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the answer on
page 22

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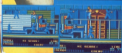
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SEGA'S SWEET SIXTEEN

TONY TAKAGISHI test drives a beast from the East in the shape of Megadrive, Sega's new 16-bit console which stormed the Japanese market last November. But if you thought all of the action was arriving from the land of the rising sun, then watch this space - next month ACE previews the UK's own exciting contender, bringing you the full story on the KONIX console...



Something rather interesting landed all the way from Japan to drop into my news than willing hands recently: it's called the Megadrive. It's the new Sega 16-bit console and it's 16-bit (but NOT 6501) Please-don't shout, some of our readers may have forgotten - (Eh, Make no mistake, I love my PC Engine - but this new console will knock spots off it.)

The Megadrive went on sale in Japan in early November and it was a complete sell-out within two days, selling around 50,000 units. The console itself costs £95 pounds (£100 yen) and the games available, *Space Harrier* (J&M Super Thunder Blasts, £24 (£200 yen) each. Don't pay too much attention to those Japanese prices, though, because I'm afraid it's going to be a bit more expensive when it hits the UK market round about next September. Although a final pricing decision won't be made until next summer, it already seems clear that the damage will be in the £500 bracket, or at least very close to it. Cartridges should be in the £30-50 region, but an adapter may be



Just before the vertiginous action starts - the end of the title sequence...



The hero leaves the name of the level about to start...



Explosive action with large, detailed enemy sprites. Just like a arcade...

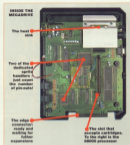
available to allow upgrading it to Sega Saturn to use their cartridges on the Megadrive.

The console is based on a 66000-core processor running at 6MHz and a Z8014 AHB2. It boasts 64K screen RAM, a choice of 256 colours to any pixel on screen and 144 internal RAM, with RGB, FM and composite video outputs. Sound comes in the form of FM, a programmable sound generator and pulse code modulation. There's a facility for listening to the digital quality output using your own headphones - these simply plug into the front of the unit - and you can use a slide lever to increase the volume on a scale of 1 to 10 (No kidding! Will it be 1 to 11 on the limited edition deluxe model? - Ed).

The unit has a stylish look to it, resembling nothing more than a CD-ROM player. There are two joystick ports (shoot!) - the FC Engine only has one, and the power switch is conveniently situated on top of the unit, as is the game reset button. There's an expansion port on the side, and the restricted information presently available strongly suggests that a system like is planned, allowing friends to tag each other and connect or even play games simultaneously down the phone (WOW!).

The back of the machine is thoroughly clean and simple - just the power slot, a composite/FM video out and three sockets for RGB output.

At the time of writing, I have only one game for the machine, *Space Harrier 2*, although *Super Thunder Blade* should be with me by the time you read this article. Even so, I can tell you that words barely do justice to a console of such processing power and sophisticated software. It is more an arcade experience than home games playing My PG Engine is



still a superb machine with brilliant games, but technically the Sega machine is light years ahead - quite simply, the best home-games machine in the world.

Switch on the power and you are faced with the Sega logo pulsing away in gaseous shades of blue. Then the words 'Space Harrier 2' zoom in from the distance and the number 2 rotates, making a sharp metallic ping as it slots into place under the title.

You can alter the play options through a menu obtained by pressing any one of the three fire buttons on the sideways two-hand joystick control. The 'Sound' option allows you to listen to any of the 18 soundtracks from the game. Game Level lets you choose from Easy, Normal or Hard. *Play!* This is exactly that, allowing you to select auto fire (don't-see-see the trigger

properly) and freely Direction is for those of you who like their joystick controls inverted.

On pressing Start you are shown an info screen with the hero running up a monitor displaying the message: Alert, Fantasy Land Falls into Chaos Now. Press Start again and you are faced with the scrolling backdrop and the name of the first level (Stuns Area). You can choose any of the first 12 levels by pressing the pad upwards, but if you do choose any level other than 1, when you complete level 10 you return to level 1 and cannot play the remaining levels.

As with the original *Space Harrier* from its digital speech, so if you hit an object you get the familiar 'Aaargh' and then 'Gah Raaa'. This is the closest I have ever heard digital speech from a games machine, or any computer.

The screen layout is simple, with lives in the bottom left corner, stage number in the bottom right and score in the top right. It plays just like the original *Space Harrier* with you moving around the screen staying like enemy although the attack patterns are different and the graphics are like you have never seen before. This one is 14:3:0.8, incredibly detailed and exceptionally finely coloured. So smooth, and not a raster glitch in sight, even when it's almost nearly fills the screen.

The end-of-wave monitors had me reeling and gasping for breath - the screen was packed with monsters, aliens, gunties and explosions, and nothing stays down! The levels with the ending coming down and scrolling above you are straight out of the arcade.

The console is basically derived from the original *Space Harrier* arcade machine and I could not resist opening it up and having a peak inside (No little terror - Ed). The chip count is very small with the familiar 68000 taking up plenty of space, and the dedicated sprite handlers were glad to see with over 200 pins out. The hardware is said to support 8-bit Japanese Sega cartridges, but these are different to those in the UK and US anyway and the worry is that you'll need to shell out something like £20 to an adapter over here.

Look at the screen shots and just maybe you will get an idea of the power of the games machine. The graphics, sound and processor speed are unsurpassed in the history of home-games consoles ON COMPUTERS (You're shouting again - Ed).

The Sega 16-bit Megadrive is due for release in late 1988 and realistically will not be best in any class of quantity for some time after that - after all, they can barely cope with their home market demand at the moment...



Stage 1 and the awesome hero continues the battle, this time between 'hor' and 'coling'.



The size of that sprite! And it moves really smoothly...



Just like the arcade machine! - Stage 10, and another monster sprite comes up...

PC ENGINE - THE STORY SO FAR

NEC's PC engine caused a storm on its launch in Japan 15 months ago, and around 500,000 units were sold within the first month. But soon controversy raged as to whether the Engine would survive - software was already coming out for it and there was also talk of 16-bit machines from Sega and Nintendo.

Fifteen months on, the number of games for it has risen to 21 (including games by JVC, Namco and Taito as well as Sega own versions). Curiously Sega does not appear to see the Engine as a great threat, demonstrated by the fact that the company has granted a license for Fantasy Zone and Space Harrier (the original coin-op).

On the hardware side it offers solid and large capacitive joystick

units, a multi-tap unit allowing up to four people to play simultaneously, and a RA Booster which allows owners to run the Engine through a monitor and their TV's. NEC has also shown working prototypes of its CD-ROM games unit with a couple of games, Street Fighter and a role-playing game. There are also junior line-ups, and there's a working prototype of a portable Engine that can be used on the move.

Clearly the PC Engine is far from dead, and indeed the announcement of the 16-bit Sega only serves to fuel speculation as to when the market is going. Nintendo has a commanding position in the world console market, but unless it makes an official announcement regarding

its own 16-bit console soon, that company could well find itself with an uphill battle against the established Engine and Sega machines.



Above: The Engine connected to a CD-ROM drive - note the special Japanese translation to this photo...

Left: The basic package - Engine and controller. In real life, the lead is much longer...

Below: Add-ons that are available in Japan include two improved controllers, it unit that allows four players to join in the fun, and a sound and video enhancement unit.



PC ENGINE VS SEGA MEGADRIVE

There is no hard and fast answer as to which console I prefer. The Engine has a wide, top-quality selection of games, and I have been playing these happily on it for the last 12 months or so. It has a good choice of peripherals, and the CD-ROM and portable games unit looks well for the future.

The Sega, on the other hand, has far more potential,

and obviously games like Outrun, Afterburner and Galaxy Force will be reissued for it. Whether or not there will be any third party software for the Sega, which is not known at this stage, could be a deciding factor at the end of the day.

Disregarding personal preferences, it is in any case too early to make any kind of accurate guess as to which

of these machines will dominate. The Sega is a hot favourite, but a not depends on software and hardware support. The Engine is established and has a name for itself.

The battle is being fought in Japan at present, and we will see the outcome (if indeed there is a clear winner) in about 12 months from now...

THE ENGINE LIBRARY



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TU TU JINBI



TENNIS
GALAGA II
WONDER BOY IN WONDERLAND
THE LEGENDARY AXE
SPACE HARRIER
DUNGEON EXPLORER
DRAGON SPIRIT



The Editor is still not impressed. (He's a hard man.) After much negotiation he has been persuaded to split his £100 star letter prize between two correspondents this month - Andrew Waterhouse and Gareth Burge, who each receive £50 of software of their choice, mainly out of sympathy for their respective plights.

Could you be the first to clean up and collect that £100 worth of software? Send your missives to **ACE LETTERS, THE EDITOR, 4 QUEEN STREET, BATH, BA1 1EJ.**

JELLY HANDLER

I recently bought a copy of First Omega (reviewed) following the rave reviews you gave this game in your mag, and to put it mildly, I am extremely disappointed with it!

The "terrifying response" however has it (imagined) for flying characteristics of a jelly handler and its "teary atmosphere" is as much use as a postbox in a goal if this game is to be the Defender of the 1990's then Lord help us.

I read using the tips published in ACE to help, but these too proved useless. The only tip I would give a potential 'vivo' buyer is South Wales. This is one game I will certainly fire and forget!

Philip Hargreaves
Coastleigh, Leicesters

Was it right, or was it wrong? Letters from Miss Fern and Miss Annette welcomed.

OK

DEMO DEMO

After reading ACE issue 15, I went to the section for next month. I saw the words Dragon King demo. I went looking over the next. After reading the rest let I felt like tearing it up, because it was only for the Spectrum and 64 on tape. I have an Amstrad CPC 464, where are the limits of demos?

Tadeusz Szepi
Bradford

Imagine your surprise when you found a Dragon King demo on the cassette last month! Sadly, we couldn't fit an Amstrad version of Atlantis on this month's cassette - it was just too big.

OK

SPOUSE INVOLVED

Being the wife of an Amiga owner I'd like to know if I am the only spouse to be a computer addict? I'm sure I can't be. There is nothing worse than being ignored because hubby has got a new game. Instead, hubby makes passes at you throughout the day then "knock-knock" at the door, a fellow over brings some new

games for hubby to try out. For games are the passed while he sits saying "look at this game, look at that one or the other". I reckon there should be a club of some sort for computer widows.

Mrs D P Courtney
Hartlepool, Leicesters

If any other computer widows out there want to write to us, we'll forward their letters to you Mrs C. Meanwhile, our inhouse game judge suggests you demand a second honeymoon in a romantic location which electronic hasn't yet reached!

OK

THE DUNGEON FOR COPYING?

I've been a computer 'gamer' for six years, and unfortunately, in my opinion, games haven't changed much. Six years ago 90% of releases were probably arcade based - is it any different today? Yes, I really enjoy a good arcade game and there should always be a space in the market for them, but surely games like Dungeon Master and other innovative software like Hunt and Nebulus point the way forward.

Another point when some big arcade games are released, unwise clones flood the market so real companies try to make and retail the 'original'. Dungeon Master sold in large numbers, so why have real companies not tried to 'subdo it'? Dungeon Master is an incredibly challenging and enjoyable game, and would it not be a step forward to have ten Dungeon Master clones to pick from this Christmas rather than ten Afterburner clones?

S-Gaine
Ayr, Scotland

Keep your eyes peeled for Chess and Dungeon Master II, from PFI.

OK

BOILING BLANKIES

Why the bloody hell can't the BBC get it right? The programme I'm complaining about is the BBC's

5's new series on computers, Electric Avenue. What a waste of time, money, time, it's just More Live with another name. I remember at the time of the original More Live there was a lot of complaint about it being trivial and uninteresting to the vast majority of computer users.

This new programme is mostly the same, and would probably save better under the title 'Applications for Large Computers including Over a Billion Cents'.

What we need is a programme for home computers, covering, say, the same range of computers that ACE does. Imagine reviews of your favourite games programs where you could actually see the animation and hear the sound. MIDI applications, interviews, software development, reviews, and reviews would never be the same again.

Gareth Burge
Glasgow

Couldn't agree more, Gareth. But it seems that TV producers either don't understand the computer entertainment market, or don't want to. Perhaps this is just as well for us in the magazines field, so maybe we'll better not join this...

OK

16-BIT BUBBLES

About a year ago I sold off my dusty C64 in favour of an ST. During my first year of ownership I have only seen and played about five or six games which my 8-bit couldn't cope with. Putting it bluntly I am sick of software companies re-releasing 8-bit game titles with dosing-up graphics and sound instead of multi-sensory games with real depth as we expect to see in update concepts and shoot-em-ups.

Honestly, Infocom, Rands and Dreamware produce game worthy of the 16-bit machines, but

NEXT MONTH!

Issue 18 of ACE goes on sale on 2nd February. Make an appointment with your newsagent now, as the next issue is packed with Exclusive news, as well as the usual mix of hot reviews and essential features...

- The OFFICIAL story on the Konix Console - full details and Exclusive pictures from Konix themselves.
- The inside story on Rainbow Arts, German Software developers extraordinaire - including Exclusive news on their new arcade machine.
- An Exclusive look at the first commercial CD-ROM entertainment product. (That's enough Exclusives - Ed)

In general we have to make do with games that a Spectrum could manage.

Andrew Waterhouse
Bedford, Herts

Generally, you're right, but the tale is set in the far future in Middle Earth, reviewed this issue, is one of a new generation of games that use the potential of 32000 machines very fully. Look out for our detailed preview of a game from Electronic Arts which is looked to appear next month. It'll knock your socks off!

OK

ROLE PLAYING THEMES—PART 1

As a role player of eight years' standing, I think that I should point out some problems inherent in the usual approach to role-playing that most computer RPGs exhibit in some fashion. These problems include: the player controlling all members of a party, the high precedence of combat to taking encounters, the problem of leaving the area of movement to a reasonable area, and the highly structured approach to the RPG, inherited from the parent table-top system.

Most of the CRPGs to date bear more resemblance to tactical, equal member wargames than true RPGs. This means that the player decides which order the party should move and fight in, what specialist should deal with a certain problem, and so on. In most RPGs, it is often that the person with the best skill deals with the obstruction ahead: it is usually the character at the front who does it. For example, a fight may wish to obscure a trap to get to the riches, rather than allowing the thief to do it. This somewhat chaotic approach to life is masked by the total control of a party by the player in a game such as *Hercules of the Lance*.

The whole point of most current RPGs is to create a valid and internally consistent alternative persons for yourself for the period of the game. This character is easily developed in a series of identified, episodic adventures with a continuous or changing set of companion characters, which allow for a large degree of character change. The nearest computer game equivalent to this is the traditional, one person adventure game, in which a quest is undertaken on an individual basis. This is the form of computer program in which personal interaction with the computer is at its

greatest. In this situation, the player is taking on the role of a mage, thief, fighter or spy on a very simple level, so he has skills within the game that he does not possess in real life. How many people do you know that are capable of creating a wizard? (Yes—Ed)

The latest generation of adventures, such as *Dragon's Back*, contain within them a set of characters which interact with the player and respond to him in an individual manner. This theme of interactive, computer-generated people within the machine is the direction in which I think true CRPGs should go, rather than the current direction of tactical hack and slay programs, such as *Hercules of the Lance*.

The ideal CRPG would have a script-type format, to limit the game area to be within the scope of the computer, and include the player as the leader of a group of individuals who all have a personality. This would move away from a game in which the player controlled all the members of the party, towards the traditional independence of thought and action of table-top RPGs. The closest approach to this ideal that I have so far seen is in *Star Trek*, where individual crew members gave you advice, acted in an extremely limited way. I've been the program to include a combat bonus for a good leadership skill or fighting skill, as in *Defender of the Crown*, seems to be the limit of most CRPG programs at the moment, and the more fundamental problems outlined above need to be addressed before CRPGs come close to matching the pleasure of a good RPG.

Chris Smith
Birmingham

Anyone else care to add to the RPG/RPG-CRPG debate outlined here? In the meantime, check out the latest on role-playing for your computer in our *Alternative Adventures* section.

OK

ALTERNATIVE FREE PLUS

May we, through your letters page, thank all those who attend at the first *Alternative Music Show* at the Aston Villa Sports and Leisure Centre on Saturday 12th November, for helping make it such a success. We had such a good response from both exhibitors and visitors that next year's show will be held at the Bagley Hall, Stafford, which boasts nearly 100,000 sq ft of

exhibition space. So if you see a *Dragon's Back* or *Quest*, *AD&S*, *1, plus*, *Texas*, *1/20th*, *Master*, *MSX*, *1, enter* prize list in full any of the non-mainstream ignored without then make a date for Saturday 11th November 1989. Thank you all once again.

Mike Smallman
Ipswich

See our report on the show a little further into the magazine...

OK

VIOLENT RIGHT WINGERS

People wage an and on about how computers encourage violence. You know the sort I mean. "Must look at that violent arcade over there! Can't we come back?"

"Now remember son, those violent message violence. No?"

"No, get off I only wants a go on Top Gun!"

"Look, we don't want you turning into a violent little boy, do we?"

Don't these people know what they're on about? Obviously not. I mean, you see so many kids jumping around with shunters and JJ automatic after playing *Go West* or *Double Dragon* don't you? Sorry, this only being serious, that people do say those things. Perhaps they aren't aware of what violence and crime that machines cause. There was an article in the local paper recently about a 16-year-old who spent 70 quid a week down the local arcade. He started when he was 12, and is now so addicted that he resorts to crime to get all the cash he needs. But when your local chippy installs *Street Fighter* or *ThunderBolt* look out! would people start complaining that every lefty start beating people up? So why do people accept fruit machines and slag off innocent arcade games? I mean, the most modern One Arm Bandit is programmed to get out only 20% of the total that mugs show in on. So in theory, 80% of the profit goes into the slot. But that slot goes straight into the Amusement's sticky little hands. On the other hand, when you jam 20p into the slot of *Super Hero* Oh, at least you are guaranteed some brain-fucking fun.

Robert Stephens
Bournemouth, Dorset.

And only the other week a Conservative MP was planning to raise Questions In The House, calling for censoring on the content of computer games...

OK

A C C E L E T T E R S

ISSUED EVERY MONTH



It's all very well looking at a game when it is nearing completion, but in order to get an idea of the way programmers, artists and game designers work on a concept, you need to go back to the drawing board stage. In the first of an occasional series, a strange game due soon from the Rainbird stable gets the treatment.



WEIRD DREAMING

Judging by the images contained in *Weird Dreams*, Herman Gomez must find it difficult to get a good night's sleep. The graphics and basic game concepts for this release, due soon from Rainbird, are products of Herman's fertile imagination. "I wanted to do a game about phobias or nightmares, set in a level where things are not what they appear to be", he explains. Clearly he is influenced by the Surrealist movement.

Herman first encountered computers while he was on a graphics course at Kingston College - he admits to having played a couple of arcade machines (the classic *Tetris* and *I Robot*) but had no experience of playing computer games when he first started messing with a friend's machine. Landing screens for *Weird Dreams* followed, as the concept for *Weird Dreams* gradually evolved.

Programmer on the project is James Hutchby, who so far hasn't exactly concentrated his programming effort on the entertainment market - he seems to write a chess

program about five years ago, and recently undertook a conversion for Hewlett, but most of his code has been written for more serious applications. Nevertheless, he has played a significant part in the evolution of the *Weird Dreams* project. "Vishni delivered the art", he explains, "and I built the game around his ideas

and graphics, contributing the more detailed generalia." A third person, Tom King, contributed some of the ideas at an early stage in the development but apparently dropped out fairly early.

James has completed the ST version and is currently completing the Amiga program as other coders work on 4-bit versions. Herman is already thinking about *Weird Dreams II*, but is now creating graphics for two games under production for Activision/Medagames: *Exodus* and *Driftlands*. ♦

Herman's original sketches for the *Weird Dreams* locations, with the resulting ST screens for comparison.

From above: A nightmare scene that includes a real creature's nightmare - by its sleep well after seeing that orange monster!



POWERPLAY

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WELCOME TO 1989

DAMOCLES ● Novagen

The secret to Paul Wexler's classic game Damocles should be complete in time for Easter. The Damocles of the title is an asteroid that is winging its way through deep space on a collision course with the planet you call home. About three hours after the game starts, Damocles will destroy everything you build here, so the major task that confronts the player is preventing that collision.

Over 18 months of development have already gone into the program - with about twice as long to build in total - and Paul Wexler looks likely to excel himself. The demo we were treated to was nothing short of stunning: this time the landscapes are filled in, and wandering around on the surface of one of the nine planets or eight moon moons is a believable experience.



BT - From the top down flying down towards the surface of a planet, you notice a building next to a highway... after landing, you leave the spaceship, enter the building, look out through the window and you can see your parked spaceship! Move around inside a building, and the view through a window changes as the viewpoint shifts - an innovative piece of programming, to say the least.

A host of hot games are making their way towards completion as you read these pages. Here's a quick selection of the best contenders in the race towards software perfection.



Edge - Blasting through space on a money-making mission in Cosmic Pirate.

COSMIC PIRATE ● Outfit

Open Games, whose portfolio of work includes an abundance of games for Japanese console manufacturers, have finally decided to write a game under their own name. One on the horizon may they now, with the BT version to follow by the end of February, Cosmic Pirate offers the opportunity to rise through the ranks of space pirates, play other games and make piles of cash.

Select missions, travel through space and land on planets, shooting everything in sight in the quest for booty. It's a main title riding the cosmic waves - so get in heading on the simulator back of base...

ARCHIPELAGOS

● Logotron

A game that is stated to have the feel and quality of SimCity, Archipelagos sets you the task of building a series of islands scattered around a group of islands. Pops have to be collected in order to build streets of land, white trees and palm-tree-filled eggs complete with a landscaping monitor to direct your aim. BT, PC and Amiga versions are scheduled for release this Spring.

BT - The first-stage landscape that you build on to, in Archipelagos





Amiga - leading to the rink is the futuristic arena where Skateball is played...

SKATEBALL • Ubi Soft

Whether it's combined with roller-skating skills in an action game from across the channel - Skateball. Also does from France any day now in this land, a strategy/sports game in the interactive movie mould...

TEMPLE OF THE FLYING SAUCERS • Exxos

Coming soon from Intergame on the Exxos label is this underground graphic adventure of rescue and conquest. And that's of the French people are falling on at the moment...



