POPULAR COMPUTING WEEKLY

A FOCUS MAGAZINES PUBLICATION

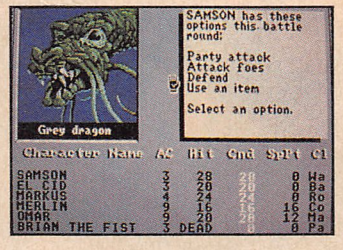
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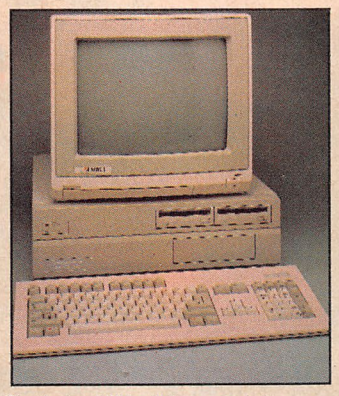
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Hanover launch for new Amiga range?



The Amiga 2000 will be upgraded.

COMMODORE is to launch a new range of Amiga computers next year. "Existing A500 machines will be upgraded to 1Mb of Ram. The new A500 will be unveiled at the West German Hanover Fair, March 16–23," our sources revealed last week.

The other Commodore Amiga, the A2000, is set to change as well. The existing 68000 microprocessor will be uprated from 8MHz to 14MHz.

Other changes to the A2000, apart from a name change to A2010, will be a new blitter chip capable of addressing 4Mb of video Ram, improved screen resolution and a maximum colour palette of 265 out of a total of over 6 million colours.

There will also be a new denise chip, but details on this are a little vague. In addition, there is a new version of the Amiga boot-up system Kickstart 1.3.

Commodore also plans to bring out an A3000 machine. The A3000 was announced in June during the US Consumer Electronics Show but was not shown. The machine will have a 28MHz 50030 microprocessor and a new 19 inch colour monitor. Price has yet to be finalised, but its likely to be around $3000. Commodore US when asked for a reaction said: "We cannot comment on un-disclosed material."

● The A3000 machine's debut may be delayed by as much as a year. There is currently a world shortage of 60030 chips on which the machine is based.

Activision link-up with Mastertronic

MASTERTRONIC has announced a surprise link-up with American software house Activision. The deal concerns Activision's agreement to licence a number of back catalogue titles to Mastertronic for release under the Ricochet label at £1.99 and £2.99 for the 8-bit games and £9.99 for the 16-bit games.

According to Rod Cousens, Managing Director of Activision: "We have been in discussions with budget labels for the last 12 months over the licensing of our products. It is only in the last month that we have had discussions in depth with Mastertronic. We are pleased to forge an association with Mastertronic and look forward to an on-going successful relationship."

This is the second attempt Activision has made into the budget market. The first was with Firebird with which they released a selection of titles. Activision has no plans at present to cut its link with Firebird. "There are a number of titles excluded from the agreement with Mastertronic," Cousens said.

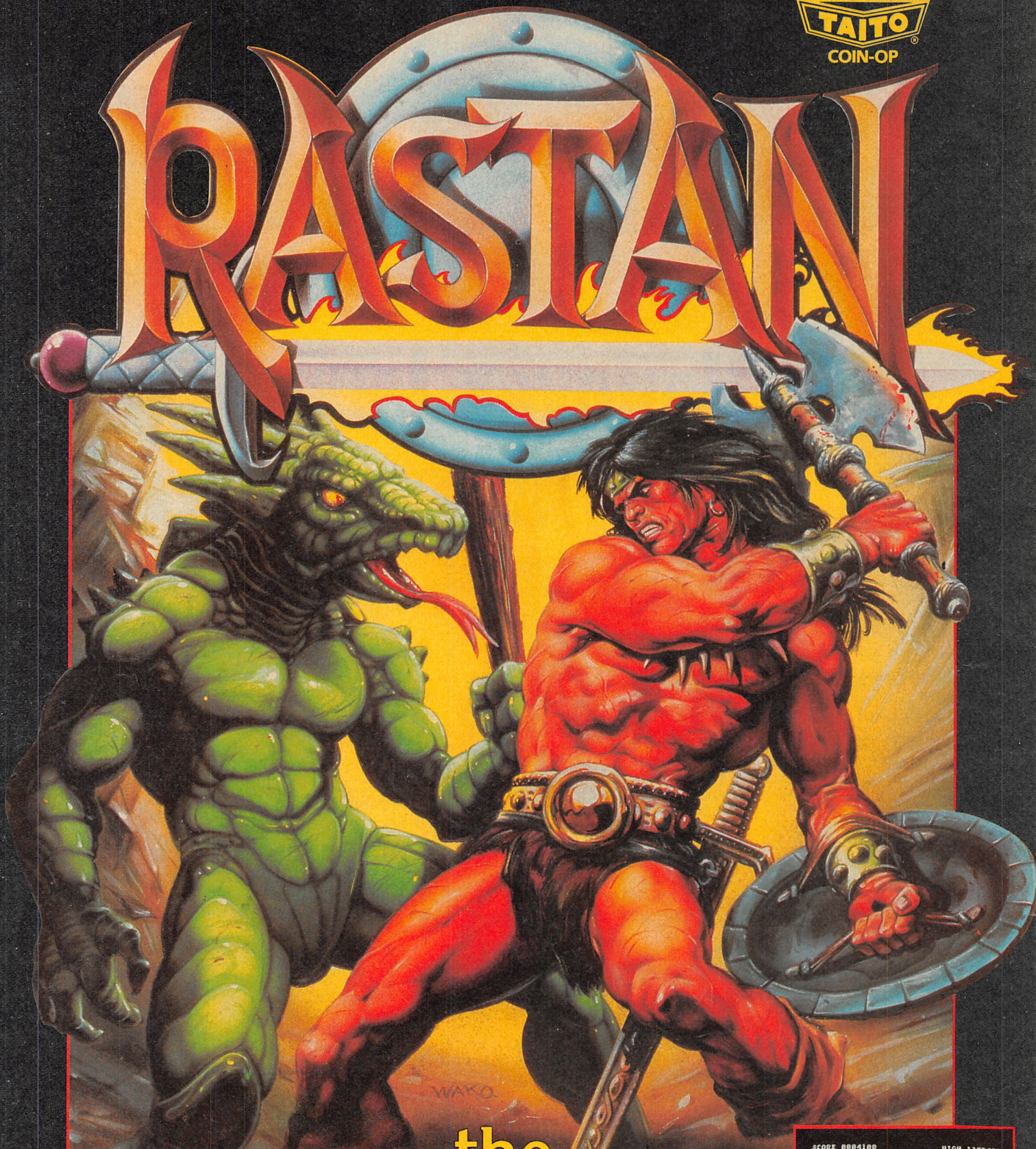
First products to be released on the Ricochet label will be *Ghostbusters, Eidolon* and *Ballblazer.*



Rod Cousens – in discussion with budget labels.

TAITO
COIN-OP

RASTAN

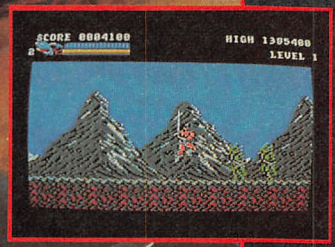


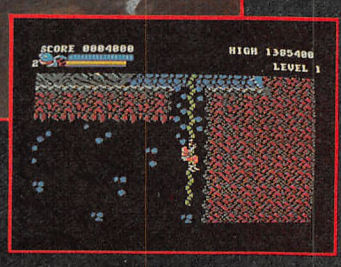
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EDITORIAL

It would appear that the computer industry is set for continued expansion as this week we report on the launch of a new range of Amiga computers.

Whether these, especially the A500, will be in direct competition with Amstrad's possible new 16-bit micro, one can only speculate, since both parties are keeping quiet on the matter.

The omen, however, is good for the computer industry – more competition, more products. As Christmas approaches, and at a time when critics are accusing the industry of dwindling, the evidence, as far as we are concerned, seems to the contrary.

Our optimism is also reflected in the move of next year's PCW Show to Earl's Court Exhibition Centre.

The organisers obviously believe that an expanding industry now requires a bigger and better event, where the diverse interests of the consumer can be catered for accordingly.

Consequently, separate categories have been introduced, so that business, leisure and games' users will get the maximum benefit out of the show.

One games company likely to be present at next year's show is Electronic Arts, the subject of this week's news analysis.

What does Electronic Arts' direct distribution mean for the company in Britain? Does this 'cutting out the middleman' actually benefit the consumer in any way or does it simply increase profits for the software company?

Electronic Arts is also well known for its various affiliated labels and licensing agreements. But it is not alone in this field as other software houses have had their fingers in these pies for quite some time now.

One such company is Mastertronic, which this week surprised everybody by engaging in a licensing deal with Activision. This will be Activision's second digression into the budget market, an indication perhaps that full-price software houses are seeking more to infiltrate the budget business which is gaining increasing percentages of the market place.

Nikki Carvey

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Deputy Editor John Brissenden
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Classified Manager Susannah King
Classified Executives Robert Cole, Tim Owen
Managing Editor Brendon Gore
Publisher Trish Phillips
Group Publisher Paul Coster
Chief Executive Richard Hease

Financial Director Brendan McGrath
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Go! sign exclusive label



Go! Director Tim Chaney with Capcom's U.S. President George Nakayama.

US GOLD offshoot label Go! has secured an exclusive licencing agreement with Japanese arcade manufacturers Capcom. Famed for the *Commando* and *Ghosts and Goblins* arcade releases, 10 new Capcom products will be released over the next 15 months by Go!. The initial four games to be released during the first half of 1988 will be *Street Fighter, 1943* - the follow up to *1942 - Black Tigers* and *Tiger Road.*

Tim Chaney, Director of Go! is very excited about the success of this new joint venture. "We expect revenues to reach £2 million," enthused Chaney. "The size of this deal really does put the size of Go! and its affiliated companies into true perspective."

Although Go! is an offshoot of US Gold, Chaney says that Go! will be competing with US Gold in the same way that Imagine competes with Ocean. George Nakayama, President of Capcom USA said, "This is a big deal for Capcom because the European market is growing rapidly and tying up with the largest publisher is a big agreement for us."

Capcom sales in 1983 were $1.1 million. This year sales are projected to reach $71.4 million.

The Capcom arrangement is not the only deal Go! has struck up recently. German software publisher Rainbow Arts has signed a deal for 15 months which gives Go! a minimum of 12 new titles on the C64, Atari ST, Amiga and Amstrad CPC.

Rainbow also plans at least six PC products. The first release is the Gauntlet clone, *Garrison,* which will be followed by *Bad Cat, Jinks* and *Around The World In 80 Days.*

Tim Chaney said, "The Rainbow Arts product is very impressive. The 16-bit titles are very strong and will form an important part of our business during 1988."

Back in the U.S.S.R.

A NEW campaign aiming to highlight the plight of Soviet computer programmers who wish to leave the Soviet Union has been launched.

Computer programmers across the world are being asked to show their solidarity in a unified effort to help free those being detained in the Soviet Union.

A refusenik is a Soviet citizen who has applied for an emigration visa and has had the application refused by the Soviet authorities. Many who have applied to leave have found themselves losing their jobs, face threats and physical assault and also be denied access to laboratories and research libraries.

Dr Jonathan Sutton, campaign officer of Scientists For The Release of Soviet Refuseniks (SRSR), says that, despite the general aura of glasnost, "the overall numbers of refuseniks being allowed to emigrate has not shown any significant increase in the last few months."

There are 241 refuseniks whose cases are being pursued by the SRSR; of those more than 50 are computer scientists and technicians.

According to the SRSR, those who apply to emigrate from the Soviet Union are subject to State persecution with some people waiting for up to 17 years to leave the country and others forced into prisons.

When *Popular Computing Weekly* asked the Soviet Embassy how computer programmers who wish to leave the U.S.S.R. are treated, we received the answer, "No comment". If you want more information about how you can get involved and help free those being detained, write to Dr Jonathan Sutton, Campaign Officer, Scientists for the Release of Soviet Refuseniks, 4a New College Parade, London NW3 5EP.

Hewson recruitments



Andrew Hewson - elusive as to art future plans.

PROJECT 4 is the latest venture from Andrew Hewson. While it is still at the concept stage, he has evolved a novel way of recruiting the programming team by cassette.

"The average recruitment advertisement would not convey the full excitement of the project and since we were producing cassettes left, right and centre, the obvious thing was to produce it on cassette," Hewson explains.

Laid over a backing track of the sound effects from some of previous Hewson games, the cassette describes the type of people wanted, including a team leader, two programmers - permanent, full-time - graphic artists and musicians - freelance.

Hewson stresses the importance of the team leader's role, saying: "They have to have a vision of what I am attempting to create. It will be on their shoulders to bring the concept into fruition."

He added that since the project will be over five formats, he needs a team which would be able to create equally proficient games on all versions.

Elusive about his underlying plans for the project, Hewson would only describe the game as, "technically sophisticated but one you can pick up and play straightaway."

Further he would only concede that it was "more designed for the youth market."

Curiouser and curiouser. Interested parties should telephone 0235 832939 - 24 hours - for an audio cassette, or send a CV and samples of best work to Hewson Consultants Ltd, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RX.

Epson and Amstrad's no-score draw

EPSON has dropped its law suit against Amstrad. The lawsuit was over Amstrad's use of the initials LQ on its range of printers. Epson was claiming that for the last four years it had been producing printers with the initials LQ and that the letters were connected with the Epson brand.

An understanding has now been reached by both companies and Amstrad and Epson will be having new printers using the initials LQ.

A spokesperson from Amstrad said: "We recognise that the printer designation LQ has been used previously, is presently used and will in future be used on a range of Epson letter quality printers."

Amstrad believe that because the products are aimed at different markets, there will not be any confusion over the products.

Edward Huggins, corporate communications manager of Epson said: "There is confusion amongst dealers and end-users asking if we're making printers for Amstrad. A lot of people thought we had linked up with them, there is no link-up."

Huggins was rather adamant about Amstrad's intention to carry on calling their printers LQ.

"We certainly wouldn't use DMP. Amstrad have jumped onto our territory and it's been causing confusion."

With Amstrad claiming there is no confusion and Epson saying there is, it will be down to the consumer to decide which printer is suitable for their needs.

Either way, it looks likely that both Amstrad and Epson have benefited more than anyone else from the publicity with an increased awareness in their products, both within and out of the industry that has already made them both very successful.

New budget range by Firebird

A NEW budget range of discs has been launched by Firebird for the Amstrad, Atari ST and C64. For the moment, the games will be taken from the existing range of budget software, with titles such as *Trust, Ninja Master* and *Freak Factory.*

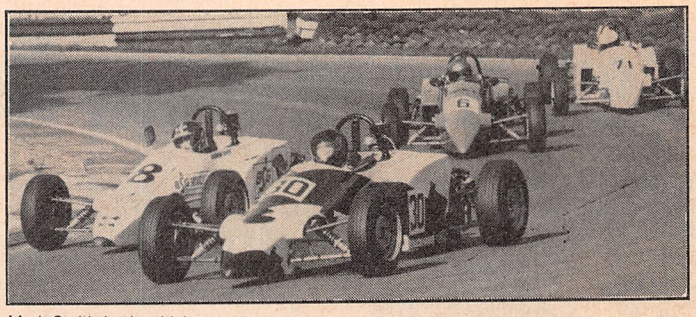
Leah Wright, Firebird public relations manager for the budget range, is not sure whether this will change in the future, saying: "We are not 100 per cent sure about initiating new titles, but there are no plans for one at the moment."

For Amstrad and C64 users, the discs offer two games instead of the usual one. There will be eight discs for the Amstrad costing £6.99 each and 10 for the C64 at £3.99 each.

Wright added that Firebird is particularly proud of its budget discs for the Atari ST, commenting: "Not many software houses offer this and we have enhanced the graphics and put in more levels."

Titles soon to be released on the Atari ST include *Harvey Headbanger, Warhawk* and *I-Ball,* priced at £9.95.

Virgin racers



Mark Smith in the driving seat.

VIRGIN GAMES has announced the sponsoring of a Formula First racing driver.

The driver, Mark Smith, is an author of interactive adventure books and has had several of his books made into computer games.

Virgin Games has produced *Falcon, the Renegade Lord,* and will be releasing a new Mark Smith title *Duelmaster, Challenge of the Magi* early next year.

Virgin will be sponsoring Smith for the forthcoming Top Gear Formula First series to be held over five rounds at Brands Hatch.

Paul Latham, general manager of Virgin, says: "He was looking for sponsorship and persuaded us to sponsor him.

"We are very much looking forward to seeing the distinctive Virgin Games logo flash round the track."

When Smokey sings

AFTER many months of waiting, Ocean has finally set a release date for *Platoon,* the computer game of the smash-hit film. The game will be available in all formats in the shops on January 25, 1988.

The film, a winner of four Oscars, including the prestigious Best Picture award and also three Golden Globes, is the story of young, inexperienced people fighting in the Vietnam war.

The computer game places the player in the role of a young recruit in a platoon of five. The player must overcome the hostilities of the different environments presented. There are six sections in the game, each presenting a problem to overcome.

Gary Bracey, software manager of Ocean, expects the game to be a hit. "We have put a great deal of effort into the gameplay to make the game exciting."

Ocean also has a coup for *Platoon.* When the video is released in January, there will be a trailer for the computer game. "This is the first time a licence has been publicised in this way. We are having a joint publicity campaign with RCA/Columbia, which is releasing the video," Bracey says.

In return for the trailer on the video, Ocean will be having an advertisment for the video during the loading screen of the game. The video and computer game are part of a minimum £500,000 marketing budget.

Early purchasers of the game will find the package includes the classic soul song, *Tracks of My Tears* by Smokey Robinson, a song featured in the sound track of the film.

New kit for ST

AN UPGRADE kit for the Atari ST is available from Evesham Micros. Costing £59, it will permit owners of the Atari 520 ST FM to expand its memory to 1Mb. In addition, an installation service is provided for £15.

For those wanting a 520 ST FM which is already upgraded, Evesham is supplying them for £338, although it has a different disc drive from the Atari 1Mb computer. Evesham managing director, Richard Austin says: "We believe that the upgrade kit represents the best possible option for people who already own a 520 ST FM.

"We even urge those on the verge of buying their first ST FM to consider our product instead of buying the full 1Mb version," he continued.

Bob Gleadow, managing director of Atari (U.K.) Ltd, comments: "Whatever is good for the end-user is O.K. with me."

Italy gets on-line

BRITISH technology is expanding overseas as Telemap becomes a major shareholder in a new Italian company, LogOn Technology SRL.

Lasernet 800, the company's first on-line service, offers a similar range of features to Micronet. Operated by the Italian state telecommunications company, SIP, it is based on Italy's national videotex system, Videotel.

Mike Brown, Telemap technical director and vice-chairman of LogOn Technology, is enthusiastic about the deal, saying: "The scene is set in Italy for a dramatic expansion in the use of data communications systems both in the business and residential sectors. The new company promises rapidly to become the most successful supplier of videotex technology in Italy and the leading service provider to the home microcomputer user, as well as a valuable partner for Telemap in the international market."

Assisting Lasernet 800 on its rapid road to success is a substantial promotional campaign in the Italian computer press.

In addition, SIP and various hardware manufacturers, including Commodore, are distributing free or low cost modems to encourage the public to become part of the new system.

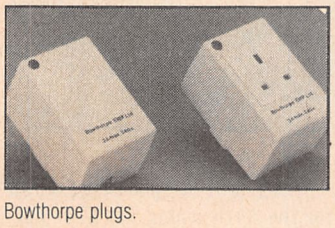
The agreement between Telemap and LogOn Technology will allow the new company to access various Telemap products, including 'Shades', the leading U.K. multi-user game.

Signor Simone Majocci, managing director of LogOn Technology, says: "Through the relationship with Telemap, LogOn Technology will have access to five years of expertise in videotex and a range of successful products.

"Combined with our local knowledge and experience, that puts the new company in an unrivalled position in the Italian videotex market."

Telemap can be contacted on 01-278 3195.

New range from Bowthorpe



Bowthorpe plugs.

A NEW range of filter plugs and adaptors has been introduced by Bowthorpe EMP. Designed to protect computers against mains-borne surges and RF interference, the filter plugs and adaptors are available in 3, 7 and 13-amp ratings.

Fitted with sleeved pins, which complies with the latest safety regulations, they also have a neon light which indicates to the user when the power is on and if the equipment is faulty.

Prices vary according to the model and are inclusive of VAT, package and posting.

The 3-amp filter plug costs £21.10 and the adaptor £24.55. The 7-amp filter plug is £24.92 and the adaptor £28.37. The 13-amp filter plug is £32.78 and the adaptor £36.23.

Further information from Bowthorpe EMP Ltd, Stevenson Road, Brighton, East Sussex BN2 2DF.

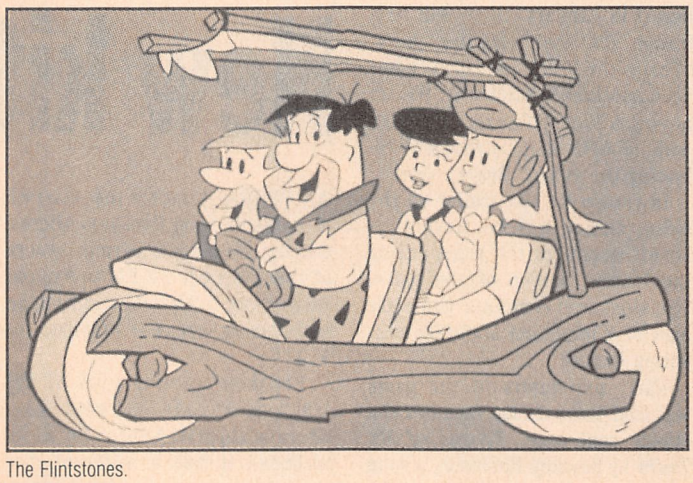
Freddy's revenge

GRAND Slam Entertainment has announced plans to release a new Flintstones computer game, following a previous release based on the life and times of the prehistoric Fred Flintstone.

