computers if they have the required software to drive it.



Resolution: up to 1000 pixels square

Eidersoft

Duncan Evans trades in his mouse for a Pro Draw Graphics Tablet

Speaking of software, the program supplied with Pro Draw is not a graphics package in itself, but a wedge, in the form of an installable disk accessory or a directly executable program, which can be used to route all official Gem mouse

in fact, after using Pro Draw with a copy of the specially configured Art Director (available from Eidersoft) and comparing the results obtained with those from unaltered copies of MacDraw, PageMaker, Am Director and Key Draw I have to say that you'd be better off with the former.

Eidersoft is, in fact, having discussions with a number of companies to produce specifically compatible versions of its programs, including one from West Germany called ST AD, which promises to be well worth looking at.

In order to get the best from the stylus your drawing skills have to be up to professional level, otherwise you're just wasting your time. However, there is an optional extra called the puck, a sort of mouse-like device with a steel ball in the centre of a magnetic coil, which is much easier for the less talented, including myself, to get to grips with. It will cost you an extra £59.95 though.

The probable market for Pro Draw is in professional and educational fields or maybe the enthusiasts and well-off amateurs.

I say well off, because the package retails at £299 including Vat and Art Director and the puck and an optional blow to the pocket. However, compatible products on the Macintosh and 68k range in at around £480.

If you're serious about drawing or art then this tablet should be one gift that isn't hard to swallow.



Trace your sketches on the tablet

calls to the stylus instead.

So, you'll need a graphics package as well and the choice is between going for one that Eidersoft has arranged to be made specifically compatible or trying to tuck and hoping that the program you've bought uses official Gem calls.

If you're thinking about using Pro Draw with MacDraw, which is supplied free with the ST, then forget it. While using the stylus is an acceptable replacement for the mouse, MacDraw will not trace the outlines of drawings on your tablet with any accuracy or to scale.



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Product Pro Draw Graphics Tablet Micro Atari ST/Amiga Price Atari £299 ex Vat, Amiga £319 ex Vat Supplier Eidersoft Software, The Office, Hall Farm, W Oxendon, Uxminster, Essex RM14 3DH.

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Rockfall

The premise of Rockfall is simple. All you have to do is collect the 16 diamonds on each screen without being squashed by the rocks. Unfortunately it's not that easy as the route to success on some of the screens is tortuous to say the least. Still, the excellent multicolour graphics should keep you coming back for more.

First, type in listing code, and when you've done that, the routine contains a short machine code routine for the game, problems like diagonally falling boulders will probably be caused by errors in listing one.

More of the listing two follows in the coming weeks.