EYE OF HORUS

• Logotron

In that's what Boston Designs have been working on - an Egyptian arcade adventure. Based on the ancient legend of Horus, the aim is to retrieve the body of Osiris inside it. It's in fourteen levels, scattered over a massive maze...

BATTLETECH • Infocom

A new development from the Masters of Storytelling, Battletech has a fair share of arcade action. Not an adventure game, by any means...



WEC LE MANS • Ocean

Years around any day now, WEC Le Mans should be coming out of the pressurising pits and into the shops.

CHAOS STRIKES BACK

• Mirrosoft

Disgrace Member 2 won't be around until the Autumn, but Amiga owners should soon be able to join in the fun. If people can still keep ahead with Chaos Strikes Back, which adds another five levels to the original game and allows the player to call the appearance of members of the opposing party.



ACE ON THE ROAD

GREMLIN

Gremlin have just moved to post-new offices in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter, so peering through the empty Cheats packets in the hall way, the ACE team descended for a fraternal visit. Work is still proceeding apace on Rasteraid (mentioned last month) and before long we should be able to bring you further details. Star Force, a shoot'em-up for the Spectrum and Commodore (it should be ready in time for review and issue, and fast and furious action is promised, with three stages to each level, ASCII or Federation of Free Traders to offer its full nomenclature, is on the starting blocks and should be lining up for review sometime Dan Russo, and Motor Blasters, an arcade-style driver and with intriguing...



Motor Blasters

Ultimate Golf are both nearing completion on the ST, and from the look of the preview shots they give comprehensive coverage to the sports they simulate. Golf not only simulates play in a wide range of games, but also simulates players: it contains a database of classic 'textures' from the 60s, and in the final version the player will be able to ask the program to attempt three-start finishes as used by famous players. Golf, on the other hand allows the human player to control



ST. Adjusting the swing parameters in Ultimate Golf before playing a shot



ST - Paroia

the actions of the on-screen golfer in detail, as well as other variables such as wind and weather.

Further details on P.A.L.E. (Paroia AI Terrain Encounter) and

Paroia Complete will appear on these pages in soon as Gremlin have taken up the Cheats wrap per cent and settled properly into their new offices...



ST - will the third arrow land in that hole twenty-four? That's Ultimate Paroia...

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THE FLYING SQUAD



Nancy at Chase HQ gives the go-down on the first suspect...



...then it's time to get moving.

CHASE HQ

TAITO 30p

American policemen are jumped round suspects' cars. They call it the Hill Zone. Tony Gibson and his partner Raymond Brody, who are attached to a unit of the Manhattan Police Department called Chase Special Investigation Headquarters, probably call it that too. But then they don't take risks.

For Tony and Ray, apprehending suspects involves ramming their cars with sufficient force to stop them. A mission starts with the partners cruising the city streets in an unmarked patrol car, waiting for the radio to burst into life as Nancy at Chase HQ gives the orders.

Then it's into the action. The player grips the steering wheel, slips into Lo gear, pushes the pedal to the floor and the chase is on. Like the majority of modern driving games, the view of the action is from just behind and slightly above the on-screen car. Other road users and roadside structures have to be avoided in pursuit of the quarry - collisions cost valuable time and cause loss of speed. A small distance indicator at the right-hand side of the screen reveals how close you are to the suspects, and Nancy also advises when visual contact should be possible. When the villains are sighted, a large arrow appears above their car and the time limit is extended.

Now comes the tricky bit. To stop the suspects, the player has to ram the suspect's car. Each collision causes damage - a meter running on the left-hand side of the screen indicates how many more times the car must be hit before it stops. On the higher levels, the criminals get cunning and start weaving in and out of the other traffic. You get cunning at times too, though - for example if the road splits, a large arrow appears on the screen showing the best way to go. Often the route winds over rough ground, or a partially closed section of the highway, complete with wooden barricades and empty boxes.

The Dot Run theme these weeks being expanded and presented in different ways (see Power Drive in the ACE article special issue 14) and Chase HQ is the best so far. Driving and violence may not mix too well in real life, but it's a winning coin-op combination. ■ Andy Smith



(Main picture) There is 60 (60s) the increased time and damage meter on the left.
(Top) Smash into that car and force it to stop.
(Middle) Stop Three and it's drag pushes this time.
(Bottom) Hit the car on the outside of a bend and you're liable to go spinning off.

60 MINUTES

QUAD

EXTENDED PLAY...

CYBERBALL

ATARI 30ip

American football in the 21st century, played between two teams of player-controlled robots. Play follows the same rules as standard American football, and you call the plays, then control the specific robot that leads the play. For example, the attacking player decides to pass the ball up the field to another robot from the Down. Once the play starts the player controls the passer and when he throws the ball it travels towards the receiver. The control then switches to the receiver and the player must try to complete the pass and gain some extra yardage. As with all the games that you tend not to find in our football is this exploding ball! As the game progresses, the ball heats up until it either explodes or crosses the other player's 50 yard or goal line. For hard hitting action, this game is well worth checking out.

COBRA COMMAND

DATA EAST 30ip

This horizontally-scrolling shoot 'em up, which puts you in the pilot seat of a helicopter, is another of the '87 monster troops. You've got firing and land-based modes to contend with and some tricky tunnels to negotiate. All you would expect from a shoot-em-up is there: extra weapons, end-of-level guardians, good graphics and sound effects - and little long term interest.

HARD HEAD

SIJINA 30ip

There's an arcade adventure very much in the Super Mario Bros mould. Cartoon style sprites trail across brightly coloured platforms, smashing blocks and bouncing on baddies' heads. It's unoriginal but addictive fun.



(Main picture) Making away with your three-way Power shots.

(Top) The Truxion arena in their glory. That green symbol changes the weapon to a Gun beam (a new colour!).

(Middle) Drop a bomb and damage those end-of-level guardians with the blast.

(Bottom) Another bomb dropped. There are speed up and power up symbols to collect at the top of the screen, so go for 'em!

TRUXION

TAITO 30ip

Among the games leading the '87 month revolution is the vertically-scrolling shoot-em-up from Taito. The player starts his craft from directly above and has to fight through five increasingly difficult stages, killing enemies and stationary enemies and dealing with the end-of-level guardians. To help, you can pick up three different extra weapons. Play commences with 'Power shots', which are three-way-firing, 'laser beams' are electric arcs that loop from your craft and back to its enemies for as long as you hold the fire button down or until the enemies are destroyed. The 'Gun beam' fires rapid laser bolts. Swapping between weapons is effected by shooting (but symbols) and collecting the resultant coloured symbols. Red means Power shots, green is for Gun beam and blue is Truxion beam. After a few games you soon learn which of the extra weapons is best used against which end-of-level guardian.

As well as skull symbols, there are also boosts to collect, which can severely damage an end-of-level guardian if it gets caught in the blast, and '3' symbols which speed up the ship. 'Y' symbols, should you manage to collect five of them, increase fire power. For example, if you're using Power shots and manage to collect five 'Y's the three shots are increased to nine, called another five and the number goes up to 75. After losing a life, up to four 'Y's can be carried over to the next ship.

Truxion is very Nintendo-like, but there's a very like a lot of other shoot-em-ups. The large display is great - the feeling you get playing the game is like suddenly buying a new 'Z' telly when you've been watching a 14" model for years. It's a good shoot-em-up too, not as exciting as, say, R-Type, but a lot better than some of the others that have appeared in recent months.

Andy Smith

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he Editor was dead: to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. Not, mind, as dead as a doornail, in the simile of our ancestors. Dead drunk.

"I don't make merry myself at Christmas, and I can't afford to make idle people merry," he had told the ragged staff when they invited him to join in the roistering at the nearest hostelry to the

office. Scroungers! They'd be wanting Christmas bonuses next...

And yet here he was as inebriated as a salamander, courtesy of a bottle of Tanzanian sherry sent round by his long-suffering printer. Concentrating his vision wonderfully, the Editor surveyed his icy bed chamber. On the table sat his 12-year-old, free-with-Green-Shield-stamps Neanderthal 3 computer (3K, solar panel on the roof) and the only two pieces of software for which he had ever parted with money: 'Precis Plus,' which automatically halved the number of words in every feature submitted to him and saved fortunes on freelance lineage payments; and 'Noughts and Crosses,' a Jung and Fulisch game which for some reason he had bought at a jumble sale for 65p.

"Games..." shrieked the Editor. "Computer games? Humbug...!" He wondered idly whether he could raise much on it third-hand.

These musings were interrupted by a low grinding, then a rattle, and finally by a clanking noise as if of the dragging of chains 'cross a wine merchant's collar. Damn! He must have left the disk drive running again. But his colour changed as it came in through the door.....



"Tony Tyler!" gasped the Editor. "What do you want with me? I signed that 1978 expenses form last year. It must be lost in the accounts department..." But the shade said not a word. Instead, it sat down at the word processor and methodically keyed in the following copy...

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

The idea came to me one day in 1983 when I was standing looking into a shop window in London's Tottenham Court Road, and scratching myself inside, a row of computers were doing their thing, all plugged into TV screens and all running some sort of moving visual display. There was a Sinclair 2065, a Commodore 40C-20, an elegant little box called a Dragon 32, a BBC computer, and an Atari 400 with its control keyboard. I wanted them all, I couldn't afford any one.

However, a magazine dedicated to reviewing games and otherwise walling about these wonderful widgets would certainly have an undesirable need for the lot. Plus a TV screen for each. All lined up on a long and well-lit work bench, while cool and dispassionate reviewers drafted from machine to machine, inspecting endless crates of free software, testing the lot on test devices and other plug-in bits, and generally having a good time.

In the cold moments, one could also get a magazine out and maybe even tap the whole experience by acquiring some mechanical dolls.

First step, check out the dolls. Had anybody else got the same idea?

At the time there was only one magazine covering the drug-rated biz. (The same one that's still in business today.) I took my idea to the Godfather of the nation's largest magazine publishing houses. Working with lightning speed, the boss took only eight months to agree. "One change," they said. "We want to call it

Big K." My original title had been *40K*, as those days the optimum *Millicore* for home computers.

By the time of the launch, I expect my boss had got around to calling a 64K... and then we'd have had to change it a year later to 128K... I frantically making a vaguely unconvincing image of exactly what things in other words with a lot of work on top. Big K was launched.

By then there were five other games titles on the market - fifty three computer magazines in all. Do you remember the *1600 Rush*? The days when dealers from all over accumulated to cash in on a new Klugefest in those days the city of Liverpool needed a kind of post

office glow, but all across the land folk were churning out stuff for Spectrum, Dragon, Beeth, VIC, Atari. One day you remember the *120-125* and others, and getting themselves photographed in Ferrari, while the balls was bemused teen stories about compact which bits.

It was soon apparent that the plethora of different machines was far more of a hassle than the luxury I had so intensely imagined. We had our row of computers and TVs, all right - with a nightmare of joystick hanging upside down from beds' ends of twisted cabling, not far in the keyboards. TVs that wouldn't fit, interfaces that wouldn't, plugs that didn't, switches that never had on, oversteps, cassette cases, some empty, some filled with anonymous white-labelled tapes, many clearly used as address or telephone for someone badly mistaken. For three, my friends, were the great days of The Games. Listing Games listings in *BASIC*. Some of you who remember the *1600K* may also have noticed that the tenacity of games magazines then to fill up their pages with program listings has abated sharply in recent years. This isn't because the readers are fed up with them. It's because the magazines are fed up with them. Never in my mind was there such a nightmare of an editorial task as sorting out the dozens of cassettes on each thing as a disk then that came at each post. By day to load them up they wouldn't load, ran them (how could we if they wouldn't load?), across them (difficult when you can't see them), and - worst of all - got the buggers out.

There was no such thing as a standard office printer in those days - you had to bring a compatible printer for each of your computers like had eight, and this blurring of printers was never actually completed, and even then had the time something wouldn't work.

Finally we were supposed to send the tapes back to their authors, but I'm afraid this task was considered of low priority, and one of those days some hapless cleaner in King's Beach Tower is going to open a long-disposed cupboard and be found under a mountain of someone's floppy cassettes.

Some of the computers we used then are still around today. Straight winner overall was the Spectrum. It was easily the most popular machine, even in its rubber-keyboard 48K version. The BBC also survived - it was by far the



head "professional" of all our computers and we write most of our "traps" on it, using WordWrite 1.0 and an Epson printer. The 1/2 soon faded, but was replaced by the far more formidable Commodore-64, again a machine still very much with us. We kept leaving rumors of a computer to be called Enterprise. The Dragon was briefly upgraded to 64K RAM, then vanished to Spain, where it still lives. The Gic just drifted away and left. The Atari 800/800, in my view the best of the lot, eventually became the K3, never, later in parish in the sell-off from Ramon to Jack Thorne. Enterprise still didn't appear, but we heard it was now called Dan.

Then there was the software — excellent stuff like *Clm* for the Beos, Chris Crawford games like the peerless *Eastern Front* for the Am — a mound of stuff for both the G64 and the Spectrum, with the former winning on count of quality and the latter on sheer volume and numberiness. The part of the original fantasy of last came true — it was really quite pleasant to lay down one's left leg, pour some coffee from the ever-bubbling pot, and move into the Review Room to pass an hour or two tackling some less large experience.

I wasn't complacent, more a kind of fatalist, since from the beginning it had been obvious that Big G was doing rather less well than we had hoped. Much of this was my fault. What I had really wanted was a sort of computer entertainment rather than games alone publication; what the publishers turned out to want was yet another games magazine, complete with listings in BASIC. He had a lot of fights over the question of BASIC listings. The publishers saw them as cheap pages; I saw them as an editorial nightmare. I lost. Few readers ever typed the darned things in, anyway, and those that did were usually underwhelmed by the homogeneity of the result (we wanted to print good games, but too often had to settle for something that would actually run).

We were getting better, bit by bit, but as the year of 1984 faded, the truth was that the Beos itself was beginning to peter out. Quasi-wellness-companies suddenly were... no more. The Liverpool thing collapsed. Mags faded. Christmas 1984 failed to produce the predicted boom, and by early in '85 it was clear that the moment of crisis was at hand. For all of us.

In February the managers called the rug from under Big G. We had talked thirteen months, and had paid our own way, but we had not made enough profit, and it was their opinion that we would never do so. Certain. Sads, I went back and told the staff of five the news. Without a word the Review Editor walked over to one of the better machines and started unspooling it. "Right," he said. "I'm having this one." The lobbying continued all that week and by the time we had finished all that was left was the £20 which for eight months had been hiding up one leg of the table where we kept our coffee machine.

The day we left the building the Enterprise/Clm, now called Plan, was actually launched on the other side of London. I never found it again.



"Humbug," spluttered the Editor apoplectically. "Utter bloody Activision...". But even as he spoke the spirit faded, only to be replaced by an even more ghastly sight. The apparition staggered from an excess of cold medication. Its pockets spewed jammie dodgers, clearly long past their sell-by date.

"My God," stammered the long-pocketed journo, "Andy Wilton! But I've told you six times already this week, the cheque's in the post. First class — at least I assume 7p still goes first class. I'll bet those thieving devils at Mount Pleasant have been opening the envelopes again..."

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ST Action - February 1988

"US Gold has done an excellent job
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STOP PRESS

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platinum and sells
over 100,000 units in
Europe in just 5 days!

Play it! The No 1!...

...but once again, before the Editor could even think of trotting out his world famous TII have it cancelled and draw you a postal order straight after the New Year holiday' excuse, the transparent apparition sat at the eerily glowing screen and keyed in...

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT



As you starting to find the whole world of computer games a bit dull, a bit short on excitement? Do you long for those days when gamey game adverts were a brand new idea, unknown different companies were building their own mooks, and everyone held their breath for the next ultimate release? You must be suffering from the dreaded micro doldrums, an affliction that's increasingly common these days.

It's all got too predictable, you see. If you feel in guess which games were going to be big this time, or which micros were going to be in the show and which, you could probably get pretty close without any inside information at all. It's not just that things are announced, advertised and written about a long way in advance; that's been a feature of the micro scene for years. No, what's different now is the way games actually come out within a few months of when they're supposed to, look roughly like you'd expect them to be from the ad artwork and compressed far to sell with their reviews.

We're talking about business here. What started out as a crazy, enthusiastic after-run from programmers' bedrooms has turned into a serious industry. Businessmen don't produce meh-gee home microz using screen chips and buggy ROMs. Businessmen don't advertise untested games for a year and then scrag them. Businessmen know there's no percentage in that kind of thing: after all, they'd get years of other people's mistakes to learn from.

Really it's just a sign that the micro gold rush is over. Back in 1982 the micro scene was the hottest thing going, so far as city events were concerned, and silicon investments were made straight after. The disastrous time of 1983-4 involved that old, with poor sales killing MSX at birth and leading Acorn as a main producer. The micro depression that followed was as unambiguously gloomy as the boom had been optimistic. Even Amstrad shares fell on the basis of their flagging micro division, and par-

ents predicted the end of the home computer industry altogether.

Necessity, it says, the pencils had raised the signs. Acorn's failure was an indication that that people were tired of micros, but that Acorn were selling the wrong machine at the wrong price. As Amstrad's majestic rise over the following year so clearly showed, there were still plenty of willing buyers around if the deal on offer was good enough. The Amstrad CPC was good value, the Acorn Electron wasn't, and that was the only difference that mattered.

If anything, the simple truth was harder to cope with than the apocalyptic visions of a total micro collapse: at least that would have been exciting and heroic, rather than just plain old business sense.

NEVER HAD IT SO GOOD

How can it be a bad thing that the computer entertainment industry has grown up? It's important enthusiasts and software cowboys, all by the way, that oughtn't to get anyone depressed. Programmers making a decent living, software houses putting the emphasis on solid gatekeeping - surely this kind of thing is good news!

And that, perhaps, is the problem: almost by definition, Computers and computer games may be a whole lot more exciting than they used to be, but before the scenes it's dull as anything. Whatever happened to the wild rocket-erotic imagination of Sir Clive Sinclair? Max Sugar may be a great deal more successful than Sir Clive Clive, but he's not half so amusing.

SECRET SCIENTISTS

The more things change, folks, the more they stay the same. Fans of the weird and wonderful may long for those far-off days of the Sinclair Q, and the COM8, but even at the end of the decade there are still a few exotic animals around. Don't look to Sir Clive Sinclair to produce them - he's busy tending his highly sensitive laptops - but rather turn your attention to the new generation of lovable coffers. At the worthy end of things stand the Miles Gordon Technologies, with their ultra-low-price Micro Alice (not to mention the Middle East, the best

and subcontinent and a few other places too.) Based on the little used Z80B microprocessor, it might be aptly described as a Spectrum with govern-slightly-larger chips. In fact it has a far better base: then any of Sir Clive's ZX beauties could boast, smaller more memory and substantially better graphics. Unfortunately it's the machine's Spectrum-compatibility that everyone's latched onto, and in 1988 that's not necessarily a blessing.

The same could be said of the new Sinclair Professional PC200, whose four-colour CGA graphics make it look like a hardware step from the 1984 vintage Amstrad CPC. It's obvious 'everyone knows' points like this that earn folk awards over the dust settles. (The way that you can't close the PC200's case properly after installing expansion boards may also give you a few thrills in years to come.)

Let's not forget the home Aristocrat either. How remarkable it is that such a modern machine should in so many ways be a real throw from the past. Like the old Good BBC Micro it's all but perfect, a sleek machine with impressive power for its time and some heavy-weight official patronage. Like the BBC it's a rather purposeless beast, too expensive for home use and a right mess to power; that is needed for the educational market. Using an Amstrad in the classroom has been talking composed in writing down to the commissioner in a Fernan, but that's almost beside the point: so another can mention observed, 'Calling a micro 'educational' means you really don't know what use the thing is.'

LET'S GET EXCITED

Okay, Ultimate aren't going to come out with that neat Earth-shattering eye, but there are still plenty of creative people worth looking at eye on. However technically jaded you might be, you can't help being impressed by the technical skill, originality and finely-tuned gameplay these guys can produce.

Take incentive for instance, the people who brought you Diner and Detective. Their astonishingly thorough 'Freemove' systems are set to the streets again in the form of the new game Total Eclipse. Just imagine what they could turn out if they designed for the ST and Amiga from the outset!

Of course, we're already seeing what happens when John Phillips starts out on 16-bit



machines: Climaxer, that's what. Here at ACE we don't rate the newer titles/Word-wrap quite as highly as we do its earlier iterations, but that's hardly surprising. Both games get an ACE 100-rating, as Admin's striking 1988 debut (especially right well have done if ACE had been around back then, 1988 this record, his next game must be worth looking forward to.

The same very definitely goes for David Graham. This is partly because David's right on the cutting edge of solid 3D game graphics, as his excellent adventures in *Wings* so aptly proved, but mostly because he's working on *Life II*. If the original *Life* can still give a good account of itself after all these years the sequel should be something truly remarkable.

There are plenty of other excellent titles deserving the goods. Realtime's impressive *Carrier Command* immediately springs to mind, but let's not forget Digital Integration's 100-rated *Bottoms* (Babington and ATF showed they hadn't lost their touch), and with *F-14 Combat Pilot* on the horizon they've clearly a team to watch. 1989 is set to be a good games vintage.

For the first time in his life, the Editor felt a pang of conscience seeping into his sodden brain. Desperately, he rushed to the window, threw it open and peered into the morning mist. "What's today?" he shrieked anxiously at the paperboy delivering his November issue of 'Bang!'. "Why, 'tis Christmas Eve, Sir, as everyone knows!" returned the scruffy urchin. The Editor rubbed his hands in glee, before rummaging in his pockets for loose change. "Ha ha! I haven't missed it! Listen, young fellow, you know the computer store on the corner..."

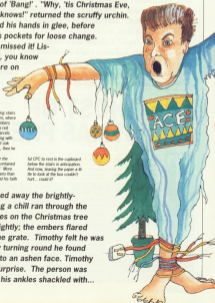


It was the night before Christmas. Tim Timothy crept down the creaking stairs to the living room, where the last dying embers of the fire cast a red glow over the parcels piled high beneath the tree. Trembling with anticipation he pulled that great oak door, praying that it would not break, then he peered over to the presents.