At present, plans are at the storyboard stage. One idea being considered is based around the 'Battles Of The Sexes', with Wilma trying to persuade Fred he should really work in the house rather than go to the bowling alley.

An exceptional feature planned for the game is that the personality of the character will change in the manner in which you complete the game.

The player will be able to choose between Fred or Barney, though not Wilma.



The Flintstones.

Grand Slam will say nothing about the game other than to wait and see. So wait and see we must.

New logo

PENDOWN, Logotron's word processing software for children, now has extra files and utilities as standard.

These include two font files of graphic characters, a set of larger and lower case infant letters, sample adventure games written using Adventure Writer and topic-specific help files.

The graphic characters will enable you to create various compositions, including insect motifs and runic designs. Since PenPlus has a double strike facility you can also now have a more dense print.

Money is one of the sample adventure games. The player is given money to shop for sweets and comics with and then has to work out how to pay for them.

For current owners of *PenDown, Extra 1* and *2* is available separately at £9.00.

Alternatively, from the beginning of December you can buy the *PenDown* package including Extra 1 and 2, for £34. For any further information, contact Lototron Ltd on (0223) 323656.

ST music

A NEW musical package for the Atari ST is to be launched by Tigress Designs. *Patchman 32* is an editing package for the Roland MT32 and is aimed at the semi-professional musician who uses a 4/8-track machine on which to record music.

Patchman 32 has many features including 64 user voices, 128 preset voices, 30 drum voices, 128 patch memories and 30 drum memories. Despite the high sophistication of the product, Tigress say the product is easy to use, as most features require only pointing and clicking with a mouse.

Patchman 32 costs £85.95 and is available initially direct from Tigress Designs Ltd, 25 Burmester Road, London SW17 0JL. Tel: 01-946 7870.

On-line appeal a great success

THIS year's Children in Need appeal excelled itself with donations exceeding £13 million. More than £50,000 was raised by the Micronet, Prestel and ITEC link up, whereby the public took part in an on-line auction, questioned celebrities and contributed to the appeal.

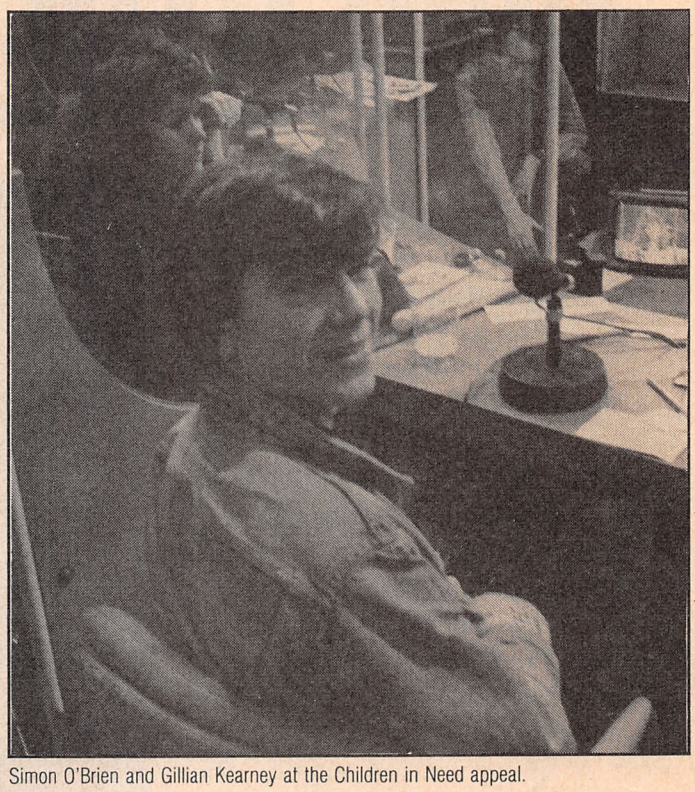
Micronet had organised the whole on-line side of the appeal and also conducted the celebrity interviews and auction. Prestel assisted with the auction but mainly dealt with pledges, while the ITEC representative co-ordinated the ITECs involved, which was over 50. One ITEC even made £5000 on its own.

Witnessing the organised chaos of the event, was *Popular Computing Weekly*. We spoke to Micronet public relations man David Rosenbaum about what the appeal entailed. "Preparations have gone on since September," he said. "We have eight terminals here, of which four are BBC micros, assorted modems and printers and a team of 13 people, including ITEC and Prestel representatives."

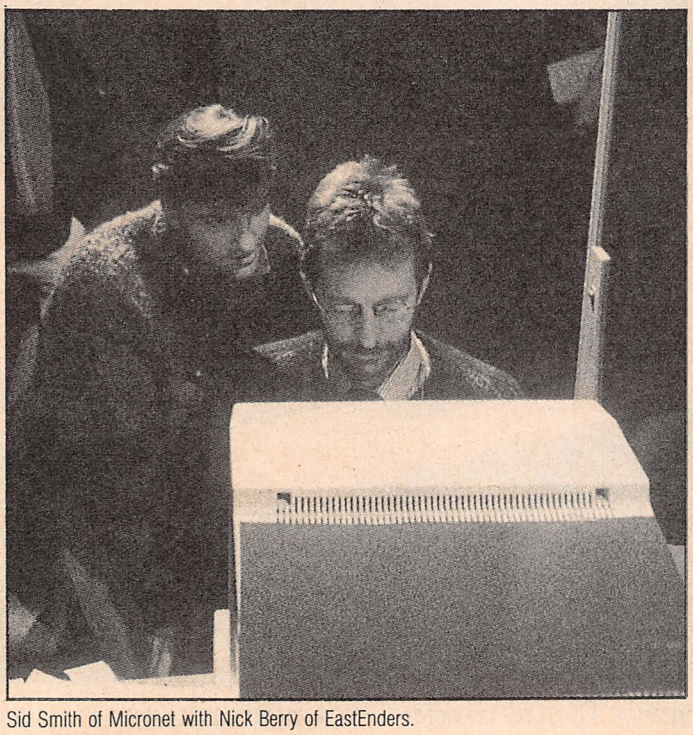
Despite preparations so far in advance, the team was not prepared for the amazing public participation on the night. A special program had been written to process the auction bids, but it was all just too much.

Rosenbaum explained: "The response was so huge that the systems could not cope and we became backlogged. For the auction, consisting of 60 items, we had more than 5,000 bids, which is incredible."

The minor technical problems did not hold back the money, however, and several items sold for considerably more than cost value. An Atari ST went for £500, a Z88 for £285, some *Wogan* tickets for £50, a Psion Organiser for £120, and a duvet – to keep you and your computer warm through winter – for £110.



Simon O'Brien and Gillian Kearney at the Children in Need appeal.



Sid Smith of Micronet with Nick Berry of EastEnders.

It was at the sight of a famous face that the money really poured in. One viewer wanted to see Joanna Lumley eat a Cadbury's Flake, while a Micronet user offered £100 to stop Des O'Connor singing.

It was heartening that so many celebrities supported the appeal, including Nigel Havers, Gloria Hunniford and Rowan Atkinson. Some of them even had a word or two in *Popular Computing Weekly's* ear.

EastEnder, Nick Berry, revealed his most embarrassing moment was having sung his No. 1 record, *Every Loser Wins*. He has no plans to release a follow-up.

Ex-Brooksider, Simon O'Brien (Damon Grant for the uninitiated) was also there doing his bit for charity. His plans for the immediate future include presenting Night Network and playing in his first pantomime, *Snow White*, as Jason, the Queen's evil henchman.

Frank 'It made me feel sad 'arry' Bruno was the gentle giant as ever. He is still hoping to fight Tyson and at the moment is training three hours a day to keep in trim.

The rest of the time is just spent doing the rounds of press and television.

Dr Who, alias Sylvester McCoy, made a dashed visit. Currently performing in the musical, *The Pied Piper* at the National Theatre, he will be filming another series of *Dr Who* next March. Without Bonnie Langford, you will be sad to hear.

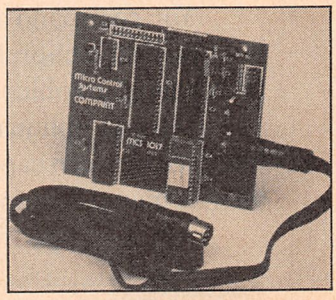
All in all, everyone just had a good time and millions were raised in the process. Even the BBC sandwiches were not that bad.

Printer link-up for Commodore users

OWNERS of Commodore 64 and 128 computers can now use Canon and Epson printers as Micro Controls System (MCS) has introduced an 8K version of its Comprint buffered interface.

The device is installed easily by plugging the Comprint circuit board inside the printer and then connecting the cable to the serial port of the computer. That done, the Comprint unit makes the printer emulate a Commodore system, the result of being designed round a code translator. it also permits access to all other features offered on Epson and Canon printers.

The 8K Comprint is aimed at those who wish to get more from a Commodore. It costs £34.99 for the Epson version and £44.99 for the Canon. Accompanying the launch of the unit is the news that the 2K versions have been reduced to £29.99 and £39.99.



The Comprint unit.

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Amiga 500 is here.

With a mind-blowing array of features and capabilities.

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"...a miracle of compression..." writes *Popular Computing Weekly** "...it all adds up to a formidable system which is clearly better than anything else at the price."

This elegant little machine takes family computing into new dimensions of creativity, excitement and productivity.

It outruns and outguns office PCs as a business multi-tasker, performing a deskful of different jobs simultaneously, at over 7 million steps per second in realtime.

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AMAZING SCIENCE FACT.

Amiga is used by Disney, Universal and other Hollywood studios for its dazzling 3D graphics manipulation and animation powers.

A sophisticated high-speed graphics processor called a blitter chip transforms images in realtime.

You can paint the screen with more than 4,000 colours. Create and modify designs and effects as you like, with pin-sharp resolution.

You command an almost limitless workshopful of stunning professional graphics capabilities.

With an optional Genlock interface, you can capture images off videotape. Manipulate and mix them with graphics. Then re-transfer them to videotape!

This means you can produce spectacular special effects like those created by Amiga computers for Channel 4's *Chart Show* and the American TV science fiction series *Amazing Stories.*

YOU AIN'T HEARD NOTHING YET!

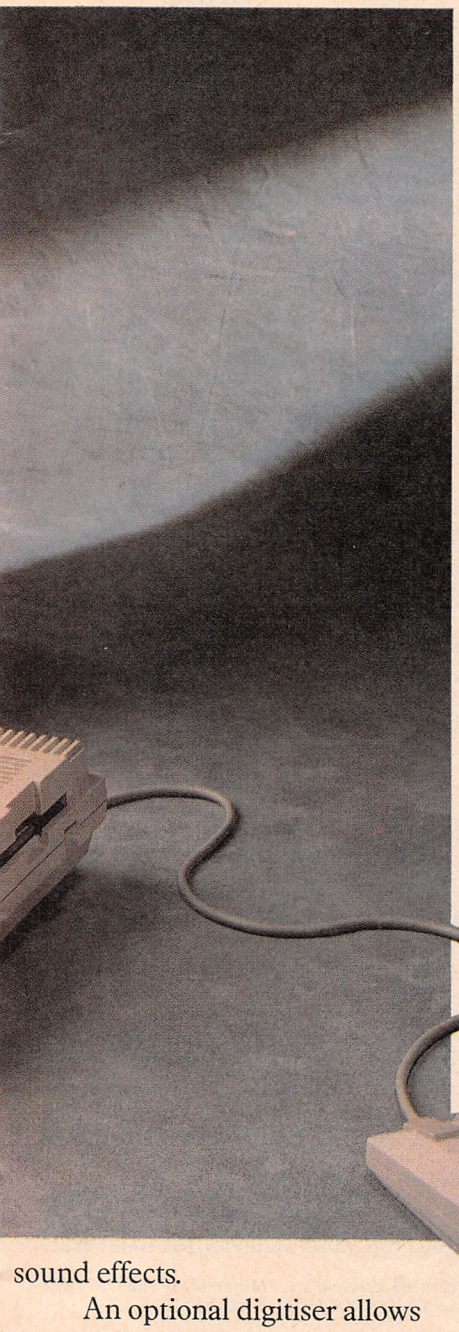
Concealed within the sleek Amiga shape, there is also a pro-quality sound synthesiser and four-track stereo sound system.

Driven by another powerful and unique custom chip, it can synthesise musical instruments and

* Includes DeluxePaint from Electronic Arts worth £79 + VAT! (Excludes monitor or TV modulator.)

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sound effects.

An optional digitiser allows you to take onboard real sounds. Mix and modify the two. Translate your compositions from keyboard to sheet music. Play them back through the monitor's speaker or your hi-fi.

Your Amiga can also synthesise the human voice.

It can speak back anything you care to write on the keyboard.

So this is one computer that can not only word process with faultless professionalism, and incorporate superlative graphics into the text, it can also read the text back to you aloud.

GAMESMANSHIP AND WORKMANSHIP!

The new Amiga 500, in fact, dumbfounds its competitors in every way.

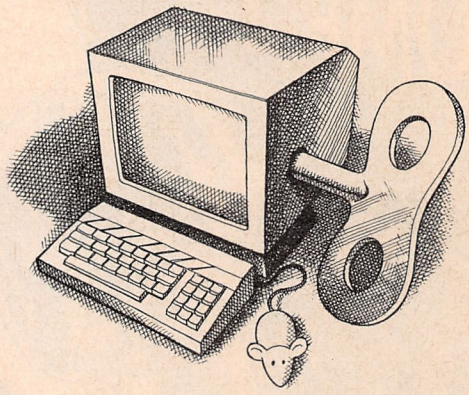
Graphics, stereo sound, multi windowing, multi screens, 512K to 1Mb RAM (expandable by an incredible 8 further megabytes externally**), 3½" internal disk drive with 880K of mass memory, 4 unique dedicated chips plus the 16/32-bit power and 7.14MHz speed of its central processor, communications and vast expansion potential all add up to a computer of immense professional capability.

Yet the same technology allows the Amiga 500 to play games so mind bending that only full-scale arcade machines have been able to play them until now.

AND AMIGA MEANS 'FRIEND'!

However many of the Amiga's extraordinary talents you find yourself using, they will all be beautifully simple and natural.

You will be totally at home in the friendly and effortless Amiga environment, where everything happens by windows, icons, mouse and pulldown menus.



And the Amiga 500 simplifies life in another way too.

There is now no comparable home computer. At any price.

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Try the astonishing new Amiga 500 at your nearest Commodore Amiga dealer.

And discover why *Personal Computer World*†, having tested the graphics performance of Amiga's latest and most powerful rival, concluded "...Amiga still reigns supreme..."

Commodore

* *Popular Computing Weekly*, 22-28 May 1987. † *Personal Computer World*, February 1987. ** *Subject to availability.*

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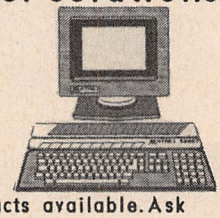
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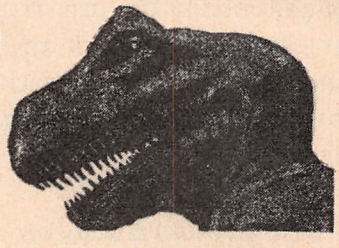
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DECEMBER

December 9-10
IBM's Strategic and Tactical Directions: 9370, PS/2, SAA Seminar
Sheraton Park Tower, 101 Knightsbridge
Details: PS/2 and the communications capability needed for SAA, examines the 9370 product, contrasting with mini-computers
Organiser: EMAP Conferences, 12 Bedford Row, London WC1R 4DU, 01-404 4844. Contact Tessa Dwan or Sarah Gladstone

December 12
Christmas ZX Microfair
New Horticultural Hall, London SW1
Details: Latest innovations for Sinclair users
Advanced tickets: £1.50 adults, £1 children. Tickets on the door: £2 adults, £1.50 children
Organiser: Mike Johnson, 01-801 9172

JANUARY

January 19-22 1988
The Which Computer? Show
The National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham
Details: Product launches, free seminars concerning computing issues in lay terms
Organiser: Cahners Exhibitions, Chatsworth House, 59 London Road, Twickenham TW1 3SZ, 01-891 5051

FEBRUARY

February 4-6 1988
The Amstrad Computer Show
The Great Hall, Alexandra Park, London
Details: Displays and demonstrations of all the latest hardware, software and peripherals for Amstrad computers
Organiser: Database Exhibitions, 061-456 8383
This event has been postponed from January 28-30 to the above date.

MARCH

March 18-20 1988
The Electron and BBC Micro User Show
UMIST, Manchester
Details: Displays and demonstrations of all the latest hardware, software and peripherals for Acorn computers
Organiser: Database Exhibitions, 061-456 8383

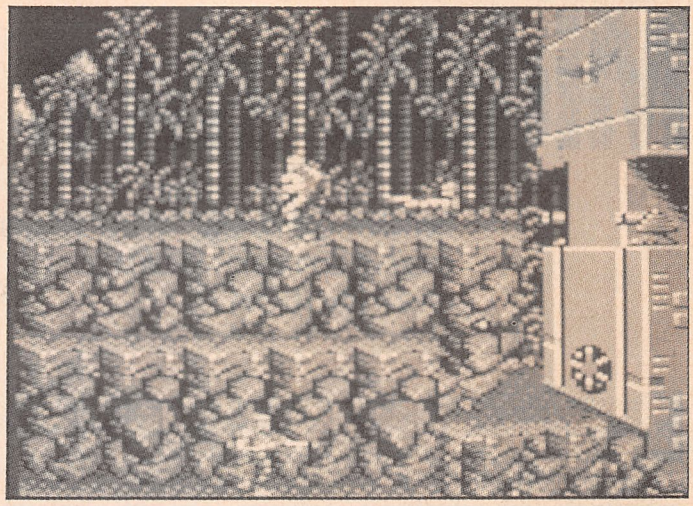
Prices, dates and venues of shows can vary, and you are therefore strongly advised to check with the show organiser before attending. We cannot accept responsibility for any alterations to show arrangements.

CHARTS

Top Twenty

1	(15)	Combat School	Ocean
2	(1)	Grand Prix Simulator	Code Masters
3	(3)	Solid Gold	US Gold
4	(27)	Live Ammo	Ocean
5	(7)	Soccer Boss	Alternative
6	(6)	Star Wars	Domark
7	(2)	Game Set Match	Ocean
8	(NE)	Match Day 2	Ocean
9	(4)	Pro Ski Simulation	Code Masters
10	(33)	Gary Lineker's Superstar Soccer	Gremlin Graphics
11	(8)	Renegade	Imagine
12	(5)	Joe Blade	Players
13	(10)	BMX Simulator	Code Masters
14	(NE)	Buggy Boy	Elite
15	(11)	Fruit Machine Simulator	Code Masters
16	(9)	Dizzy	Code Masters
17	(17)	Back To The Future	Firebird
18	(20)	Indiana Jones	US Gold
19	(19)	10 Pack	Gremlin Graphics
20	(18)	Thundercats	Elite

All figures compiled by Gallup



SOFTWARE HOTLINES

Christmas fever is starting to grip the industry. High flying executives are perspiring as products begin to overrun schedules and programmers are being heated over hot coals for not producing the goods on time.

The big question is, which of the titles mooted for a December release will actually arrive on time?

US Gold's *Gauntlet 2* and *Outrun* are both running tight but you can expect a virtual tidal wave from **Ocean.** *Gryzor, Phantom Club* and *Madballs* all have December 3 release dates. The following week *Basket Master* on the **Imagine** label, *Wizball* ST and PC, *Rastan* and *Slapfight* ST are due in the shops.

Gryzor, on the Amstrad CPC, is pictured at the top of the column. Negotiate the electric force field and blow away wave after wave of fanatical guerrillas as you progress towards the enemy base. Based on the **Konami** coin-op it should be one to watch out for.

Phantom Club also sounds interesting. Programmed by 'The Duke', the Hungarian who wrote *Movie,* it is a 3-D strategy game. It involves saving the reputations of various superheroes who have succumbed to the temptations of life.

What you won't see until after the festivities have subsided are *Platoon* on anything, and *Eco* on the ST.

Robtek is having something of a blitz on the 16-bit market at the moment, with *Ball Raider* on the Amiga out now at £19.95, and *Dizzy Wizard* due next week at the same price.

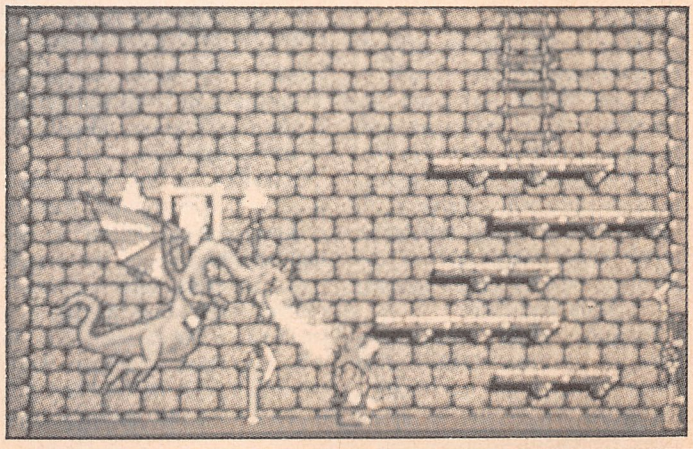
At the £9.95 level and on the Amiga, *Quasimodo* and *Championship Backgammon* are now available, with *Championship Draughts, Jigsaw Mania, Rocky* and *Brainstorm* promised for December 10.

The people who brought you *Hunt For Red October,* **Argus Press Software,** will be turning back the clock with their next release, *Pacland.* Whatever next? We have had *Breakout* variants, so the next step has got to be *The Return of Pong!*

The picture at the bottom of the column is *Blamp Lamp,* mentioned last week. Having seen some more screens I can confirm that this looks very impressive.