Craig Davenport

```

50 PRINT "C:PRINT" PLEASE WAIT!!! "
500 AD=12288:Y=0
510 READ A:IFA=-1THENG000
520 POKERD+X,A:Y=Y+1:GOTO510
530 AD=49152:Y=0
510 READ:IFA=-1THENG000
530 POKERD+X,A:Y=Y+1:GOTO510
1000 DATA 0,102,110,110,95,95,60,0,24,60,102,126,102,102,102,0
1001 DATA 124,102,102,124,102,102,124,0,60,102,95,95,95,102,60,0
1002 DATA 126,100,102,102,102,100,120,0,126,95,95,120,95,95,125,0
1003 DATA 126,95,95,120,95,95,95,0,60,102,95,110,102,102,60,0
1004 DATA 102,102,102,126,102,102,102,102,0,60,24,24,24,24,24,60,0
1005 DATA 00,12,12,12,12,100,95,0,102,100,120,112,100,100,102,0
1006 DATA 95,95,95,95,95,125,0,95,110,127,107,99,99,99,0
1007 DATA 102,110,120,125,110,102,102,0,60,102,102,102,102,60,60,0
1008 DATA 124,102,102,124,95,95,95,0,60,102,102,102,102,60,14,0
1009 DATA 124,102,102,124,120,100,102,0,60,102,102,102,102,60,0,0
1010 DATA 126,24,24,24,24,24,24,0,102,102,95,60,6,102,60,0
1011 DATA 102,102,102,102,102,60,24,0,99,99,99,107,127,110,99,0
1012 DATA 102,102,60,24,60,102,102,0,102,102,102,60,24,24,24,0
1013 DATA 126,6,12,24,40,95,126,0,60,40,40,40,40,40,60,0
1014 DATA 12,10,40,124,40,95,252,0,60,12,12,12,12,12,60,0
1015 DATA 24,60,126,24,24,24,24,24,0,16,40,16,40,127,127,40,16,0
1016 DATA 0,0,0,0,0,0,0,24,24,24,24,0,0,24,0
1017 DATA 102,102,102,0,0,0,0,0,102,102,255,102,255,102,102,0
1018 DATA 42,95,60,6,124,24,0,98,102,12,24,40,102,70,0
1019 DATA 0,102,60,56,100,102,63,0,6,12,24,0,0,0,0,0
1020 DATA 12,24,40,40,40,24,12,0,40,24,12,12,12,24,40,0
1021 DATA 0,102,60,255,60,102,0,0,0,24,24,12,12,12,24,40,0
1022 DATA 0,0,0,0,24,24,40,0,0,0,126,0,0,0,0
1023 DATA 0,0,0,0,24,24,0,0,3,6,12,24,40,95,0
1024 DATA 0,102,110,110,102,102,60,0,24,24,56,24,24,24,125,0
1025 DATA 0,12,40,95,126,0,60,102,5,20,0,102,60,0
1026 DATA 5,14,30,102,127,6,6,0,126,95,124,6,6,102,60,0
1027 DATA 0,102,95,124,102,102,60,0,126,102,12,24,24,24,24,0
1028 DATA 0,102,102,60,102,102,60,0,60,102,102,62,6,102,60,0
1029 DATA 0,24,0,0,24,0,0,0,24,0,126,0,126,0,0,0
1030 DATA 14,24,40,95,40,24,14,0,0,0,126,0,126,0,0,0
1031 DATA 10,42,47,175,100,100,101,101,100,173,45,45,43,11,10,2
1032 DATA 120,160,232,240,20,126,126,94,94,126,126,120,240,232,224,160
1033 DATA 3,15,13,61,53,246,214,214,246,53,61,13,15,3,3
1034 DATA 102,102,240,112,124,92,150,151,151,150,92,124,112,240,102,102
1035 DATA 254,254,254,170,239,239,239,170,63,243,255,60,255,255,207,252
1036 DATA 255,255,195,195,195,195,195,195,195,195,195,195,195,195,255,255
1037 DATA 195,195,195,195,195,195,195,195,195,195,195,195,195,195,195,255
1038 DATA 12,31,91,63,31,15,3,63,63,3,3,7,14,12,12,20
1039 DATA 8,240,204,252,240,240,192,252,252,192,192,224,112,40,40,0
1040 DATA 252,192,192,224,112,52,60,24,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,-1
2000 DATA 100,0,102,255,100,213,6,201,62,240,13,201,63,240,9,201

```


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Memory Fill

Adam Wright

This routine for the Commodore 64 allows you to fill a specified area of memory with a specified byte. This could be useful for filling colour memory or retaining data.

The syntax is `Fill address, startaddress, number of bytes to be filled, byte to be filled with`.

```

8 REM MEMORY FILL
9 DATA 20,61,100,141,20,140,140,20
10 DATA 150,21,41,101,150,20,150,20
11 DATA 20,61,100,141,20,140,140,20
12 DATA 140,8,4,24,27,25,30,100
13 DATA 1,140,20,150,244,5,250,20
14 DATA 100,50,100,200,100,0,100,200
15 DATA 150,5,2,200,250,100,200,200
  
```

```

8 DATA 100,20,200,200,0,20,200,100
9 DATA 20,100,270,50,247,100,200,20
10 DATA 24,20,20
11 REM ***** END OF FILL *****
12 REM ***** END OF FILL *****
13 REM ***** END OF FILL *****
14 REM ***** END OF FILL *****
15 REM ***** END OF FILL *****
  
```

Spectacular Clear

Simon T Goodwin

This relocatable machine code routine for the Amstrad CPC machines provides two novel ways of clearing the screen.

Call address produces a shutter effect. Call address+16 produces a fade out effect.

```

10 address=MEM-56:MEMORY HIFEM-57
20 FOR address TO address+500
30 KERN $FF
40 FORK $FF, $FF, $FF, $FF
50 NEXT
60 *CALL address+16 FOR SHUTTER EFFECT
70 *CALL address FOR FADE OUT EFFECT
80 *
90 DATA 20,100,100,100,100,100,100,100
100 DATA 100,100,100,100,100,100,100,100
110 DATA 10,10,10,10,10,10,10,10
120 DATA 20,100,100,100,100,100,100,100
130 DATA 100,100,100,100,100,100,100,100
140 DATA 200,100,100,100,100,100,100,100
150 DATA 100,100,100,100,100,100,100,100
  
```

Restore Extend

Chris Horton

This program for the C64 extends the limited Restore command so that the user can specify which line the data pointer is to be printed at.