With shaky hands he reached for the largest box of all, the one he knew contained the 31 "State of the Art Computing". More rare, more precious, more colourful than any ever before. Tantalus that day had led to this

for DPC to rest in the cupboard below the stairs in anticipation. And now, facing the paper a little to look at the box couldn't hurt... could it?

As he gently peeled away the brightly-coloured wrapping a chill ran through the room. The baubles on the Christmas tree jingled ever so slightly; the embers flared momentarily in the grate. Timothy felt he was not alone. Slowly turning round he found himself staring into an ashen face. Timothy jumped up with surprise. The person was dressed in white, his ankles shackled with...



...could they really be old Spectrum power supplies? And were those leading leads that framed his face like straggly hair? The strangest thing of all was that if he squinted, Timothy imagined he could see right through the figure.

"Who are you?" Timothy managed to utter. The figure replied in sepulchral tones; "I am the ghost of Christmas Presents Past. Call me **Gwyn Hughes**. What have you there?"

"An S-S-ST..." Timothy stuttered. The ghost let out a low moan. "Well, you needn't sound so gloomy," Timothy smiled. "This is the best computer available." The ghost groaned again. "How soon they forget." "Forget what?" said Timothy, wrinkling his brow.

"The Lynx, the Oric, the Enterprise..."

"Like in Star Trek?" Timothy sparked up.

The third groan was even more sepulchral than the previous two. For several seconds the wraith stared at Timothy then, suddenly, the French windows blew open of their own accord. "Come with me," the spirit commanded, holding out its hand...

THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENTS



laughed. "Where are you taking me? The North Pole? The Arabian Desert?"

"Vatou Mille Liqueur Centre," the ghost replied without emotion.

"Vatou Mille Liqueur Centre?" Timothy exclaimed, hardly able to stifle the squeaking noise.

"You'll see," said the ghost. "You'll see..."

If somebody offered you a mere with graphics resolution of 672 x 512 pixels and a 266 colour palette, four-voice stereo sound via eight channels, 128K available RAM, networking, a built-in email processor and looks good enough to get it Design Centre approval (you'd snap at it, wouldn't you?)

Surprisingly enough, when the Enterprise

appeared around four years' ago, very few people found them in their Christmas stockings, and pretty soon the company hastily went into liquidation, joining the savage Lynx, the astronomical Jupiter Ace and the meaningless-but-famous sounding Oric Atmos.

And so these price-conscious enthusiasts in the home micro market, stabilised along the way with the Oric, Spectrum and later the Amstrad CPC, crossed the line. Like earlier horses, most of the horses ended up at cat's meat, or at least consigned to cupboards, but a few remained loved and cherished by their owners, even though their list of software remained severely limited. And early in November 1988 the Alternative Micro Show (which stated that this is life after death—complete with all the evangelical fervour that usually accompanies revival meetings).

This was a rough-down memory lane—some of it as well as 18—to an era when a new machine seemed to appear every two weeks. It may seem strange today, when the only decision is choosing between an Amiga or an ST, that some people really did buy the Dragon 32.

Actually there was a scarcity of Dragons at the show, and not because of a preponderance of sword-wielding pirates. The Dragon users are a proud bunch, who were holding their own gathering a fortnight later. But if mythology was missing, the true genius of Einstein was everywhere—primarily because the show's organisers are brilliant, the 'fading machine's user group.

Clare's fantasy and Mike

Smallman have been arranging Einstein shows for some time, but otherwise figures were falling. Perhaps getting together with some other minority groups would solve the problem? The play seems to have worked, led by the enthusiastic crowd.



The Zenith is still fairly well known, thanks to Benco, which sold off the Zenith machine at amazingly low prices. David Bell of IBM Computers, who has taken over publication of the Zenith User magazine, has a database of approximately 1,500 users and, as he points out, probably only 50% of owners bothered to register.

The CP/M-compatible machine seems especially suited to the technically minded. Neil Smith of Acorn Desktop User Group says that Model Polytechnic uses Zeniths to train computer engineers. The tutor puts a fault in the machine and the students have to repair it. Syntrix Software has even produced a MIDI interface for the machine - and promises that finished versions won't be housed in cardboard boxes like the prototype.

You could have encountered an Zenith in your high street, but you'd need a huge memory to recall the Texas Instruments T9924A. This laptop-like, slim and black micro was made distinctive by the huge indent over the key-board, which resembled nothing less than a driveway beside a house, or cartridge. The machine was powerful and popular in the States, but an original selling price of \$650 - £260 (after restricted sales).

Those who could afford that phenomenal price, it thought in other nations to a £150 or even £80, seem to have stuck by their machines - perhaps because they were buying a phenomenon. The S-WPA (fully name, huh?) was actually a 16-bit machine based on the 96000 processor. While few users recognized the bit, it is a fact that they now needed a BASIC cartridge to do much with it.

It's George Francis Parlett who says that the machine was reliable and boasted good sound and graphics with three audio channels and 28 sprites. Mark Page of Last Anglian Region 99ers (they probably used a genuine term because of the number of UK airlines) is of the same mind that enthusiasts like to add bits on to their systems. Peter Butler of the UK Users Group demonstrated the, with a speech-controlled robot which uses the cassette recorder control port and a very good speech-synthesizer. But so it should be - the same 'B' word chips are still used in many of today's computers.

Speaking of machines which were ahead of their time, there's a small QJ presence at the

show, though like Oregon (over the QJ, fans tend to stick to their own Social gatherings). The excellent Freddy Machos of Digital Precision isn't afraid to hold forth on why the Quantum Leap really flopped since after take off.

"It suffered from being produced in an erratic and haphazard fashion with no real development schedule." And why was that? "Because Dave Seidel was obsessed with the idea of providing track drivers with something to 'crack.'" We'll be featuring the QJ in our Alternative Motor Show issue. Despite its failings,

which included the gate keeping out of early models in a dangle, the QJ was ahead of the pack. Its processor belonged to the 80000 family, just like the ST and Amiga, which made it capable of multitasking. It also had a good virtual language, making it popular with programmers. There are probably still around 75,000 QJ owners around.

As Freddy says, the QJ isn't really dead. Alan Sagar was architecturally inefficient in killing it when he bought Sir Clive's name and QJ technology keeps on reappearing, most recently in the form of the Thor - though nobody seems keen to persist with Micro-drives, which Freddy defines as 'a Unix in a plastic box.' His company currently has an MS-DOS emulator under development which is free and a half price (under the ST's IBM music license), as he says, "The Amiga chips didn't do it right."

While the QJ was always aimed at the serious user, most micro-fans have been at the leisure end of the market. Computer's Lynx is still a bit odd according to enthusiasts like Bob Jones of the international user group. With members as far away as "One Crazy Sagger in New Zealand who calls us up at midnight," the machine retains some 700 followers. In France the SNEC French-Belgian group swap software as they pass through each other's cities.

Clive Chapman of the Reading area association explains the Lynx's appeal as its graphics,

which beat all the competition when it appeared in 1982, and the fact that it's a good machine for software development. Ironically, not enough software developers, and lack of software support (coupled with bad marketing) killed the machine. Even today a BASIC

graphics demonstration runs so quickly and smoothly that it's easy to believe Bob Jones' assertion that a Popular Computing Weekly panel, on seeing the program at the 1984 PCW show, refused to believe that it wasn't a video tape until he saw the code listed.

The Lynx appeared in 485 and 128K versions, as well as an odd 96K halfway house. The 485 version only used for the extensions, but was one of the first large-memory home micros, which

many still believe should have spent the marketplace. A distinctive-looking machine, unless by chance the plastic cover is by one way, it seemed to have everything the computer gamer could want when it was first announced. Unluckily when it actually appeared, a year and a half later, the hardware boom was almost over as people made their choices.

Despite attempts by Enterprise's own software division to support the machine, including an unimproved version of Jim Wilson's classic, Katusha, Enterprise went into liquidation. Now, after a brief hiatus, a new user group has been formed and Tim Box, who has already produced an excellent mouse-driven graphics package for the machine, is close to producing a Spectrum emulator which runs most, if not all, Sinclair software (other like recent Spectrum). He demonstrated Vegas, Don Daves, complete with Spacey attribute class.

The QJ should also have claimed a place in the market. Its sound and graphics were far superior to the Spectrum's and in an age when BASIC was still considered important, its version was fast and structured with neat touches such as dedicated game sound commands to summon up a Zap instantaneously.

There was no QJ user group at the show but there was Home and General Computing,



SUPPORT GROUPS

The following list of contacts is by no means comprehensive, but it provides a method of getting in touch with supporters of all the machines mentioned. The groups in companies can't necessarily supply new or second-hand hardware/software. Please involve an user with any enquiries.

Alternative Micro Show (Organisers) Emsoft Ltd.
Peter Lane, Copdock, Ipswich,
Suffolk IP5 0AB (0473) 682709

Tatung Olivetti 8088 Computer
Bank Top Works,
Southwark, Halifax HD3 9PA
(0422) 52095

Syntrix Software, 17 Manor
Close, Riposts Inn, Andover,
Hampshire SP11 7SU

Jupiter Ads, Jupiter Ad User
Group, 17 Spring Wood Close,
Durston, Christchurch BH1 8EG
(0574) 237505

Enterprise, International Inter-
national Users Group, 80 Hatten-
ford Ave, Princes Risborough
MK2 0JG

T1994A, Perco Electronics,
Wotton, Farnham, Dorset BH14
0PE (0484) 44422

T1-994A Users Group, 24
Basson Drive, Cuffley Heath
E46 4DU (0707) 873778

East Anglia Region 99ers
User's Group, 13 Elm Walk,
Lavenham, Suffolk IP27 9QR
(020887) 2837

Lynx, Lynx User Group, 35
Adrian Close, Newbridge, St
Ives, Cambs

Reading Lynx User Group, 14
Compton Drive, Reading

QJC, Home & General Comput-
ing, 8 Staley Hall Road,
Bainbridge, Cheshire SK16
2DT (061) 923 7369

QJ, Digital Precision,
220 The Bazaar, London E4
6BB (01-827) 5483

Quanta, 26 Oxford Street,
Quincy Shalford, MK11 1JL

QJ Super User Bureau
PO Box 3, Shilton, Ox4 4JH

MSX-MSX Central, 14 The
Wardens Ave, Albury Village,
Coventry CV5 9DU

which holds vast stocks of Cric software and can still supply peripherals, such as a third party-DIC drive. Alan Whitaker explained that the Cric 1 was killed by a bugleader ROM, not accessories in those macro-golfball days. The Cric's reputation suffered more than most though and this, coupled with excessive pricing regarding software development, when the company tried to keep income, killed the machine. Despite a French takeover and the appearance of the Astro, which had all the bugs corrected and looked less Cric in its red and black case, only 100,000 machines were sold worldwide.

These were the victims of the format wars which MSX tried to do away with. The Japanese 'standard' only succeeded in so far as there are now 'dead' MSX machines from a wide range of manufacturers, which makes it viable for IBM Central, a Coventry-based group with worldwide members, to import software from Japan where there is still a strong user base. In fact you only need cross the Channel to discover MSX2 in action - the Spanish use it in schools like we do the BBC.

Probably the most interesting thing about MSX remains the machine's unique features. Faced with producing machines with roughly the same specifications, major electronic manu-

facturers such as Toshiba, Sharp and Philips developed special abilities such as music or video systems. If you can't afford an Amiga and Compaq you can still have a bit of fun with an MSX machine, picked up for a fraction of the cost, as David Rowczyk demonstrated, grabbing a frame from a video-camera.

In the saga of lost opportunities and lost marketing chaps-on, what a disappointment if you'd received one of these machines from Santa Claus, only to find it lacking any form of support, six months later. Enough examples there? No, there is just one more machine, possibly the strangest that ever existed, that deserves mention. It was locally located, sitting alone on a small table in a far corner of the room.

The Jupiter Ace was intended to challenge Sir Clive's empire, but in the execution, it looked like a white (DB) with a Spanghetti-style rubber keyboard and had a full 1K of RAM, almost all of it accessible. But whereas every one else provided BASIC as their onboard language (so that kids around Christmas could blackmail their parents with tales of 'computer literacy') the designers of the Ace knew better. They went forth and almost inevitably failed to multiply.

Today the machine has virtually no cult

ware, limiting its appeal to devotees of its powerful but difficult language, and there isn't even a proper user group, which is why John Charter was calling patiently with his prized machine, hoping to find fellow Jupiter users. And though he was hardly overjoyed by partners, there was a steady trickle, including one man who had travelled all the way from London to see if there was still life in the machine he had bought at a garden sale.

Yes, there was. As show organizer Graham Bennett said, old computers never really die. People tend to fall in love with their first machines and there will always be support for them, no matter how small a trade. Which is why this year's show is intended to move to a bigger venue, in Stafford's Bingley Hall, and will run for two days over the weekend of the 11th and 12th November, 1989.

Tiny Timothy blinked as he opened his eyes. The Christmas morning sun streamed in through the window and upstairs he could hear his parents stirring. He had fallen asleep with his head resting against the box containing the ST. "The state of the art," he thought. "Better colours, better sound... but what about better marketing? Isn't that what really counts? And in ten year's time...? I'd better book my table at the Alternative Micro Show for 1998," he concluded. "Otherwise they'll all be taken up by Archimedes and Sinclair PC200 owners."



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WIN A STAR WARS ARCADE MACHINE

104 prizes on offer as DOMARK gets the Force with ACE...

Fancy yourself as a bit of a Star Wars fan? Well here's your chance to collect an upright Star Wars arcade machine from Domark, or maybe a set of videos... or even a poster.

Mark and Dominic, the Domarks, are sad to be losing the coin-to they used for reference when the first Star Wars game was being programmed, but the trilogy of Star Wars games of-the-time is one complete Jedi! Lucather starts making some heads of the promised new Mini in the world, anyway. They like just moved offices and splashed out on a complete version of the Star Wars arcade machine, and there's one more for TWO consoles in the new Domark, so it has to be goodbye to the Star Wars machine... soon it will be a lucky ACE reader's turn to play up late at night in front of a Star Wars arcade game set to permanent free play.

Apart from the main prize, which is worth hundreds and hundreds of pounds, three runner-up prizes are on offer in this Domark Star Wars trivia quiz - sets of the trilogy of films, Star Wars, Empire Strikes Back and Return of the Jedi. And there there are no less than 100 consolation prizes - a hundred assorted Star Wars, Empire Strikes Back and Return of the Jedi posters are waiting to be despatched.

To enter, all you have to do is have a go at answering the five Star Wars questions that appear on the coupon. If you get stuck on one of them (which shouldn't be the case if you are a real Star Wars fan) don't worry - enter anyway, as you will stand a good chance of collecting a prize. If you have got a problem with a Domark game - like being stuck on a level, or having loading difficulties, then there's a new hotline telephone number to call: 01 780 2224. Don't go ringing that number and asking the answers to the questions, mind...

Complete the coupon and pop it in the post to us at ACE STAR WARS COMPETITION, 4 Queen Street, Bath, BA1 1LJ to arrive by 5th January 1993.



WIN



ENTRY FORM

1) Who played Luke Skywalker?

2) What is the name of the spacecraft that you pilot in Star Wars, the computer game?

3) What role did Peter Cushing play in Star Wars?

4) Who programmed the home computer version of Star Wars for Denmark?

5) What was the name of Princess Leia's planet that was destroyed by the Death Star?

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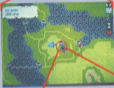
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The first screen is loading and what's happening is accessing the various icons on the Full Map Level.



Select the Magnifying Glass icon on the Full Map, move the glass over Mount Doom and click again, and you are transferred to this section of the Campaign Map, which shows Sauron's HQ and the immediate vicinity.



Select the Magnifying Glass icon on the Campaign Map, move the glass over Mount Doom (where there's also an icon representing an army of Goblins, which means, and you are transferred to the Substrata Level. Mount Doom is shown in the background, and as you slowly pan's view down, you can see a rectangular screen, the last part are represented by a small army.



- Clicking on the Eye allows you to open the Campaign Map, the stage used in Level 1, which is Middle-earth's HQ for setting up status information.
- The first icon allows the current game to be viewed on a second game to be available only, and some position can be used on a map - showing the current position between a previous saved game.
- Click on the Magnifying Glass icon, and the screen's larger picture becomes a magnifying glass which can be moved over the map, clicking again when the position changes the display on the Campaign Level, showing a section of the main battle map.
- Selecting the magnifying glass icon opens a window which shows the package of generators to be selected with - Normal, Heavy and Very Heavy settings are available.
- Allow the height and number of arrows shown in the screen or level to be determined. To change weapons, arrows or the number of arrows, move the mouse over the arrows, click on the appropriate icon, and click on a second time to close.
- Change the screen, and allow it to be used to access the Animation Level of a chosen location.
- Click on the Full Map Level display.
- Allow the speed of generators.
- Click on the magnifying glass icon, and the screen changes to a new screen. Place it over the icons you want to move, and click again - a message "OK" appears next to the screen. Move the "OK" screen over the magnifying glass icon, and click on it, and the screen is moved, and then click again. The icons you commanded then start to move in step to the destination you have chosen.



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A TOURIST'S GUIDE

Or how to find your way around and get things done on the quest to destroy The One Ring



Play takes place on three levels: Full Map, Campaign, and Animation - a pointing finger is used in conjunction with icons to transfer between levels and make selections. Players attempt to move or position can use single key commands to access most of the options.

As might be expected, the Full Map level offers an overall view of Middle-earth, representing the general geography of the land. Forces allied to Evil appear as small red squares, while the party (at your side) are shown as smaller blue points - the blue dots flash if the forces they re-

present are in the frame of view to allow your orders. In Campaign Level, the screen acts as a window, revealing a portion of a huge scrolling map of Middle-earth. The geography is shown in more detail, and icons on the map show the position of individuals or armies.

Once again, the icons that represent forces happen to accept your commands (like on and off), and as forces or characters move, their associated icons travel across the map. A readout at the top of the screen constantly updates the time and date in Middle-earth.



WAR IN MIDDLE EARTH

MELBOURNE HOUSE go Tolkien crazy

SINGING about gold has nothing to do with it. This is much more than a sequel to Melbourne House's classic adventure of yesteryear — *The Hobbit*.

War in Middle Earth combines elements of strategy/wargaming with adventuring in a massive game the sheer size of which makes demands on the player. You don't have to be a Tolkien fan to appreciate it, but an in-depth knowledge of the events and terrain portrayed in *Lord of the Rings* certainly comes in handy when setting down in front of the computer and attempting to get The One Ring into the hands of Sauron's lot.

The action begins at the start of the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. For those of you unfamiliar with Tolkien's history of Middle Earth, here's a quick recap: In *The Hobbit*, see how Bilbo Baggins retrieved The One Ring from Gollum. Now Sauron's nephew Frodo has it. Gandalf the wizard has told Frodo to destroy the ring by taking it to Mount Doom and casting it into the fires of the Earth, but Mount Doom is located in the valley of Mordor, the lands controlled by the forces of Evil. It is guarded by massive armies of Orcs, Goblins and other unpleasant creatures under Sauron's direct command.

Wargames in this module take Sauron of his



(Above) The full map of Middle Earth, which gives an overall picture of what is happening. The game is predominantly played within this screen in strategy.

whence came the



COMBAT IN MIDDLE EARTH

So far, Melbourne House haven't had anything to show us the war in Middle Earth is so hot, but the player should be able to get personally involved in fights, directing the moves of combatants as if playing a board game. In 18-bit implementations, player involvement in fights is fairly minimal.

If a fight is about to start somewhere in Middle Earth, a window opens on screen at the Campaign or Animation level and the player has the option to transfer to the location and watch what goes on, or run things remotely from the Campaign Map screen.

During combat, a window opens, showing who's involved in the struggle and offering four option boxes for each of the main characters or armies fighting on the side of Good. As the struggle progresses, text messages report on what is hap-

pening and the player can select alternative strategies for the forces controlled. Issuing an order to Charge sends folk streaming into the fray while

Engage results in a more considered approach to fighting. Withdraw effects a moral retreat which can be followed up by a command to Disengage Engage,

but Retreat results in a total rout, and cannot (and shouldn't) be resumed unless the last good dieback to phase after the finally-departing goodies.

The relative fighting capabilities of the forces found in Middle Earth soon become apparent — an army of Orcs quickly makes mince-meat of an army of cavalry, for instance, wiping out hundreds of horsemen but only losing a handful of Orcs. A group of hobbits armed with silver blades is no match for a single Nazgûl if a fight starts, and even if you try to split. Patrol orders to all the hobbits present, at least one is generally killed, so make sure Frodo gets to do a runner with the Ring.

Naturally, morale and health affect the fighting capabilities of forces, and additional weapons or armour can be found and used to improve the odds.



A solitary Nazgul proves no match for Frodo and an army of a couple of hundred Rangers. For once, the good guys win!

powers for war, and into Middle Earth of Evil. Unfortunately, Sauron wants his ring back, so he has dispatched nine Nazguls to scour Middle Earth and seek out whoever holds it. If a Nazgul finds the bearer of the Ring, a fight to the death ensues, and once a Nazgul has possession of the Ring, all the Sauron's armies head back to Mordor. If armies, allied to the cause of Good fail to prevent the Ring from falling into Sauron's hands, then darkness will envelop Middle Earth for the rest of time.

A classic struggle between the forces of good and evil...

There is only one way to win the War, and that is to destroy The Ring. Melisama Hecce has used the information contained in the Lord of the Rings trilogy to build up the game world, but it doesn't mean that play strictly follows the plot of Tolkien's books. At the beginning, all the characters have pre-set missions, and if you start the game, all back and do nothing, events will unfold on their own — but the forces of Evil get to recover the Ring, and return it to Sauron.

It's up to the player to influence the course of events and ensure that the One Ring is destroyed. To begin with, only two centers can be controlled by the player: Frodo and a couple of hobbits accompanying him, and a small army of Rangers located near Mordor. Hobbits are no match for Nazguls, and keeping it towards Mordor is almost certain to result in victory for Sauron.



The Witch King wanders on his evil way — he looks like a Nazgul but wears a crown

For the quest to succeed, help is needed. If other armies are to be retained to the cause, then warriors have to be found and taken to their leaders in order to establish conditions for command — which is where the adventure side of gameplay is reinvigorated.