Stop press, last minute news. *Gauntlet 2* has been released on the Spectrum and Amstrad.

Duncan Evans



Middle men re-assessed

Nikki Carvey investigates to what extent the consumer gains or suffers from direct distribution.

Electronic Arts, the major U.S. Software House, is well-known for its direct distribution methods. This policy is as unique in the consumer software industry. Electronic Arts claims direct distribution is also the best policy. But who benefits from direct selling?

Electronic Arts believes it needs distribution strength to succeed in the world of fast turn-over consumer software. In the U.S., it has already proved that this system works, with more than half its total sales volume going direct to retailers.

The same system is now operating in Britain. Despite the obvious differences in the U.S. and U.K. markets, spokesperson for Electronic Arts, Lesley Mansford, is confident that direct distribution will work equally well over here. "We've spent much time and effort researching into the feasibility of it over here. There is no reason why it should not work," she said.

Richard Tidsall of Centresoft, one of the U.K.'s biggest distribution companies, did not agree with her. "It is a backward step," he commented." "Direct supplies were quite common in the early days of the industry but slowly disappeared as software companies found it better to use a separate distributor."

The crux of the matter is essentially, 'Is it or isn't it?', with Electronic Arts arguing that direct distribution is better for all concerned, and the distributors maintaining that their service is superior.

"The distributor is only interested in shipping the stuff out and not what the stuff is," explained Lesley Mansford. "By selling our own products, Electronic Arts can control the situation, knowing that each product will receive sufficient attention. It also enables us to get closer feedback from the retailers and have a more personal relationship with them."

Richard Tidsall would have none of it. "The retailers find direct supplies an inconvenient imposition. They have to spend more time on accounts and deal with more people. They would rather spend the time on selling."

David Ward, chairman of Ocean Software, was also inclined towards this opinion, as far as individual retailers were concerned. "Distributors act as wholesalers giving them a choice of products rather than having to deal with 40 or 50 software companies. In addition, it enables them to buy smaller quantities than if buying from the manufacturer."

But if direct distribution is so much better than involving a middle man, the obvious question is why Tidsall's issue is predictable. "Because they are happy with the role of the distributor, who pushes the product for them. Our service is just as good as anything offered by direct distribution."



John Forrest, Director of European Distribution for Electronic Arts – "The consumer benefits from direct distribution because it offers them a better range of products."

Mansford, on the other hand, believes that distributors currently monopolise the industry in Britain and because of the muscle they can exert, software houses cannot afford to take the risk. "If a small house like Palace decided to sell direct, they would put themselves in a precarious position. If it does not work, they cannot go back to the distributor and say, 'Can I come back?'"

It is the success of Electronic Arts' distribution network that has led to the growth of its affiliate labels – independent software houses who have their products distributed and marketed under the E.A. banner. In the U.K. it currently has three affiliates; Nexus, CRL and Martech.

Simon Harvey, spokesman for Martech, explained why he thought Martech signed with Electronic Arts. "One contributory aspect of the Martech/Electronic Arts deal was that E.A. gives retailers solid support at the point of sale, providing them with posters and other merchandise. Because it concentrates on less products, they can sell more effectively. For example, if you have got to sell 27 companies' games, all in the same margin, your product may get lost when sold by distributors."

David Ward, however, thought that too much emphasis was placed on the argument about distribution, saying, "The method of distribution is unimportant since you can only shift what the public wants. It is all a question of supply and demand."

Since direct distribution effectively cuts out the middle man, the implication is that the consumer will benefit along with the retailer and software house. Not so. Mansford, however, was adamant that the consumer does not lose out.

"We produce high quality products each time. Our games tend to appeal more to older people who are more interested in thinking games rather than shoot-'em-ups. Consequently, the consumer does not get easily bored playing the game and so the product has an extended life."

Simon Harvey supported her view stating, "It is false to suggest that a company who distributes directly should pass on savings to the consumer because they still incur the same costs, such as shipping products in and out, administration etc. They go through identical functions to the distributor, they just have different names."

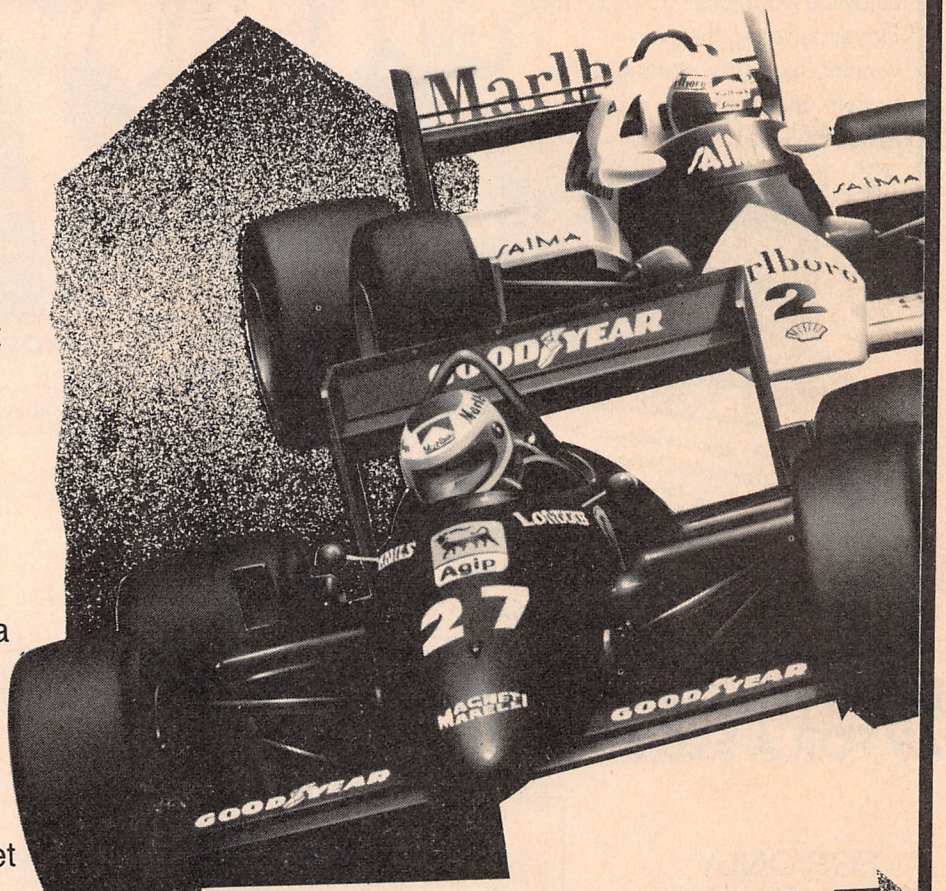
Richard Tidsall did concede that consumers might be slightly affected by direct selling, through the inconvenience of not being able to purchase the product from certain chainstores who only deal with a single supplier. Boots, for example, are supplied by CentreSoft and since Electronic Arts does not sell its products to CentreSoft, the public cannot buy its games in Boots. Electronic Arts backs up its products with a merchandising service. This is one aspect of direct selling that is appealing more to stores, especially big ones like Smiths. According to David Ward, such stores are: "Moving away from central buying towards a merchandised service".

Whether this means that more companies will go into distributing for themselves has yet to be seen. Richard Tidsall, for one, certainly does not think so. At the end of the day, direct distribution appears to benefit the software manufacturers, while the retailers find a distributor more convenient. In both instances, consumers are left out in the financial cold. □

XMAS Nº1?

Grand Prix Simulator is one of the sales success stories of this year. The Amstrad version was launched first and has spent 20 weeks at the top. This was followed by the Spectrum version which entered the chart at number one. Six weeks later it is still there. Now there is the Commodore 64 version which has the potential to repeat the story.

Grand Prix Simulator is endorsed by Johnny Dumfries who drove for the Lotus Formula 1 team in 1986 and is driving for the Jaguar world sportscar championship team next year. 'The game has a striking resemblance to Grand Prix driving in that the only way to get a fast lap time is to be very smooth and accurate. Being heavy handed or jerky may look spectacular but it slows you down.'



Code Masters

PRESS RELEASE

For years the pop music industry has created different versions or mixes of the same tune. The 12" single version, the LP version, the disco mix etc. Code Masters have taken this concept and applied it to computer games to create the Code Masters Plus range.

The A side of the first cassette contains the game. This is to the high standard that the public expect of Code Masters products. Side B contains the expert version of the same game. This is so difficult as to be unplayable until the standard version is mastered. The challenge that this represents will considerably increase the life and addictive qualities of the game.

There is also a second cassette which contains two sides of alternative scenarios in which either version of the game can be played. This extends the game further still.

Launch titles are as follows:—

Super BMX Simulator on the C64 by Richard Darling. Containing over a year's worth of enhancements and improvements over the best selling BMX Simulator. This game incorporates artificial intelligence and an innovative four player option. There are fifteen different scenarios in which it can be played.

Jet Bike Simulator on the Amstrad CPC and Spectrum by the Oliver Twins. This brings the excitement of overhead view racing to water, with the added attraction of 24 different scenarios.

Code Master Plus will be packaged in double crystal library cases along with a mini poster and stickers. The first titles will be available at the beginning of December. At £4.99 they are excellent value and remain a pocket money purchase.

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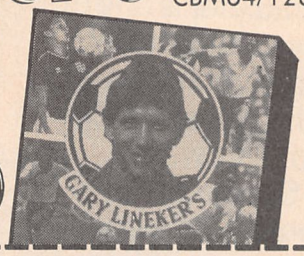
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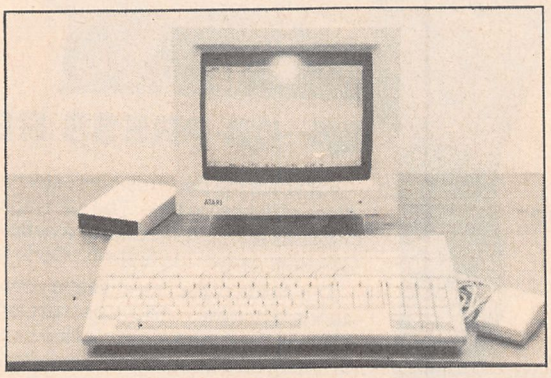
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The dead zone

As a regular reader of your magazine. I would like to enquire as to why there are no listings for programmes or articles featured on the Tatung Einstein computer. As most shops do not seem to stock much information for this machine, it would be very helpful, to myself and other users, to have a list of stockists where we could obtain software.

Could you also advise of any Einstein User Groups in my area, as I am interested in contacting other users.

I enjoy your magazine but I feel that it is neglecting some of the lesser known though often excellent micros, such as the Einstein, whose capabilities are often underestimated.

Philip Clews,
Crewe,
Cheshire.

The Einstein, as with many other 'dead' computers, still has a user base but the limitations of space mean we cannot promise to cover it. However, the following letter should be of some help.



"I don't think I'll break many records with that!"

Einstein a go-go

I am writing to thank your magazine for including the 1987 National Einstein Exhibition in the events column. The show which was held at the National Motorcyle Museum on Saturday 14th November was a tremendous success.

We were overwhelmed by the response with close on 2000 attending, the activity there would have had to be seen to be believed.

The turnout was so good that we have now arranged for another exhibition to take place on Saturday April 23rd, this will take place at the same venue, only in a larger hall.

To all those who attended, may I extend our warmest gratitude for making it such a great day. May I also take this opportunity to inform all Einstein owners of the existence of the U.K. Einstein User Group and I enclose the November edition of our magazine for your perusal.

Mike Smallman,
U.K. E.U.G.,
7 Sheepen Place,
Colchester CO3 3LD,
Essex.

Free advertising

Thank you very much for printing our letter informing your readers of our fanzine. However, in the next issue I read the letter entitled *"People in Glass Houses"* where somebody was complaining about our kind of letter.

This is the argument I have: how on earth are people supposed to know about us if we don't inform them? I remember some years back where magazines like *Popular* would print numerous letters each issue asking for the space to announce some club or bulletin board. We certainly cannot afford any advertising when each individual's wages at the end of each issue is 80p. Perhaps to avoid any further argument you could devote a page in the not-too-distant future to fanzines like ourselves.

While I'm on the 'soap box' please allow me to say that you can get copies of *'Silicon'*, issue two, from the address below by sending an S.A.E. and a cheque made out to Phillip Henry for 25p. There, that wasn't too painful was it?

'Silicon',
14 Rennie Crescent,
Cheddleton,
Nr. Leek,
Staffs,
ST13 7HD.

Not too painful, no, but enough is enough. Please, no more fanzine letters!

Don't stop

Let me say how pleasantly surprised. I am by the new format of *Popular Computing Weekly.* Your news coverage is second to none, especially being first about the Commodore Amiga virus which was of interest to myself and other Amiga owners.

What I am interested in, is more information about budget software for the Amiga. Is there any chance you might be doing a feature on budget games for the Amiga in a forthcoming issue?

Simon Taylor,
Burnley.

Er, what's that?

I should be obliged if you could explain in simple basic English what is 'virus' – is it a new strain of 'AIDS' or something? I am a simple sort of body who uses his computer for pleasure. I am not a whizz-kid so I fail to understand a word that has been written on the matter in the last two weeks of *Popular Computing.* Perhaps I should visit my doctor and get injected against it!!!

Norman Gardner,
Swanage,
Dorset.

I think your doctor would be as mystified as you are. Simply it is a program that corrupts discs and can move from one disc to another. There, happy?

Viral revenge

I have been following the reports of the 'virus' program affecting AMIGAs with some interest.

As a games software writer I have been personally ripped off by people who think it is their right to buy a program and then supply pirate (stolen) copies to all and sundry. The practice may only make a small dent in big company profits, but this overshadows the fact that the original writer is losing royalty payments on his work.

Now, suddenly, people are afraid of being infected by the 'virus'. Well, that isn't necessarily a bad thing; after all, if all your games and application software is obtained legally and you only use accredited copies, then there is little to worry about.

In my opinion if you become infected it's probably no more than you deserve! There is some truth in the remark 'IF YOU CAN'T WRITE IT YOURSELF THEN YOU SHOULD BE PREPARED TO PAY FOR IT'.

Ron Jeffs,
Taunton,
Somerset.

As I said in my editorial last week, the main problem with this argument is that the virus has spread on freeware discs more than any other single type of disc, with the most infected ones being no more than innocent enthusiasts.

Positive expansions

May I say how much I enjoy reading your new expanded games section especially since you are now using colour.

It would be nice if occasionally your software editor could include some reviews on new products for the MSX, since I own this machine, and *Popular* is about the only decent general interest computer mag. around.

Ian Jones,
Derby.

Me and my dog

In case anyone is interested, eight months ago I founded the *Atari ST and Commodore Amiga Mutual Friendship Society.* The Society has gone from strength to strength, all members benefitting from shared ideas with a common understanding and respect for one another's abilities.

After extensive promotion we now boast three members including me and my dog. There were five of us but there was this fight . . . I forget what it was about.

Our Society is completely without prejudice and there is no bias towards either of our adopted computers except for the Amiga. If anyone would like to join our Society they must send in their application in 1st Word format on a 3.5" disc. All applicants MUST own both an Atari ST AND a Commodore Amiga. No time-wasters please. Allow 28 days (+ 3 months quarantine) for us to process your disc as we are not geared up to deal with thousands of applications all at once.

Finally, I would just like to add that in the new year we shall be phasing out the more limited machine completely. And the dog.

Brian Cavers,
London.

We are sorry but *Popular Computing Weekly* cannot guarantee to reply to *all* letters requesting a personal answer. It helps us enormously if readers are prepared to have general queries answered on these pages, so, if possible, please do not send SAEs.

When the going gets tough... the Bard goes drinking

It was a close-run thing but *The Bard's Tale* is the shock winner of the Game of the Week award. For sheer addictiveness, gameplay and value it just edged out *Backlash*. *The Bard's Tale* is one of those pseudo role-playing games where the player creates and arms six characters who then go and save the world, or some similar laudable quest.

In this case the objective is a little closer to home. The city in which you reside, Skara Brae, has been taken over by an evil mage called Mangar and lawlessness is rife.

The object is to find Mangar and persuade him to release the city from his evil grasp. It is not an easy task, as there are two towers you cannot get into – not for a long time anyway. There are the catacombs under the Mad God's temple which are guarded by devotees of said Mad God and a few other tricky places.

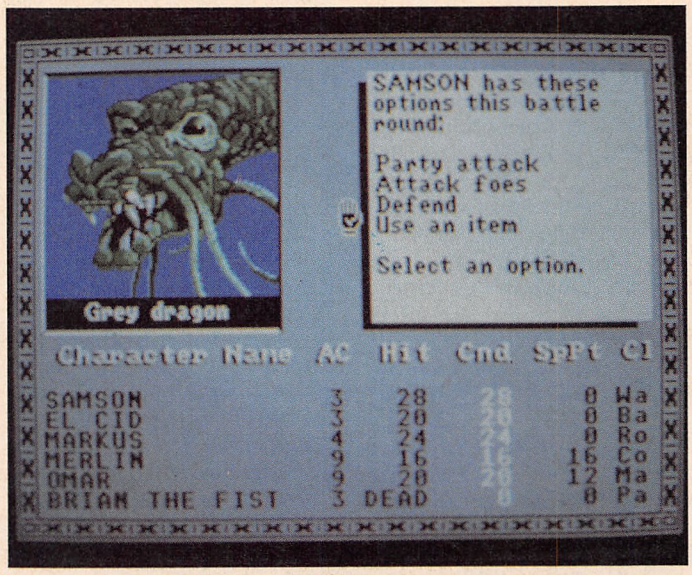
There are seven races to play as characters, humans, elves, dwarfs, hobbits, half-elves, half-orcs and gnomes. Each race usually is good at one particular profession – elves like magic, dwarfs are good fighters, hobbits are agile enough to make good thieves. The rest of the races can perform a mixture of everything, with varying degrees of success.

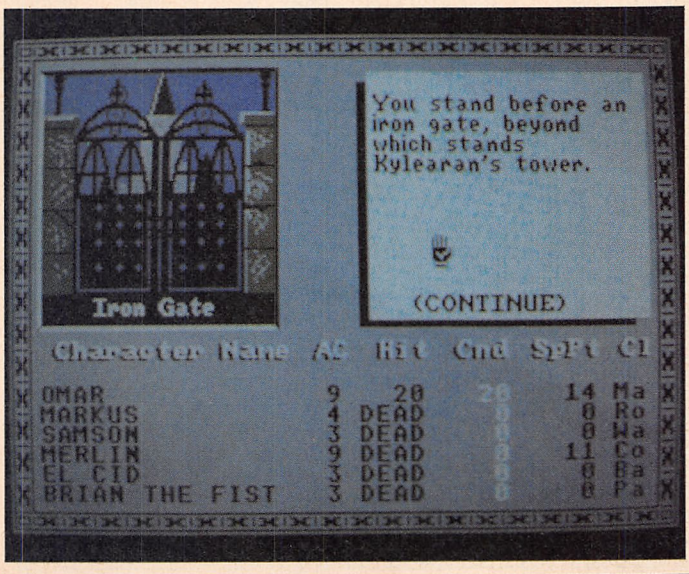
As usual, each character has attributes ranging from one to 18, which affect how well they perform. There are secondary attributes which have a more discernable effect on play, including condition which shows how many hit points you have left and spell points. Each spell you cast costs spell points, so when they have been exhausted it is back to wielding a staff for a time.

Now to the important stuff, character classes. The fighter types are under five categories – warriors, paladins, rogues, hunters and monks. Although warriors are the old standbys, I would recommend a hunter for any party because of his ability to strike a critical hit and kill opponents with one well-aimed blow.

Conjurers and magicians deal with the magic side of *The Bard's Tale* and after they reach third-level magic spells they can swap classes. Once they reach a certain level they can change into a Sorcerer or Wizard, which are fairly powerful. A character who has mastered all seven spell levels of all four magic user classes is known as an Archmage. You will need at least one of them eventually.

The final class, and the most distinctive, is the bard, a warrior who has turned his back on the profession and turned wandering minstrel. Bards have six tunes – though they must procure an instrument first to play them – which have a wide variety of effects. The trouble is that a bard can play only as many tunes as he has experience levels. Then it is down the tavern for a pint to refresh the vocal cords. Thus when the going gets tough, the bard goes drinking.





The screen display is split between the characters state at the bottom, information on the right and a 3-D view in the centre. The view of the city scrolls towards you in real-time, very fast as well. This view changes to a close-up of a monster whenever your party is assailed.

Initially it is a good idea to avoid parties of things like barbarians, unless you want Conan-fodder. While humans, and even gnomes and dwarfs roam the streets during the day, at night some of the more unpleasant creatures emerge. Giant spiders are ghastly but contender for top of the yucks must be the zombies. You are greeted by the sight of a decomposing monster chewing on the end of a human bone. Blood runs down the bone and drips off the end with truly gruesome animation. Most of the monsters are animated minimally, as well as being very well-drawn, so that dwarfs leer, gnomes twitch, dogs snarl, and zombies chew.

The graphics are excellent and give a real feel for the game. When you are jumped by four contingents of 99 black widow spiders in the castle you can feel the hairs on the back of your neck rise.

The game is well-structured so that to get into a more difficult location you have to conquer the deepest region of the beginners' dungeon. So it continues all the way through.

When you have earned sufficient experience points you can visit the local review board for an increase in level and hit points – and spell points if applicable. The trouble is that you are not told where it is but I can assure you it is not too far away. The first dungeon is easy enough to find, provided you like wine.

It will take a long time to finish *The Bard's Tale*. I have not come close, despite playing the Amiga version for three months.

If you are looking for a real challenge, a real fantasy quest, and a brilliant game to boot, it does not get any better than this.