The syntax is `Spn address, line no.`
The routine occupies memory from 48152 to 48294.

```

50 DATA 100,100,100,100,100,100,100,100
60 DATA 100,100,100,100,100,100,100,100
70 DATA 100,100,100,100,100,100,100,100
80 DATA 100,100,100,100,100,100,100,100
90 DATA 100,100,100,100,100,100,100,100
100 DATA 100,100,100,100,100,100,100,100
110 DATA 100,100,100,100,100,100,100,100
120 DATA 100,100,100,100,100,100,100,100
130 DATA 100,100,100,100,100,100,100,100
140 DATA 100,100,100,100,100,100,100,100
150 DATA 100,100,100,100,100,100,100,100
  
```

Programming Spotlight

This is a new feature for the programming pages of *Popular Computing Weekly* where programs which would normally have to be reproduced simply because of their length are deleted, with a screen shot or dump included, and offered by the author for sale to you, the reader. Programs featured in this spot become the copyright of *Popular* and also you pay a nominal sum of £10.

Singlestep

R M Wilkinson

This handy Spectrum utility enables the user to step through a machine code program one step at a time, examining the results in the various registers and memory locations, changing them if necessary. All 100 instructions of instructions are handled and single registers are represented in binary.

For a copy of *Singlestep* and full working instructions send £2.50 to R M Wilkinson, Programming Spotlight, *Popular Computing Weekly*, 12-13 Little Newport Street, London WC2R 2YP.



PROGRAMMERS

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From Warsaw, Germany, Ireland and England

Mark Jenkins with readers' letters from the four corners of the world

In case nobody believes that *Popular* reaches the parts other micro magazines can't reach, we thought we'd start this week with some readers' letters from all over the world.

Jerry Zawadzki from Warsaw wants to know which synths and accessories he should choose to make up a good music system with a Casio's 128 which he's been using for six months. While he's thinking in terms of the Casio CZ 101 as a basic synth.

The Casio has the advantage of a good software base for editing and Patch storage using software from Joseph and others. It also works well with the Casio RD-1 sampling drum machine, the S2-1 sequencer (although Joseph's step or real time software packages are probably a better bet here), and the new drum set kit and interface which will allow you to play drum beats live or program them as part of a MIDI sequence.

I don't have any information sheets on the Casio equipment here but you can contact them at the address below for info on any of these products.

Over to Germany, and Angus from his website is to ask if Tommy Software of Frankfurt has a UK distributor yet. Tommy markets the Music 32 composer for the Atari 520 ST, which we reviewed a few weeks ago, and in fact don't seem to have UK representation. But I have established that you can order its products by mail in Great Britain or dollars (at 1.8 DM to the dollar), that they'll charge 10 DM postage, and that all orders have to be prepaid.

On to Northern Ireland where Mark McBride is looking for Atari 520ST music software suitable for use with a Casio CZ3000, their splittable polyphonic synth. As we know from reviews over the last few weeks, there are excellent Atari sequencers from Hybrid Arts (Synchro Music will deliver them by mail) including G2 Track and SMPVC Next, and from Steinberg (Pro 24 and a sequencer version with built-in sampled drum sounds) and from Take Note, the Dr 7 software series.

Back home to Bishop's Stortford and D Harrison, who has a Hart Music Machine and a Casio CZ101 and is thinking of getting a CZ3000. But how should they be connected together? What is a Slave and a Master, what is a

Delay Chain and a Thru socket?

To deal with these briefly, the master synth is the one you play, and the slave synth is the one that is connected to it or to a sequencer which programs. The slaves can be keyboardless sequen-



tees since you only have one pair of hands to play a keyboard with. A delay chain is a series of keyboards connected together via the MIDI Thru sockets, which pass on all the incoming MIDI information to the next synth.

That doesn't mean to say that all synths in a chain will be doing the same thing. Because they can be set to any one of 16 MIDI "channels", they can be playing any one of 16 patterns which can be transmitted via MIDI simultaneously, or doing nothing if they're set to a channel on which no activity is occurring.

The alternative to a delay chain is a star network, which can be used if some of your synths don't have Thru sockets,



and can also cut out the causes of some annoying delays on larger setups. But a star network does need a micro interface with lots of outputs, or some kind of MIDI selector box.

In Figure 1, a master synth controls a slave module and they'll play the same notes provided that the slave is set to look at the MIDI channel which the master is transmitting on.

In Figure 2, a master synth programs notes into a micro sequencer which then plays them back. The master synth plays any notes on its channel and ignores the rest — the information also goes from the Thru socket to the slave synth which plays notes on its channel and ignores the rest.