Providing Frodo and his party manage to avoid the Nazguls in the early stages of play, they can start traveling the length and breadth of Middle Earth in search of potions, weapons, armor and magical artifacts that improve their chances of survival. In these travels, they come across helpful characters who may drop hints as to the location of vital items, or even join the questing party, improving the odds when a fight starts.

As the adventure game progresses, the strategic element develops. When the correct items are discovered and taken to the leaders of men, dwarves and elves, or even join the cause and allow the player to command their movements. Usually the player becomes less of an adventurer and more of a General — but approaching the task as a pure warrior is

TALKING TOLKIEN

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien was first and foremost an academic — Merin, professor of English at Oxford University, he created the fantasy land of Middle Earth primarily as a personal diversion, writing a detailed history, and producing maps and illustrations of the strange creatures that inhabited the land.

The Hobbit, Tolkien's first book, followed the adventures of a small-minded hobbit who ends up in possession of The One Ring, an incredibly powerful and evil object forged long ago. It set the scene for a massively detailed trilogy of books: The Fellowship of the Ring, The Two Towers, and The Return of the King which detail the events

leading up to the ultimate destruction of The Ring.

Tolkien wrote other whimsical stories set in Middle Earth, including Farmer Giles of Ham and The Adventures of Tom Bombadil, and co-operated in a project with Donald Swain which led to many of the songs featured in the Middle Earth stories being set to music.

After his father's death in 1973, Christopher Tolkien produced The Silmarillion and Unfinished Tales — edited volumes of his father's unpublished stories.

Further details about Professor Tolkien and his works can be obtained by contacting the secretary of The Tolkien Society at 25, Amersbury Crescent, Hove.

Visit Sauron, ERG (ERG), send it all — it's a charity!

HOBBIT FREEBIE!

If you'd like to be the owner of a special, deluxe edition of the book that sets the scene for The Lord of the Rings — The Hobbit — simply write your name and address on a slip of paper and send it to: Hobbit, ACE, 1 Queen Street, Bath, Avon, BA1 1EL. We have one copy of this delightful and valuable tome to give away, and it goes to the winner of the first slip of paper drawn on 16th February. Get to it!



An army of 500 Frodo are garrisoned at Baramir's, and will 'end' the war too.

unlikely to lead to success. Sauron's forces are large, powerful and cleverly deployed, while Mordor is effectively a fortress. Cunning, strategic, sound Generalship and a modicum of luck are all needed if Frodo or any other character on the side of Good is to cast The Ring into Mount Doom and win the day.

Cast aside any ideas of producing a sequel to The Hobbit, Melisama Hecce have produced a game that is not only in play at first, but one which should have an almost unprecedented depth of play and 'funability' on 32-bit machines. They have managed to create an environment which closely follows the events portrayed in Lord of the Rings, but one which allows the player to experiment with tactics and influence the predetermined outcome. Accidents are likely to give up within half an hour, once they have marveled at the graphics for a while, but perseverance pays off...

Whether 32-bit computers can rise to the occasion and offer a similar level of absorption remains to be seen.

—Quinn Rab

RELEASE BOX

FRONT	CD ROM	ISSUES
SPECTRUM	CD ROM	OUT NOW
EMTRAD	CD ROM	OUT NOW

IBM PC VERSION

An absolute gem, but doesn't mean hobbit fell out of the 'very heavy' setting. One comment, needed to read the mission graphics at Acromb level is to read between mapping levels, intricate maps about Sauron's life forms. Nevertheless, the scope and quality of the game make it the only thing special. A product that should attract a wide range of people, not just Tolkien fans or wargamers, who are prepared to put control after the 'heavy' fun. Beautifully done. (SQA version reviewed and photographed.)

GRAPHICS	9	IQ FACTOR	9
SOUND	9	FAIR FACTOR	9
ACE RATING 9/14			

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Initially promising, it takes a while before you have enough to start enjoying...

Out of Sight!



F-19

F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER will turn your PC into the latest machine on today's electronic battlefield. The graphics are that vivid... the animation that smooth... and the feeling of flight that convincing. But F-19 is no joy ride. Dynamic game play challenges you with a lifetime of action. Fight your way through hundreds of missions packed into the real-world regions of Libya, the Persian Gulf, the North Cape and Central Europe.

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MICRO PROSE
SIMULATION • SOFTWARE

By the MICROPROSE/EMULE Corporation, Bedford, MA.
©1994 The MicroProse Corporation.



IBM PC — on the center court in front of an expectant crowd. Make perfect serves in the top half and right of the screen, return all the shot decisions you make.

OH

I kept adding my own commentary to the (at least in the line of tennis) games. There won't be any disputed line calls though — what the computer says goes.

The court is viewed as if from the side stands, and can be accompanied by one of three backgrounds. Before playing a match you can fiddle with codes of setup commands to get the right balance. You can play against the computer or another player and choose from 10

RELEASE BOX

OS/2 IBM C24256 C/D4256 IBMPC

IBM PC C24256 C/D4256

SERVE AND VOLLEY

ELECTRONIC ARTS get smashed

PC VERSION

The IBM version looks sharp but the OS/2 looks something to be desired from the color section. The action is quite slow, but that doesn't harm the graphics.

GRAPHICS 7.0 IQ FACTOR 3

AGEED 4 FUN FACTOR 7

ACE RATING 70.1

personal opponents or create a new one. Players are rated for speed against endurance, forward against backward and power against accuracy.

Matches can be played on hard, grass or clay courts and over one, three or five sets. There are three skill levels — easy really is easy and difficult is just that. You can also enter to single matches or a knockout tournament between eight players.

The playing mechanism looks extremely complicated at first, but it really is simply stuff. All you need to do is time pressure of the fire button to choose the type of shot you want

to play, and play it at the right time. Movement to the ball is handled automatically, although you can move to a general court position while waiting for the opponent's return.

It's well presented and can be as easy or difficult as you want. Clunky sporting action that will last through many a Wimbledon fortnight.

Bob Mabe

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Never very thrilling but long-term it will still be very enjoyable.

JORDAN VS BIRD

Rim-bend with ELECTRONIC ARTS



YOU are forgiven if your immediate reaction was "who?" because unless you're a big fan of American basketball, the names Larry Bird and Michael Jordan won't mean that much.

It's obviously a basketball sim, but there are no teams in sight. Instead the game is all mawkish action as you take the part of one of the basketball stars, and a friend (or the computer) takes the part of the other, in these grueling confrontations.

One on One is just that, a straight battle. You can opt for a full game of four quarters (deciding their lengths for yourself) or play straight through to eleven or fifteen points, without any time limit. Stan Smith Controls allows up to four players to join in a shooting competition, slapping and dunking away in an orgy of acrobatics — in a solo game, by following "Air Jordan" as he demonstrates a slam dunk. Not to be outdone, Larry Bird gets a game of his own, JPoint Shoot Out, where the player has

to shoot handsets against the clock.

If you like this particular style of basketball, you'll probably get a lot of enjoyment from Jordan vs Bird. It's certainly well executed and the variable difficulty levels make it challenging. Get to try before you buy unless you're a real fan though.

Andy Smith

RELEASE BOX

OS/2 IBM C14256 C/D4256 IBMPC

IBM PC C14256 C/D4256

PC VERSION

The OS/2 version's fine, the OS/2 version's better. It's playable and challenging and if you're into the sort of thing you'll get a lot enjoyment from it.

GRAPHICS 7 IQ FACTOR 3

AGEED 5 FUN FACTOR 7

ACE RATING 71.1

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Great — if you like that sort of thing.

AMIGA owners have Ferrari Formula One to boot up when they fancy a quick spin in a car with a ground clearance of about three centimetres. But what do poor PC owners have? Very little until now.

From Accutab to the best of the best comes the racing title that puts you firmly in the driving seat. There are three basic modes: practice, single race and the full-blown championship.

In practice mode you can choose any of the eight circuits and test ground in your favourite context without worrying about any other cars. The single-race option also lets you select any circuit, but now in competitive spirit test other cars. Take part in the championship and you'll race against other world-class drivers on all the circuits.

As well as being able to choose the circuit,

GRAND PRIX CIRCUIT

ELECTRONIC ARTS go circuit training

the player can select one of three cars to drive for each race, and the difficulty level can be adjusted to taste. Fancy driving an automatic that doesn't mind if you constantly screw up the engine? No trouble. Or would you rather change gears yourself and drive a temperamental, delicate piece of machinery that needs skilful handling? Again, no problem. For PC owners/drivers it's got to be worth a long, fast look.

—Andy Smith

PC VERSION

Play will even using the joystick input, although a joystick is better. The IBM version's better looking, but it's still a great game in CD2.

GRAPHICS **B** **IS FACTOR** **A**
 AUDIO **B** **IS FACTOR** **B**
ACE RATING **BBB**

RELEASE BOX			
DATE	CD-ROM	CD-ROM	IBMPC
BM PC	CD-ROM	OUT NOW	



POWERPLAY HOCKEY

ELECTRONIC ARTS pucker up

JOLLY hockey sticks, chops. There's not a lot of laughs in ice hockey — just a lot of blood, bruises and noise. The padding and padding might cause a wry smile though — it's not often you see Michael Garber (the reigning ice hockey legend).

Hockey simulators have tended to be just

football on ice, but the control here gets nearer to the real thing. It takes time to manoeuvre in the ice — you can't do 180-degree turns in the blink of an eye. You can play the game either one-on-one, or with a full team in which you control only one player.

Fans will be pleased to know that line turns like roughing, overchecking, icing, off-side and slap shots are all included. The time periods and skill levels can also be altered. At the highest skill level the action is fast and furious.

When playing as part of a team, you can rely on intelligent behaviour from your teammates and from the automatically-operated goaltender, so you can concentrate on just the one player. Penalties have been fully implemented as well, even when a light breaks out — and they do!

It's the best ice hockey simulation yet, although the action is rather remote because the figures are so small.

—Rob Webb

RELEASE BOX		
DATE	CD-ROM	OUT NOW

CD2 VERSION		
The graphics are great but generally limited. Best bit of the sound effects in the matches of impact after the push-and-shove happenings.		
GRAPHICS	B	IS FACTOR B
AUDIO	A	IS FACTOR B
ACE RATING BBB		



CD2 — Best means that in a cold war where the only substitutes are rubber discs.



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PURPLE SATURN DAY

Extraterrestrial EXOS

Games are usually rated for intensity to allow, but here we have some inter-species rivalry that doesn't end up with dead-bodies all over the place. But that thing we're going to be entirely free of intensity—because the aim in this cosmic sporting clash is 912 to win.

The correct takes place near Saturn, where you participate in four different events against seven alien opponents. Before launching into the games, proper you can practice each event against a dual alien, although not as accomplished as the alien, is no slouch.

The tournament is run on a knockout



This is the statistical window for the human player. Although the human ratings look really inferior at present they have little effect on the action and can be improved with practice.



The tournament table shows all eight contestants and their score in each event. The 912 on the bottom row is where the human player has 'performed from the climax.



To the victor go the spoils. Awarded here are the previous winners of the title.

begin with the initial pairings randomly selected. You go head-to-head with an alien in each of the four events and the one with most points progresses to the next round. This means that despite our really weak overall it's still possible to punch up with big victories in the others.

A status screen is available for all eight contestants. This shows the high scores they have achieved in each event, the percentage of victories they have in that event and their personal attributes. All of these improve with practice, but it takes a long time to be able to match most of the computer players' figures.

Coming from the same stable as *Cyber Blood* and *Get Dexter*, you would expect this to have superb graphics, and it certainly does, but it's also got excellent gameplay. Initially you may find the aliens overwhelming, but they aren't unbearable. They will, however, always provide good opposition—so if your guard is dropped they slip in and eye. In the long term it's a matter of sharpening your averages and attributes, and remains very enjoyable.

—Rob Kelly

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	CD ROM	OUT NOW
AMIGA	CD ROM	MISSING
AMSTRAD	UNDER DEVELOPMENT	
CGA/EGA	UNDER DEVELOPMENT	
IBM PC	UNDER DEVELOPMENT	

ST VERSION

The graphics are superbly good, but for the cost of all the events to be copied and compared for effects in the Parallel and from Saturn. The alien music is fine, but like the sound effects.

GRAPHICS	9	IQ FACTOR	9
AGENCY	9	FUN FACTOR	9
ACE RATING 912			

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Security verified at first and a tough battle went with great gamely to back it up.

TIME JUMP



The simplest of the games, because it's little more than a shoot 'em up. Targets are only the computer from the foreground

and have to be captured by getting a cursor over them and firing. In all three waves of action the targets come almost too fast to deal with and to maintain interest.

Clearly you may have an old memory's about your level of success is illustrated by the almost five graphic evolution of an image through many stages. This is the weakest of the games, but it doesn't have the worst package.



The large white alien here already has captured, and the cursor the white rectangle, is showing in its top line position too.

BRAIN BOWLER



The trickiest of the four with games to get the brain to get comfortably the most rewarding. The screen shows a cross-section of a

brain, exposing computer circuitry. The aim is to activate your half of the brain by guiding an impulse through the circuitry to their target.

The player controls a spinning spike shape object that moves down to the circuitry to activate things. There are three main things to be done: that continues to allow impulse to be sent down to where. With a new way gets while an impulse is about so it can pass through and capture neurons. This last action is the trickiest because the impulse must be picked up from a special cell and absorbed in a neuron, and then another impulse has to travel down to fix it in place. This also builds a bridge across the neurons, allowing impulses to get to their targets. The computer opponents adjust



TRONIC SLIDER



The two opponents can both fly across an arena that will float in preparation with others. An energy field automatically opens into the grid and releases about. When shot it releases a mass of orange balls which can be collected by diving into them. This increases your energy level and score. Moreover, collisions with pillars, the sides of the grid and the other player deal energy and points. There's a time limit, so it's just a matter of collecting as many energy balls as possible.



Around the ball and it turns into the orange spheres stable in the foreground.



Shoot into the energy field (on the left) and the ball of the other track.

The overhead view of the position shows players, the players and the energy field.

This indicates the energy levels that the players have managed to control. The computer players, on the left, is currently way ahead.

RING PURSUIT



A race through the circular ball surrounding that, but only do you have to follow the ground level, trying to avoid the traps. It's a matter of the game habits, but a yellow course made up of red and yellow spheres must be completed at the same time. Reaching the correct side of a satellite will result in the best side to your score. In the wrong side and the other player.

This event calls for a mixture of speed and dexterity. The alien can be forced to go the wrong side of a satellite when in the trap, but it's safest to make the running instead.



This time the alien has gone the right way around a red satellite - better than his last.

The remaining handlers and satellites look very impressive, but it is the solar scanner on the left of the arena that makes the biggest difference. It doesn't show the satellite, but it does display most clearly the status code and the alien's position.

Following facilities - some are very fast while others concentrate on trying to keep up your ball of the brain. Even though it's the least impressive of the games to look at, it will keep you hooked the longest.



This looks into an activation device after shooting up an impulse.

Captured impulses are trapped in lines, where they can be used to activate another process down them.

These two points are where impulses can be picked up.

This completed block of green edges has allowed an impulse to get to the center of the brain.

The alien is slightly ahead and about to go the wrong side of a satellite - more points for you.



The solar scanner shows the two sides and the satellites. It's essential to make the right side as you will get a lot of points in the process.

The sphere probably this in purple will a slight bit before is completed.

BY FAIR MEANS OR FOUL

A SUPERIOR boxing game???

SOMETIMES a person has to cheat, simple as that. Whether it's typing in a code or making illegal moves in a boxing match, sometimes it's the only solution.

In this case, two player boxing ain't it's the

SPECTRUM VERSION

The mostly monochrome graphics are adequate, but the animation is poor (the way the feet move especially) and this, coupled with weak sound effects, does little to keep you interested.

GRAPHICS 3 1/2 FACTOR **+**
AUDIO 2 FUN FACTOR **-**
AGE RATING 3/3

CDI VERSION

The graphics are more colorful (at least) and is fairly animated. Again the sound is poor, and you aren't playing this at a great time.

GRAPHICS 5 1/2 FACTOR **+**
AUDIO 2 FUN FACTOR **-**
AGE RATING 3/3

legal moves that are needed as you challenge for the Championship. Playing solo, that means taking on an increasingly difficult opponent as your way to the top, and then more in defence of your crown.

There are fifteen rounds per bout and a total of eight available moves, four fair and four foul. The two boxes are armed soldiers, while a referee wanders around the ring watching the boxers - most of the time! A small icon of your boxer in the top corner changes colour according to how much attention the referee is paying. A red icon means he's watching like a hawk, a yellow one means you've got a chance of getting away with an illegal move and green means it's definitely time to start letting loose with head butts, kicks and groin punches. You don't have to keep an eye on the indicator all the time, because the ref often falls asleep and

RELEASE BOX

SPECTRUM £19.95 (17/10/88) REVERSE
AMSTRAD £19.95 (14/10/88) UNRATED
CDI/IB £19.95 (11/10/88) REVERSE



Box - you're in fair chance of getting away with a few fouls - should you risk it?

a large speech bubble full of **SHIT**'s appears.

If your man gets caught making an illegal move, he'll shout 'foul' and you lose one of your five lives. You also have to be careful not to get too close to the other boxer, because the controller's go into a hold and temp sides. If this happens too often, you lose another life.

By Fair Means... is by no means a good boxing sim. The challenge is poor and it's got lots in it of any challenge. Admittedly it's supposed to be more of a laugh than a serious simulation, but it's doubtful you'll find it entertaining for long.

Andy Gribb

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Don't feel the distance.

TKO

ACCOLADE get punchy

BLACK eyes and bloody noses feature heavily in this latest offering from UK software house Accolade. And why not? It's, after all, another boxing sim.

Two players can compete simultaneously and ring it out over three, five or ten two-minute rounds. Alternatively, a solo player can take on five computer-controlled opponents in the quest for the title (again, you choose the number of rounds).

The screen display is split horizontally into two, with a boxer in each half facing the player. The top boxer is yours when playing solo and every time you throw one of the nine available punches a large glowing hand camera flying out of the screen. Watch the bottom screen as well and you'll see whether the punch landed or was blocked.

The punches fall into two groups, body and



Box - Mahoney takes a nasty knock on the jaw. Perhaps he needs to relax his guard?

head. Moving the joystick to one of eight positions and then hitting the fire button determines which kind of punch is thrown, the idea being to hit the opponent where he isn't guarded. He's not to do the same to you though, so you have to alter your guard to avoid taking blows. That simple requires pushing or pulling the joystick

CDI VERSION

The graphics are colourful and well-animated. You'll soon beat the computer opponents, but the gameplay made with some boring street.

GRAPHICS 5 1/2 FACTOR **+**
AUDIO 3 FUN FACTOR **-**
AGE RATING 7/15

up or down without the fire button pressed and you are happy with one of the five guarding positions available.

The strength of the punch your boss throws depends on which guard position he is currently using. For example, if he's got his hands high, protecting the head, the punches thrown will be relatively weak (also, if the guard is low, he can really get some power into the punches and do some serious damage - if the letters connect).

The split-screen display works effectively and it's a fun game to play. You'll find it tough to beat the computer opponents at first but you'll eventually master them and enjoy the challenge along the way.

Andy Gribb

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



The two player option increases lasting interest.

Weird Dreams

ddRRRRRR ring

RAINBIRD

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923

Strange control methods have been responsible for producing some of the best games ever, like *Sensory* and *Zark*. However, some unplayable burlesks have also been caused by idiosyncratic controls. So how does mixing a ball of variable weight, size and speed around a maze measure up — classic or clutter?

The mazes are viewed in 3D and are divided into plates. Each level comprises four plates, connected by two-way lifts — there is usually more than one lift between a pair of plates. To complete a level, the ball has to be found, and that makes traveling through all four areas. On the first level the player is confronted with a simple linear route, and it's a matter of shuffling through one plate at a time, but later levels involve switching between plates. Often you'll see a lift or two that is tantalizingly close, but need to follow a tortuous route to get to the chosen point.

Trying to go anywhere in a hurry usually proves deadly. The desire to move fast has to be tempered with the need to keep the sphere under total control. On the other hand, shuffling isn't healthy because the floor tiles



Because the sphere and the lifts that can already be lifted, Sensory puts the heavy focus on seeing the floor to the player.



When the ball is in a safe spot, Zark can beed straight down again, taking you into plate three.

INCREDIBLE SHAPE

that are passed over slowly, blocking the route back, and retracing a path through a section of the maze may prove essential to survival and eventual escape.

Dotted all over the mazes are symbols on the floor tiles which have different effects on the sphere. The most important tiles affect the mass and volume of the sphere, which not only changes the handling, but also governs when the sphere can actually go. For instance, if it's made heavier the ball can't pass over cracked floor tiles. If it is made too large it can't pass through narrower areas in the maze. Then there are times when the sphere needs to be

ELECTRIC DREAMS of dwindling balls

White tiles glow and the sphere glows, fluctuating off a high pitch, which is very dangerous when ascending stairs.

When signs reduce the sphere when hit, constantly, a high pitch increases a little, which is very dangerous because control lines come every 10,000 points.

Staircase generators appear off one plate and keep the white spheres in play the whole time.



If the white tiles are hit to normal, the rest of white and purple at the entry of the staircase — see touch and death notices.

When the sphere gets near ground of speed, it'll fluctuate off when the direction is present.

Ball with lift, and the sphere will be trapped for a time while the stairs to reduce the ball's mass and force your sideways.

RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	131.995	SEP/87
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SPECTRUM	129.95 + 14.995	SEP/87
AMSTRAD	129.95 + 14.995	SEP/87
OSAYIN	129.95 + 14.995	OUT NOW

CGI VERSION

The excellent 3D graphics are impressive, if not very colorful. The scrolling is linear and smooth, but as you would expect. The other major bonuses along with the effects have a cut-size spring feel to them.

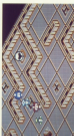
GRAPHICS ? 10 FACTOR ?
 AUDIO ? 10 FACTOR ?
ACE RATING 933



Arriving in a dangerous arena, you need to get to the shield zone quickly, because the reasonable opponents get to you...



After obtaining the shield, you'll need to break the number and capture your own team's heavy forces on the way to the shield...