Reviewer Duncan Evans **Program** *The Bard's Tale* **Micro** Atari ST (C64/Amiga) **Price** £24.95 **Supplier** Electronic Arts, 11/49 Station Road, Langley, Berks SL3 8YN.



Matchday

It's taken a long time, but Commodore's *International Soccer* has finally been superseded. I wasn't all that enamoured with Ocean's original *Matchday,* but the sequel, called *Matchday II* unsurprisingly, has quality written all over it.

There is a huge selection of options available including all those fiddly bits like, defining your own keys, giving teams a goal start, time limit per half, whether to attend games that you're not playing in, changing team and pitch colours, and changing team names and tactics.

You can play a game on its own against the computer or with a friend, or against a friend. The good point is that you can also play in a league championship, with up to seven friends playing the other teams, and can play in three rounds of a cup competition.

It is these latter options that make *Matchday II* such a worthwhile successor to *International Soccer.* Not that it's a mediocre game to play down on the pitch either.

The scrolling of the pitch is a little slow and cumbersome, but the amount of control you can exercise, variety of deflection angles, and other features such as barging into the opposition more than make up for it.

The kickometer isn't the best method of judging the strength of a ball, but it can be fixed in one position, and it does allow backheels!

A marker surges between counters representing the backheel, weak shot, medium shot, and wallop. When it reaches the desired kick you want to play jab the fire button and Bob Wilson's your uncle.

Matchday II is more than a capable successor to *Matchday,* it's great.

With the league and cup options there is the variety to keep you playing for months.

Reviewer Duncan Evans **Program** *Matchday II* **Micro** Amstrad CPC **Price** £8.95 **Supplier** Ocean, 6 Central Street, Manchester M2 5NS.

Knightmare

A clever graphic adventure which has put some originality into what was becoming a boring field, *Knightmare* is based on the TV series of the same name.

Each screen of the game, represented as a page of a magic book, shows a chamber of a dungeon.

In your quest to escape from the dungeon you must use the normal adventuring techniques and vocubularly – magic spells, collecting objects, asking for advice from the other characters, fighting or avoiding monsters, and so on.

In this case, the text input uses an ingenious two-key system which allows you to match verb and noun by scrolling through the relevant possibilities.

If you are stuck, the Oracles, good or evil, will give you either helpful advice or a misleading riddle.

You cannot select which Oracle you consult, so it can be more helpful to ask other characters such as the Old Man, or take the advice of the Dungeon Master who appears at the top of the screen.

The single-colour graphics are clever, featuring little details such as dripping water in the dungeons.

Since *Knightmare* looks fairly complicated, it is also good to note that there is a game save option.

A good combination of puzzles and arcade action , *Knightmare* deserves to be seen whatever your normal taste in games.

Reviewer John Renwick **Program** *Knightmare* **Micro** Spectrum **Price** £9.99 **Supplier** Activision, 23 Pond Street, Hampstead, London NW3 2PN.



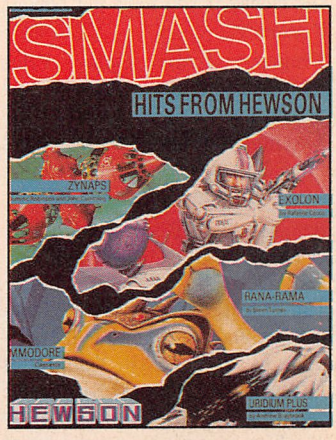
Your complete guide to all the software released this week

Amstrad CPC

Program *Dr Scrime's Spook School* **Price** £1.99 **Supplier** Mastertronic, 8-10 Paul Street, London EC2.
An arcade adventure with fairly simple graphics. The object is to test your ingenuity against gruesome ghouls, ghastly ghosts and hideous hunchbacks. Interesting, but not particularly original.

Program *Four Smash Hits* **Price** £9.95 **Supplier** Hewson, 56b Milton Trading Estate, Milton, Abingdon, Oxon.
Amazing value for money package that includes *Zynaps, Ranarama, Uridium Plus,* and *Exolon.* It all depends on how many of the games you have already, but for new Amstrad owners this makes a great Christmas prezzy.

Program *Knight Orc* **Price** £19.95 **Supplier** Rainbird, Wellington House, Upper St. Martins Lane, London WC2H 9DL.
Level 9's challenging adventure, this time for the 6128, with lots of illustrations.



Amiga

Program *Thai Boxing* **Price** £9.95 **Supplier** Anco, 35 West Hill, Dartford, Kent DA1 2EL.
Martial arts game with plenty of gratuitous violence. Just watch the faces of the combatants become sickeningly bruised and bloody. Some nice backdrops make this version an improvement on, say, the ST and it is fairly cheap as well.

continued on page 18 ▶

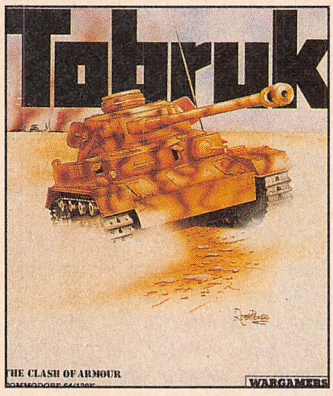
Software guide continued

◀ continued from page 17

IBM PC/Compatibles

Program *The Hunt For Red October* **Price** £24.95 **Supplier** Argus Press Software, Victory House, Leicester Place, London WC2H 7NB.

Yankee imperialist propaganda reaches the PC. Not as good as the Amiga version, but if you are interested in submarine simulations then it is worth a look.



Spectrum

Program *Nightshade* **Price** £1.99 **Supplier** Ricochet, 8-10 Paul Street, London EC2.

One of the later Ultimate filmation games, the formula was getting a little tired by this time. Still, worth the money if you have not bought it already.

Program *Action Reflex* **Price** £1.99 **Supplier** Ricochet, 8-10 Paul Street, London EC2.

Another re-release at a budget price. You play a bouncing ball in a series of mazes.

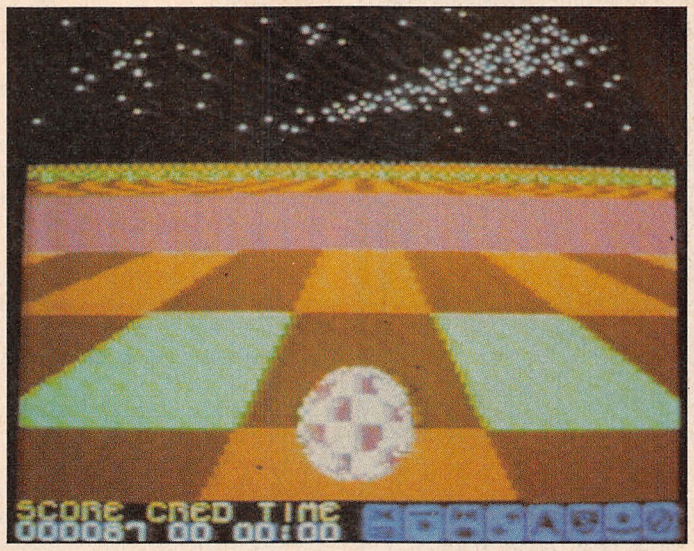
Program *UCM* **Price** £1.99 **Supplier** Ricochet, 8-10 Paul Street, London EC2.

The title stands for Ultimate Combat Mission, but that is an exaggeration to say the least. You are an intergalactic criminal trying to escape from a top security jail. The graphics are nothing special but it plays well enough.

Program *Firetrap* **Price** £7.99 **Supplier** Electric Dreams, 31 Carlton Crescent, Southampton SO1 2EW.

Climb up the monochrome burning building, avoiding monochrome bricks, cars, glass and obstacles as you seek to rescue the people trapped inside. Aside from the colour scheme, it is not a bad implementation of an old arcade game. Definitely one to consider.

continued on page 23 ▶



Cosmic Causeway

If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. Robert Bruce's sentiments obviously hit hard at Gremlin, leading it to release its latest game, *Cosmic Causeway.*

Anyone who knows Gremlin well will realise that in many ways this game is the third part of a series of games which have been remarkable for their excellence, and complete lack of success.

The first game was *Bounder.* Programmed in-house by Gremlin in 1986, it received critical acclaim from everyone who reviewed it but failed to sell very well in the shops.

Convinced that the concept was a good one – bouncing balls along a track – Gremlin published another game using the same concept; *Trailblazer.* Again, although the press loved it, it failed to sell in the quantities it deserved.

Now, Gremlin has released the follow-up to *Trailblazer, Cosmic Causeway,* and if it is not the massive hit I predicted for the other two, I'll eat my hat.

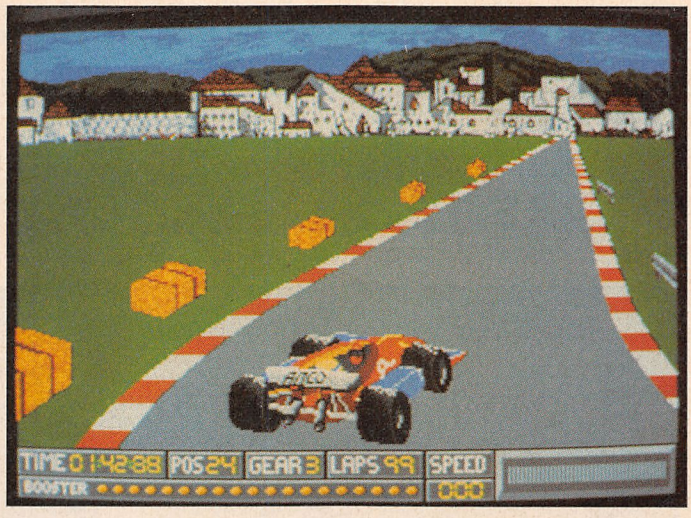
The object is to control your ball as it bounces round a space assault course. Each time you land on a block it can either help or hinder you – speeding you, stopping you, giving extra bounce – in your quest. Where *Trailblazer* was good, *Cosmic Causeway* is brilliant.

The graphics are well-depicted and the scrolling, supposed to be into the screen, is smooth and amazingly fast. To add to its playability, each level has a bonus ball which, if collected, gives the player a bonus ability – rather like *Nemesis,* although in this case you can choose which bonus you want.

Another bouncy theme tune and the added feature of being able to blast baddies, including a huge dragon which attacks you as you complete level three, and you have a complete game which should be a part of arcade fans' collections.

If I had my way, it would be game of the week but unfortunately I have been over-ruled.

Reviewer Daniel McGrath **Program** *Cosmic Causeway* **Micro** C64 **Price** £9.95 **Supplier** Gremlin Graphics, 10 Carver Street, Sheffield.



Grid Start

From one end of the spectrum to the other. Last week there was the Electronics Arts impressive *Test Drive,* a high-class driving game. This week the Anco *Grid Start,* a pole position-style game, has been released.

Grid Start puts you behind the wheel of a chunky six-gear formula one racing machine, with a choice of six international circuits on which to race.

You can either practice or get straight into the championship, which includes a race on all circuits against 26 competitors.

A championship table lets you know who is doing badly and more often than not you will find yourself propping it up.

The problem is that the slightest contact with another car or a straw bale or any piece of scenery results in a deafening explosion with pieces of car flying everywhere.

Your overalls are obviously made of sterner stuff, though, as you are able to continue in a new car after a few seconds.

When some of the drivers in the race drive suicidally into the back of you it can be very irritating.

The only safe way I could get round was to be permanently in third gear and then try not to let everyone lap you.

Not many frames are used for the other cars vanishing into the distance, so it looks a little jerky, but the scrolling of the track is fine, as it should be.

For the price *Grid Start* is reasonable value and, provided you can master the kamikazi opposition, should prove entertaining enough.

Reviewer Duncan Evans **Program** *Grid Start* **Micro** Amiga **Price** £9.95 **Supplier** Anco Software, 35 West Hill, Dartford, Kent DA1 2EL.

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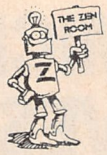
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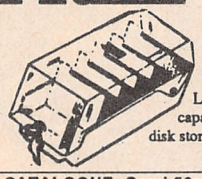
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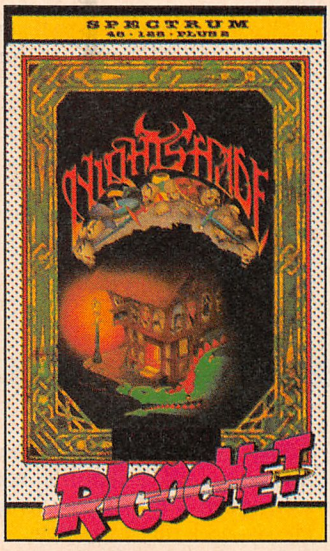
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Software guide continued

Atari ST

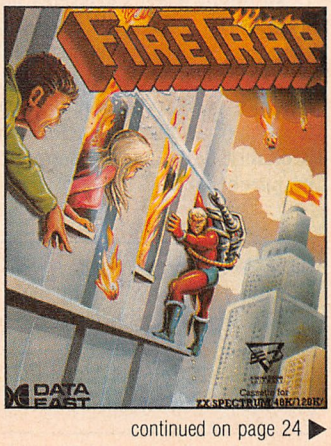
Program *Las Vegas* **Price** £9.95 **Supplier** Anco, 35 West Hill, Dartford, Kent DA1 2EL.
Really dreadful attempt at a fruit machine simulation that was done far better in Eidersoft's Vegas Gambler.

Program *Karting Grand Prix* **Price** £9.95 **Supplier** Anco, 35 West Hill, Dartford, Kent DA1 2EL.
Not very much to do with karting, and even the wealth of options regarding players, tyre compound, conditions, sprocket size, difficulty and number of tracks cannot redeem this Super Sprint style game.



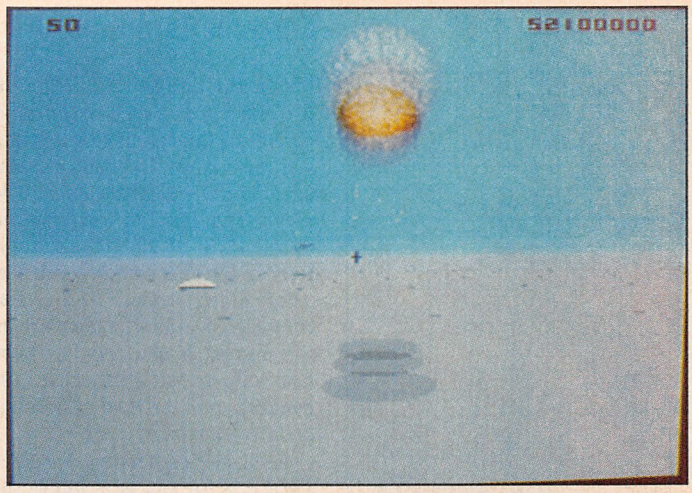
BBC B/Master/ Electron

Program *Star Wars* **Price** £9.95 (tape), £12.95 (disc) **Supplier** Domark, 22 Harefield Road, London SW19 3TA.
Great game converted to BBC machines. A must for every Acorn fan's shopping list.



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Backlash



Finally it arrived. It just failed to take Game of the Week but it is still the best out-and-out blasting game to appear on the ST so far. The objective, or lack of it, is the reason *Backlash* was not Game of the Week. The objective, you see, is to register a high score – 42,000 was mine. No mission, no target zones, nothing but kill, kill, kill. Considering that there is a reputed 495K squashed on to a single-sided disc that is a rather surprising flaw.

Unlike most shoot-'em-ups, the entire screen is utilised and also the action is in 3D.

You find yourself flying over a plain which loops around at the edges and is dotted with grey discs which zip towards you at a dizzying rate. Also on the plain are indestructible cones and circular silos from which emerge all manner of enemy craft.

They range in viciousness from ones which rush around spitting the occasional fireball at you to ones which fire like machine guns and others which lay down sheets of fire which roar towards you with frightening speed and appalling regularity once you reach level four.

Another hazard, one which cannot be avoided and has to be destroyed, is the guided missile which homes in on your and it starts to weave around on the higher levels.

You are not powerless to resist the onslaught. You are armed with fireballs. The animation of the fireballs scorching into the distance, bouncing along as they go, is wonderful. You can fly underneath incoming fireballs as they bounce over you.

There is a moderate amount of animation in the enemy; one ship in particular reveals itself as an eye when it gets close. Then you let it have it. Spotting the foe from a distance is facilitated by a circular scanner which appears in the top half of the screen.

The game really is an all-consuming action experience ST owners cannot afford to miss. When you are under fire from all directions and enemy ships are exploding into spinning diamonds all around, the excitement is unbelievably intense. With a few additions this could easily be turned into a commercial arcade game.

For 10 minutes of adrenalin-pumping, heart-pounding action with a genuine arcade feel, *Backlash* is brilliant. If you do not have a copy, proceed in an orderly manner to your nearest stockist and treat yourself.

Reviewer Duncan Evans **Program** *Backlash* **Micro** Atari ST **Price** £19.95 **Supplier** Novagen, 142 Alcester Road, Birmingham B13 8HS.

Rampage

Rampage at the arcades was one of the highlights last year. *Rampage* the Commodore 64 version seems to be a wasted licence. The object is to be as nasty and evil as possible as you go from city to city smashing every building in sight.

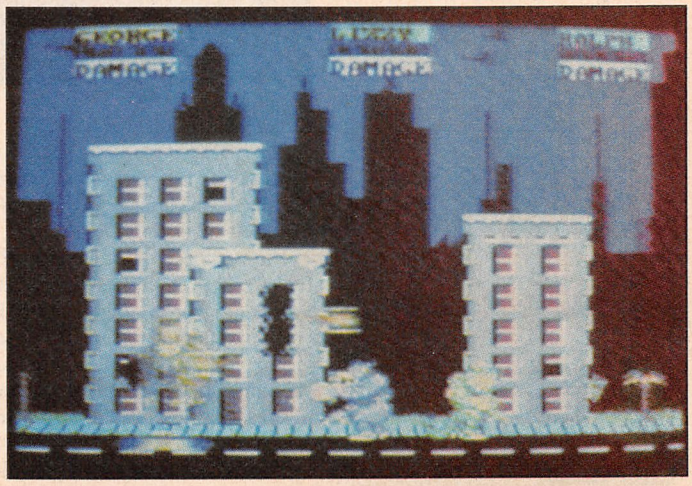
Gameplay is very confusing as you control your little nasty around the screen. Sound effects are used to the bare minimum and the theme tune is not too exciting.

One plus point for the game is the packaging, which is set to appeal to those who like violence in computer games. Unfortunately I cannot see anyone paying £9.99 for a piece of artwork.

The potential for *Rampage* was there to be tapped, Activision has not utilised its programmers or the Commodore 64 effectively. When you compare this to an old Activision release such as *Ghostbusters* it makes you rather sad to think that Activision has decided to purchase material like this. In its haste to release the game in time for Christmas it has overlooked the all-important quality of the game.

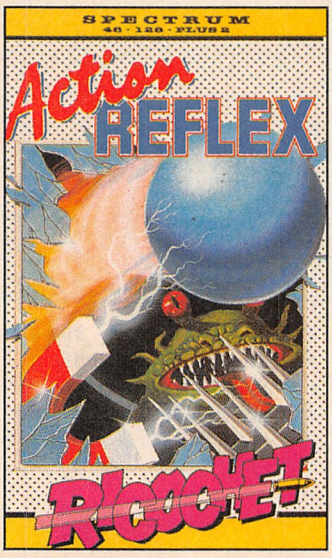
I have been told that the C64 is not the best version of the game but it could have been better if Activision had managed to get the three-player option. Criticisms apart, *Rampage* must have been an enormous task to convert, and in that light, is not too bad.

Reviewer Simon Gillan **Program** *Rampage* **Micro** Commodore 64 **Price** £9.99 (tape), £14.99 (disc) **Supplier** Activision, Pond Street, London NW3.



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Software guide continued



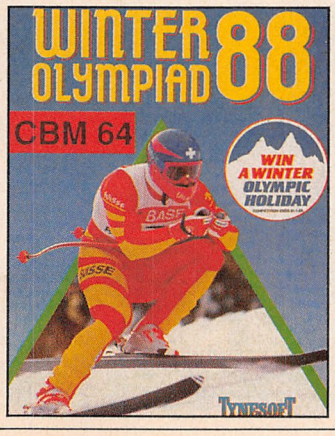
Commodore 64

Program *Angle Ball* **Price** £2.99 **Supplier** Mastertronic, 8-10 Paul Street, London EC2.
Pool transported to a hexagonal table. You can control spin, strength and position. The frame set-ups become increasingly difficult.

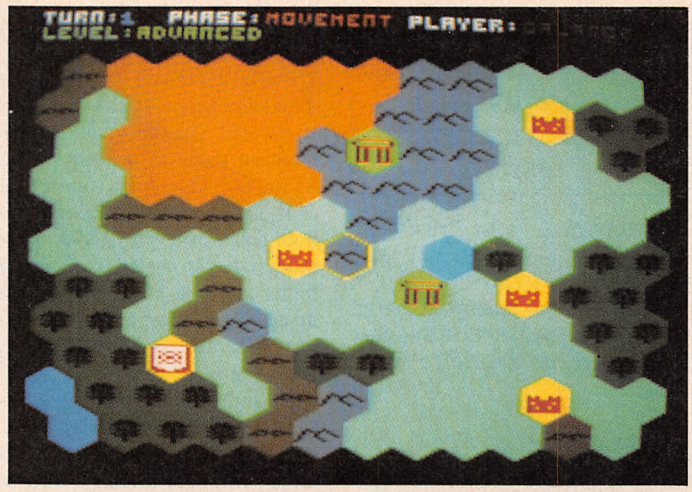
Quite a reasonable game, but it really depends on whether you like pool.

Program *Talladega* **Price** £2.99 **Supplier** Mastertronic, 8-10 Paul Street, London EC2.
A 3-D driving game from a few years ago, that was good at the time. There are no screen shots on the packaging and the game is now very dated.