In Figure 3 a master synth programs a micro which then plays back the master synth and six separate slaves all set to different channels — this is a star network.

JO Healey of Ladbroke has just bought a Yamaha DX21, its full-size splittable FM synth, and would like to link it to a C84 and choose a suitable drum machine. You can now buy a C84 interface from Steinberg, Daniel, Joseph or C-Lab among others and all these companies have their own software except Daniel (the cheapest interface at the moment). My favourite package is C-Lab Master Tracks at around £100 but Steinberg's Pro 16 has a Sequencer option if you're interested in printing out your music. All these are rather expensive, but the cheaper Sid and Jellingsware software is now unavailable in the UK.

As for drum machines, you can synchronise any sort of MIDI drum machine (starting with the Roland TR909 at £248) from a properly interfaced micro and may be able to sync cheaper non-MIDI drum machines depending on which interface you choose.

Tommy Software, Mainzer Landstrasse 147, 641, West Germany.

Joseph Music (0286) 831610.

Casio Electronics, Unit 6, 1000 North Circular Road, Hayes Green, London HA2 6J1 (440) 81311.

Synchro Music, 24-26 Avenue Miles, Luton MK1 3AP (01-444) 8124.

Daniel Electronics, Units 8-9 Farnon Industrial Estate, Denbury Road, Farnon, Stoke-on-Trent ST7 2JZ (0782) 272818.

Party time, party line in the USA

Ben Knox tells you how Compuserve can put you in touch with computer enthusiasts all over the world

Yesterday, I went to a party. The party was held in the USA. To be precise, it was held in New York. It was also held in San Francisco, Chicago, Miami, London and Amsterdam.

It sounds like some kind of international pub crawl, but in fact, the party was an electronic one. The partygoers all had one thing in common: they were logged on to the 'CB Simulator', a part of the huge Compuserve Information Service which is based in Columbus, Ohio.

The CB Simulator allows anyone who is a member of Compuserve to talk to any other member, alone or in groups, by typing messages in at their keyboard - wherever they are in the world.

national computer call then dialing direct by telephone. A telephone call to the US will cost up to £60 per hour. A PSC call costs about £10 per hour. On top of these costs, you will have to pay the time charges associated with the services you are calling.

The first thing that strikes you when you get onto a US system is its size.

Compuserve runs on some 40-odd DEC mainframe computers. It has upwards of 400 different services. These range from special interest groups (or forums) for different computers and software, through electronic mail, to the CB Simulator.

The forums are the place to go if you're looking for help with your computer, or if you want to download software.

Each forum has a number of areas. There is a messaging section, data libraries, a noticeboard and a CB-style conference section.

The more popular forums have many hundreds, or thousands of members. Many of them are very knowledgeable and are more than willing to help sort out other users' problems.

Questions and answers are left in the message sections. If you leave a question, then it is a good idea to check into the forum regularly. Otherwise you might find the reply is quickly overwritten. The IBM forum can have 500 messages available at once and messages get overwritten every two or three days.

The data libraries are the place to look for software. In them, you will find hundreds of public domain and shareware programs available for you to download. If you do a lot of downloading of programs, you should try and contribute to it. British users have rather a bad reputation on US systems, because they tend to make lots of downloads, but never upload anything.

You can contribute, either by uploading some British software (only public domain or shareware) or taking an active part in the messaging section of a forum. This extra usage will cost you money (though Compuserve switches off its time charge when you are uploading). But, you are getting a great deal of quality software for very little cost, so a few pounds spent on public relations shouldn't hurt too much.

Most forums use their CB facilities for regular weekly meetings where users can get to know each other.

Sometimes special CB conferences are arranged, where personalities are available to answer questions from us-

ers. Barry Manlow was once a guest on the rock music forum. There have also been astronomers in the space forum, sex therapists in the human sexuality forum and well-known journalists in the journalism forum.

The most active area of Compuserve is the CB-simulator itself. CB is similar in concept to Chatline on Prostar's Microware 800.

Compuserve's CB offers many facilities. For example, in keeping with the radio-based metaphor, it has channelled 36 of them in total. Up to 20 people can comfortably communicate on each channel. Any more, and it gets difficult to follow conversations.

Some channels are reserved for per-

"The first thing that strikes you when you get into a US system is its size - Compuserve offers upwards of 400 different services"

"Sometimes, special CB conferences are arranged where personalities are available to answer questions from users on specialised topics"

Computer information services for utilised are very big business in the United States. Compuserve is the largest system, with some 350,000 members. Others include The Source, People-Link and Delta. All these systems display information in the ASCII scrolling text format. This is different from the format used by Prostar here in Britain, which is called 'wordart'.