Finally, you'll need to get to the shield zone to win the game. Now it's not so easy to win, unless you get lucky... (Image copyright)

DRINKING SPHERE

either small and light to make a jump, or large and heavy in order to move things around.

Much of the gameplay is a matter of mapping out the moves and knowing when the floor cops are, so that you can plot a route to see all the necessary files. Another excellent consideration is finding the coins that give you



There's a tricky area - heavy pieces make getting to the shield difficult or instead over, while surrounding them increase the sphere's volume...

A shield that protects you from marauding assassins - without a shield, the sphere will almost certainly be destroyed, which means returning to the start of the level.

Assassins come charging out of generators and follow your sphere - fortunately they don't home in too fast. If there's no shield the last line of defence is to try to shoot the assassins, by firing in the direction of movement. Ammunition is limited, but can be replenished at ammo dumps, which are placed before the start of a level.

Other floor cops do wacky things to the sphere like speeding it up, spinning it round and releasing it randomly, capturing it and

FOURSFIELD TO THE FORE

ISS is the first game from programming team Foursfield. It's a very impressive debut, and they've already been signed up to produce the pinball simulation *Demomania for Electric Dreams* - with the hope that this can produce the realistic ball movement found in ISS.

The team is made up of Stefan and Anna Ulrowski who designed the game, Colin Reed who programmed and Steve Green, the graphics man. The inspiration for the game apparently came from a pair of slippers, the intricate nature of which gave Anna the idea for a game set in the messy design. Extraordinary.

Green, the graphics man. The inspiration for the game apparently came from a pair of slippers, the intricate nature of which gave Anna the idea for a game set in the messy design. Extraordinary.

Extraordinary. The inspiration for the game apparently came from a pair of slippers, the intricate nature of which gave Anna the idea for a game set in the messy design. Extraordinary.



The Foursfield team photo (left to right) Stefan Ulrowski, Anna Ulrowski, Steve Green, Colin Reed.

reducing the score, giving bonus points or stopping you down a black hole. With all these cops lying in wait for the sphere it's easy to get bounced helplessly around from one coin to another if you ever get out of control.

At first the control is awkward, and the fact that the plates get complicated doesn't help quick progress. It doesn't take long to get to grips with the controls and maze layouts, though, and once you've done so ISS affords the same sort of rewards that other 'control-intensive' games like *Thrust* and *Splendory* give. A star game that is an impressive debut for programmer Foursfield.

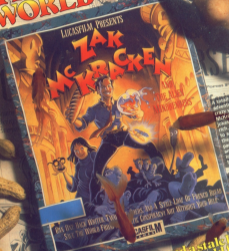
• **Get Ready**

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



A great way to explore and map, once you've predicted for a while.

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910

Rice, November 1943. Winter is approaching and the German army is in retreat. After suffering defeat at Kursk in July, the Germans have pulled back as far as the Dnieper river where they hope to prepare themselves for the inevitable Soviet winter offensive. Such is the position of the forces at the start of the one- or two-player wargame.

There are three scenarios, each one starting on a specific date and lasting a set number of turns. The player can choose which side he wishes to play, and what the skill-level of the opponent should be if he is playing solo. The first scenario is the whole campaign, lasting some 50 days (and has equally one turn, from 3 November to 23 December 1943). For this scenario the Russians are in the far stronger position (at least at the start) and the Germans are struggling to hold their ground. The second scenario lasts for 30 days, commencing on 15 November with the German forces ready to counter-attack against a Russian offensive



Assign objectives to your units by selecting the unit's ID and dragging the cursor onto a town, city or enemy HQ.

FIRE BRIGADE

Parzers from PANTHER

RELEASE BOX			
ATARI ST	TDK	LAZYCAT	
AMIGA	TDK	LAZYCAT	
IBM PC	ST/1008 (Australia)	REVEREND	
MAC	ST/1008 (Australia)	REVEREND	



The simplified strategic map shows you an instant picture of the overall situation. The Battle display on the Strategika map shows how well your units fared yesterday. The main OSA display shows the starting positions of the forces for the final scenario (which runs from 1-23 December).



a victory depends on the amount of Victory Points earned for taking control of towns, rail-way junctions and other strategic positions.

If you're after a simple, easy and quick wargame you can forget Fire-Brigade. Although the game structure is very user-friendly, it takes time to play well, and there are too many options offered and decisions required to make it a walkover. Spend some time getting to know the game, though, and you'll be playing it for months to come.

• Andy Smith

PC VERSION

The graphics are about as exciting as you'd expect for a strategy wargame. But at least on an VGA machine they are colourful. Unfortunately it's all in glorious mono in CGA, but still plays well, and yes, you can tick a couple of PC's together and take on a remote human opponent.

GRAPHICS: 4 HD FACTOR 7
SOUND: NA FUN FACTOR 6
ACE RATING 910

MAC VERSION

Ran on my Mac, including a Mac II, but forget the GEM. The game releases of icons and menus make it very easy to play, since you know what you're doing. You can also tick two machines as allies or enemies and play against a remote human (Unfortunately it cannot run under AppleLink).

GRAPHICS: 4 HD FACTOR 7
SOUND: NA FUN FACTOR 6
ACE RATING 908

which has forced them to give much ground. The final scenario lasts 18 turns, starting on 5 December with the Germans ready to launch another counter-attack through the 68 Panzer Corps. By the time both sides have received substantial reinforcements and equipment and got much better-equipped than they were at the start of the campaign.

Fire-Brigade is easy and menu driven, and breaks down into two main phases: orders and movement. During the orders phase the player specifies objectives for his units, designates supplies and combat support, and assigns replacements. As the player is a General, the orders go to junior officers who then carry them out to the best of their ability.

With orders issued, the movement phase begins and proceeds, hour by hour (combat is instantly resolved) until the next morning. Then you can look on the map and see where you suffered defeat or achieved victory, and update the old plan or revise the new one (based on your efforts (the computer). The game continues in this fashion until either the scenario ends, or one side gains a decisive victory, in which case you can continue. Achieving

FIRE-BRIGADE is currently available only from Panther Games in Australia at this address:

Panther Games Pty Limited, PO Box 1076,
Melbourne VIC 3004, Australia. Tel: 03 937 0100

The game is GEM distributed too, for Mac users. Read Panther for further details on this distribution.

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



In involving and challenging wargames, let's hope Panther manage to get a US distribution.



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KICK OFF!

Errr, extrordinary. T'was the season to be jolly, now tis the season to... errr... go out an buy a Soccer game, twould appear. So now it's over to Phil South, the man they're all calling... errr... Phil South!

Amazing really, but one day you can't find a football game if you want one, then ten come along at once. I don't know exactly why, but it's true to say that nowadays soccer stars are a 'genre', and will be for as long as people can come up with newer better ways of programming them. Sega and Nintendo have soccer cartridges, March Day it won more awards and appreciation than Kim Basinger's bottom, and football manager/director type games rival dragons adventures as the most popular strategy game platform ever. The links with strategy/adventure become

more apparent with releases like Gremlin's Day Of The Ravens, which as well as an average football game has an average arcade adventure too.

The quality of these footy games varies, with some being playable and watchable on the Spectrum without too much trouble, while others are real clunkers which turn Arnie and Muriel potential into all the bile of a Cuckoo point of computer. So let's take a real eye view of the current crop of football fantasies and see how many we can kick into touch.



ROY OF THE ROVERS

GREMLIN replay a comic hero

THE whole of Manchester Rovers has been hijacked, and it is up to Ray Of The Rovers (who must have been pilkiding his Porsche or a state's bottom at the time, this wording captured to find them before the big match, this is the scenario for the first section of ROFR, a true-life, pub-terminator dream arcade adventure, which for some reason puts me in mind of Andy Capp) to wander around a map of Manchester (supplied with the game) and follow the slightly modern class and you do, or indeed don't if it doesn't seem to matter find the foot team.

Then you are asked to load the footy section of the game. The missing players are miraculously restored, and this is where the game's story falls down. If the Rovers lose the match, the developers can move in and build a deck of flats. If they win, then the team can carry on to thrill the crowds and please the

readers with their antics, and, who knows, maybe even earn a Fleetway comic annual all to themselves!

The arcade adventure section is well implemented, for sure, but lacks real sparkle and any kind of incentive to complete the task in hand. The footy game is very difficult to control, and you often find yourself tanning in

exactly the opposite direction from the way you'd like to be going. I thought the problem might be a dull position, but the game mode based on every one I tried, including the trusty Kevin Napsdale (he flutters down all roads, which is a bit of a shame as the idea had possibilities).

Strolling around the streets looking for clues can be a challenge for some, I know, but to rise this adventure's a little lacking in the kind of strange points that make the task enjoyable. What it needs is a really cracking football game to act as an anticlimax. Unfortunately, it doesn't have one.

RELEASE BOX

CD4128 £9.95s £14.95s **OUT NOW**

SPEC 126 £7.95s **OUT NOW**



Day of the Ravens on the Spectrum - go find your mates and give 'em hell in a jolly old game of footy!

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Stares combination of an arcade adventure and a soccer game.

SPECTRUM VERSION

The Spectrum version has the problem of being mono-coloured, which makes it hard to distinguish our hero from the opposition.

GRAPHICS 8 **16 FACTOR** 7
AUDIO 4 **FM FACTOR** 6
ACE RATING 5.5

FOUR SOCCER SIMULATOR

Codemasters throw in four games in one

NOT so much a game, more a way of releasing four games in one package. Three spectacularly similar football games, along with a training toolset feature more than a passing resemblance to Garry Mountacher's Olympic Woomans. The four games are not multiboot, and so are entirely



Street football on the Spectrum is Codemasters' style.

RELEASE BOX

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SPEC 128	£9.99	— £14.99	OUT NOW
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separate in nature and on a side each of two screens.

First, there's 21-a-Side Soccer, a conventional enough soccer simulator with the usual 90 minutes of computerized fouling, cheating and 'over injury' acting. The game responds quite well to your control, and you stand a reasonable chance against the computer. Aside from the fact it can't get faster than you, it's actually reasonably easy to tackle and beat. One tricky thing is passing, since you can't see the field beyond your rather limited viewpoint, so actually laying off the ball to another player before Chopper Harris has your neck on a stick is a little problematic. If they have throw-ins, corners, fouling, penalties, offside and the like, he rates as a proper simulator.

Indoor Soccer has the same player graphics and gameplay, but takes place on a pitch with walls around it, so the ball bounces, and only five players a side. Street Soccer differs in that instead of a nice neat rectangle to play in, you're get runs, trees and houses to negotiate. One thing it doesn't have is the little man who chases your ball or calls the toddlers to you have to go home.

Finally there's Soccer Skills, where you train yourself up. Basically it consists of dribbling the ball around cones, taking and saving penalties, lifting weights, and doing press-ups

and sit-ups. The scope of the games is fairly limited, but the implementation is pleasant and playable, and the package represents the best value for money in a football game.

SPECTRUM VERSION

The graphics are fine and the gameplay is good. Though some of the games are on a par with Masterboy 1, it is good for the price.

GRAPHICS	7	IQ FACTOR	4
AUDIO	5	FUN FACTOR	8
AGE RATING 8-9			

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Three solid soccer games with training prog as well represents good value for money.

FOOTBALL DIRECTOR II

D & H Games move in a familiar direction

STARTING humbly on the Spectrum (only in the Spectrum always humbly) Football Director had become the world and its female progenitor's favorite soccer management game. Football Director II proves that you really can't get too much of a good thing, and shows me if it isn't better than its progenitor. Now available in Atari and Amiga versions, FDI is still an unexpected hit. I've tried to analyze its appeal, but I can't see it myself. It does have a level of complexity that some people find stimulating in the starting to sound like a Melrose adventure and is enhanced by containing the names and attributes of current league players. There is a support group



FDI on the SP - will Bechdelite equate before the final whistle goes?

RELEASE BOX

SPEC 128	£19.99	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£19.99	OUT NOW
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AMSTRAD	£19.99	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£19.99	OUT NOW

ST VERSION

Like the other versions it's in Basic and it's fairly slow, but then if you're a strategy fan that isn't too big a problem. The effect of the game is still curiously addictive.

GRAPHICS	5	IQ FACTOR	4
AUDIO	3	FUN FACTOR	7
AGE RATING 8-9			

I'm worried for players interested in playing other Football Director fans in leagues and cups, which is incredible. Can you think of any other game where this has happened? Okay, or what? What you want to know is if it's any cop.

Well, even I, a hardened anti-strategy, found the content of the game appealing, and as long as you're into foxy and subtle games, an odd corner, you'll love it.

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



In-depth strategy game 50000 on managing a team. Hard work but addictive with it.

MICROPROSE SOCCER

A Sensible soccer game from Microprose

915 After peddling a half-dozen games around a variety of potential publishers, the Sensible Software defense team—namely Jonathan Hale, Chris Yates, and now boy Martin Galeghy—finally signed up with major league team, Microprose (the one with the red, white, and blue strip).

This foody package contains a normal eleven-a-side game, plus a version of American rules indoor soccer. Both varieties are developed using an overhead viewpoint in much the same vein as the popular arcade machine—the name of which (sorry, it A2Z) can actually recall at this moment...

When the scores over many other soccer titles is in the range of opportunity for varied

play, both on the pitch and off. These include a number of different stats (goals, passes, shots, back kicks, blocks of options to fiddle with, and a whole smattering of events in which to partici-



915 - nice overhead view makes, and plenty of playability too!

915 VERSION
Extremely playable and visually appealing, with plenty of variety.

GRAPHICS 9 IQ FACTOR 7
AMUSE 9 FUN FACTOR 9

ACE RATING 915

pate, such as the Microprose International Challenge, World Cup Tournament and a Soccer League, with up to 16 human players—the more the merrier.

Galeghy is dead smooth and the package as a whole makes an extremely attractive proposition—especially for solo armchair players, who normally have to call somebody to have anything like a decent game.

Microprose Soccer seems to come in a bit cheap at 115 for the USA console, but if it's value yours after, then leaves the competition back in the changing room.

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE

One of the best foody titles available for the C64.

HOTBALL

SATORY gives good French

HAW Yes, here, yet another French game from the Satory/Cubier House label, this time just a straight forward one-a-side soccer match... no, that's not a misprint, I used ONE-a-side two player football matches.

To be fair, it can be TWO-a-side and four player using the simple, but stylish interface plugged into the parallel port, and that at least sets it above the crowd. Interesting idea, main-



915 - it's got a nice overhead view, but that doesn't really help the game's lack of playability.

ing a dangle out of the interface you need to play the game... although the interface bit is itself a touch on the erratic side. Trying to select the options on the initial screen is sometimes impossible, as the cursor insists that you are pushing the joystick to the right, when you aren't even touching the stick.

The viewpoint on this one is straight down onto the pitch, and the way you move the players is at first confusing. It's a bit like moving a

text, pushing forward to go forward, knocking the stick to the left and right to turn and pulling back to stop. If you push forward and let go of the stick, your player will plough on until he hits an obstacle. This is a sensible way to have to play a football game—in my experience you need to be able at least to turn round without having to go via forward because the turning circle of your player is bigger than that of a truck! Like most things, you can get used to this way of playing, but it would have been nice not to have to. Again, the dinky joystick control played havoc with my player, sending him running towards my goal despite my best efforts to persuade him otherwise. In spite of this, when it actually works, it can provide some good entertainment.

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE

Fairly football game with four player facility and a handy joystick port.

RELEASE BOX		
COM128	C64 Box	C64 Box OUT NOW
EPIC128	75A	Feb 88
LEARN IT	75A	Feb 88
LEARN	75A	Feb 88
AMSTRAD	75A	Feb 88
IBM PC	75A	Feb 88

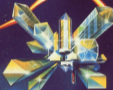
915 VERSION
It's not a hot game, and deserves a look, despite the erratic display/interface which has some strange effects on player control. Try before you buy, though.

GRAPHICS 7 IQ FACTOR 7
AMUSE 7 FUN FACTOR 8

ACE RATING 535

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Starting away on Level One - about that symbol to cycle through the weapons.

PICK A shoot'em-up, any shoot'em-up (shuffle it and put it back!) and more likely than not it'll feature either horizontal or vertical scrolling. Emerald Software, courtesy of Marble, have launched themselves into the Amiga market with a shoot'em-up called Phantom Fighter that combines the two styles.

To reason the time for tapping into a heady-armed spacecraft that, there's a word to use for starters and your mind is numb for seconds - what more reason do you need?

The first level of the game is horizontally scrolling. The player controls a small on-screen spacecraft and has to dodge and shoot wave after wave of attacking aliens. Destroy a whole wave and the aliens leave either a 200 point bonus in an extra weapon symbol. Shoot the symbol before getting it up and it cycles through the available extras which include: more speed, to help you avoid the aliens and their bullets; sideways-firing weapons; and homing missiles. Once collected, the extra weapons remain until you either die or collect another weapon. Some weapons can be far more useful than others; for example, the homing missiles are not very effective against red devil guardians and ground installations but they are against most flying nasties. It's some-



Level Two - now you've got ground installations to contend with too!



Destroying the guardians at the end of Level Two.

PHANTOM FIGHTER

EMERALD and MARTECH with a ghostly game

times very amusing to have to give up your jinky Physics system (complete with sideways long!) for the decidedly less waxy sideways-firing system.

The levels aren't very long so you soon come across the guardians (the early ones resemble the remnants of alien vehicles which have to be destroyed before the next level loads in. Now you're in a vertically-scrolling game complete with ground targets that stay fire at you. Survive the level and it's horizontal

time again. Beginning to get the picture?

As you'd expect, the levels get progressively harder. The aliens get more numerous, faster and start attacking in multiple waves. Like most shoot'em-ups of this type, the aliens stick to certain patterns when they come at you, but unlike most shoot'em-ups the attack patterns are very complicated and it isn't long long to realize that there is no safe place to hide on the screen.

Phantom Fighter is a good shoot'em-up, with horizontal levels that are ever-so-slightly like *Starzone* and vertical levels ever-so-slightly like *Starzone*. It's tough and challenging, but ultimately lacking in depth. A nice debut for Emerald, so let's hope their next game looks as good and plays as well but shows a touch more originality.

• Andy Smith

AMIGA VERSION

Great graphics, the screaming and early arrival of background music, great graphics and high speed - what more do you need in a shoot'em-up?

EMERGED 0 10 FACTOR 1
REBO 0 FUN FACTOR 7

AGE RATING 7-9

(Right) Pointing off the last wave of them on Level Three before the end of level guardian appears.

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Challenging and playable shoot'em-up, but in the end it's standard arcade fare.



RATTLE. ROLL IT..



Atmega Master System version



SEGA Genesis version

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The briefing room. This looks like it could be a tough mission with all these Zekes (Zeros) ahead.



Prepare to follow the other bombers into the dive. Luckily there's no sign of the Zekes yet...



Starting the dive. Another Zeroless has just dropped its bomb. Stay level up on the controls...

BATTLEHAWK

US Gold takes LUCASFILM sky-high

928

Desktop Hobbyists have dominated the PC flight-sim market with Falcon and Electronic Arts have achieved similar dominance with interceptors on the Amiga. Now Lucasfilm Games could easily upset the apple cart with Battlehawk 1942.

This WW2 naval air combat simulation covers four of the most important battles of the

1942 Pacific war. The player can both fly other American or Japanese planes of the period, and take part in up to 32 individual missions (four missions for each side in the four battles).

To start with, flying precision is important. Three types of plane are featured - fighter planes, dive bombers and torpedo planes. Learning to be a fighter pilot, for other solo modes, means learning how to fly and fight in a WW2 propeller-driven aeroplane. Action with a dive bombing squadron calls for skill in dropping bombs from the correct altitude while avoiding enemy fighters and flak - torpedo runs are similar, but take place at much lower altitudes.

The precision runs vary in difficulty. Runs may be made against sitting targets, moving

RELEASE BOX		
IBM PC	CD-ROM	EASTON
OTHER VERSIONS TO BE ANNOUNCED		



3,000 ft and it's time to release a bomb. Watch the participating pilot who's just backed out of the plane.



In replay mode, watch how well you performed during the mission, viewing from any angle or distance.

GRUMMAN F4F-3A AND F4F-4 'WILDCAT'

The F4F-3A (radial-engine center-based) fighter was introduced in 1941 and first saw action against the Japanese in December of that year. The F4F-3A continued to be an active part of the American naval strike force and participated in numerous engagements in 1942 including the Battle of the Coral Sea, by the time of the Battle of Midway, the F4F-3A was superseded by the improved F4F-4.

This version of the Wildcat had folding wings and two a/c. All engine machine guns. Although the F4F-4 was no match for a Zero in a one-on-one dogfight, American pilots soon learned to avoid dogfights and hit the weaker Zeros in pairs, where the superior firepower and armor of the F4F-4 proved to be a distinct advantage.



A US Navy F4F-4 Wildcat prepares to take off from a carrier.

Picture courtesy of the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum Library.



(Above) The rear gunner's view of the expanding ship. (Below) It is debrief time back at base after the mission.



A WKS 1942

legals or moving and firing targets, some of which have fighter escorts to protect them. After learning how to handle the plane you can sign on for active service in one of the four scenarios: the Battle of the Coral Sea; the Battle of Midway; the Battle of the Eastern Solomons; or the Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands.

Several missions are available in each battle scenario. For example, in the Battle of the Coral Sea, flying as an American pilot, you can make a dive-bombing attack against the aircraft

carrier *Shoho*, or be a fighter pilot escorting the dive bombers. Alternatively, you can be a fighter pilot defending the American ships. Landing on *Yorktown*, from Japanese dive-bomb attacks. Taking the role of a Japanese pilot in the Battle of the Coral Sea, you can seek to defend the carrier *Shoho* from American attack, fly a torpedo mission against the Lexington, or embark on a dive-bombing mission against the Yorktown.

Medals are awarded for exceptional performance, but only to American pilots — the Japanese did not go in for such things. Service records are constantly updated, but it's important to note that an active service log record is only updated when the plane is flown equipped as it would have been in reality...

(Below) In a *Zero* providing Carrier Air Protection. Most scenarios can make short work of *Zeroes* if you can hit them, but ammunition is limited so use it sparingly.



unlimited supplies of ammunition don't lead to disappointments in your service record!