Program *Winter Olympiad 88* **Price** £9.95 **Supplier** Tynesoft, Addison Industrial Estate, Blaydon upon Tyne, Tyne & Wear NE21 4TE.



Sorcerer Lord



From the author of *Battlefield Germany* is *Sorcerer Lord*. A change of theme but this is still a wargame in the tradition of standard fantasy board games. The plot sounds as if it was inspired by an Elric of Melnibone story. Over in the shadowlands you see, after idling around for a few centuries, Shadow Legions are on the march. A new Shadow Lord has whipped up enthusiasm for conquest and the land of Galanor is on the menu.

As a self-respecting *Sorcerer Lord* it is for you to organise the defence and command the alliance of men and the elves of Imryth – this really is Elric stuff.

The game is played on a hexagonal map, so beloved of board gamers, and uses simple, colourful and clear graphics for the units, fortresses and the like. Terrain includes woods, hills, wooded hills, mountains and desert, each of which affect movement detrimentally.

To get an overall view of how the war is progressing there is an option to display the entire playing map, which is very useful in the mid-game stage.

Features you would expect in a PSS game are all there. You can only see units in line of sight. There are five movement modes; armies and their leaders can be stacked and fatigue affects play their part.

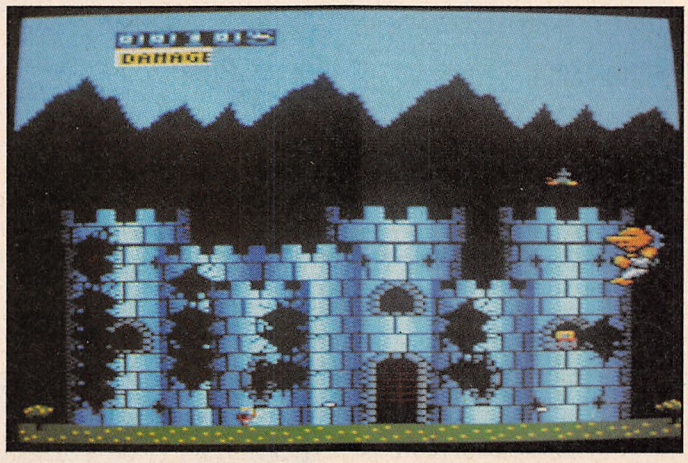
Sorcery plays a major role in the battles and rather than the player having spells to cast, it is all limited to summoning demons to fight in your cause.

The amount of help you get depends on the sorcery rating of your army leader and how near to a rune ring you are. As with Elric asking for help from his patron Arioch, what you sometimes get is not worth the blood spent for it. Should you get a host of major demons, though, the opposition can expect trouble with a capital T.

Sorcerer Lord is on the expensive side but with its fantasy board game heritage and pieces of novels in the plot and quality packaging, it is definitely worth it.

I liked *Sorcerer Lord*, so if you fancy a taste of sword and sorcery, go for it.

Reviewer Duncan Evans **Program** *Sorcerer Lord* **Micro** Amstrad CPC **Price** £12.95 (tape), £17.95 (disc) **Supplier** PSS, 452 Stoney Stanton Road, Coventry CV6 5DG.



Ramparts

Ramparts is a new release from the recently set up U.S. Gold offshoot label Go!

Unfortunately, *Ramparts* looks and plays like a very average budget price game and it is very disappointing to find Go! having to release material like this bearing in mind the amount of effort being put in to make Go! a premier label.

The plot concerns Sir Griswold and Sir Larkin. They have been cursed by the Evil One who has made them the size of ferocious giants.

The object is to hunt down the Evil One and restore the honour of the knights.

The task of doing it is not easy; hostile barons of huge fortressed castles stand in the way. To survive you must smash your way through the castles, steal food and generally make sure the castle is in ruins.

The inlay card states that *Ramparts* is "compulsive, fast moving action that'll keep bringing you back time after time."

Ramparts is without doubt one of the most unplayable games of late.

The idea of going up and down a castle smashing it up in the process does not work with this game. There is only one screen in which the castle appears and for £9.99 Go! is really underestimating the intelligence of Amstrad CPC owners.

No doubt when Christmas has passed the game will revert to the more realistic price of £1.99. It looks and plays like a very average budget release. By releasing it as full price, Go! will probably have many disappointed purchasers.

Reviewer Leslie Bunder **Program** *Ramparts* **Micro** Amstrad CPC **Price** £9.99 (tape), £14.99 (disc) **Supplier** Go!, Units 2-3, Holford Way, Holford, Birmingham B6 7AX.

Software guide continued

Tonic Tile

While this game has a good deal to commend it in terms of the colourful graphics, well-sampled music and sound effects, it has to be said that it is a little late to do another version of *Arkanoid.*

As with all these *Breakout* derivatives, *Tonic Tile* features a series of screens made up of coloured blocks, a bat moving from left to right at the bottom, a bouncing ball to hit into the blocks, and several kinds of bonus targets and weapons which can make life either more difficult or easier.

In this case the selection includes bonus canisters which make your bat sticky, increase its size, generate two extra balls to hit, give you laser fire or slow the ball.

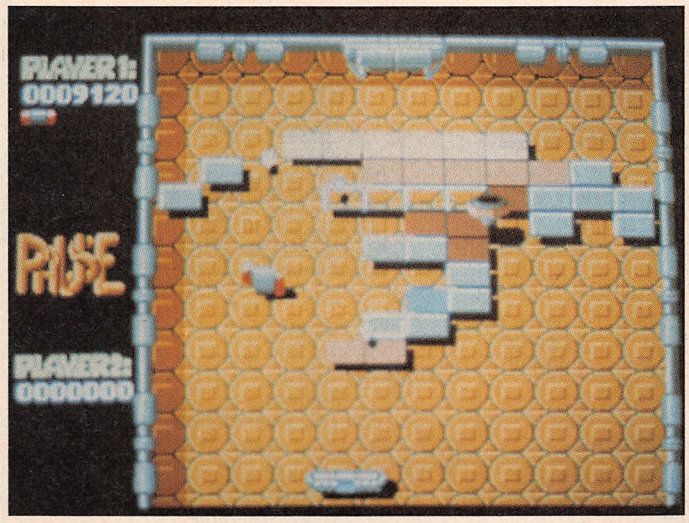
Special whirly targets, very similar to the Slinkies in *Marble Madness,* score you extra points, and if you hit a rotating drill-shape you will clear the screen.

There are indestructible, invisible, and extra durable blocks, too – in other words, *Tonic Tile* has all the same elements as *Arkanoid* and *Impact.*

I found the mouse control rather unresponsive and in a game where speed of reflexes is everything that is unfortunate.

It would be pleasant to be able to be more enthusiastic, since *Tonic Tile* makes good use of ST abilities and features some excellent effects.

Unfortunately, it offers nothing new and I cannot see it appealing to anyone who already has *Arkanoid* or *Impact.*



Reviewer John Renwick **Program** *Tonic Tile* **Micro** Atari ST **Price** £19.99 **Supplier** The Edge, 36-38 Southampton Street, London WC2 7HE.

Street Hassle

Some games defy belief. Not because they are particularly good, or particularly bad, but because it is amazing that they exist. *Street Hassle* is such a one – so morally corrupt and in such bad taste that I am amazed it reached the market. I liked it, especially the neat cartoon-style graphics and the mindless violence.

Lou Reed references notwithstanding, *Street Hassle* is a kind of parody of games like *Death Wish* or *Cobra,* where the impressively-muscled hero sets out to rid the streets of punks.

Here the tattooed muscleman in sunglasses is a mild-mannered schoolteacher driven to the brink by an outbreak of thuggery among old women and blind people.

As you move through the levels, your offensive – and I mean offensive – moves vary. On the first level, you can grab old women and nut them.

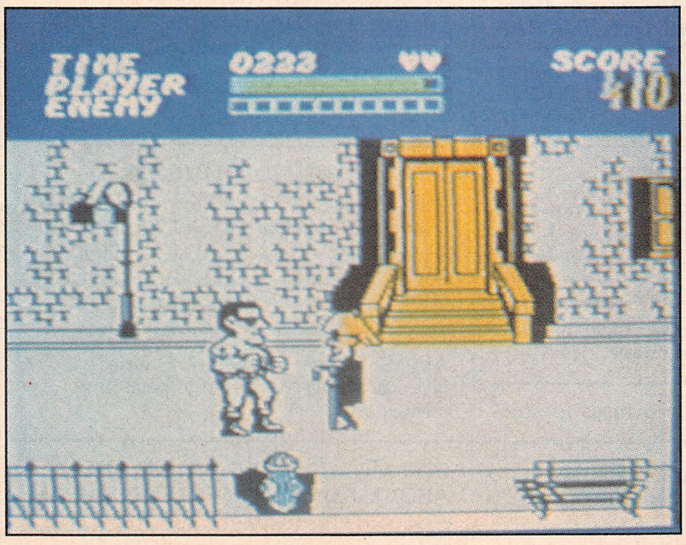
On the second level, it is an aeroplane spin, and goodness knows what happens later because I was rolling on the floor with my legs in the air.

All that is accompanied by cryptic messages which could be quotes from Dirty Harry or Neitsche. "Crime swallows like a microphone stand", "Think of it as urban renewal", and "I'm thinking of your burial".

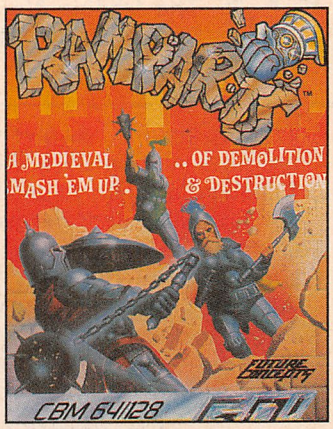
Small prizes will be awarded to anyone who can identify the quotes.

I will not reveal the secret of how you get past the snarling dogs, the bars, the gorillas and the bomb-planting anarchists.

It is very difficult, to say whether *Street Hassle* is a good game but it had me in stitches.



Reviewer John Renwick **Program** *Street Hassle* **Micro** Spectrum **Price** £7.95 **Supplier** Melbourne House, 8-10 Paul Street, London EC2A 4HJ.



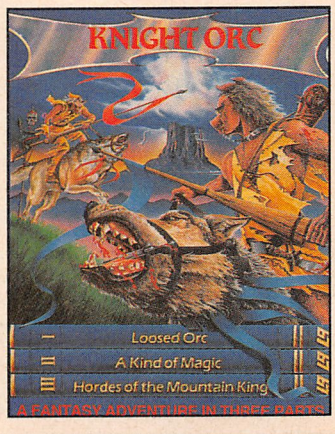
Another winter sports simulation, set in Calgary next year. The graphics of the six games, ski jumping, slalom, downhill racing, bob sled, biathlon, and speed skating are excellent on the C64, but haven't we seen all this many times before?

At least the games are interesting and there is a competition to win a trip for two to Calgary.

Program *Ramparts* **Price** £9.95 **Supplier** Go!, Unit 2-4, Holford Way, Holford, Birmingham B6 7AX.
Good simple fun, but rather on the expensive side.

Program *Four Smash Hits* **Price** £9.95 **Supplier** Hewson, 56b Milton Trading Estate, Milton, Abingdon, Oxon.
See Amstrad listing. Even better value on the C64.

Program *Tobruk* **Price** £9.95 (tape), £14.99 (disc) **Supplier** PSS, 452 Stoney Stanton Road, Coventry CV6 5DG.
For once the press release did not speak with a forked tongue 'Tobruk is a one or two player game, with full joystick control and excellent arcade sequences'. It is a good game too.



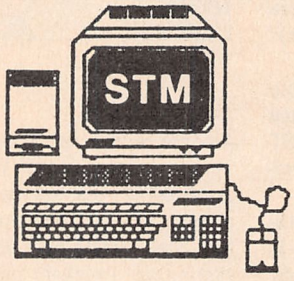
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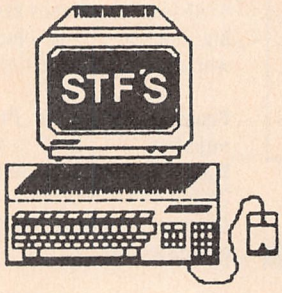
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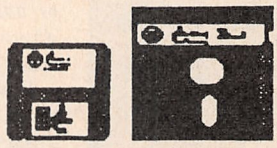
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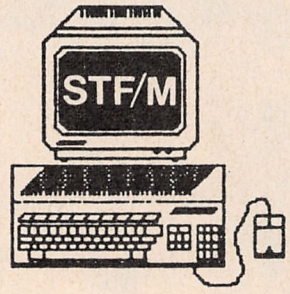
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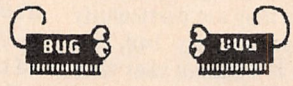
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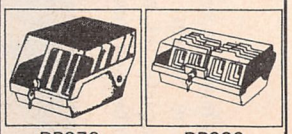
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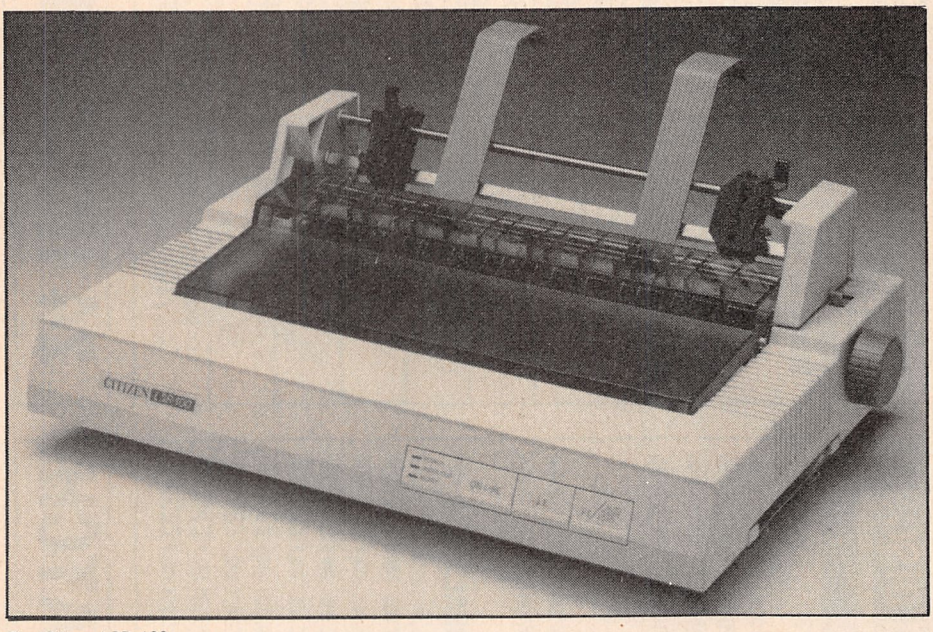
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The upright Citizen

Roger Howorth reviews the Citizen LSP-100 printer.

The Citizen LSP-100 is a new 9-pin dot matrix printer designed to challenge the mighty Epson LX800, and at £245 it might do it. The LSP-100 promises the purchaser up to 175cps in draft and 40cps in correspondence quality print modes, and by using variations of effects such as italic, condensed and so on, can produce more than 400 print styles. The LSP-100 has a Centronics parallel interface as standard with optional RS232 serial, Commodore or Apple IIe ports if required.



The Citizen LSP-100.

The unit is reasonably compact, measuring approximately 15in. × 10in. × 3in., and features Epson and IBM control code compatibility. More unusually, it has a 4K data buffer to speed long print runs and includes friction, tractor and bottom feed options in the standard package.

Construction

The LSP-100 has a solid feel to it but is light, weighing slightly less than 4Kg. There is a hinged smoked plastic cover on the top of the machine which gives access to the ribbon and paper thickness adjustments, but the main mechanics are all safely hidden inside.

The printer can be fitted with either a parallel, RS232, Commodore or Apple IIe interface card. They slide into the base of the printer with the computer cable being plugged into the exposed end of the interface card. The cards are designed to fit the overall look of the printer and, as such, are really noticeable only when they are removed.

Dip switches

The interface card also houses a set of dip switches which set the printer default settings such as the character set, whether a cut sheet feeder is to be used, and so on. Being located on the interface card makes them easy to reach once you have removed the card but to do so it is necessary first to disconnect the printer from the computer and the mains.

The "Bottom Feed" option is useful if you intend to use a printer stand or continuous labels, as it makes the paper path straighter and thus less likely to jam. The accompanying diagram shows how when using Bottom feed the paper enters the printer just below the carriage and leaves just above it.

Most printers allow the paper to be fed only from behind the carriage.

The power switch is out of the way on the side panel and another three switches are mounted vertically on the front. They are labelled "ON LINE", "Line Feed" and "Form Feed" but have several other functions.

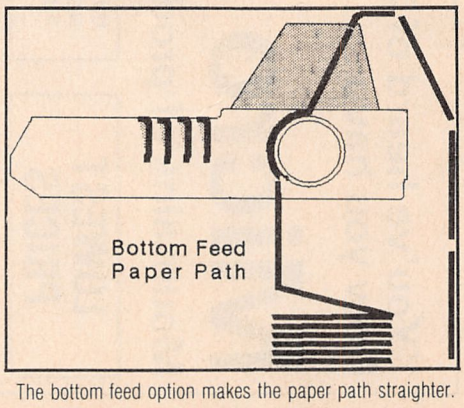
There is a brief section in the manual which describes likely problems owners of various computers might face when connecting the printer. This includes alterations to the dip switches where necessary, as well as advice on the correct lead. The computers covered in this section are Amstrad PC and CPC, Atari ST and 8-bits, BBC, Commodore and Sinclairs, as well as the ubiquitous IBM PC or compatibles.

Control codes

The printer is configured for use with the standard Epson control codes and so for most people there should be no need to fiddle with the dip switches. If you need to use IBM control codes or have bought the optional cut sheet feeder, a few adjustments will be necessary. This can either be done with software every time you use the printer or more permanently by altering the settings of the dip switches located on the interface module.

The interface card is encased in a plastic shell and is removed easily by sliding it from the main printer case. Because there are no exposed electronic components, the task is not as intimidating as it first sounds, the interface card seems sturdy and is as easy to remove as opening a box of matches.

The manual has a fully-illustrated appendix which explains exactly what effect the eight dip switches have and using them it is possible to select a variety of default character sets, like all printers available these days it is also very easy to alter these settings by sending software control codes from your computer.



The bottom feed option makes the paper path straighter.

For those unfamiliar with Epson or IBM control codes, the idea is that as printers all support a variety of functions, such as printing in italic or underlined, it makes sense to be able to control those features from the computer by sending simple instructions. It is achieved by using one of two universal standards laid down originally by Epson and IBM.

To use a particular feature of your printer, you print a special sequence of two or three characters. Whenever the printer receives them, instead of printing them out as it would with all the other alphabetic characters it receives, it activates the relevant feature instead.

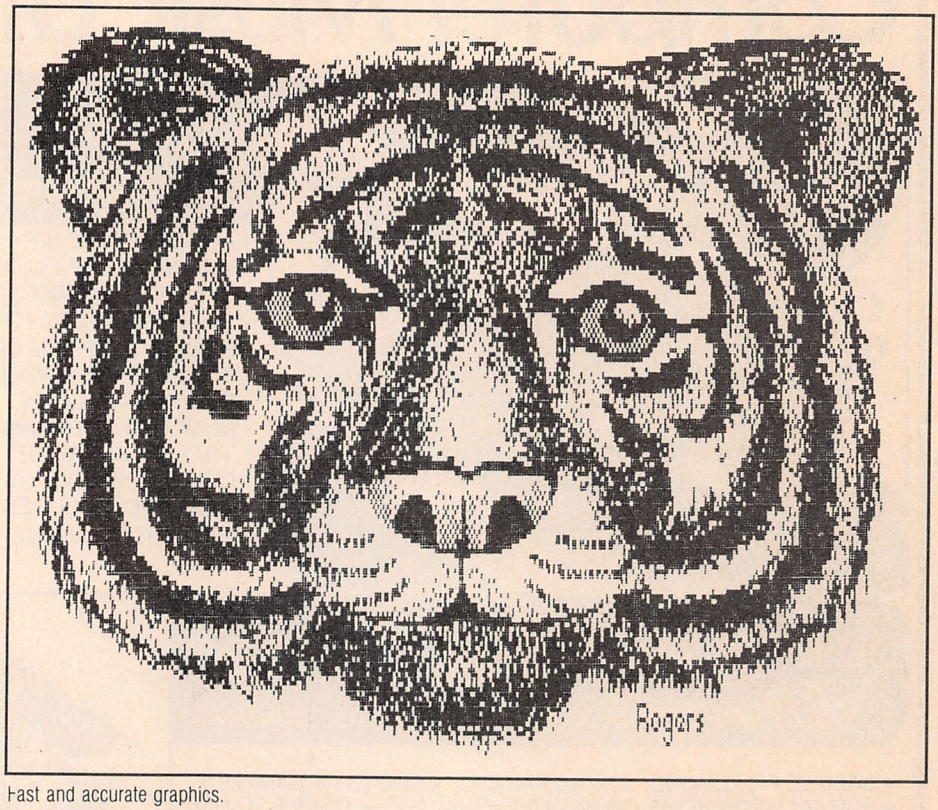
Operation

Once your computer and printer are joined successfully by a piece of wire, unless you are very unlucky or are using IBM control codes when you do not have an IBM, you should experience no real problems. That holds true for virtually any printer you care to mention, whether you are driving it from Basic with the LPRINT command or from a word processor.

"The Citizen LSP-100 is a new 9-pin dot matrix printer designed to challenge the mighty Epson LX800, and at £245 it might do it."

I reviewed the LSP-100 using an Atari ST and *First Word Plus* and the printer worked satisfactorily first time. Using *Easy Draw 2* to produce the sample graphics again caused no problem. It is possible to swap between correspondence quality and pica, italic, emphasised and condensed by using various combinations of the three switches located on the front panel but for most people these tasks can be performed faster and more accurately by sending the correct control codes from the computer, most word processors will cope with this automatically.