It is relatively easy for British communications enthusiasts to access these American services. In the same way that the international telephone network allows telephone users in different countries to talk to each other, computer networks enable computers to link up across country boundaries.

British Telecom's network is called Packet Switch Stream (PSS). To access a wide-wide system, you simply dial the telephone number of your nearest PSS exchange. Then, after entering your ID, you type in the network address of the system you want to use.

After a few seconds you will be in contact with the system. It is much cheaper to use PSS to make an inter-

local interests channel one is the 'adult' channel, 17 is for teenagers, users, and 28 is for people who want to communicate 'anonymously'.

Two users can go into private talk mode, where no-one else can look in on what they are typing to each other.

Additionally, for private group chats, there is a 'scramble' mode. Only those people who have entered the same password can talk to each other.

You can keep an eye on what is happening on other channels using the monitor function. With the monitor, you can read the messages being sent on up to two channels, plus the one you are currently 'tuned' into.

There are two drawbacks with Compuserve. First, it has quite high connect time rates - (between £5 and £15 per hour, plus PSS charges). Second, the company seems to be very wary of taking on subscribers from overseas.

Anyway, if you want further information, contact Compuserve Information Service, 5000 Arlington Center Roadway, Ohio 43035, USA.

Next week we'll look at other US data bases, and what they offer.

New Releases

John Cook looks through this week's new arrivals

Amiga

Program *Defence of Power Type Global Strategy Price £29.95 Supplier* Mindsteps, via Mimonsoft, Maxwell House, 74 Worship Street, London EC2 2EN.

Conversion from the same Macintosh program we reviewed a few months ago, it's difficult to explain how good this program is.

Played out on a map of the world, I've never got to Beginner Level yet still find it difficult to take in the vast amount of information the program puts at your disposal.

It's Russia vs America in global manoeuvres, with the object to score prestige points from your opponent and expand/consolidate your sphere of influence.

I preferred the hi-res mono graphics on the Mac, but this is a faithful conversion, and is still one of those programs any serious games player cannot be without.

Amstrad CPC

Program *Imaginable Type Adventure Price £1.99 Supplier* Firebird Silver, 74 New Oxford Street, London WC1.

See Spectrum listing for comment.



Program *Fool Type Arcade Adventure Price £1.99 Supplier* Boldog, Mastertronic, 9-10 Paul Street, London EC2.

Excellent little title that has you fighting against another wizard. Collect the herbs, zap the villain. And is there a journalist in the world that could resist the line, 'Your glorious Fool?'

Program *Berliniefel Germany Type Strategy Price £12.95 (tape) £17.95 (disk) Supplier* PDS, 482 Stony Stanton Road, Coventry CV6 5GG.

The latest addition to the PDS Wargames Series starts with a frighteningly plausible build-up scenario in the instruction manual, based on an Iranian-led, Mead against level. The cause is a super-power confrontation that mobilises forces on both sides, culminating in a Russian invasion of West Germany.

The system and implementation look good, so play it now if you have the inclination. You won't have time to it if it happens for real.

Program *The Growing Pain of Adult Male Type Book-yrns Price £8.95 Supplier* Virgin Games, 2/4 Vernon Yard, Portobello Road, London W11 2JX.

See Spectrum listing for comment.

Program *Agent Orange Type Arcad/Strategy Price £6.95 Supplier* Add, Angus Press Software, Victory House, Leicester Place, London WC2H 7NB.

Can you succeed in the quest to find the ultimate weedkiller? Yes, I know it sounds silly, but actually Agent Orange isn't bad.

A nice mixture of strategy, requiring a fair bit of planning (or is that plotting) and the expected amount of violence. Well worth taking a look at, if only to give credence to the excuse, 'You got a bit of wanting to do in the Duke Spud Arm,' next time you're asked to mow the lawn.

Pick of the week

Best defence

Program *Defender of the Crown Type Strategy/Arcade Mirror Commodore Amiga Price £29.95 Supplier* Mimonsoft, via Mimonsoft, Maxwell House, 74 Worship Street, London EC2 2EN.

Overkill strategy title. How often do you read, 'This game is the most completely fuddy-duddy thing ever, so go out and strap a granite to your chest, teenagers!', only to find out in a 'retrospective' a few months later that, 'Oh yeah - I think we overrated *Alan Gansdale* at the time'.