Battlefields is a tremendous combat sim, with none of the usual 'take off from the carrier' or, do the mission and land again' monotony. Each scenario puts you right in the heart of the action. Using the mouse or a joystick is definitely recommended as the best means of controlling the plane - although it's not particularly tricky to master the controls, the sense of realism is greatly increased if you can fly the plane with one hand on the controller and use your other hand to switch between views. If you keep moving things up, it's a good idea to turn on the on-board camera so you can watch the action from outside the cockpit as you and analyse just where you're making mistakes.

For truck-avoiding action (Battlefields has everything - the sense of 'being there' is tremendous) as you watch other members of your group go chasing enemy fighters, or start floor bombing 'em. Thrilling and astonishingly addictive stuff.

• Andy Smith

(Below) Singal: When these WW2-era sims, they really show!



(Above) The Japanese torpede plane mission in the game Battlefields... and (Below) hit him. Your job was to protect him, to expect a stiff landing-off back at base.



MITSUBISHI A6M2 TYPE 0 MODEL 21 ZERO

The carrier-based Zero or 'Zeke' as it was known to the Americans could outfly and outmanoeuvre any US fighter during the first two years of the war, in the hands of an experienced pilot it was like a hawk among flocks of geese. Designed specifically for carrier operations, a 7' 8" section of each wing folded up allowing the Model 21 to fit inside deck elevators. In combat the Zero was especially suited to bomber protection, carrier defense and strafing ground installations.

Just before the last major carrier battle in the Pacific in 1942, the Model 21 was updated into the Model 22. This was a faster plane with a larger and more powerful engine. However the extra speed was offset by the reduced fuel-tank capacity and the

consequent reduction in range. Though both the M21 and M22 were faster and more agile than their US counterparts, they lacked armour and firepower. One of their major drawbacks was the lack of a self-sealing fuel tank, which led to many M22 wrecks when a hit was taken in the tank...

A captured Zero lands in the USA on the beach-head being flown for evaluation. Picture courtesy of the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum Library.



PC VERSION

of USA, the graphics are great - although the screen display is a bit slow and jerky. Once you're in the thick of the action you hardly notice it. The flying action is gripping, the different missions are absorbing and the variety of job tasks keeps play challenging.

GRAPHICS: 8 16 FACTOR: 4
 SOUND: 5 FUN FACTOR: 5
A-00 RATING: 938

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



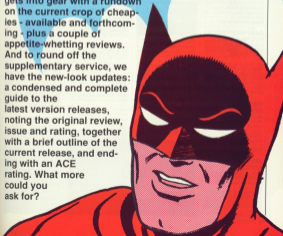
The action starts straight away and keeps it going.

S C R E E N T E S T

SUPPLEMENT

Another ACE Screen Test Supplement: Number Two in an infinite series...

And what delights lie in wait on the following pages? Tricks 'N' Tactics goes from strength to strength, crammed full with readers' tips on how to play (or cheat at) Elite, Garfield, Operation Wolf, Virus and - oh, the list just goes on and on. ACE's regular budget round-up gets into gear with a rundown on the current crop of cheapies - available and forthcoming - plus a couple of appetite-whetting reviews. And to round off the supplementary service, we have the new-look updates: a condensed and complete guide to the latest version releases, noting the original review, issue and rating, together with a brief outline of the current release, and ending with an ACE rating. What more could you ask for?



UPDATES: AN AT-

AMIGA

CAPTAIN BLOOD

SOFTWARES £34.95 db
Atari ST version reviewed
Issue 7 - ACE rating 8/10

The multicoloured French arcade adventure looks just as good as it did on the ST. Thankfully, the attractive but swerving graphic sequences can now be cut short, making this version even more playable than its predecessor.
■ ACE RATING 9/10

ELITE

FRUITBIRD £24.95db
Atari ST version reviewed
Issue 14 - ACE rating 9/10

The music and sound effects have been considerably improved. Obstacles vary similar to the ST and previous to play.
■ ACE RATING 9/10

GARFIELD "BIG FAT HAIRY DEAL"

THE EDGE £24.95 db
C64 version reviewed Issue 8
- ACE rating 5/10

The basic 8-bit game with few changes, save for clearer background graphics and animation. Obvious graphics makes it one for connoisseurs of the genre - or Jim Davis' cat character.
■ ACE RATING 5/10

HELLFIRE

ATACK

MARTECH £19.95db
Atari ST version reviewed
Issue 18 - ACE rating 5/10

Improved sound effects but every thing else is as dull and unexciting as the ST version.
■ ACE RATING 4/10

INTERNATIONAL

SOCCER

MICROREAL £19.95db
Atari ST version reviewed
Issue 8 - ACE rating 5/10

Nice music, nice graphics, shame about the gameplay. It's too simple and you will be bored after just a few minutes running around the pitch.
■ ACE RATING 4/10

OUT RUN

US GOLD £24.95db
Atari ST version reviewed
Issue 15 - ACE rating 8/10

As great as the ST version and the music sounds better. Rather old but these days though.
■ ACE RATING 8/10

SPIDERTRONIC

SOFTWARES £19.95db
Atari ST version reviewed
Issue 8 - ACE rating 8/10

Some weird action as on the ST. The effects have been lifted up a bit, but little else has changed.
■ ACE RATING 8/10



THUNDERBLADE

US GOLD £24.95db
C64 version reviewed Issue 16
- ACE rating 8/10

Looks absolutely super and has lots of shooting explosions and effects. Everything moves fast but it is a tad difficult.
■ ACE RATING 8/10

PACMANIA

GRAND SLAM £29.95db, £14.95db
Amiga version reviewed Issue 18
- ACE rating 7/10

Plays more natterly than the 16-bit versions. Graphics and sound effects are pretty handy too.
■ ACE RATING 7/10



Versions of previously-released titles arrived thick and fast in the closing weeks of 1988 - so we clear the decks a little with a whistle-stop tour, machine by machine.

AMSTRAD

GUERRILLA WAR

MACHINE £29.95db, £14.95db
Spectrum version reviewed
Issue 16 - ACE rating 7/10

Much more colorful than the Spectrum version, but the scrolling is jerky and the graphics in poor. Not one of Imagin's best conversions.
■ ACE RATING 6/10

LIVE AND LET DIE

SOFTWARES £29.95db, £14.95db
C64 version reviewed Issue 16
- ACE rating 7/10

Smooth, colourful graphics and equally enjoyable gameplay. For fast, water-tight action it's tough to beat. Shame that there aren't more courses.
■ ACE RATING 7/10

RETURN OF THE JEDI

DISNEY £29.95db, £14.95db
Atari ST version reviewed
Issue 16 - ACE rating 6/10

Colorful, fast graphics and adequate sound effects. The control is a bit stiff at times but in the collision detection but it's still a great conversion.
■ ACE RATING 6/10

ATARI ST

FIREZONE

PSD £24.95 db
Amstrad version reviewed
Issue 8 - ACE rating 7/10

A nicely presented, simple wargame that gives you some tough combat sequences to contend with. There is a game design feature included too that will keep you busy for a while.
■ ACE RATING 7/10



GARFIELD "BIG FAT HAIRY DEAL"

THE EDGE £19.95 db
C64 version reviewed Issue 8
- ACE rating 5/10

Almost identical to the Amiga version (see update comment on these pages). The music is well good, but the game runs faster and is thus slightly more playable.
■ ACE RATING 5/10

NIGEL MANSELL'S GRAND PRIX

MARTECH £19.95db
Spectrum version reviewed
Issue 7 - ACE rating 7/10

T-GLANCE GUIDE

Remedios' crash sequence, accompanied by dreadful sound effect. Except for the ST justice of it, in terms of graphics or gameplay.

■ ACE RATING 421

SORCEROR LORD

MSX £24.95pb
Spectrum version reviewed
Issue 4 - ACE rating 404
Amstrad version reviewed
Issue 8 - ACE rating 408

An absorbing and very enjoyable-looking wargame that's not easy to beat. The graphics, of course, have been substantially improved.

■ ACE RATING 404

THE PEPSI CHALLENGE MAD MIX GAME

MS-GOLD £14.95pb
SPECTRUM version reviewed
Issue 10 - ACE rating 424

Further returns in a pale imitation of the aged original. The ST version is reasonably attractive, but suffers from poor playability, compounded by messy scrolling and insensitive controls.

■ ACE RATING 428

C64

BATMAN

DCBM £8.95pb £14.95
Spectrum version reviewed
Issue 16 - ACE rating 400

This is a wonderful arcade puzzle. The ST's better graphics add to the game.

■ ACE RATING 413



BUBBLE GHOST

EPIC £9.95pb £14.95pb
Atari ST version reviewed
Issue 4 - ACE rating 414

The highly original and addictive puzzle game finally makes it onto the MS, and it's just as much fun as the other version.

■ ACE RATING 414

THE PEPSI CHALLENGE MAD MIX GAME

MS-GOLD £14.95pb £19.95pb
SPECTRUM version reviewed
Issue 10 - ACE rating 424

Comparable to other formats here ST update on these pages. No outstanding features in this Amstrad variant, which is extremely average fare.

■ ACE RATING 420

TOTAL ECLIPSE

SCENTINE £9.95pb, £12.95pb
C64 version reviewed
Issue 16 - ACE rating 407

It's a bit too slow but very nice to look at. Puzzles as addictive as ever but slow update to enjoying.

■ ACE RATING 401

TYHOON

MACHINE £8.95pb, £12.95pb
Spectrum version reviewed
Issue 16 - ACE rating 404

Superior to the Spectrum version - much easier to see what's going on. It's tough too, with the varied arcade stages making a very testing challenge.

■ ACE RATING 704



SPEEDBALL

IMAGINEWARE £24.95pb
Atari ST version reviewed
Issue 14 - ACE rating 424

A display that fills the screen and booted-up sound effects, water fire, superior to the ST version. Every bit as addictive to play in one of two player modes.

■ ACE RATING 474

STAR TREK

FIREBERG £8.95pb £14.95pb
Atari ST version reviewed
Issue 9 - ACE rating 704

Released beyond belief: the C64 Star Trek finally arrives, and takes for obvious differences in graphics and sound, the main game - what little there is - has remained intact. However, the interest aroused by the ST version has long since worn off.

■ ACE RATING 640

PC

DEFENDER OF THE CROWN

CREAMWARE £20.95pb
Atari ST version reviewed
Issue 6 - ACE rating 406

Clarity medieval strategy/maze game, attractive in C64, but it comes off quite badly in C64 mode. The lack of mouse control is a severe detriment to the action sequences which are left to joystick or cursor keys. Expensive and all...

■ ACE RATING 507

STAR TREK

FIREBERG £24.95
Atari ST version reviewed
Issue 9 - ACE rating 704

As with the C64 version, gameplay remains more or less unchanged. Sound, though, is very poor, and C64 graphics most unsatisfactory.

■ ACE RATING 620

SPECTRUM HELLFIRE ATTACK

WARTSCH £8.95pb £14.95pb
Atari ST version reviewed
Issue 10 - ACE rating 404

It's modified even in C64 mode. The graphics are nothing special and the way the display suddenly inverts is very annoying. It's a poor Afterburner variant that won't get you excited.

■ ACE RATING 387

INTENSITY

FIREBERG £7.95pb, £12.95pb
C64 version reviewed
Issue 14 - ACE rating 642

The graphics have come across well and look quite good in monochrome. The parallax too is impressive, but the C64 version tends to be monotonous.

■ ACE RATING 626

NETHERWORLD

HERBOLD £7.95pb, £12.95pb
C64 version reviewed
Issue 12 - ACE rating 600

Nice graphics with good use of colour. The peculiar last level's changed a bit in conversion, so it's not as impressive.

■ ACE RATING 614

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

FIREBERG £7.95pb
C64 version reviewed
Issue 14 - ACE rating 718

Completely different to the C64 version. Still, an arcade adventure that's addictive and frustrating enough to keep you playing for some time.

■ ACE RATING 744

THE TRAIN

ELECTRONIC ARTS
£8.95pb, £14.95pb
C64 version reviewed
Issue 7 - ACE rating 647

A splash of strategic planning and a fair old slice of arcade action in this team-driving sim cum shoot-'em-up. Good graphics, but still not too much graphics.

■ ACE RATING 641

CHEAP 'N' CHEERFUL

◆ **SPANTIS**

The latest Atlantis releases include Tank Command and Gunlighter (both Spectrum £1.99) by the author of Crisis. Antislack owners are also catered for with Space Trader (£2.99) — an 80s-style trading game that lacks the 80 graphics.

◆ **MARSHMAN**

No — Marshman don't have a budget label just yet. But they are currently looking over the idea of selling out up to release games written using STOS, their ST game designer. If anyone out there is interested, drop Chris Payne a line at Marshman Software, Europe House, Adlington Park, Adlington, Macclesfield, SK10 4NP. Further details of the STOS system are due to appear in a forthcoming feature...

◆ **SIKE**

US Gold's budget label continues to re-release Britain with Brewster, World Games, Way of the Tiger, Eagle and Super Cycle across all 8-bit formats for a mere £2.99.

Meanwhile, Spanish soft ware house Topsoft is responsible for the Pepsi Challenge game, which Mid have been signed up to produce. It's the first original game, Blackboard and Chessman.

◆ **MULTIPLATFORM**

As usual, the Virgin subsidiary has a pretty big £1.99 catalogue, although the bulk of it consists of re-releases. Plans are apparently afoot to re-release the properties of original titles, with two original games due to appear soon: Resurrected (Spec, Amstrad and Amstrad) (Spec, C64 and Amstrad).

Re-releases include how to be a Complete Bastard (Spec, C64 and Amstrad), Hacker (Spec and Amstrad), Robotz (Spec and Amstrad), Hawk in Battleground, Gun Dave II (Spec, C64 and Amstrad), Transformers (C64 and Amstrad) or — well, Magic Wheel (C64, Spec).

One interesting release

is Memorabilia of Lordal (Spec, C64 and Amstrad). This full-price Amstrad game was dumped on the cover of a magazine, but wasn't released commercially because Amstrad left the UK market.

Multitronic continue their 16-bit £24.99 products with Chase (ST and Amiga), plus World of Horror and Cyber la Sparta variants for the PC.



ST — Wasteland's Chase

◆ **CODEMASTERS**

More original games from the leading Codemasters' name. (Good Masters) is the C64 version of the 'River hero' legend football platform game. Mega Missions appears on the Spectrum, while Super Star Man makes his debut on the C64. The popular Amstrad game Dupp returns in Ironsides (Amstrad), while MAD makes yet their penultimate and another lease of life in MAD Fantasy Simulator.



GPC — Pressure Island Mop

In a recent move, Codemasters have made £2.99 their starting price for budget titles — so expect to see a lot of extra from now on.

◆ **PLAYERS**

More releases on the Players front, with the old Arcus name game Personality, and Eagles Fed from Players' parent company Pandas. Both good games at £1.99 for Amstrad, Spec and C64. Completing the £1.99 line-up is a Spectromonly product

called Control — a vertically-scrolling shoot'em-up with its title to command it.

◆ **SILVERBIRD**

Also getting into the re-release limelight, Silverbird (all titles £1.99) are about to release Castles II (Spec, C64), followed up by The Secret Armour of Arctus (Spec, C64 and Amstrad) in the New Year.

Silverbird also have plenty of new titles coming through, the first of which is Fantastic Fun (Spec, C64, Amstrad and MSX). Hard on Fun's heels should be Merry-go-round Magic and Desert Warrior for the C64, International Speedway (Spec, C64 and Amstrad) to be followed by Night Games (Spec and Amstrad).

Silverbird also have the cheek to re-release White Classics for the Spectrum, C64 and Amstrad. Featuring such wonders as tennis, squash and football — remember them?

Starting up 16-year-old (at least) game concepts and passing them off under the guise of classics is hardly cricket.

◆ **ACCORN**

Microprose's new label, Accorn, handles original and re-released 16-bit games at a regular budget price of £24.99 — usually for the ST and Amiga. Their product line-up is currently dominated by Amiga games and includes Crystal Hammer (an Amstrad variant) on ST and Amiga, and an oriental beat em-up Ray of the Little Dragon as the first pair of original releases.

On the re-release front, Accorn's lineup is based around a number of old German games which saw the light of day, squashed tightly and returned in the case of darkness. MoonDewler has been seen previously on 8-bit machines, then there's Post Mexican, an extremely lame Gilgar's Gold-style platform game, while Spaceport is simply a 16-bit rendition of the old Spaceport classic Port Assaultport.

BUD

The first incarnation of our

DEATH STALKER

Codemasters

Spectrum, Amstrad £2.99

Conspicuous by the lack of any 'Smaller' tag, Codemasters' Death Stalker is an arcade adventure with a heavy scent of fantasy: the main character — a warrior with velvet tendencies — is guided around the earthy ruins (by choice), on a mission to discover the lost key of darkness and in so doing, he descends into the 'Tempter' (Sargasso).

On roads, potions and items are collected as the relation to later puzzles, prisoners are rescued from their bondage and attacking members of the undead are despatched by silly sword play.

Sections of the landscape appear only in proximity to the main character, and so the route gradually unfolds as progress is made. Gameplay is a little slower than it might have



been, and the combat is pretty pallid stuff, but there's still a definite urge to explore.

Both Amstrad and Spectrum versions are unusually colourful and should help with any in-built fog.

◆ **ACE RATING 62+**

PETER PACK RAT

Silverbird

Amstrad, C64 and Spectrum: £1.99

Based on the Atari concept of the same name, Peter Pack Rat is a jolly little collection where the tubby rodent is charged with collecting goodies and taking them back to his den within a time limit. The polyonymous Sargasso is littered with obstacles, including ladders, pipes and slides which Peter has to negotiate, and is also home to a selection of enemies which appear intermingled with the hero's progress.

While the Amstrad and Spectrum versions are identical, with a detailed introduction to play, the C64 profits from a multi-view back-

GET BONANZA

regular slot for budget games arrives in the SCREEN TEST Supplement.



Spectrum - Could that be a Mountain bike in the junkyard?

stop and smoother and faster gameplay. Android and Simlar users might think twice about the purchase, but C4 owners should enjoy the action on offer.

■ **ACE RATING 895**

MUTANT ZONE

Mastertronic

C64, Spectrum (reviewed) £3.99

Mutant Zone lives more than a passing resemblance to an earlier Mastertronic release for the C64 (and later) Spectrum, called *Spore*. This is not necessarily a bad thing though, since *Spore* was, and still is, a very good budget game. *Mutant Zone* contains most of the features of its predecessor: Impenetrating life-forms, destructible blocks and catchable-weld-joint transporters, extra weapons, energy-recharging points and collectable objects.

The subtle blend of strategy and blasting is both thought-provoking and adrenaline-pumping at the same time. Sharp graphics, biting gameplay and decent sound-effects make for a very polished and entertaining purchase.

■ **ACE RATING 824**



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● **TNT's offerings have a distinctly ST flavour about them this month, which is great for Atari owners, but not so hot for everyone else. Remember, there's no reason why the owner of an 8-bit machine shouldn't pick up the Top Tip prize...**

This issue, together with the map and complete solution for **GARFIELD**, we have the ultimate cheat for **ST ELITE** and listings for both the ST and Spectrum versions of **FOOTBALL DIRECTOR II** – among many others.

NEBULUS

■ John Phillips' maddeningly addictive platform game can get a little bit tough with only three Pogs to play with. In order to make life a little easier on the Amiga and ST versions, select the required mission and then type "HELLONAMUM" on the title screen. Not only does Pogo have unlimited incarnations, but pressing F1 through F8 accesses the unlimited towers on that mission.

■ John Phillips

SAVAGE

The attractive multi-loader from Probe on the Spectrum is split into three sections, and the access code for the last is **FIRGUS** – possibly because Probe's head honcho is Fergus McQueen (whose initials also appear on the box for *Thundercross*, by the way).

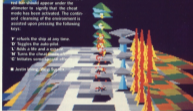
VIRUS

Owners of the Atari ST version of the Archonides demo – etc., game, sorry – may be interested to hear of a cheat mode. Hold down ENTER, and press F and O.

When the ship becomes airborne, a red bar should appear under the altimeter to signify that the cheat mode has been activated. The post-wood-clearing of the environment is assisted upon pressing the following keys:

- F: reflects the ship at any time.
- D: toggles the auto-pilot.
- L: fills a life and a power.
- M: turns the cheat mode off.
- C: initiates a complete restart.

■ John Phillips



SORCERY PLUS

■ The aged Amstrad game recently surfaced for Atari ST, so here, courtesy of an anonymous tipster, are some hints to ease the path of being an apprentice sorcerer.

Some of the subterranean pillars can actually be run through.

The Green Monster is killed by the sharp stick, the Ground/Goble with the strong sword, and the Flying Eye, Pig and Pumpkin are all destroyed using the ball and chain.



Cauldrons on the ground replenish or deplete energy, and vary from game to game. Sorcery always replenishes energy.

Flora de Lys and Coats of Arms permanently unlock doors bearing those symbols, and are not used up in the process.

Bottles and keys open the remaining doors, but are consumed in doing so.



The objects required to liberate the corresponding Sanctuaries are outlined below:

OBJECT	SANCTUARY LOCATION
Sorcerer's Moon	Stonehenge
Wand	Tunnel
Book	Outer Sanctuary
Golden Chalice	Wine Cellar
Goblet of Wine	Whatelands
Little Lys	Palace
Crown	Strongroom
Scroll	Dungeon

There are often two or more of each item so if one is difficult to reach, it's worth having a look for another. The book is hardest to get (near the waterfall) so it's worth attempting to retrieve this first. Once all the Sanctuaries are free, go to the Sorcerer's and sit on the remaining pillar to complete the game.

CYBERNOID

The 16-M version of End-Game's classic space-travel shoot 'em up also profits from a great dose of the cheats. Press the space bar on the title screen, type in "W00T5/8" and press space again. A warbling noise and message signify that the cheat mode is operational. An endless supply of Cybernoids is now in evidence, and, as if that wasn't enough, pausing the game and pressing **TV** temporarily lets you straight to the start of the next level.

■ David Gibson, Preston.



SHANGHAI KARATE

■ The following listing for the Amstrad CPC allows either player to choose how many lives they want. In one player mode, the computer adversary is Player Two.