For those who produce printouts from their own programs, the manual provides examples of how to use every feature of the printer from Basic, as well as a list of hints on how to adapt the examples to suit some of the more popular dialects of BASIC. The list includes Apple, Amstrad, TRS-80, CP/M, Atari, Commodore, BBC and you know who. I was most impressed by the speed and quiet of the LSP-100. It is common practice for printer manufacturers to quote figures which are nothing if not wildly optimistic and Citizen's claimed speeds follow the trend, I printed a 4.2K file in 40 seconds which is approximately 105cps and in correspondence quality the same file took two minutes 56 seconds, which is 24cps. Those figures are certainly competitive, more so when viewed alongside the price and quality of construction, which are both excellent.



Fast and accurate graphics.

Graphics

Graphics are fast and accurate. The picture of a house took three minutes to produce, the others were faster still. Here the 4K data buffer helps if you do not have your own printer spooler software.

Another pleasant feature of the Citizen is its comprehensive hex dump facility. Most printers allow you to enter a special mode where, instead of printing alphabetic characters, they print the hexadecimal codes sent between computer and printer. Citizen has taken this one step further by printing both a table of the hexadecimal numbers and another of the ASCII characters alongside.

That kind of function is probably used only rarely but if you find the printer is not doing what you think it should, here is an invaluable debugging tool which, is made far easier to use with the dual table system.

The Citizen LSP-100 is aimed at people who might buy an Epson. I think the kind of person who would buy an Epson would do so regardless of the features and price of the competition.

Having said that, I think many people considering a mid-priced printer will be swayed towards the new Citizen.

It is fast and quiet, features which are not necessarily appreciated when first buying a printer but when you have used one for a time.

Well-built

The machine is well-built. That is important, not only because it is less likely to suffer from wear and tear than a more flimsy device but also when considering print quality.

One 9-pin printer will produce much the same quality output as another 9-pin printer only if the paper and printer head are moved with the same degree of accuracy. Put another way, to produce NLQ output the printer must be accurate to within 1/72 of an inch. It cannot do so if the quality of build allows any unwanted movement in the various components.

This all adds up to a recommendation of the LSP-100 as a serious work horse. If you want something to produce listings or the occasional letter, you might be able to save £50 to £100 by getting a slower printer which still has similar features. If, however, you require a printer for graphics work or print-out documents regularly which are more than a few pages long, you may benefit from the extra speed and robust quality of this machine. □

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Sounds of the future

Mark Jenkins reports on a new company, MCMXCIX which imports music software.

Over the last year or so, one of the most enterprising music software importers has been Take Note, based in Camden. Now Dean Stanton, who half-owned the company, has left to set up his own import service under the banner MCMXCIX (1999 to those in the know).

MCMXCIX (MCM for short) is a division of the Synthesizer Company (TSC for short - not getting confusing, is it?).

It sells a vast selection of synthesizers, drum machines and accessories from Roland, Yamaha, Korg, Akai and many others. MCM share their offices and showrooms off London's Edgware Road but are otherwise fairly independent, since the retail activities of TSC have to be kept separate from the wholesale activities of MCM (although TSC is one of the stockists of MCM's lines - there, now we're all confused).

Atari ST and Macintosh

MCM's music software is more or less evenly divided between the Atari ST and the Apple MacIntosh, although the IBM PC and compatibles and the Amiga are getting an increasing look-in.

Most of the software comes from American companies such as Digidesign, Intelligent Music, Mark of The Unicorn, Dr. T and Caged Artist, although some German lines such as Beam Team are included as well.

We will be looking at STACKS of software from MCM over the coming months, but here is a taster of some of the lines they will have in stock.

Mark Of The Unicorn Performer

One of the most respected MIDI composition packages in the US, designed for the Apple Mac 512K and needing a MIDI interface such as the OpCode range (which also works with software from Digidesign, Mark Of The Unicorn, etc.).

Launched for the Mac, M! is now available for the ST and offers "intelligent" performance and composition, claiming to "magnify your skills and stimulate your imagination".

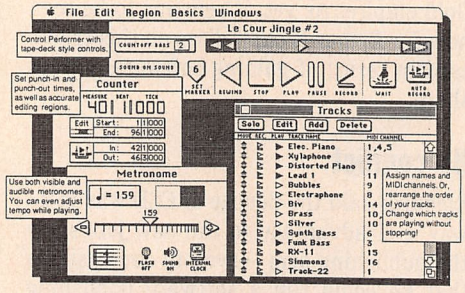
Basic musical material such as notes and chords can be specified and the program builds on them to create complete compositions. These are file-compatible with other more conventional programs for editing purposes.

Dr. T Range

The latest version of Dr. T's Keyboard Controlled Sequencer (V. 1.5) comes complete with a Multi Programming Environment (MPE) routine which allows you to run several other programs simultaneously.

These could include Fingers (a baby version of M!), the Copyist scoring program, any of the Caged Artist Series of editors for the Roland MT-32, Roland D-50, Yamaha DX-7 (DX-Heaven) and other synths, and so on.

The interesting thing about the MPE is that it is not just a switcher but a true multi-tasking environment. While you are editing synth sounds, the sequencer can



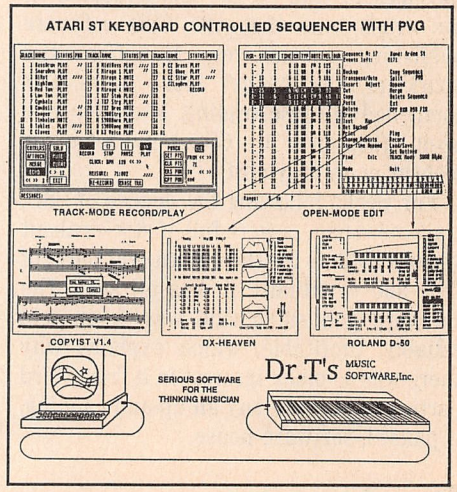
Screen shot of MCMXCIX's *Performer* for the Apple Macintosh 512K.

still be running, which means that you can enter System Exclusive sound edited into the sequence.

This allows you to alter synth sounds as they are playing in a sequence, which takes us back to the good old days of flexible analog synths and sequencers.

The MT-32 Editor will of course be welcomed, and comes with a routine to convert D50 sounds to MT32 sounds. Dr. T's Copyist will score out Keyboard Controlled Sequence files on any number of staves and with any complex time signature. It runs on the ST or IBM PC compatible and can use Panasonic and other common printers.

The PVG (Programmable Variations Generator) creates series of notes with



Scores out keyboard controlled sequence files on any number of staves.

regular changes in velocity, pitch or other values. It will be available in an integrated package with the KCS.

Sound Designer range

The Sound Designer range was again launched on the Mac but is becoming available for the ST. Different versions allow you to edit sounds for the Emulator, Akai, Prophet 2000, Mirage and other samplers, and file compatibility will eventually allow you to exchange sounds from one sampler to another.

MCM are also handling several hardware products including Twister and Q-Sheet which comprise a MIDI/SMPTE mixer automation system, various MIDI interfaces, the Axxess Mapper which is a MIDI splitter/keyboard zone controller, and much more. Also on the Mac only so far you can get Jam Factory ("an improvisation and live performance processor") and UpBeat ("the smart rhythm programmer for all drum machines").

MCM will be happy to send you details of any of their products; contact them at the address below. □

MCMXCIX, 9 Hatton Street, London NW8, 01-724 7104.

Risen from the ashes

David Lester gives us a run-down on some budget software houses and in particular, a profile of Software Publishing Associates.

The software industry has weathered various storms in its short life, including an above-average number of firms going bankrupt. Notable firms to have bitten the dust include Imagine, in 1984; Rabbitt, a one-time major software player; and, last summer, Creative Sparks Distribution.

"Much has been said as to why CSD crashed, most of it merely gossip and speculation. One of the consequences of the crash was that the CSD software publishing subsidiaries, MicroGen and Sparklers, the budget label, were also compelled to cease trading. MicroGen had been taken over by CSD only some six months or so previously.

For weeks following the demise of CSD, trade newspapers were full of stories about various bidders for the constituent parts of CSD and eventually it was all sold. The software publishing side was, I am told reliably, profitable, which explains why there was so much interest in it from third parties wanting to buy an up-and-running, if paused, software house.

Acquisitions

Ultimately, Softly Softly and Software Ltd, two of the rumoured bidders, slipped from the quest and Maynard International bought Sparklers, with a huge back catalogue of titles, while Tynesoft acquired the rights to MicroGen back titles.

Since then, Sparklers has been very quiet, although at the PCW Show, Maynard International publicity mentioned something about a relaunch, which it seems will also apply to its other label, the ironically-named Top Ten Hits, notable mainly for its continued absence from the said chart.

It also transpires that the better titles acquired will be released through The Alternative label. Meanwhile, Tynesoft have made far less noise about their acquisition but instead has released some of its new titles under the MicroValue 2 cassette, which seems destined to follow the chart success of its predecessor.

While all that was happening in the summer months, little was heard of the erstwhile liveware of CSD; two of them, though, were planning their come-back, which has now happened and seems to have been successful.

Leigh Richards, who ran the software publishing arm of CSD, and Henry Kitchen, who was the high-profile managing director of the old firm, are now quietly running a new publishing operation, Software Publishing Associates. Better known by its two brand names, Pirate Software, the budget label, and Crysys, the full price label, these ranges have been set up remarkably fast and smoothly, given the extent of the demise of CSD. Perhaps a more appropriate name might have been Phoenix or Firebird but there might have been problems with that.

One of the surprises to some people was the ease and speed with which the two found themselves once again running a publishing organisation, in the aftermath of one of the biggest bankruptcies of the software industry. The new firm is owned by a large city-backed institution with interests in several slices of the computer cake, including Software Ltd, the distributor once thought most likely to buy the Sparklers label.

That makes the new labels part of a substantial organisation comparable in size to Mastertronic or the Centresoft/U.S. Gold empire. As yet, it remains to be seen how far Richards capitalises on this trump card in terms of gaining software market share.

No conflict

Richards said the demise of CSD was in no way a disadvantage to the new job, since the publishing arm served to demonstrate that he could run a software publishing operation and make it work. Far from his running around trying to raise finance for the new venture, he was approached by the new backers to run SPA, which is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the parent company and which "had seen the profit opportunities of publishing".

Given that there was such a substantial parent, it is something of a surprise to find that Richards and Kitchen did not buy the Sparklers and MicroGen labels. They have clear reasons. "Why worry about yesterday's products? Other people may be, but I am interested in giving people new and fresh products," said Richards.

Kitchen was even more blunt, saying: "Sparklers titles were a good product a year ago; if people want to buy old games, that is fine, but it is not what we want to sell."

That does not stretch to the third, less well-known side to the publishing division, Trust, a budget business software house. Considering the continuing high sales and support for the product, it was acquired from the receiver by SPA and is apparently still selling very well.

Programmers needed

Arguably the most important area to consider when setting up a software house is from where the games will come. Will you get enough, of sufficient quality? While you might expect programmers from Sparklers to keep well clear of any new venture by the same people, that has not happened. Many of the new titles are written by the people who produced much of Sparklers catalogue. So, as well as the free publicity every new label attracts, and the resulting flood of enquiries from prospective programmers, Software Publishing Associates has the added advantage of a network of programmers already operating.

In practice, Richards claims that all the programmers who worked for him under CSD and who are still coding are working for him and SPA – as well as many more, both in response to recent advertisements for programmers and to the usual launch publicity.

There seems to have been some opposition from an even more surprising source, one of the distributors taking the range which one would have thought would be only too keen to sell the titles. It seems that one retailer tried to order some of the new Pirate range through his normal supplier but was astonished to find the supplier being as forceful as he could in trying to dissuade the shopkeeper from buying the games.

That appears extremely puzzling, until the same shopkeeper explains that the distributor then tried to persuade him to take an alternative brand of software which, he assured the shopkeeper, was much better quality. Perhaps, if that is true, the better brand should sell itself, not needing any underhand tactics.

There have also been one or two trade comments as to the name of the budget label, suggesting that it might encourage piracy or at least condone it. As one might expect, Richards denies the possibility of any such affects which, if true, would presumably lead to his titles being pirated

first of all, so it would be in his interest to change names if he thought there was anything in the allegations.

" Given that there was such a substantial parent, it is something of a surprise to find that Richards and Kitchen did not buy the Sparklers and MicroGen labels. They have clear reasons. "Why worry about yesterday's products? Other people may be, but I am interested in giving people new and fresh products," said Richards."

So, now that the new labels have emerged from the ashes of CSD, how are they faring? Pirate appears to be doing well. While not yet an equal rival to the big three, its titles are on sale alongside all the other budget majors, such as Players, Atlantis and Powerhouse and, in particular, they seem to be receiving good coverage in the major multiples like W H Smith. As with any publisher, sales figures were not proffered; had they been given others would only have disputed them, goes the argument, so why bother?

Certainly the packaging is very striking – the usual glossy picture, with a decidedly grim skull and crossbones emblazoned on the rear. Three screenshots of each title are also included on the back, apparently not just title screens but "real action shots of the game". As with the Sparklers range, there are titles at £1.99 and £2.99.

Titles available so far include such delights as *Call Me Psycho,* as well as *Holiday in Sumaria, Super Smashout* and others. The most successful title to date apparently is the well-received *Trivial Fruit* game on the Commodore, a £2.99 title. The *Call Me Psycho* title does not though, mean, that Pirate will be following CRL down the road of horror software and computer nasties?

Horrorware

"Horrorware is not our scene at all," according to Richards. "Software which is radical and different, yes; offensive or sadistic, no.

We do not need pornography in this business; if some people need to go to those lengths to sell their product, one may draw one's own conclusions."

Call Me Psycho, despite its particularly pleasant packaging, is nothing to do with any of the films of the not-so-dissimilar name but is a standard arcade game.

There are a few new titles in the pipeline for most major formats except for CPC.

The next releases will be *KGB Agent* and *Operation Ahoria* on Commodore 64, and *Cybex, Murphy* and *Knightfall* for the Spectrum.

Thereafter, Pirate hopes to release about six to eight budget titles each month, increasing to 10–12 by the end of 1988. Given that volume, there should be at least some chart presence if the games are any good.

Gallup is a sore point with most budget software houses and all eyes are on the changes which have been announced recently.

Pirate is expecting it to show a number of its titles riding high as Gallup are "noting our increasing presence" in the market. In support is the current Christmas boom, which SPA says is going very well – "far in excess of the sales we had at CSD".

SPA is moving ahead. It has launched one of the first packages of software to be available on 3in. disc for the new Spectrum, a compilation of three of its current hits, retailing at the budget price of £4.95. If this goes well, more will follow.

Although so far Pirate has grabbed most of the limelight, its full-price brother has not been idle.

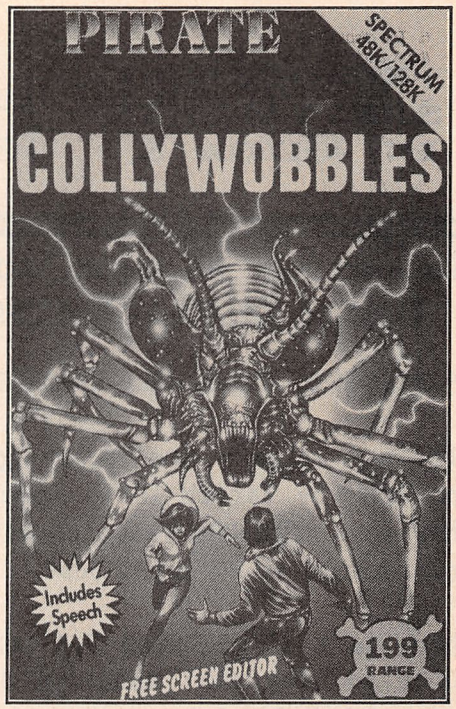
Crysys is about to release its first title. *Eric, Phantom of the Opera.* It will be launched initially on the Spectrum, at £7.95 on tape or £9.95 on disc. It is supported by a fairly substantial advertising campaign and you will probably have seen the teaser advertisement for it; it is an arcade adventure based closely on the original novel, set in Victorian times.

The graphics are said to be a replica of the Paris Opera House and certainly look operatic.

Raoul, the lead character, whose girlfriend you are trying to rescue, is well depicted, complete with dark suit and top hat. When jumping or crouching he even holds on to his hat.

While not a world-beater, the preview copy looks well-written and a difficult challenge.

To make it even more difficult, Mark Rivers, the programmer, has designed it so that you cannot shoot and move at the same time; you need to "make a strategic decision" as to which to do and when.



Pirate software – in the limelight.

There are other novel twists, too, such as the way your girlfriend's heart is shown beating when you approach.

More budget games

At present most publishers seem to be moving from full-price and down towards budget and it is somewhat surprising to find a new budget label making the reverse move.

SPA feels that there is still plenty of mileage available from the full-price software on 8-bit machines, but, nonetheless, 16-bit is taking over.

Which is why the second Crysys title is for the Amiga, again due for release next month.

Larry and the Ardies is due for early December and should follow on the ST soon afterwards, both priced at the lower end of the range at £14.95.

Pirate, too, will not be neglecting the ST or Amiga and have four titles lined up for release at £9.95 in January, 1988 – two titles for each machine.

Not to be left out, the business side, Trust, is also planning conversions to ST and Amiga of its popular products which retail at between £19.95 and £99.95.

Ambition? Of course, Richards would like to see SPA becoming a pack leader before too long, as might be seen from the ambitious plans outlined, spanning almost every sector of the market.

It remains to be seen whether or not the bird recently risen from the ashes makes it as far as becoming an eagle or simply teeters around among the sparrows. □

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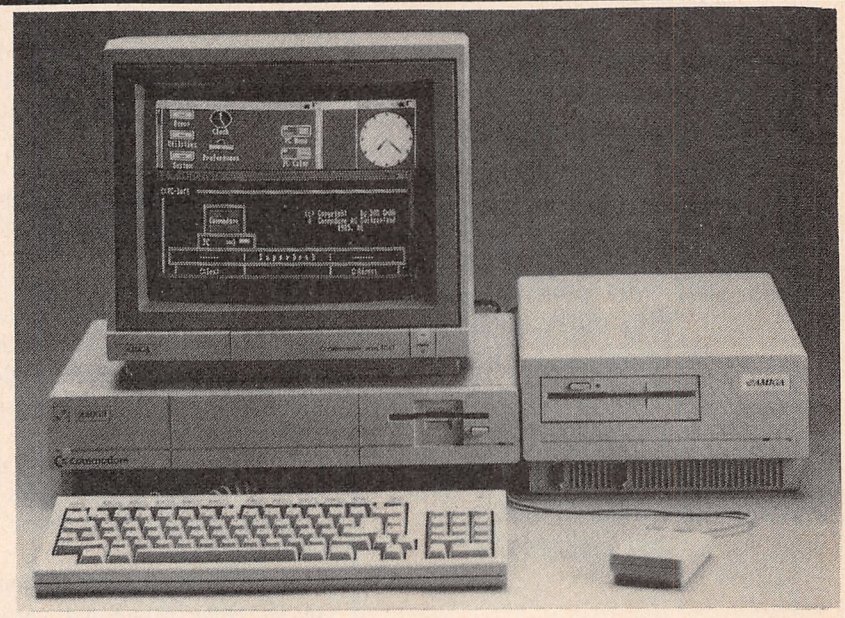
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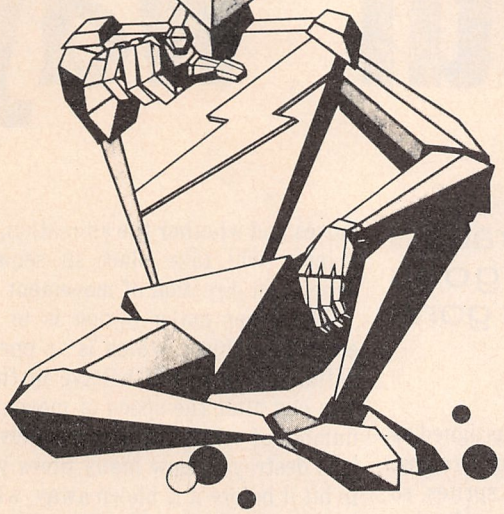
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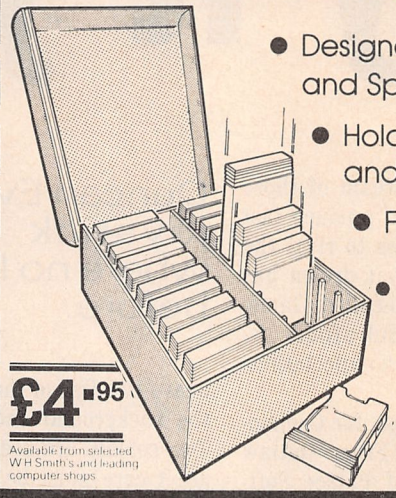
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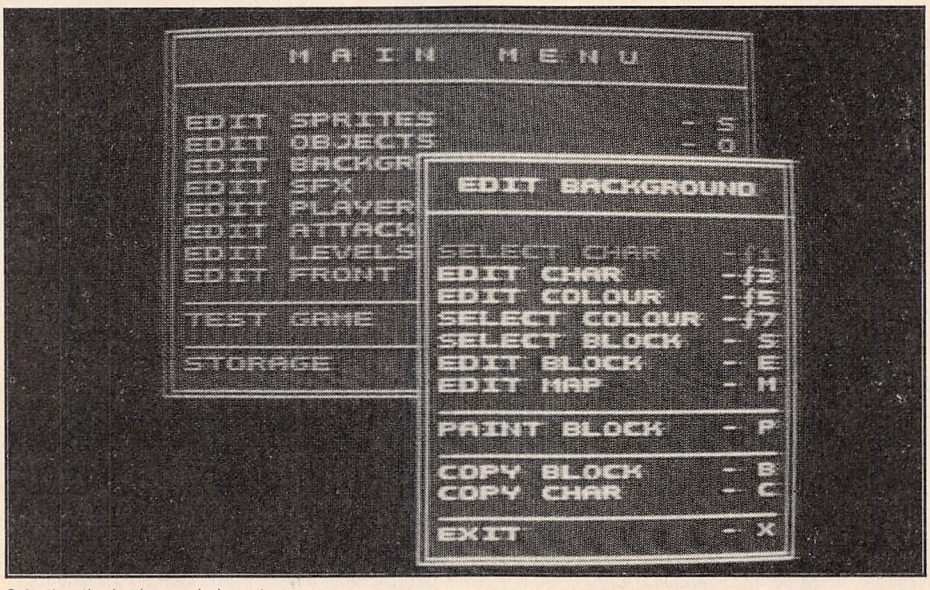
Duncan Evans grabs a joystick and goes where no Kit has gone before.