Set, there but for the Grace of God, oh - yes when I tell you that *Defender of the Crown* has the bestest, most wonderful, most detailed graphics of any game ever in the history of the whole world, rest assured that I am resting my right hand on the breasts of Holy Thomas (Bible, Koran, etc). I am sitting on as many Mother's graves as could be conveniently accommodated in the office, my left hand is over my heart and I recite the Dab's Law even as I write. *Defender of the Crown* completely takes your breath away.

Mindspace call it *Cine-maware*, even suggesting that you eat popcorn while playing the game - and there gives a hint to its virtues and its faults.

The game has strategy and

arcade elements, as you join the pan of a Baron Lord who has vowed to contribute to the last Norman conquest. He can do this by campaigning with his army - carefully built up as you buy units (some with weapons from land via computer or with loot from doing 'smash and grab' raids on other counts).

You can plant far land against other Lords - or join for the farm. Siegeage exists - fight for the hand of a lady. It's a great fun and eye-opening, time after time.

Don't expect a complex economic/wargame however - the massed ranks of *Plato* for each lord is a way of winning the game fairly easily, but as a showpiece for your Amiga - go, go, go! Use those neat blowing colour screen shots - see next week's *Adventure Supplement*.



Atari ST

Program *Slyfox Type Arcade Price £24.95 Supplier* Long Arms, Covent Garden, London WC2E 8JH.

Electronic Arts conversion that should be thought of as a colourful shoot-em-up, rather than a flight simulator. For the latter, go and grab *Slick Race Hammer*.

C16/Plus 4

Program *Storm Type Arcade Price £1.99 Supplier* Mastertronic, 9-10 Paul Street, London EC2.

The first *Counter-style* program available for the C16. Unless you know different, that is.

Program *Molochus Plus Type Arcade Price £1.99 Supplier* Mastertronic, 9-10 Paul Street, London EC2.

3-D style arcade adventure in a tank against one. Contains bombs, rockets and useful coins. Just like real life really.

Commodore 64

Program *10th Floor Type Sports Simulation Price £8.99 (tape), £14.99 (disk) Supplier* US Gold, Units 2/3, Halford Way, Halford, Birmingham B6 7AX.

Program Asteroid Type
Arcade Price £1.99 **Supplier**
Mastromonic, 9-10 Paul
Street, London EC2.

Conversion of previous
Plus of the Week, a
space-age penny football par
excellence. On the 64 the
graphics are, as you might
expect, superior – but the
vector algorithms aren't quite
up to the same standard.

Yet with one of two player
and 10 different ship types to
choose from, it's still a great
buy.

Program The Vikings Type
Arcade Price £9.95 **Supplier**
Status Software, Creative
Sparks Distribution, Unit 811,
Armstrong Mill, Southwood,
Surrey Centre, Southwood,
Farnborough, Hampshire
GU14 0NP.

Another release from Sta-
tus, Creative Sparks' full
price label – licence from the
Danish company Kite Line.

Quite simple, this game is
not up to full price quality –
with the interface on the
sprites. Quite elsewhere on
the screen as Exhibit A,
it is.

Essentially a Commands
variant with some adventure
elements tacked on, it can
immediately think of two budget
games (Mud and Super Robin
Head) that would do you just
as well. Not good.

Program Cyber? Type Ar-
cade Price £2.99 **Supplier**
Super Sparklets, Creative
Sparks Distribution, Unit 811,
Armstrong Mill, Southwood,
Surrey Centre, Southwood,
Farnborough, Hampshire
GU14 0NP.



This is more like it – a mid-
level budget item. Again
from Kite-Line, but the title
screen also mentions a cer-
tain file Systems as joint
copyright holders and the
name 'Cyber?' crops up in the
header and second level.
Work that one out if you can.

Program Agent Orange
Type Arcade Price £9.95
Supplier ABF, Angus Press
Software, Victory House,
Leicester Place, London
WC2H 7NS.

See Amstrad CPC listing for
comment.

Program The Mystery of the
Lost Sheep Type Adventure
Price £4.00 (mail order only)
Supplier Central Computing,
61 Beach Road, Gilbey,
Tarnworth, Staffs S79 8QJ.

Program The Spirit of Kings
Type Simulation Price
£3.99 **Supplier** Mastromonic,
9-10 Paul Street, London
EC2.

A step at the races for up to
5 players – a genuine
rare afternoon material, also
ideal after a heavy session
down the pub.

Program Magic Madness
Type Arcade Adventure
Price £3.95 (tape) £9.95
(disc) **Supplier** Angus Soft-
ware, 25 West Hill, Dartford,
Kent DA1 2EL.

Program Oil and Gas Type
Arcade Price £1.99 **Supplier**
as Finland Silver, 34 New
Oxford Street, London WC1.