10 MEMORY 617FF
20 PRINT "How many lives for?"
30 INPUT " player 1:" a
40 INPUT " player 2:" b
50 LOAD ""
60 CALL 67500
70 CALL 67700
80 LOAD ""
90 LOAD ""

100 PORE 8417F, 86F
110 PORE 841CC, 883
120 PORE 8422C, 8F9
130 FOR s=80000 TO 80E23
140 PCAS aS: s=VRL78+aS
150 PORE s,c c=0: c=MD7
160 IF c=2675 THEN 290
170 PORE 8800: a
180 PORE 8814: y
190 CALL 44026
200 DATA 3e, 25, 20, 2e
210 DATA 3e, 32, 7e, ae
220 DATA 22, 7f, ae, c3
230 DATA 00, ae, 3e, 30
240 DATA 32, 46, 06, 3e
250 DATA 00, 32, ae, 07
260 DATA 23, 0E, 07, 3e
270 DATA 00, 23, 3e, 80
280 DATA 23, 3e, 03, 09
290 PRINT "over"

■ Andrew Sulman, Kent.

VINDICATOR

■ Yet another multi-section game. The codes necessary to enter the second and third sections are: **VALSALVA MANOEUVRE** and **EUSTACHIAN TUBES**, respectively.

■ Steve Hax, Swindon.

STREET FIGHTER

■ Want some help with this beat 'em up on the ST? Simple: press the **HELP** key to access the next level. Short but sweet.

OPERATION WOLF

■ Ocean's great conversion of the popular Uri-bearing shoot 'em up is just ripe for a swift PDKE in the code. Load the cassette version and reset the CGM using the appropriate cartridge or paper clip. Type in the listing below and **PDJN** it for infinite grenades, bullets and energy, thus making the mission a sure-fire success.

10 DATA 194, 173, 32, 298, 94, 358, 128,
131, 157, 32
20 DATA 86, 245, 362, 32, 160, 0, 142, 84,
3, 140
30 DATA 85, 2, 98, 72, 189, 173, 181, 35,
187, 289
40 DATA 145, 141, 136, 136, 183, 169, 140,
76, 52, 3
50 FOR A=820 TO 828: READ B: B=0:B
POKE A, B: NEXT
60 FOR I=5230 TO 5254: READ B: B=0:B
POKE I, A: NEXT
70 IF B=4525 THEN SYS 5230
80 PRINT "GOOD B DAY"

■ The Master Hacker

GAME OVER II

Spanish software house Dynamic followed up Game Over with the wily-titled Game Over II. And just how does one get into the second section of the Spectrum version without playing all the way through the first part? By entering "8757" when prompted...

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Throughout the year, we plan to hand out £150, yes £150 worth of software to the sender of each month's Top Tip. If you want to get a piece of the action, send in your tips, PDKEs, raps or detailed playing guides, and do it now! We're not interested in second-

hand tips, or detailed guides on how to play games for the 2000 - it's brand-new tips for the games in the last couple of issues that we're looking for. And remember, you may not win the top prize, but we're also giving five people the chance to own the game of their choice for their machine. Make sure you send us a list of the games

you'd like to get if your tip comes top of the pile - select three from the last three issues to be sure that they are still currently available.

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■ Although thoroughly tipped already, there's life in the subject of *Elite* yet... The ST incarnation of the classic Braben and Bell BBC game can now be tipped some more - courtesy of practically every other person to write in to T 'N' T! And as Amiga owners should by now be able to enjoy the pleasures of attempting to become more than merely Harmless, expect some Amiga-specific tips to appear on these pages soon...

Before getting into the nitty gritty of the game, take a while to 'know your enemy' as the Harlequins would say. There's a ghost program which shows the ships on the recognition chart to be examined in more detail.

When the first ship appears out of the distance, pressing 'R' stops it from landing. The cursor keys now move the ship vertically, and can the image around. Pressing 'F' then starts the ship landing again.

Pressing the cursor keys while the ship is moving allows the ship's rate of rotation to be shifted accordingly. The spinning around may also be stricken or enlarged by using 'D' and 'I' respectively, while 'F' brings the next ship into view.



Lowest non-commissioned rank

There are some other interesting features included in the game itself: pressing 'W' brings up a scrollie message, bearing the usual credits, and indicating the version number, full points and elapsed play time.

Some serious combat practice can also be had by holding down the 'ACT' key during a hyperspace jump. The ship is consequently dropped into Witch-Space, to be surrounded by attacking Thargoids.

Finally, pressing 'C' while docked turns the music back on - as long as a docking computer has been installed.

■ Leon F. Wilkins, Milton Keynes.

A much more useful option included in ST *Elite* is a loading screen. When first asked for the entry password, type in 'SARA' and press RETURN, the correct password should then be entered at the second prompt. During play, pressing 'I' on the numeric keypad now brings up a screen of data, plus prompts to alter the value of the bytes shown.

To alter specific variables within the game, first enter the two-digit byte number and press RETURN, then the chosen value, again followed by RETURN. In this way, the following items may be obtained:

ITEM	VAL	RESULT
01	..F	..14 seconds
02	..F	..1000
03	..F	..1000
04	..F	..1000
05	..01	..1000000
06	..01	..1000000
07	..01	..1000000
08	..01	..1000000
09	..01	..1000000
10	..01	..1000000
11	..01	..1000000
12	..01	..1000000
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94	..01	..1000000
95	..01	..1000000
96	..01	..1000000
97	..01	..1000000
98	..01	..1000000
99	..01	..1000000
100	..01	..1000000

These are the most useful items, although a little experimentation might reveal other, equally interesting effects. (Since the required amount of equipment has been installed, ESC brings up the status screen once more.)

■ S Scarborough, Sussex.

Elite on the PC also comes under the technicians' close scrutiny: here is a method of obtaining almost infinite credits with the minimum of effort.

Potential *Elite*ists should have at their disposal a copy of DEBUG (which is included in most versions of DOS). *Elite* on disk, and a saved commander file ('NAME.cod').

Type 'PROGRAM' to display the current directory to the left of the cursor. Search through the directories on your disk until the 'ELITE' file is found, then type 'FISH' and whatever is to the left of the cursor, ending the '='.

Change the directory to that containing the 'ELITE.exe' and 'NAME.cod' files. Type 'DIR' to see the contents of your disk and the 'ELITE' file is found, then type 'FISH' and whatever is to the left of the cursor, ending the '='.

Type 'DIR' to see the contents of your disk and the 'ELITE' file is found, then type 'FISH' and whatever is to the left of the cursor, ending the '='.

Finally, type 'EXIT' and start a game as normal. Press 'ESC' and '1' to load in the commander. A swift check of the status screen should reveal a healthy-looking account containing 99999.9 credits.

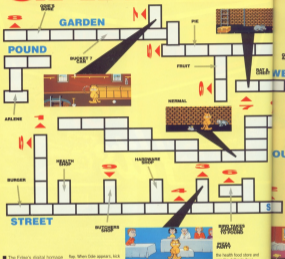
■ Dylan Colburn, Leytonstone.

ODDLES OF SOFTWARE?

Welcome to the New Year, Last Issue we promised to start giving away £100 of software to the winner of Tip of the Month, and while we're not being mean, nobody had the chance to really go for the big one - this column was written before the Christmas issue was in the magazines. Expect to see the first £150 prize-winner in T 'N' T next issue.

Meanwhile, as a reward for sending the tips and map for Last Month's Rocky Whong of County Down gets Op Whither the OS4. Steve Row of Southwick gets a copy of Spectrum (Barnes) in return for his Spectrum credits. ST users, Richard Clement of Berridge and Paul Blanks of Harlequin receive Flying Saucer for their machines, and Dylan Colburn of Leytonstone is seen to be the proud possessor of PC Palace.

GARFIELD



■ The Edge's digital homage to Jim Davis' iconic cartoon cat is now available on the Amiga and ST. The puzzling gameplay is a bit convoluted. The following solution should shed a reasonably bright light on the proceedings if used with the map above.

Collect the bench from the feed room and eat the peanut to stop Ode picking it up. Collect the rubber hose and place it by the cat

Rag. When Ode appears, kick him at the Rag to open it, allowing access to other screens. Now head for the garden shed and fall through the hole in the floor. Head down into the bowels of the sewer until Normal is discovered. Ode covers kicking later, the unscrupulous cat killer drops his clockwork mouse - let Ode pick it up. This allows Garfield to make his way back up to ground level, where he can then drop the bench and take the clockwork mouse from Ode.

Transport the mouse to the

health food store, and drop it by the shop-keeper, who then provides a speech about Moulton (to all our British readers). Send Garfield back into the sewers, and drop the donut in front of the giant rat. The rat moves away from the shed allowing Garfield to kick it from underneath the key within.

Drop the key near the golf bench, then return to the shed. Take the route to the hardware store and a lucky dollar appears in exchange for the tool. Go back to

some bad news.

Returning to the bench, drop the seed and pick up the key once more. When the bird appears, jump up and kick a side to the City Pound. It's then simply a matter of following the floors until Garfield is reunited with his beloved friend.

■ **Master Garfield, Benks.**

NUMBER



S

NEWS FROM THE COMPUTER

START - TWO IN

TOTAL ECLIPSE

■ Mr. Incentive, Ian Andrew, has scratched his head and come up with one of two hints and tips for the latest Freescape™ game, *Total Eclipse*. These tips should be as effective on all versions.

1. Examine the game closely.
2. To move more swiftly, push the joystick forward and press the forward key at the same time.
3. To map the pyramid, use chambers with heights of 24 and 36 together and 48 and 60 together.
4. In *Blackout*, use the vector names for successful mapping.
5. Remember that each page will have four sides.



6. When each treasure is completely collected, the adventurer's heart rate returns to normal.
7. Always use the 'F' key to face forward whenever disorientated.
8. Always use cliffs as a last resort; they may be much more useful later on.

FOOTBALL DIRECTOR II

■ The following cheats allow prospective football directors to have a large bank account at their disposal.

SPECTRUM +3

```

0040 70 and change line 1038 to:
LET J0=87 (1800000/40) PRINT AT 8,1:
THE BANK WILL OFFER YOU: AT 9,1: 1'
2) LET I1=87 8.0/1000 LET
J1=INT (I1+J0/100) PRINT AT
10,1: "BANKMENTS ARE 1":
2) AT 12,1: "OVER 80 WEARS
1/10" LET J1=0
  
```

And change line 1024 to:

```

GO SUB 1038:
LET L1=5: PRINT
AT 8,1: "YOU
OWN 1' J0: "MORTGAGE":
AT 9,1: "BERRY HOW
BUDGY" : PRINT L1:80
2) LET J2=0: GO SUB
270 LET O1=20: GO TO
107:OR=1: OR O1=0
OR O1=10)
  
```

Save the altered program and enter a save game disk

disk 10).

To use the file, insert the disk at the main menu and press 'S'. Take out a most size and then say back the sum of 80. Repeat the procedure until the requisite cash has been obtained. Then replace the Football Director II disk, and continue.

ATARI ST

Load a saved game, make a note of the amount of money in the bank account, and then quit.

Bring up ST Options, and load in the saved game as a letter (use the 'open file' option). Go to the end of the file. Eight lines from the end of the data, there is a current bank account figure. After this figure as required (preferably upwards), change the line below to the same value, and then close the file.

Load Football Director II and the previously saved game, which should now have the altered bank balance.

■ Paul Morley, Leeds.

LD



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ATARI 51
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Fantasy is revolll! ACE takes a close look at Infocom's Zork Zero and predicts the future of interactive fiction; Pat Winstanley reviews Times of Lore; the Pilgrim checks out Dream Zork; and we launch an exclusive adventure conference system... all in ACE's hard-hitting new fantasy/RPG section.

ZORK ZERO

INFOCOM's fight to revive interactive fiction...

WHEN Infocom decided to go graphic, they intended to do far more than simply drop pretty pictures into their games. The company that pioneered the state-of-the-art adventure planned to redefine the marketplace and produce games for the 1990s that combined traditional narrative strengths with new worlds of interaction. ACE has got a copy of Zork Zero hot from the States, running in the Apple Mac, and joining the Infocom way forward. Will we want to follow? Here are all the questions you may want to ask...and the answers...

1. WHAT IS ZORK ZERO?

It's Steve Meretzky's answer to the challenge of graphics and extended gameplay. His colleagues, Dave Lutting and Mark Black, have gone for RPG (Ultima) and interlocked graphics (Siegler), but Steve's approach consists of taking the traditional adventure format and adding spice. Since we're dealing with the author of Leather Goddesses, Hitchhikers and Babelball, to name but a few, for 'spice', read 'humour'.

2. WHAT'S THE STORY?

Zork Zero takes place during the days of the



A typical Zork Zero screen. The border pattern changes during play, reflecting the nature of the current location. You can switch off that feature if you want a spicier game by typing **NOBDR**.

Underground Empire of Quedor. The rising tyranny of Halloweb has brought down a curse on the empire that threatens to destroy it. You awake in the royal castle and must find hidden artefacts which together can be used to neutralise the spell.

3. WHAT'S THE MAP LIKE?

Well, the castle has everything you could possibly want, from a lake to a mountain to a private zoo. The variety of locations is one of the game's strong points.

4. WHAT'S THE PRESENTATION?

Innovative Zork at the screenshots! There's a colour border round the screen that changes accord-

ing to the type of location (interior, exterior, lake, etc) and all location descriptions feature attractive illuminations within the text.

From time to time, whole screen graphics can be flipped up, presenting either puzzles or even game-winning scenes. Unlike most adventures, the graphics are totally integrated into the gamefile, conveying information that is both relevant to AND dependent upon your actions in the game. There's one puzzle, for example, that reveals a cryptic picture which alters when you push certain buttons in obscure locations. Challenging, and fun!

5. WHAT'S THE SYSTEM LIKE?

Infocom's best yet. There's a brilliant on-screen map (see screenshot) for rapid movement in each area of the game, plus an UNDO command that gets you out of trouble following accidental death. The Mac version also lets you save named files - very useful.

The parser is of course flawless. It isn't quite as complex as the Magnetic Scrolls parser but having that's almost an advantage in our opinion. The ideal parser supports that does not impinge upon gameplay and in this respect the Infocom parser is superb. There are also function key definition facilities on some versions.

ST
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GA
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5. WHAT'S IT LIKE TO PLAY?

Highly addictive, and certainly addictive's best adventure since Lurking Horror. Although large in traditional structure, the game is enhanced through the use of graphic puzzles and the constant presence of the leader. This chapter lets you roam and can often get you out of sticky spots (or offer other rewards) by giving you the chance to solve wordpuzzles and riddles.

What all this means is that the gameplay in *Zork Zero* extends into several different styles. You've got exploration and standard adventure puzzles, you've got riddles and combats, and you've got graphical challenges as well. And throughout you've got Steve Meretzky's inimitable humor. A real treat for Macintosh fans, this one.

7. IS THERE ANY BAD NEWS?

Yes, the Mac version won't be released in the US. Even worse, other versions won't be available until next March. It'll be worth waiting for, however, and we'll be running an update when they appear. Don't miss it!

RELEASE BOX

MACINTOSH Input only from Infocom, 1985

Cambridge Park Drive, Cambridge, MA 02142

USA: US price in application.

Other versions to be released in US in March.

1985 - watch this space for details.



The built-in on-screen map facility, with the exception of legend of the Sword, this has to be the best on-screen mapping we've ever seen. It can be called up at any time by entering **MAP**. Each section of the game is held on a separate screen and you can move about the map instantly by clicking from one location to the next, then hitting **Q** to return to the last screen. Our only quibble is that it doesn't scroll, but you can't have everything! Note that the different locations have icons, helping you to remember where everything is.

THE ACE VERDICT

Highly addictive with a variety of challenges that mean to retain interest. A lot more character-driven than could have made for a real fanpage, but it remains one of the best games of its type to us.

LANGUAGE: EN SYSTEM: 86
CHALLENGE: 82 ENCOUNTERS: 78

ZORK ZERO IMPLICATIONS

Adventurers...North, South, or out to lunch? Steve Cozke wonders where we're going...

You may have been playing *Zork* when you were in the cradle. You could have put your feet on the original mainframe Colossal Cave. Maybe you even funded the Wumpus through the PAM of a 1981 video-diner wonder in the early 80's. Whatever your adventuring past, you can't run away from the present...and the present of text adventuring is pretty grim.

First is, games that simply print text to the screen are not interesting to today's gamers, who is used to programs like *Dungeon Master* and *Ultima II*. There are currently two ways round this, exemplified by *Magnetic Scrolls* and *Level 8*. The *Magnetic Scrolls* approach is needed. First, the adventure has a powerful hi-tech parser that enables you to do just about anything. Second, the text comes along with pretty pictures. Result? An old fashioned game that looks just a bit more up-to-date. This approach puts all the pain on the story - and some of the MS pain doesn't burden the strain at all well.

Level 8 have decided - more interestingly - that the problem is more profound

FREE SOFTWARE!

What do YOU think the future holds for adventure fantasy software?

The ACE adventure team will be receiving a computer-usage credit note on this subject over the next couple of months, with software prices to published letters. Help revitalize *adventuring fantasy* - write now to ACE Adventure Fantasy Conference, c/o Science Street, Baiton, BA1 1EL. Paper and software

than simply one of parsers and appearances. They believe that there are no longer any interesting conventional adventure puzzle possibilities. Everything you can do with objects and spells has already been done, so enter the interactive character.

This approach is more open-ended and, if combined with good graphics and parsing, leads to some powerful atmospheres and

subtle possibilities. However, characters can't become a pain in the backside if not cleverly designed at the programming stage and some Level 8 gamers have left a lot to be desired. What's more, the long-term future of games that depend on interactive characters for addiction has to come under threat from Multi-User Games.

Infocom are toying with both these ideas, and are also introducing RPG elements into their software. *Zork Zero* is an encouraging release because it shows that the company have understood the basic problem - lack of gameplay opportunity within the traditional adventure format. By adding in riddling, combats, and graphical interaction they have succeeded in stretching interactive fiction to new limits.

Despite the promise of MUGs over the next decade, people will always want to sit down and play a game on their own that challenges their imagination and ingenuity. The adventure of the future will feature RPG characters, interactive NPCs, multi-player characters, combined graphics and textual puzzles, menu-driven intuitive interfaces, and CD-ROM distributions. Let's hope the software houses of today get a move on and publish it sooner rather than later.

DREAM ZONE

BAUVILLE's click and run graphic fantasy...

GAMES like *Adventum's Borrowed Time* and *Irony's Dots & Dashes* started a big craze for mouse/keyboard-style adventures. Software in this tradition usually boasts at least panel, a graphic picture window in which you can sometimes click on objects to add them to your inventory or examine them, and a text response window. *Dream Zone* is a typical example...

One drawback of this genre tends to be lack of gameplay, with the program expending all its ammunition on screen presentation and user interface, while leaving nothing in reserve to challenge the player. Again, enter-

tainedly, *Dream Zone* is a typical example...

Briefly, the plot is as follows: You are suffering from persistent nightmares and after treatment by Dr. Freud you find yourself being out your dreams for real! This involves exploring the city of the Dream Zone and taking the puzzles therein, most of which involve "interacting" with other characters. The interaction is in inverted commas because it isn't free-form discussion, but rather a series of confrontations with stationary characters who set you (often dull) tasks.

There's something slightly unappealing about this game. For

the new generation of 16-bit games from Level 9 and Origin, for example. There are one or two tough puzzles, but they tend to be of the frustration variety and rarely if ever get the adrenaline going.

The graphics are reasonable, the interface acceptable, and the game playable... but that's about all the recommendation it deserves. If someone gave it to you for Christmas, you may get a kick out of it, but if you paid for it you're more likely to look yourself.



Dream Zone on the IBM...pretty game, pretty simple.

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	ON/BOX	OUT/BOX
AMIGA	ON/BOX	OUT/BOX
IBM PC	ON/BOX	OUT/BOX

THE ACE VERDICT

Even if you like this type of game more than most, *Dream Zone*... which only gets 50 points that should pretty quickly use system credits of value can never substitute for quality. In fact it gets, but it takes more than credit itself to make it possible to give a game a review.

LANDSCAPE 66 SYSTEM 76
CHALLENGE 66 ENJOYMENT 66

TIMES OF LORE

MICROPROSE's ultimate arcade adventure?

WITH

the current surge in role-playing games, the border between arcade action and adventures is becoming blurred. However, shoot-em-up fans are often out of more strategic games by the need to watch statistics, improve skills and acquire armor when all they really want to do is blast the opposition.

Times of Lore is an ideal contender for the borderless area. It combines the fast reflex joystick skills of classical with the adventurous freedom of games such as *Bards Tale*.

The plot revolves around the aftermath of the High King of Alverin's departure to his homeland of the Elden Isle, to renew his spirit after a long war. In his absence chaos and anarchy became the law of the land. Adventur-



ers are being recruited to carry out dangerous missions and you offer service to the highest bidder.

After choosing to play as a Knight, Vahryn or Barban you visit the Floating Skull Tavern, where careful conversation sets your first mission. Then it's off to the wilderness and adventures.

Play takes place in a swirling landscape with the characters viewed from above, *Commander* style. All actions are joystick-controlled, movement is in the normal arcade fashion, and various options can be selected by pressing the spacebar free-choosing from a set of icons in the lower half of the screen.

Options include talk, examine, inventory, get, drop, use and other as well as save, load,

ADVENTURES

score etc. He being in required, even when talking to characters, because all available options are displayed on menus. Conversation proceeds by clicking key words from characters then clicking about these topics, hopefully picking up further key words as the conversation progresses.

Control is extremely simple. All that is required is to make sure your character is not in and losing the enemy. Pressing the fire button makes your character attack - a fire well aimed blow is enough to dispose of most monsters. After combat a delightful sequence shows the decomposition and burial of the victim and very often some goodies are left behind. These can range from bags of gold to food, or magical items such as potions and scrolls.

Graphics are clear and colourful but I found the joystick control rather flabby and imprecise - assuming when your character must be positioned exactly to enter buildings and follow winding paths. The lack of diagonal movement makes it feel jerky and unsatisfactory.