It has always been the dream of those who lacked the talent to produce fast action arcade style games to rival the professionals. Until now, that dream has been largely unfulfilled, so-called Game-maker programs being pitiful affairs designed to raise and then dash expectations cruelly.

This is all about to change, for Commodore 64 owners anyway. From Outlaw Productions, an offshoot of Palace Software, there is a Shoot 'Em-Up Construction Kit.

Three types of game can be produced with the kit – vertically-scrolling shoot 'em-ups, Rambo-style games with some reverse action, and single-screen maze or shooting games.

For such an impressive product the packaging is surprisingly sparse. A simple plastic box and a large glossy sheet containing the instructions disguise the powerful utility the Kit is.



Selecting the background character.

On the disc or cassette there are four sample games. The entertainment value may be suspect but they serve to illustrate the various types of game which can be produced. The SEUCK program contains the date for a blank game which you must fill in to create your masterpiece.

The entire program is menu-driven, with various sub-menus covering sprites, objects, background, enemy attack waves, player limitations, levels, sound effects and the front end.

Sprites are the things which fly, crawl and move round. A spaceship, alien, missile or explosion can all be defined as a sprite. There are 127 sprites available and the process to transform a blank block of pixels into an exciting image goes something like this.

Select the sprite number and start painting on the pixel grid. You are allowed four colours but the restrictions pay a heavy toll. One of the colours is assigned as the background and is used for erasing. Two colours are used in all 127 sprites, so great care must be taken when selecting them. Only the final colour can be different for each sprite.

There are four functions for manipulating your design. You can slide it around in its box, which is useful if you have designed it lopsided, mirror the design in any direction and copy it to another sprite number. Finally, you can erase sprites which are beyond redemption.

Once all the sprites are defined they must be assigned an object number in the range 00 to 58. An object can be one sprite on its own or a number of them strung together to form an animated sequence.

Certain object numbers are pre-assigned so that 00 is always player 1 and 01 is player bullet 1. One of the major items in this section is the edit sprite and place utility. It facilitates the selecting of sprites and arranging them in the desired order for animation.

There are options for determining the speed at which the object animates or moves and whether the animation, up to 18 frames, will take place in sequence or depend on direction of movement.

The other major option is to do with editing an object, which is an enemy, and defining how it will behave in the game. You can alter the speed of movement, the number of points the player receives when it is destroyed, how many times you have to hit it before it is blown away, whether it fires at random or in a specific direction, how rapidly it fires and the speed of the bullets, result of a collision with your ship or with a bullet, and a host of functions linked to other sections of the program.

The collision routines are interesting since you can make the enemy impervious to your fire and thus invincible, or set up things so that you can fly straight through them unharmed.

The other items in this section are mainly in the audio department. You can alter sliders on a display of the registers of the SID chip to produce wierd and wonderful noises or just dull ones; it all depends on your creativity. These noises can then be assigned as an explosion or bullet sound effect.

When you have your sprites and objects the next thing to do is design the background, so that you can plot the attack waves over the scenery. The background is made up from 4×8 pixel characters which are welded to form character blocks. They appear on the screen in a 5×5 matrix.

There are 254 characters available which you can paint with four colours. The restrictions on the colours this time is even more severe. The first three colours have to stay the same for the entire map. The fourth colour can be different for every block – not character – but has to be from the first eight in the C64 palette for some reason. A fair amount of foresight and

imagination has to go into planning the backgrounds if they are to avoid a similar look.

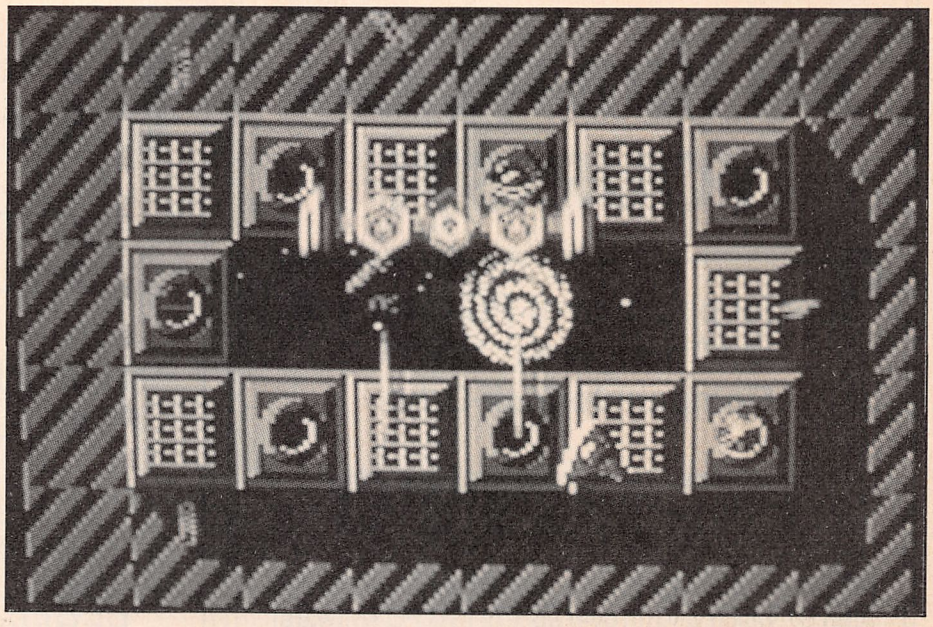
Once a block has been constructed it can be copied around and inserted into the map at the desired point. The basics are all there – now for the clever part, designing the enemy attack waves. Because this section is so heavy on memory there is a limit on how complex the attack waves can be. This takes the form of a units free counter which decreases as the patterns are defined.

First, you select the enemy sprite, then call up the map. You are given rough and fine control over where to position the sprite. Once the object is positioned you trace the attack route with the joystick and press F7 to store the pattern in memory.

It is nearly there now. The broad canvas of your megagame has been painted; all that is left to add are the small details and your signature.

The player variables include the number of lives up to seventy; speed of ship, 1–5; number of bullets, up to three; directional fire; bullet duration – 1–99; and collision with characters. The latter feature is the one responsible for determining whether the player ship can travel through obstructions and whether the ship will stop or be destroyed. So if you are a balloon you could have cacti which burst you and fences which just prevented your passages.

The same procedure is repeated for player two and you can have two players on screen at once. Sound effects are next. Although you cannot have music playing throughout the game, there is nowhere near sufficient memory; you can arrange simple tunes by having stationary objects firing bullets with a zero life expectancy so they do not go anywhere. Assign a different note to each object when it fires and I am sure anyone with sufficient patience could mangle a well-known tune. You can have 24 sounds effects, which is good enough.



Testing the game.

Down to defining the levels for your shoot-'em extravaganza. This option allows up to 22 levels, each of which may be still, continuously scrolling, or push scrolling – for Rambo style games. You can define whereabouts on your map as each level goes; they do not have to follow either and what happens at the end of the level.

The speed of scrolling is variable between slow and not so slow. For vertically-scrolling shooters it is certainly fast enough and, more important, very smooth. Considering the nature of the program, I was surprised and delighted to note that the scrolling is of professional quality.

What could possibly be left to do? The front end, of course – the piece with messages and introductions. The character set is completely re-definable and you can type in instructions for the people who never read the inlay.

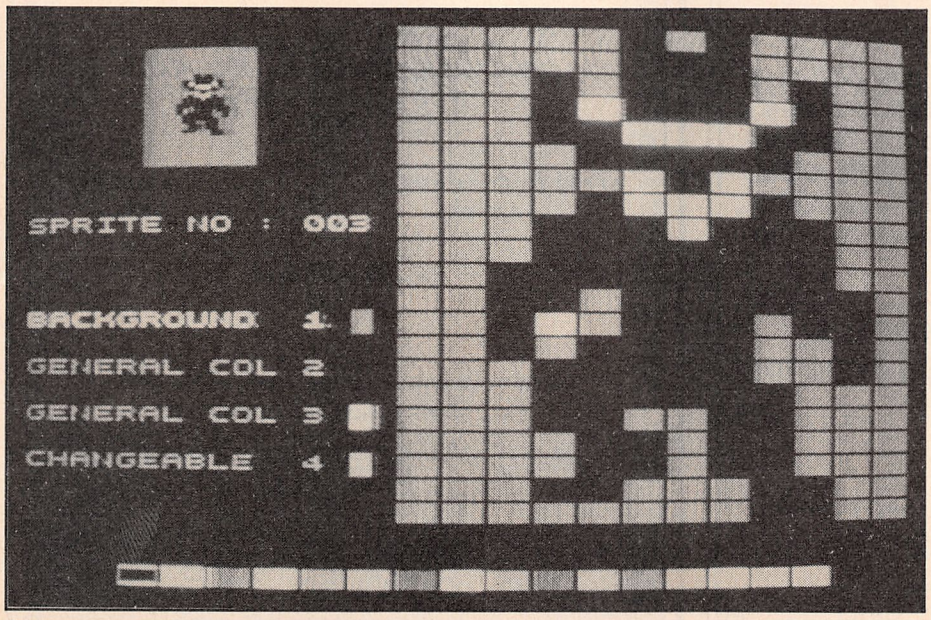
All that is left is to select in which colours you want the front end to flash and there you have Pommando 2, Blambo, Who Dares Wins a Trufle, or whatever. You have to test it as well.

Once satisfied that it is the next best thing since *Starglider* you can save everything in a format which can be reloaded and played without having to go through the editor.

The big question is if the Shoot 'Em-Up Construction Kit is good enough to enable you to produce professional software? The answer is almost or not exactly, depending on how you look at it. What you can produce is equivalent to budget standard, providing you have a fair amount of imagination, which is a real achievement by Outlaw.

The area which would have turned an excellent product into an absolutely brilliant one involves the changing of the presets. Then you could have *Nemesis*-style games in which the player picked up extra weapons, speed, limited invulnability and the like. I can see there is room for SEUCK 2 at some point.

What you have is basically the arcade equivalent of the Quill or GAC and the same concerns apply. If you have the imagination, the style and the vision, the Shoot 'Em-Up Construction Kit will serve you well. Congratulations to Sensible Software, the programmers and Outlaw for making the breakthrough. □



Editing a sprite.

Program *Shoot 'Em Up Construction Kit* **Micro** C64 **Price** £14.95 tape, £19.95 disc **Supplier** Outlaw Productions, 275 Pentonville Road, London N1.

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Compatible link-up

Barry Smith reviews a link hit by C Port for the Z88 and non-IBM compatible PCs.

When the Z-88 was launched, Cambridge Computer announced a PC link kit consisting of a cable and software for the IBM PC and compatibles which would allow *PipeDream* files to be transferred to IBM PCs and converted to *WordStar* or *Lotus 1-2-3* format. Owners of non-IBM compatible machines, however, have had to wait for third-party developers to produce link kits.

C Port

One such developer is London-based software house C Port. It already has a Z-88-Amstrad PCW import/export kit and is working on a similar kit for the Apple Macintosh. The latter is expected to be launched in the new year, probably at the Which Computer? Show, and will provide a transfer facility between *PipeDream* and the *MacWrite* file format.

The PCW kit allows owners of the Amstrad PCW series of machines to transfer files between *PipeDream* on the Z-88 and CP/M or *LocoScript* on the PCW. It consists of a 9-pin to 25-pin serial cable, menu-driven software to run on the PCW and a short manual. PCW owners will need one of the Centronics/RS232 add-on units available to use C Port and the software requires CP/M Plus version 1.4 or later.

Data transfer

Data transfer between PCW applications and *PipeDream* or Diary is via ASCII text files, the software does not create *LocoScript* files directly on the Amstrad. This has the advantage that *PipeDream* files can also be converted for use with many CP/M applications, such as *WordStar, NewWord* and *Protext* but it means that *LocoScript* users require version 1.2 or higher, since earlier versions of *LocoScript* do not support the ASCII format.

Before transferring files in either direction you must create plain text files. You do so with *PipeDream* by choosing the Save as Plain Text option on the <>FS (file save) screen. In the same way, *LocoScript* files destined for the Z-88 should first be converted using the *LocoScript* F7-Make ASCII file function from the disc management screen.

WordStar and *NewWord* users can achieve the same effect by printing to disc. You can then use the 'Convert CP/M text tile to PipeDream' option on the C Port menu to make a *PipeDream* file ready to send to the Z-88. *PipeDream* files are also converted to CP/M (ASCII) text files at the PCW end, since the Z-88 has no facilities to do this.

The C Port link makes use of the Z-88 built-in Import/Export file transfer program and implements the same file transfer protocol on the PCW. This protocol allows for batch transfer of multiple files and can send filenames across with the files. Moving either single or multiple files in either direction therefore is very straightforward.

Line breaks

When converting from *PipeDream* to CP/M format the program allows you to choose whether to preserve line breaks or not.

If you are transferring running text it is usually best to eliminate the line breaks so that hard carriage returns appear only at paragraph ends.

Each paragraph can then be re-formatted by the target word processor between whatever margins happen to be set. Tabular material, however, will transfer better if you retain the existing line breaks.

Once you have *PipeDream* files in CP/M format, most CP/M word processors should be able to read the text. If you have eliminated line breaks, *NewWord* and *WordStar* require you to re-format the entire document to wrap the lines again; the *NewWord* command is Ctrl-QB and the *WordStar* equivalent is Ctrl-QQB. To import the CP/M text file into *LocoScript,* you must re-boot the machine with a *LocoScript* start-of-day disc, create a new document and then import the text into the clean *LocoScript* document using f7-Insert Text. *LocoScript* will re-format the text as it is read in.

Transfer in the opposite direction works equally smoothly - the only pitfall is forgetting to choose the Load as Plain Text option on the <>FL (file load) screen; this results in each line being truncated at the first column.

Storing

In addition to text file transfer, the C Port software allows the transfer of binary files from the PCW to the Z-88. In theory, since the Z-88 and the PCW both use the Z-80 central processor, this should allow you to develop software using CP/M software tools - either the bundled assembler and debugging tools, or a high level language compiler - and transfer the finished result to the Z-88 for execution. It would then be possible to store the software on EPROM for distribution.

Given the current paucity of Z-88 development tools, this kind of procedure will probably be the only option for most serious developers for some time. Do not embark on it lightly, though, because the Z-88 is not a CP/M machine - you would need to determine how the Z-88 operating system works yourself or get technical assistance from Cambridge Computer.

Printer server

More useful for most PCW owners will be the ability to use C Port as a Printer server. The PCW printer has a non-standard interface and can be driven only by the PCW. By running the C Port software and choosing the printer server option you can print from *PipeDream* or the Diary using <>PO and allow C Port to route the output to the printer. Since the Z-88 default printer driver is Epson and the PCW printer is Epson-compatible this option works very well.

The C Port link kit is an excellent buy for PCW owners who want to use the Z-88 when they are away from their desks. The file transfer and conversion routines work well and the printer server option overcomes one of the main problems with the Z-88, its lack of a proper parallel printer port. □

Product: Z-88-PCW Import/Export Utility
Supplier: C Port
Telephone: 01-376 5098
Price: £24.95.

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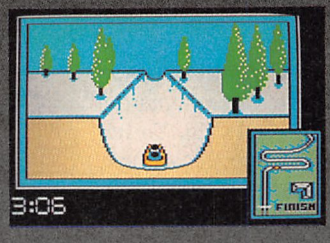
WINTER OLYMPIAD'88

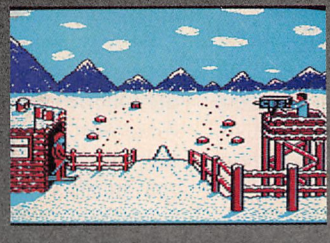
Winter Olympiad'88 is undoubtedly the best winter sports simulation to date. It features the classic winter olympic events; Ski Slalom, Giant Slalom, Two man bob, Ski-Jump, Biathalon and Speed Skating. These have been depicted in a way not seen on any home computer before. The result is a phenomenally realistic and spell-binding game.

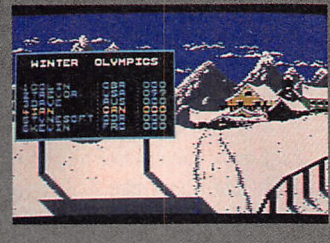
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Designer programming

The first part of Kenn Garroch's series on program design deals with the methods of preparation involved in writing a program.

One of the more difficult and somewhat obscure problems about writing a computer program is determining what needs to be done. The bigger the program, the more complex this becomes. One way is to tackle the problems as they appear.

The disadvantage with this is that, while it can work well for simple problems, when something difficult occurs work tends to halt until the problem is solved. Also with this method the finished program tends to be rather spaghetti-like and, after a few months, incomprehensible.

Method

A better method is to use the top-down approach and split the idea into sections which can easily be understood and hence programmed.

The best place to start is not with the computer but with a piece of paper. The first step is to write all the things the program should do. Options which many not have occurred in the original idea should also surface at this stage, making the program more comprehensive than it would have been if it had just been worked out on the keyboard.

Once the basics have been set out, the breakdown can begin, with the aim of transforming each section into a series of steps.

Since programming languages, with the possible exception of multiple-processor languages such as OCCAM and ADA, always work as a sequence of steps, the final program breakdown needs to be of the same format. As each section is broken down further, it should eventually approach a form which can be transferred directly into programming language statements.

Of course, while all this is happening, new possibilities will occur which can be included in the original idea. In fact, this can and does occur at every stage of the process.

Flow charting

Two formalised methods can be used to help with splitting the idea into programmable statements.

The most common is flowcharting, which uses a set of standardised boxes into which statements are placed. They are then linked with lines to show how the program runs from one to the other.

Each box can later be split into a series of smaller boxes, eventually giving a set of flowcharts which contain program commands. I find flowcharts to be rather time-consuming and sometimes confusing, although there are times when they produce a better result than any other method.

Alternatives

An alternative is to use a kind of written English-cum-programming language with labels, loops and jumps to set out the idea. This is sometimes known as pseudo code. They are broken into subsections which eventually become the program statements.

For most programming requirements, this is fairly fast and does not involve all those tedious boxes and lines flowcharting requires.

Writing program code

At some stage the program code, whether in a high-level language or machine code, has to be written.

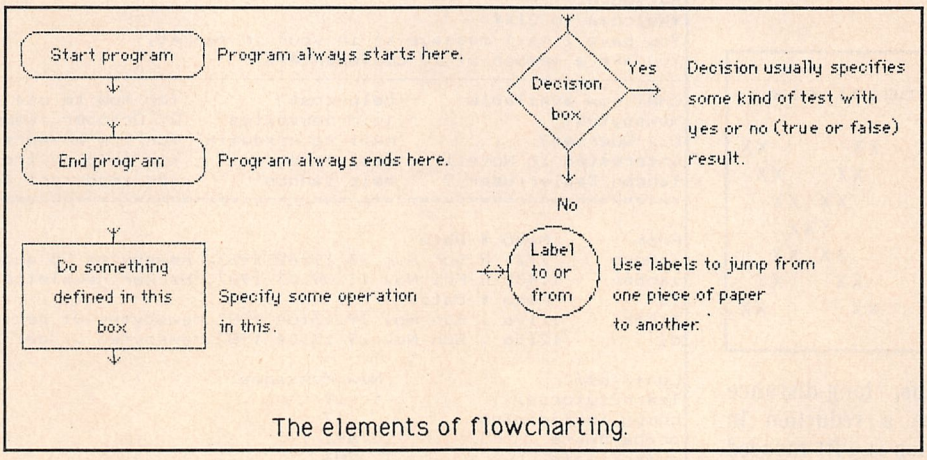
> **"The best place to start is not with the computer but with a piece of paper."**

At that point, a good reference book is vital. All languages and assemblers have numerous commands which can be put together in different ways to achieve the same result.

The trick is to determine the best way, i.e., the fastest, simplest, and most elegant method.

This is where the manual is useful and, although it is usually more important in machine code than in a high-level language, each command should be considered very carefully to make sure it is the best to use.

Once a method has been written, tested and used, it should be filed with as much documentation as necessary, so that it can be included in future programs with as little fuss as possible. That can save a great deal of time and effort at a later date. □



The elements of flowcharting.

Cix, cix, cix – the number of the base

Now into its second year of operation, Cix, the U.K. cousin of the *Byte* magazine on-line database in the U.S., is growing rapidly. Steve Gold looks at what services are available to subscribers who get their Cix by telephone.

One of the problems with accessing bulletin boards is the number of times another modem user beats you to it. With several thousand modems in use in the U.K. it is not surprising that the single-line BBS is overloaded at times.

Multi-user BBSs are a comparative rarity on this side of the Atlantic, on account of few subscription-based BBS services taking off in the U.K. One service which has taken off in recent months, however, is Cix, short for Compulink Information eXchange.

Modelled initially on the highly-successful Bix Byte Information eXchange system in the U.S., Cix uses similar software but running on a proprietary Tower Unix system with 4Mb of system RAM in which on-line users can cavort.