Fairly standard 'jump-
y-jump' collect the ob-
jects' arcade style game, with
a touch of humour that raises
a smile per. It's been in the
Spectrum charts for five
months – if that means any-
thing.

Program Imaginative Type
Adventure Price £1.99
Supplier Finland Silver, 34
New Oxford Street, London
WC1.

Program The Growing Pace
of Action **Mike Type** Book-
ware Price £9.95 **Supplier**
Verge Games, 3/4 Vernon
Yard, Portobello Road, Lon-
don W11.

See Spectrum listing for
comment.

Program Alien Type Ar-
cade/Simulation Price £9.95
Supplier Electric Dreams, 31
Cotton Green, Southamp-
ton SO1 2PR.

This week sees the arrival
of the delayed Cerebro-
dore 84 version of the cele-
brated game of the month.
Delayed because they didn't
like it the first time, so they
re-cut it again. The final result
is excellent. Highly recom-
mended fare for the under-
stressed.

MSX

Program Mixer Events
Type Sports Simulation
Price £9.95 **Supplier** Anco
Software, 26 West Hill, Dar-
ford, Kent DA1 2EL.

Six simulated snowy
sports for 1-8 players.
The Bobbed edition gets an
immediate nomination for the
PCW 'Winter Games' – never
heard of a pub 'award' (1983?)
for contributions to the col-
lective atmosphere.



PC and Compatibles

Program Office Street Type
Spreadsheet Price £17.99
Supplier PG Associates,
Data House, Dale Street East,
Aston-Under-Lyne, Lancs
OL5 7TE.

Primarily a budget, spread-
sheet program – but with
a text editor and a few macro-
style commands.

Spectrum

Program Little Alien Type
Arcade Adventure Price
£1.99 **Supplier** Sparklets,
Creative Sparks Publishing,
Unit 811, Armstrong Mill,
Southwood, Surrey Centre,
Southwood, Farnborough,
Hants GU14 0NP.

Program Such Hand Day
Type Arcade Price £7.99
Supplier Advance Software,
17 Maple Way, Harlow, Essex
CM18 7LE.

Humorous picky-take of
the Rambo/Cobra style
game, with an element of
platform and ladders thrown
in.

Program Agent Orange
Type Arcade Price £9.95
Supplier ABF, Angus Press
Software, Victory House,
Leicester Place, London
WC2H 7NS.

See Amstrad CPC listing for
comment.

Program First Type Arcade
Adventure Price £1.99
Supplier Bulding, Mastromonic,
9-10 Paul Street, London
EC2.

Spectrum 128/ Plus 2

Program Little Computer
Academy Type Pet Simulation
Price £9.95 **Supplier** Ac-
ademy, Academy House, 23
Paul Street, London MW9
2PA.

The program that changed
Commodore users now
watches the Spectrum Plus 2.
There is no denying that it
doesn't look quite as cute as
the format, but all the major
features are there.

Program The Kingdom of
Kell Type Graphic Adventure
Price £9.95 **Supplier**
Anco Software, 26 West Hill,
Dartford, Kent DA1 2EL.

Ison driven adventure for the
128/Plus 2. Looks inter-
esting, look out for a review
soon.

The search for perfect software

The astonishing advancement in hardware power over the last five years is of benefit to every potential user as the specifications rise and the prices drop, but one notable aspect of this situation is how little the standard of software has risen in relation to the computers themselves.

In the days of the ZX81, just before its demise and subsequent replacement by the ZX Spectrum, the software had achieved a high standard, to the extent that we had high resolution graphic arcade games selling every mibble of memory.

I can honestly say that since those days I have not seen a single item of software that values the potential of the machine to an absolute maximum.

With the public acceptance of downmarket budget software, even a simple 'wire graphics' arcade game such as *Blitz* can be admired for its supposed high standards of graphics.

As the other extreme there has been a form of hardware snobbery, where we are looked down on for using a machine that is not deemed to be state of the art.

As a programmer writing software for vertical applications, I was required to produce a program for soft furnishing and department stores, whereby the user could input some basic information, ie, the window size and the cost of the curtain fabric, then a few simple calculations had to be made and

the price of the curtains displayed on the screen.

There were several other software companies in this field, achieving very limited sales. The major point that these companies seemed to have forgotten is that the average shop sales assistant is not computer literate, does not wish to mess around with floppy discs and has a fear of any computer larger than a pocket calculator.

Bearing this in mind I contacted Casio Electronics which produces a large range of pocket computers with small display screens and capable of being programmed in Basic or machine code. These machines could sell for under £100 with the software built in. Rare and available as soon as the On button was pressed. We sold several hundred of these machines.