Having said that, the game as a whole gets well, keeping both brain and hands constantly busy. Any adventure whether arcade, role playing or straight fantasy fan should find plenty of playability and absorption in this offering.

■ Pat Westacott



RELEASE BOX

ADAM ST	124 95k	OUT NOW!
AMICA	124 95k	MARKET
SPECTRUM	121 95k - 121 95k	Feb 1985
AMSTRAD	121 95k - 121 95k	Feb 1985
ORIGEN	121 95k - 121 95k	OUT NOW!
IBM PC	124 95k	Feb 1985

THE ACE VERDICT

Imparting the art of adventure and accessible both and death action, that really works, with well designed and good, and death come in some useful problems, the ace comes highly recommended.

LANDSCAPE 91	SYSTEM	85
CHALLENGE 88	ENCOUNTERS	80

NO PROBLEM!

This month's tips and queries from adventures around the world. Don't forget - if you're stuck in a game, try the Adventure Helpline in the Feb Pages and check out the column every month.

HEART TALK ADVENTURE

By visiting the oasis in the Swamp Woods at night you can gain access to the City of Aah.

Orin will let you see hidden doors.

Blue Stars will let you teleport from a stone ring. Collect vials to increase vital ity.

Night vision is improved by green leeches.

Jade skulls are good wizard bombs.

Red towers give you a map. Rings, books, monsters. Make sure you search all wrecks for keys or skulls.

Richard Thompson, Queensland

I have purchased two adventure games which I am completely stuck on - *Wales of Sherwood* and *Wales of Blood*, both of which are published by Adventures International UK. The game instructions state that free hot sheets are available from Adventures International,

but letters by the company have been returned as 'name away' or 'no know at this address'.

Can you help me please? Ken Dean, Lowestoft

Sure can, Ken...but you won't thank me for it. All we no longer of the world, so the best thing to do is to keep trying the Adventure Helpline. By the way, Ken says people on the Helpline have been failing to answer queries accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope. Please note, helpers, that we do carry out checks on you from time to time and anyone caught supplying self be taken off the list.

SHADOWCAST

Help! I'm playing *Shadowcast* and understand that few nights have to be found. I have found four of these nights but I am now completely stuck and I can't find the Staff of Ages... Andy Grant, Wilt

Easy Andy...there is a snake, and a snake! ...

ALTERNATE REALITY

Game actions:

Date Colour
Effect
Skill Red -1
Strength

Silver Weight poison or
+3 intelligence
White -1 physical
speed
Gold Dear Sea
Water
Black Vulnerability at
White Fear of wounds
Silver
Charms +1
Orange Protection +1
or -1 intelligence
Green Ignorance

PSYD

In the smooth way...take the mould from the cage, wear the gloves, set the gold disc in the crucible, hold it over the fire with the tongs, pour gold into mould, then go W, A, W, S, NE, E and wait for mould to cool. Then legs mould with hammer. This produces the ring... R.C.B. Marshall, Croydon

Adventurers everywhere desperately need your help. Send in your tips to *No Problem! ACE*, 4 Queen Street, Bath, Wiltshire BA1 1EL. Sending your name to print is just part of the reward - the real is knowing that someone, somewhere will be praising your name for evermore.

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great software prizes for the best contributions. Don't miss next month, when we launch the first conference on the future of adventuring. Even better, make sure you're one of the contributors! Check out this month's column for details on where to send your letter...

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Amiga	21.95	24.95	AC20090
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Amiga	24.95	24.95	AC20081
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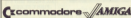


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The game based on the TV series... (text continues)

**URIDIUM**

Hardware ■ Spectrum 640K ■ C64 64.0K ■ 1.2.0K ■ Amiga 640K
1.2.0K

The piece de resistance of scrolling shoot-em-ups, Uridium's shoot, dodge and attacking ships while dodging around six huge structures. Great music-looking backgrounds and the smooth scrolling you've seen in just this heat and confidence about the opposition. A game not to be missed, especially now that C64 versions have packaged with the excellent Paradise.

**ZARCH / VIRUS**

Hardware ■ Amiga 640K ■ Windows 640K ■ Turbo 64 640K ■ PC 640K ■ Amiga 640K ■ Amiga 640K ■ Amiga 640K

Get ZArch's highest rated game to date. A solid three-dimensional shoot-em-up with cut-graphic perfection and lightning-quick gameplay that flows on screen easily. Needs a 1.4MB version have added and they're just as good as the 640K version (check out the notes on p.64). All that remains to be seen now is whether you'll be ZArch using the 4-bit version.

ADVENTURES

Adventures have come a long way since The Hobbit. State-of-the-art graphics and powerful parsers enable you to communicate with other characters, and fully explore the world of your choosing. Add role-playing elements and you can see why this section of the software biz is the fastest growing area of computer entertainment.

**BEYOND ZORK**

Hardware ■ Amiga 640K ■ C64 64.0K ■ PC 64.0K ■ Amiga 640K
1.2.0K

Intrepid's attempt to invade it on the role-playing market is a great success. Unlike the tedious Caves of Qandor in a game that contains the wit and mystery of one of the world's most original software companies with state-of-the-art parsing and graphics. Tons of fun with on-screen mapping facility.

**THE BARD'S TALE III**

Hardware ■ Amiga 640K

The latest Bard's Tale game offers a number of refinements over its predecessors (all of which you will still want taking a good look at). First, the graphics are better overall. Second, the ranged combat features which take careful account of the distance between you and your opponents. Finally, the game's logic and rewards are excellent value for money.

**GUILD OF THIEVES**

Hardware ■ C64 64.0K ■ Spectrum 640K ■ Amiga 640K
1.2.0K ■ Amiga 640K ■ Amiga 640K ■ Amiga 640K

One of Britain's finest adventure software houses - Magpie Games - designed this product a traditional treasure hunt with superb graphics and some very nice puzzles. Powerful parser helps to create a convincing game world with humour and imagination.

**JEWELS OF DARKNESS**

Hardware ■ C64 64.0K ■ Spectrum 640K ■ Amiga 640K
1.2.0K ■ Amiga 640K ■ Amiga 640K ■ Amiga 640K

Level 9's Britain-based adventure programming family, have put together three of their classic releases, Colossal Adventure, Dungeon Adventure and Jewels of Darkness. The games have been updated with graphics and logic recalculations and are closer to the original spirit of adventuring as you're likely to find.

**TIME AND MAGIC**

Hardware ■ Spectrum 640K ■ C64 64.0K ■ C64 64.0K
1.2.0K ■ Amiga 640K ■ Amiga 640K ■ Amiga 640K

This collection of the Level 9 games, Lords Of Time, Red Moon and The Price Of Might have all been so popular with letter-pasting, bigger resolutions and picture editing. Expect more if you don't already own all the games.

**CORRUPTION**

Hardware ■ Amiga 640K ■ Amiga 640K ■ PC 64.0K
1.2.0K ■ Spectrum 640K ■ C64 64.0K ■ Amiga 640K

This tale of insider dealings, bribery and crooked business deals is likely to appeal to adventures who prefer to wander through vast dungeon networks seeking treasure. But for those who are fed up with traditional adventuring, it's the a breath of fresh air. Superb graphics, great atmosphere and a well-built plot make this a worth game for you to own.

**WASTELAND**

Hardware ■ C64 64.0K

Orange's most intricate USA shipping student business and other areas in this role-playing app. The atmosphere may not be as good as the Amiga's but some of the game, but the extra dimension of strategy leaves the PC, Amiga and Apple versions of the IP series way behind.

**ULTIMA V**

Hardware ■ Spectrum 640K ■ C64 64.0K ■ PC 64.0K ■ Amiga 640K

Notwithstanding level of detail in this role-playing influential app. Trust your instincts making the opposition and earning the highest, best, and geographical areas that will enable you to defeat the forces of evil in underground. Superb maps, great looking interest, and tough challenge games.

**LURKING HORROR**

Hardware ■ Amiga 640K ■ C64 64.0K ■ PC 64.0K ■ Amiga 640K

Intrepid's latest is a 2D. Lurch and the horror-themed game sends you into a 200 level as you discover something very nasty lurking beneath your college library. Superb but only game with broken descriptions that defy you to play it after that.

**IRONIC'S BACK**

Level 9 Amiga 640K

A great follow-up to Chrono Trigger. Level 9 have really got to grips with the use of characters in their games and how to program them very effectively.

**POOLS OF RADIANCE**

Amiga 640K C64 64.0K

SSI, the strategy specialists were very keen to attempt to capture the complete essence of the G422 system on a computer, but they didn't quite succeed. An RPG-enhanced game that will appeal to not only G422 fans but to anyone looking for an enthralling game that will keep them playing for months.

**FISH**

Hardware ■ Amiga 640K ■ C64 64.0K ■ Amiga 640K

One of the best games for Commodore Amiga ever made. Great graphics and not as quirky as The Pagan. This is definitely the best release since Quest Of The Raven. Good value indeed.

COR! SO MANY COMPETITIONS!



Here is another chance to win a fabby prize - a whole US\$ 5000 per year! How do you have to do it? It's about the total number of words (including adverts) that have appeared in this issue (printed words don't count) - but this one doesn't! Just this one doesn't because it was used in the last sentence.

Answers on a postcard to:

Cor! So many competitions
ACE Magazine, Future Publishing,
4 Queen Street, Bath BA1 1JL

■ Having won't? Sorry, we can't give you the details, but we can help.

HARDWARE UPGRADE GUIDE

	ACORN ARCHIMEDES	APPLE MACINTOSH																								
THE RANGE	The 400 and 512 series have machines with 640K and 400K on only one of three or various slots.	The Mac II series has a dedicated upgrade monitor system that lets you upgrade with the Mac II's capabilities for any dedicated monitor you require. Both have separate keyboard and mouse.																								
MEMORY & CHIPS	The 400 has 128K of memory with 640K on RAM, but both are Acorn-made chips that don't allow chips to be added in-process.	Though both machines have 128K of memory, the 512 only has a Motorola 68010 to run it, and while the 400 has the built-in Mac II memory, it's not a Motorola 68010.																								
PRICES	Recommended retail prices start at \$271.00 for the 400 or 400K. There's no sign of a second-hand market as yet.	Recommended retail prices start at \$249 for the 512 with 68010. If the Mac II has anything, that goes well as performance and amount hardly cheap. Customized new case can be done, and the cheapest configuration is personally important from the Macs (at \$1.5K for Mac II, for a Mac including I and with you).																								
GRAPHICS	Don't consider it suitable: your monitor will be 640x480 (500 pixels) 640x480 or 640x480 or 640x480 — an expensive high-resolution — an expensive 640x480, again in 10 colors. There's no hardware graphics — the custom — but with the graphics adapter for games, the desktop technology isn't mature.	The remaining 512 has a screen resolution of 640x480 with the Mac II has a 640x480 screen in 10 colors, shown from a palette of more than 10 colors.																								
MONITORS	Yes — complete video color — 400 — yes, or 10 monitors.	As well as the built-in 512 or dedicated (Mac II) Apple only, there are plenty of third party monitors, though often poor screens and some like monitors that are close to being good.																								
SOUND	The desktop built-in sound features 10 channels (in 4 stereo pairs) and a range of six voices, all built through a post-quality internal system.	The Mac's four-channel sound chip can produce some very useful six voices — done on the Mac II — but you'll need a third party 800 (per slot) or 4 years various other music.																								
DRIVES, MICE & JOYSTICKS	The built-in drive is good and fast, and packs a healthy 1000 or 1.8K bytes. The built-in mouse with a non-3-button mouse — but no joystick as yet.	The built-in drive is good (per slot) 800 or 1.8K bytes. The built-in mouse is good quality, but it is the standard mouse.																								
SOFTWARE	Games for the Archimedes are things called Super and Grand (both are built around a supporting the Archimedes) but for now the only major one is Archimedes (3D version). Computer built 400-based games. There's also a range of 4 games that really push the limits to supplying the Archimedes. The number of graphics packages available includes anything Archimedes seems happy for now. Other applications are not being currently fresh really looking.	Games software is normally plenty on the Macs, though some software is not available for them. There's a large amount of graphics and word processing software — more of a fairly many — and a large number of the business use. There's also plenty of great software for the 800 monitor, but it's not worth doing.																								
PROSPECTS	The Archimedes advanced learning makes for a good game system — there's no sign of support from any of the Archimedes houses — and the set-up is quite good (not too high). The graphics software has some high-quality Archimedes from prices, but with the things that are not too high either.	The future for the Mac is excellent, but mostly in the desktop side of things.																								
OVERALL	The Archimedes is a good choice of 400, and with the power for the computer. A full desktop-quality result with it as a software-based machine that Archimedes can't match it to be installed. It's the same price for a worthwhile day for computer users, but it's not worth the money to buy, but it's not about it.	The Mac's a very good machine, and a good learning. Archimedes is a good machine, it's a good choice in the future for the rest of us.																								
RATINGS	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Graphics</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sound</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SOFTWARE:</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Range</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Quality</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prospects</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </table> 	Graphics	3	Sound	4	SOFTWARE:		Range	4	Quality	3	Prospects	3	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Graphics (512)</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sound</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SOFTWARE:</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Range</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Quality</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prospects</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </table> 	Graphics (512)	3	Sound	4	SOFTWARE:		Range	4	Quality	3	Prospects	3
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Prospects	3																									

LETTER FROM EDITOR

Dear Readers:

Here I am slogging away on yet another issue of ACE, and what thanks do I get? None. I dunno why I bother sometimes. Take today. I got in the office around midday - the Ed's still socked from a heavy working session the night before, the Publisher's slung his hook for the weekend and the Reviewer Ed is dancing round the office yelling "Jeez! Elsecoff" and "It's 106 miles to Chicago, we got a full tank of gas, half a pack of cigarettes, it's dark and we're wearing sunglasses - lol lol, not to mention the Production

Ed who's stood on top of an Apple Mac running Quark Express version 2.0 making and trying to meet imaginary deadlines while the staff writers are lagging over the rating of some adult slash-thriller (don't you just HATE computer games? Give me a nice database or spreadsheet in lieu of all a neap accounts package to play with and I'm happy).

So, I leave them to it and trot off to make myself several cups of strong black coffee - with a couple of shots of Tequila in each bowl. It's winter and these offices aren't as warm as they might be and so, and so forth, when I eventually stagger back into the office (around lunch everything's in chaos) the staff writers have resorted to throwing computers at each other,

the Ed's trying desperately and pathetically to stuff a jam sandwich in the A drive of a new Amstrad PC1638 2 VGA machine and shouting maniacally "It's crashing! A bloody system crash, what are you? stupid?" So I thought to myself "Am I the only sane person in the world? Surely not, there must be some readers out there who could clear my desk and blast life up with a witty letter or two." So I sat down at my trusty keyboard and composed this desperate little note - hope it works.

Cheers!
Pink Pages Ed

P.S. Wrap your letters around either feet or something instead of Claret!

COMPETITION

To enter off with the single, strictly limited edition *Afterburner* (referred to) featured by *Games 6/88* simply find the answer to the single question below. The name of Claret, another a small amount of research.

Who was the first test pilot to fly the prototype P.11 Thunder Cat?

Answers on a postcard to: I don't know! ACE competition, ACE Magazine, Future Publishing, 4 Queen Street, Bath BA1 1JA. Closing date 1 February.



SOLUTION TO PRIZE CROSSWORD No9

The first correct entry out of the bag was from Stephen Lodge of Harbury, near Wakefield, who sent ACE worth of software for his computer. Here's what the completed crossword should have looked like...

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Pool 16388 effect does the customer say? "I was just impressed with the general standard of the programs & their ease of use. I had a look around the program & worked out for myself the data without the use of the manual which shows just how good the program structure is set out. To get to the point, the way I'd only 16388 comes up front with 100 of 100 points, 4 through me a win of 0.11 88. Not bad for a first effort. Thanks for an amazing program. Regards P.J.L. Salford, (Name & Address with form for free-trials.)"

* Pool system (Poolbuster & Poolplanner) cost 199.99 inclusive **

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THE ACE PRIZE CROSSWORD No 11

Set by Mike

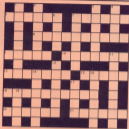
The first correct entry from the post bag wins software worth £25. Closing date for entries is 5 February. The ACE crossword is a cryptic. The answer might be an acronym, or formed from the end of one word and the beginning of another, or concatenated all by the clue. Most, but not quite all, of the answers are computer-related.

ACROSS

5. Game from Gemini having eight stars about it (6)
7. General's favoured logic (6)
8. Doctor Beer's Zaxxon game from Scandinavia (3,3)
9. Support for some priceless Tandy machines (5)
10. Game still valid (7)
11. A boring game (7)
12. Fashion model's first useful piece of hardware (9)
13. Keep out of the hat - it's a game from Birmingham (4,6)
20. Screen spring out of base every day (6)
21. Riped out when fed tea (6)

DOWN

1. Model file coming from a real part (6)
2. About running out of game from US (4,4)
3. 40's game from Actionaire (6)
4. Basic command that's OK during game class (6)
6. Person helping to develop idea (6)
7. Extraterrestrial found under stone (6)
11. Created a future when rooms named by us (3,3)
12. People magazine from Psychology (6)
14. Student has one ruler by preference (6)
16. A person travelling to Covent Garden productions (6)
17. An actor's strongest last year's production (6)
18. Star turn by Electronic software house (6)



NAME _____
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ALIENS

Last month's Dragon Ninja demo tape was good – but this is even better. In keeping with the ACE tradition, we've decided to treat lucky Spectrum and C64 owners to yet another classic game. The US version of *Aliens*. Wow!

THE PLOT...

0V428 if used to be called, now it's known as Asteroid. This is the planet you Ripley vowed you'd never return to. Ever since your encounter with that vile and treacherous Alien that so nearly managed to kill you. But now the planet-formers and Colonists that had recently set up on the planet have started disappearing – or you've agreed to return to the planet and destroy the Aliens – for good.

To survive the ordeal and return alive you'll have to complete the following missions:

- **Dropship Malfunction** – guide a plummeting ship down to the surface of 0V428.
- **APC Rescue** – bring the spare marines back to the Armoured Personnel Carrier.
- **Operations Room** – fend off a barrage of Aliens, to make enough time to cut through a steel door.
- **Air Duct Scramble** – find your way through the air duct system to get to the drop ship.
- **Planet Rescue** – save Newt from the Aliens before the entire Atmosphere Processor explodes.
- **Queen to One** – battle the Alien Queen with your powerloader.

Realize you can handle that?

WHAT TO DO...

● APC RESCUE

There are four marines on sub-level base of the Atmosphere Processor, and they've been found by the Aliens. You've got to guide them back to the APC.

Tracking screens.

You've got five special tracking screens for each marine. The top screen is the individual's barometer track and the lower screen indicates his/her safety condition.

If the upper screen is normal Marine is OK.

Upper screen is excited Aliens are near.

Lower screen shows static noise Marine is OK.

Lower screen green Marine has reached APC.

Lower screen flashes red Marine is in trouble.

Lower screen all red Marine caught by Aliens.

Lower screen is black Marine has been lost.

Use the joystick to manoeuvre the marines.

You can only control one marine at a time, so

switch between the marines by pressing keys

14 (or F1, F3, F5, F7 on the C64). The name

of the current marine then appears below the Mission Tracker in the upper right of the screen. Use the Mission Tracker to see what's going on outside your field of vision.

● OPERATIONS ROOM

The Aliens think you're surrounded and the only way you can escape is to hold them off long enough to cut through a steel door leading to the air ducts. The Aliens are going to drop down from the ceiling and try to flush you down to the survivors waiting to go through the door. Stop them by using the joystick to manoeuvre the marines and touch the aliens with the torch to make them retreat. Manage fire and you go into the Air Duct stage. Fall and you can try again.

● AIR DUCT SCRAMBLE

Find your way through the maze of air ducts to the Drop-ship landing pad. You're looking at an overhead view of the maze, with one third of it on screen at any one time. The blue and gold squares are Ripley and Newt. The white dots are the marines. The red circles are the aliens.

The marines will sacrifice their lives to protect Ripley and Newt and when you press the fire button it detonates a grenade you lost a marine, so it's best to avoid the aliens altogether. If you make it to the Drop-ship you can continue if not, you'll be able to try again.

● NEWT RESCUE

There are only 17 minutes before the Atmosphere Processor blows, and Ripley has to locate Newt and lead her back to the elevator. The range indicator in the upper right part of the screen tells you how far away you are from Newt. Find her and she'll follow you back to the elevator. Make it and you'll be ready for the final confrontation.

● QUEEN TO ONE

Use your powerloader (an exoskeleton that works like a tank treads) and wiggle the joystick from side to side in an attempt to hit the Queen as often as possible. The red bar at the base of the screen turns green as your blows take effect. When the Queen's bar is completely green, you can grab hold of her by holding the joystick button down, the unlock door will open and you can drop her through it by releasing the fire button. Succeeded and you'll have saved humanity. Fail and – well, you can try again.

THE KEYS...

SPECTRUM

Use a joystick in the following keys:

LEFT ↑

RIGHT ↓

UP ↑

DOWN ↓

FIRE SPACE

C64

Joystick only.

HOW TO LOAD

SPECTRUM

Select 48k mode if you've got a C128 machine and type LOAD*. Hit the ENTER key and press 'PLAY' on your tape deck.

C64

Press 'SHIFT' and 'RUN/STOP' keys simultaneously. Then follow the on-screen instructions.

TRICKS 'N' TACTICS

When firing the Droop-rip, remember to think like a pilot: pulling back on the joystick will raise you to climb, pushing forward sends you into a dive. Avoid oversteering.

During the APC rescue, try to get your marines together and move them as a group. Give special attention to those marines who are in the Alien's next area.

In the Operations Room, don't bother trying to hold off the really fast aliens – torch them right away.

In the Air Duct maze, there's almost always more than one way to get from one place to another. Be flexible – use the routes where there are the fewest aliens.

While rescuing Newt, don't bother wasting aliens that are some distance away: try to dodge them instead.

After grabbing the queen, come at her from below.

MISSION STATUS CODES

Complete a mission and you'll be given a mission status code. Write this down and whenever you start the game you can enter the code and start the game at the last level you completed.

NOTE: You won't receive a code until you've successfully completed the first level – and the exit press RETURN to start the game.

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