The reason I mention this is, why use a megabyte in a rack a rat? These are low cost, downmarket machines, but ideal for just this sort of basic purpose.

I would like to see computers made to suit the software for which they are required. The Amstrad PCW was a perfect example. Technically it was behind, but for commercial and practical purposes it has become one of the most successful machines in existence. The one phrase that this industry should always bear in mind is, "Software is application first, hardware second".

No-one ever expected the Guy to become a mass market consumer product and as

a less extreme example we have machines like the Kings, which unless drastically reduced in price, will end up as a powerful but discarded chess player.

For the average potential computer user, there must be a valid reason to buy a niche. Those who type letters can see clearly the advantages of buying the Amstrad PCW, and the machine was marketed primarily for that purpose. To try to explain the capabilities of an Amiga would leave many people totally unimpressed. The very first question I am asked by family and friends when showing off my latest computer is, "What does it do?"

This is the very same question each manufacturer should ask before launching its product.

Until the day that home computers can communicate with perfect speech synthesis and recognition; produce printouts in typesetting quality; have constant monitoring over all house appliances; bank and building society accounts; automatically issue birthday, anniversary cards and reminders to all friends and relatives; link to my car and provide travel news, best routes and routine maintenance; link to my Video recorder and record any program that I might find interesting; link to every film of reference in the world for unlimited information on any topic and could tell me under £500; until that day, let us at least have some decent software.

D Nicholson

NEXT WEEK

Special Supplement

Adventures

Check up on the very latest news and reviews in adventures in our supplement.

Megabits - Tony Bridge has hundreds of tips for all the most baffling games on the market.

The Rainbow file - we look at the latest offerings to be published by Rainbow, the brand new Ringo Doo from Level 9, plus *SDScan*, *SDscan* on BT and *Spectrum*, and the Amstrad PCW Ports.

Defender of the Crown - the most spectacular historical simulation ever? From Minnesota, on the Aviga.

Role Playing Games - a survey of the genre and how to get involved.

US databases

Ben Kross brings you the second part of his series on the big US networks.

Chess Board

Martin Bryant discusses chess ratings and how they are evaluated - for both human and computer players.

Hackers



DESKTOP PUBLISHING ON THE ATARI ST

Now there's a real alternative 68000-based desktop publishing system!

Fleet Street Publisher provides all the features your customers would expect of a high-priced system but at a price they can afford.

The program runs under GEM, so it's friendly and very easy to use. Working on a what-you-see-is-what-you-get principle, designing good page layouts becomes almost intuitive, with true-to-scale fonts and images displayed on the screen.

FLEET STREET

CITY OF LONDON EC4

Publisher

Use it to create

- Multi-column newsletters and publications
- Advertising layouts and brochures
- Business reports and contracts
- Promotional literature and specification sheets
- Flyers and overhead transparencies
- Organisation charts and flow charts
- Invitations and announcements
- Menus, cards, letterheads and much more



Special features

- Point sizes from 4 to 72 (up to 214 on a 1040)
- Over 150 ready-made graphic images supplied on disk
- Includes an conversion program to convert other 37 graphics files
- User controllable letters, word and line spacing
- 1-4 levels of shadowing for boxes
- Edit text in one window and lines straight into the page in a second window
- Up to 7 windows open at any one time
- International characters included



Fleet Street Publisher will be available from your wholesaler in March, RRP £119 including VAT.

Drivers for a range of popular laser printers, including Atari's own forthcoming machine, will be available shortly.

System Requirements

- Atari 520 ST minimum
- Monochrome OR colour monitor
- Epson FX-80 or compatible dot-matrix printer

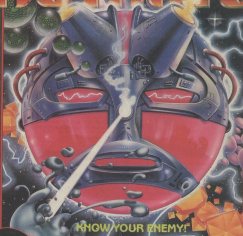


MIRRORSOFT

Maxwell House, 74 Warwick Street, London EC2A 2EN
Telephone: 01 373 4844 or 4818

BELIEVE ME...THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO BEAT THE

MUTANTS



KNOW YOUR ENEMY!

I took on the Mutants knowing I was armed to the teeth with missiles, mines, torpedoes and more... I could even choose where I wanted to fight! How could I lose? ...How DID I lose? I've never seen anything like it... they came at me in droves, in swirling gases, in forms spinning a deadly gossamer and there were more to come. I know now that one form of Mutant will never escape a well planned pattern of mines. It's just the beginning... but I must build the ultimate weapon or I'll NEVER be rid of them all!



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ocean

COMMODORE
8.95