Cix has eight access ports which users dial up on the long-suffering Guildford telephone exchange. Soon the number of available ports will increase to 15, when the service transfers to a London 01 number.

```
Type 'cix' to login: cix

 XXXXX    XXXXXX   XX      XX
XXXXXXX     XX      XX    XX
XX   XX     XX       XX XX
XX          XX        XXX
XX   XX     XX       XX XX
XXXXXXX     XX      XX    XX
 XXXXX    XXXXXX   XX      XX
```

When that happens, long-distance callers will experience a reduction in calling costs, since London is a B1 reduced rate trunk call from most major centres in the U.K.

Cix costs £12 to sign-on, for which users receive a pseudonym on the network, as well as a password of their choice. For the materially minded, a comprehensive set of user documentation is supplied. It includes an A5-sized manual, useful help card and other documentary evidence of membership.

On-line costs are £1 per hour at cheap rate, £1.80 per hour at peak rate, which is defined as 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday. The charges are in addition to the telephone call costs associated with dialling Cix in Guildford.

The company hope soon to introduce a PSS link into the system, allowing users to access Cix via the Compulink closed-user PSS identity. Call costs for PSS access will probably be about three pence a minute, roughly comparable with those charged by Telecom Gold and other electronic mail networks. On-line charges accrued during the month are direct-debited to a recognised credit card or via a direct debit to a subscriber's bank account, a useful facility since it saves time on both sides.

With such a charging system users are expected to use at least £5 worth of call time per month – five hours during cheap rate, less during peak rate. Most of the Cix 920-plus membership easily exceed that call quota, although occasional users should be aware of the £5 per month minimum billing charge.

In return you get access to all eight Cix Dowty Quattro modems, all of which will accept calls at any modem speed between

```
On 0483-573337 V21 V22 V23
  V22bis (MNP supported)

CIX Version 4.02C
Nickname? (Enter 'new' for new user)
Password:
*Welcome to CIX*
You have 2 mail message(s) in your in-basket,
You are a member of 10 conference(s)
------------------------------------------------------------------------------
CHAT now available      'help chat'         for how to use it!
Newsbytes?              'join newsbytes'    27 October issue now online
Cix Queries?            'mail to cixadmin'  for the answers
Interested in Novell?   'mail to novell'    for info on the Netwire Conference
Tandon Dealer/User ?    'help tandon'       for important Tandon information!
==============================================================================

From        Memo * Date
fthorn      7721 R Sun Aug 23 18:42 1987. newsbytes 25 august edition
ianben     11435 R Fri Nov 13 09:03 1987. Hacker newsletter
To          Memo * Date
fthorn     12196 . Sun Nov 29 13:04 1987.newsbytes 01 dec 87 edition
dj         12196 . Sun Nov 29 13:04 1987.newsbytes 01 dec 87 edition

Conf/Topic                New Messages
learn/tutorial                  19
compulink/joining               17
pc/hardware                    691
pc/software                    783
pcw/news                       402
newsbytes/editorial              4
newsbytes/digest                 8
Main:
```

Logging-on.

```
CIX 'Internal' Conferences
--------------------------
o learn          Interactive tutorial for the Compulink CoSy system.
o conf           NEW CONFERENCES LIST
o vendor         All advertisments go here - rates available on request.
o moderators     CIX moderators conference
o eureka         Questions, Answers and discoveries on CIX, or BBS's.
o pads           PAD's - discussion on a choice of PAD for CIX.
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o compulink      All about Compulink
o chatter        Conference for general chatter - anything goes!
o cixadmin       Discussions on CIX administration and billing.
o classified     CIX classified adverts - private ads only.
o orderit        -=*=- The COMPULINK mail order service -=*=-
c devteam        The CIX Development Team Conference
o cix_fac        Suggestion area for changes to CIX
o cixutils       Utilities to help you use CIX
```

300 and 2,400 baud, including the ubiquitous Prestel 1,200/75 baud rate. For higher-speed and longer-distance callers, the Micro Networked Protocol error-correction standard is available automatically, provided that subscribers use a modem which supports the facility. Once on-line, users are presented with a rapid log-on system which requests their name and chosen password. Like its BBS forebears, Cix is split into a number of conferences, which are sub-divided further into topics.

Each conference, as can be seen from the log-on illustrations, is a sub-division of a group of conferences.

New conferences can be started by subscribers at any time and, provided there is sufficient interest, the conference will be sustained by Cix technical staff.

Creating a conference is no small task, since a conference creator usually is expected to become its moderator, logging-on regularly, answering users' questions and generally housekeeping the conference. Most users are content, however, to join a small selection of conferences and topics, reading the latest news and treating each conference much like a BBS in its own right.

"Cix costs £12 to sign-on, for which users receive a pseudonym on the network, as well as a password of their choice."

As well as the expected BBS-style topics of conversation, Cix also has a number of other user services, including a weekly world-wide news service - Newsbytes; a racing tipster - Captain Carsdale, and several hobby forums. These items are provided as a service for subscribers, either by Cix or people the company commissions on behalf of its subscribers.

```
Computer Connected Conferences
------------------------------
o lan            Local Area Network Conference.
o mug            Multi User games
o advsys         Byte's adventure authoring system
o cad            computer aided design
o 1992computer   Conference to design the mass market machine for 1992
o community      Applications of computing for the benefit of the community
o email          Electronic Mail
o orator         ORATOR, the Intergrated Services Communications Manager.
o prog.eds       Talk about your favourite programmers editor
o progtut        Tutorials on various programming languages.
c infocom        For all INFOCOM nuts - Your destiny is about to unfold!
o games          Games Conference
o videogames     For all you Video Junkies...
o stories        Anecdotes, Stories, Lies of computing as when you were a lad
o numerology     A discussion about number counting systems, et al.
```

```
"Other" Conferences
-------------------
o link           LINK! Magazine authors, editors, and scoundrels conference.
c usirg          United States Immigration Reform Group.
c hit            Electronic comms in F.E. course
```

Like bulletin boards, however, subscribers to Cix will reap additional benefits if they do more than just look in on the conferences. Participation is the order of the day, with many users becoming familiar people to the many subscribers who log-on to the service each day. Several system enhancements are in the pipeline. One major enhancement being beta-tested by subscribers at the moment is a multi-user game - Mug *Phantasia*. Like most Mugs, *Phantasia* is designed to be played by several people at the same time. Once Cix moves to a London telephone number and its line capacity increases to 15, many more people will be able to log-in simultaneously and play the game at a surprisingly low cost.

Compared to the cost of playing other Mugs such as *The Gods* and *Mud* the BT Multi-User *Dungeon* - *Phantasia* represents excellent value at £1 an hour. Once Cix becomes available via PSS the costs of calling the service will fall still further.

Cix is growing all the time. It grew originally out of Compulink, a multi-user BBS network created by Frank and Sylvia Thornley, who still run the Cix system. Compulink was and still is a major distributor of shareware and public domain software. For around £3 a disc, users can get any one of literally thousands of PD/shareware software packages, all classified neatly via a series of library discs.

Contained in a new user's subscription pack are several discs which unpack to give a complete list of what software is available through Cix. Another service available free to subscribers is a monthly newsletter, *Link*. It aims to keep the more occasional user of Cix aware of what they are missing. The more frequent user will also be enlightened by Link, since there is so much activity on what must surely be one of the busiest U.K. on-line systems.

Further details of Cix can be obtained by writing or telephoning the service direct. The service is available on a trial basis to new users, who may log-on using the main system port. □

```
Leisure Conferences
-------------------
o cd             Compact Disc Swap Shop and Mail order
o books          At last...some culture
o films          What's happening on the big screen.
o food           Food Drink ETC
o jokes          Here we go then !!!
o ring_world     Ring World - The Game!
o philosophy     A conference for those interested in philosophy.
o lonely_hearts  There must be somebody special out there somewhere.......
o gene           A conference for anyone interested in genealogy.
o diplomacy      The Diplomacy board game
o radio          For anyone interested in any aspect of Amater Radio.
o music          Music of all types in all forms
o audio          Technical forum for HIFI, stereo, studio work etc.
o aviation       All aspects of General Aviation
```

Compulink Information Exchange,
Compulink User Group,
67 Woodbridge Road,
Guildford, Surrey GU1 4RD.
Tel: 0483 65895 (voice)
0483 573337 (data - V21, V22, V22Bis and V23 baud rates)

ORG

Robert Glavas

The game of *ORG* is based loosely on the good old *Connect 4* theme. Instead of using the Earth's gravity so that the counters drop down, ORG can be played in four directions and is therefore more complicated.

There are two players, blue and yellow – dark or light for those in black and white – who must rotate their counters around the board using the 'Z' and 'X' keys. When the required position has been reached, the counter can be whizzed across the board by pressing SPACE. If a Kempston interface is present the counters are controlled by a joystick.

A game can end in a draw or by the yellow or blue player winning. If a game has been won, the score will be updated and the board re-set. The STOP key – symbol shifted A – acts as a reset switch which can be used to restart the game.

The program uses graphical techniques which ensure that it can be played in black and white or colour. It should also be compatible with all of the Spectrum series of machines. □

```
  7 DATA 2,P(PLAYER)*2+7
 14 DATA (P(PLAYER)-6)*2,23
 21 DATA 18,23-(P(PLAYER)-14)*2
 28 DATA 18-(P(PLAYER)-21)*2,7
100 RESTORE 100: FOR F=USR "A" TO USR "H"+7: READ A: POKE F,A: NEXT F
110 DATA 0,31,63,127,A,A,A,A
120 DATA 0,252,254,255,A,A,A,A
130 DATA 127,A,A,A,A,A,63,31
140 DATA 255,A,A,A,A,A,254,252
150 DATA 0,21,42,85,42,85,42,85
160 DATA 0,84,170,85,170,85,170,85
170 DATA 42,85,42,85,42,85,42,21
180 DATA 170,85,170,85,170,85,170,84
200 IF INKEY$<>"" THEN  GO TO 200
210 OVER 0: INVERSE 0: POKE 23693,71: POKE 23624,71: POKE 23658,8: POKE 23651,2
0: POKE 23562,2: POKE 23609,3: CLEAR : BEEP .0001,69: GO SUB 9000
220 LET KEMP=1: FOR F=1 TO 10: IF IN 31>31 THEN  LET KEMP=0
230 NEXT F
240 RANDOMIZE
300 LET Q$=CHR$ 144+CHR$ 145: LET W$=CHR$ 146+CHR$ 147: LET E$=CHR$ 148+CHR$ 14
9: LET R$=CHR$ 150+CHR$ 151
310 LET Z$=E$+E$+E$+E$+E$+E$+E$+E$: LET X$=R$+R$+R$+R$+R$+R$+R$+R$
500 PRINT AT 0,0; INK 0;"ORG"
510 FOR F=174 TO 169 STEP -1: FOR G=1 TO 23: IF POINT (G,F) THEN  PRINT AT 3+(1
75-F),(G*1.3);Q$;AT 4+(175-F),(G*1.3); INK 2;R$
520 NEXT G: NEXT F
530 PRINT AT 17,2;"BY ROBERT GLAVAS  (C)1987 A.D"
540 LET B=1/20: BEEP B,15: BEEP B,20: BEEP B,22: BEEP B,28: BEEP B,26: BEEP B,2
6: BEEP B,26: BEEP B,30: BEEP B,30: BEEP B,30
700 DIM T$(2,16): LET T$(1)="ANY KEY TO BEGIN": LET T$(2)="                ": D
IM T(2,2): LET T(1,1)=20: LET T(2,1)=10: LET C=1
710 PRINT  INK 5;AT 21,8;T$(C): LET T(C,2)=0
720 IF INKEY$<>"" THEN  GO TO 800
730 LET T(C,2)=T(C,2)+1: IF T(C,2)=T(C,1) THEN  LET C=(1-(C-1))+1: GO TO 710
735 IF INKEY$<>"" THEN  GO TO 800
740 GO TO 730
800 LET BLUE=1: LET YELLOW=2
810 LET NONE=0: LET DRAW=-1
820 DIM I(2): LET I(BLUE)=1: LET I(YELLOW)=6
830 DIM K(2): LET K(BLUE)=65: LET K(YELLOW)=70
840 DIM W(2): LET W(BLUE)=0: LET W(YELLOW)=0
900 CLS : GO SUB 9000: FOR F=16 TO 175 STEP 20: INK 6: PLOT F,0: DRAW -F,175-F:
 INK 5: PLOT 255-F,175: DRAW F,F-175: NEXT F: INK 7
910 PRINT  OVER 1;AT 4,12;"ANY  KEY";AT 12,6;"AN EVEN NUMBER MEANS";AT 14,6;"TH
AT THE BLUE PLAYER";AT 16,11;"GOES FIRST"
920 FOR Q=1 TO 300: LET R=INT (RND*8500+.5)+1000: PRINT AT 8,14;R: IF INKEY$<>"
" THEN  LET Q=301
930 NEXT Q: LET PLAYER=YELLOW: IF R/2=INT (R/2) THEN  LET PLAYER=BLUE
940 LET B=1/20: BEEP B,25: BEEP B,27: BEEP B,29: BEEP B,27: BEEP B,20: BEEP B,2
7: BEEP B,23: BEEP B,20: BEEP B,20: BEEP B,20
950 FOR F=1 TO 300: NEXT F
999 REM %%%% SET %%%%
1000 CLS : GO SUB 9000
1010 PRINT AT 2,0;
1020 PRINT TAB 9; BRIGHT 0;Z$'TAB 9;X$
1030 FOR F=1 TO 7: PRINT TAB 7; BRIGHT 0;Z$( TO 2); BRIGHT 1;Z$; BRIGHT 0;Z$( TO
 2)
1040 PRINT TAB 7; BRIGHT 0;X$( TO 2); BRIGHT 1;X$; BRIGHT 0;X$( TO 2): NEXT F
1050 PRINT TAB 9; BRIGHT 0;Z$'TAB 9;X$
1060 PRINT AT 5,2; INK I(BLUE);Q$;AT 6,3;E$;AT 6,2;W$;AT 7,3;R$;AT 5,28; INK I(Y
ELLOW);Q$;AT 6,29;E$;AT 6,28;W$;AT 7,29;R$; INK 7;AT 9,2;"WON";AT 9,27;"WON";AT
 11,5-LEN (STR$ W(BLUE));W(BLUE);AT 11,30-LEN (STR$ W(YELLOW));W(YELLOW)
1070 DIM P(2): LET P(BLUE)=1: LET P(YELLOW)=15
1080 LET ENTRS=0
1999 REM %%%% GAME %%%%
2000 LET WINNER=NONE
2010 FOR Q=-4E10 TO 4E10: GO SUB 3000
2020 LET PLAYER=3-PLAYER
2030 IF WINNER=NONE THEN  NEXT Q
2040 IF WINNER=DRAW THEN  PRINT AT 21,12;"D R A W"
2050 IF WINNER=BLUE THEN  PRINT AT 21,7;"B L U E    W I N S"
2060 IF WINNER=YELLOW THEN  PRINT AT 21,5;"Y E L L O W    W I N S"
2100 LET B=1/20
2110 FOR F=1 TO 3
2120 BEEP B,30: BEEP B,32: BEEP B,35: BEEP B,40: BEEP B,35: BEEP B,40: BEEP B,40
: BEEP B,40: BEEP B,40
2130 NEXT F
2140 IF INKEY$="" THEN  GO TO 2140
2145 IF INKEY$=" STOP " THEN  GO TO 200
2150 IF INKEY$<>"" THEN  GO TO 2150
2160 IF WINNER=DRAW THEN  GO TO 1000
2200 LET PLAYER=WINNER: GO TO 1000
2999 REM %%%% MOVES %%%%
3000 RESTORE P(PLAYER): READ X,Y: PRINT AT X,Y; INK I(PLAYER);Q$;AT X+1,Y;W$
3010 FOR Q=-4E10 TO 4E10: LET A$=INKEY$: GO SUB (8030 AND NOT KEMP)+(8000 AND KE
MP): IF A$<>" STOP " AND A$<>" " AND A$<>"Z" AND A$<>"X" THEN  NEXT Q
3015 IF A$=" STOP " THEN  GO TO 200
3020 IF A$=" " THEN  GO SUB 3100
3021 IF WINNER<>NONE THEN  RETURN
3022 IF A$=" " THEN  GO TO 3000
3030 LET Z=-1: IF A$="X" THEN  LET Z=1
3035 RESTORE P(PLAYER): READ X,Y: PRINT AT X,Y; INK 7; BRIGHT 0;E$;AT X+1,Y;R$
3040 LET P(PLAYER)=P(PLAYER)+Z: IF P(PLAYER)=0 THEN  LET P(PLAYER)=28
3050 IF P(PLAYER)=29 THEN  LET P(PLAYER)=1
3055 RESTORE P(PLAYER): READ X,Y: PRINT AT X,Y; INK I(PLAYER);Q$;AT X+1,Y;W$
3059 BEEP .01,40: BEEP .01,45
3060 NEXT Q
3099 REM %%%% SLOT %%%%
3100 IF P(PLAYER)<8 THEN  IF ATTR (X+2,Y)<>71 THEN  RETURN
3110 IF P(PLAYER)>7 AND P(PLAYER)<15 THEN  IF ATTR (X,Y-1)<>71 THEN  RETURN
3120 IF P(PLAYER)>14 AND P(PLAYER)<22 THEN  IF ATTR (X-1,Y)<>71 THEN  RETURN
3130 IF P(PLAYER)>21 THEN  IF ATTR (X,Y+2)<>71 THEN  RETURN
4000 IF P(PLAYER)>7 THEN  GO TO 4100
4010 FOR F=X+2 TO 16 STEP 2
4020 PRINT AT F-2,Y; BRIGHT 1-(1 AND F=4); INK 7;E$;AT F-1,Y;R$
4030 PRINT AT F,Y; INK I(PLAYER);Q$;AT F+1,Y;W$
4035 BEEP .05,RND*5+30
4040 IF ATTR (F+2,Y)<>71 THEN  LET A=F: LET F=99
4050 NEXT F
4060 LET B=Y: GO SUB 5000
4070 RETURN
4100 IF P(PLAYER)>14 THEN  GO TO 4200
4110 FOR F=Y-2 TO 9 STEP -2
4120 PRINT AT X,F+2; BRIGHT 1-(1 AND F=21); INK 7;E$;AT X+1,F+2;R$
4130 PRINT AT X,F; INK I(PLAYER);Q$;AT X+1,F;W$
4135 BEEP .05,RND*5+30
4140 IF ATTR (X,F-2)<>71 THEN  LET B=F: LET F=-1
4150 NEXT F
4160 LET A=X: GO SUB 5000
4170 RETURN
4200 IF P(PLAYER)>21 THEN  GO TO 4300
4210 FOR F=X-2 TO 4 STEP -2
```

```
4220 PRINT AT F+2,Y; BRIGHT 1-(1 AND F=16); INK 7;E$;AT F+3,Y;R$
4230 PRINT AT F,Y; INK I(PLAYER);Q$;AT F+1,Y;W$
4235 BEEP .05,RND*5+30
4240 IF ATTR (F-2,Y)<>71 THEN  LET A=F: LET F=-1
4250 NEXT F
4260 LET B=Y: GO SUB 5000
4270 RETURN
4310 FOR F=Y+2 TO 21 STEP 2
4320 PRINT AT X,F-2; BRIGHT 1-(1 AND F=9); INK 7;E$;AT X+1,F-2;R$
4330 PRINT AT X,F; INK I(PLAYER);Q$;AT X+1,F;W$
4335 BEEP .05,RND*5+30
4340 IF ATTR (X,F+2)<>71 THEN  LET B=F: LET F=99
4350 NEXT F
4360 LET A=X: GO SUB 5000
4370 RETURN
4999 REM %%%% CHECK+SWAP %%%%
5000 IF A=4 OR A=16 OR B=9 OR B=21 THEN  LET ENTRS=ENTRS+1: IF ENTRS=24 THEN  LE
T WINNER=DRAW
5005 FOR G=-6 TO 0 STEP 2
5010 IF ATTR (A-G,B+G)=K(PLAYER) AND ATTR (A-G-2,B+G+2)=K(PLAYER) AND ATTR (A-G-
4,B+G+4)=K(PLAYER) AND ATTR (A-G-6,B+G+6)=K(PLAYER) THEN  GO TO 7000
5020 IF ATTR (A+G,B+G)=K(PLAYER) AND ATTR (A+G+2,B+G+2)=K(PLAYER) AND ATTR (A+G+
4,B+G+4)=K(PLAYER) AND ATTR (A+G+6,B+G+6)=K(PLAYER) THEN  GO TO 7000
5030 IF ATTR (A,B+G)=K(PLAYER) AND ATTR (A,B+G+2)=K(PLAYER) AND ATTR (A,B+G+4)=K
(PLAYER) AND ATTR (A,B+G+6)=K(PLAYER) THEN  GO TO 7000
5040 IF ATTR (A+G,B)=K(PLAYER) AND ATTR (A+G+2,B)=K(PLAYER) AND ATTR (A+G+4,B)=K
(PLAYER) AND ATTR (A+G+6,B)=K(PLAYER) THEN  GO TO 7000
5100 NEXT G
6000 LET PLAYER=3-PLAYER
6100 RETURN
7000 LET WINNER=PLAYER
7010 LET W(PLAYER)=W(PLAYER)+1
7020 RETURN
7999 REM %%%% KEMPSTON %%%%
8000 IF IN 31=1 THEN  LET A$="X": RETURN
8010 IF IN 31=2 THEN  LET A$="Z": RETURN
8020 IF IN 31=16 THEN  LET A$=" "
8030 RETURN
8999 REM %%%% SIG %%%%
9000 PLOT 237,0: DRAW 0,10: DRAW 6,0: PLOT 246,8: DRAW -7,0: DRAW 0,-8: DRAW 7,0
: DRAW 0,8: PLOT 248,10: DRAW 0,-10: DRAW 7,0: DRAW 0,8: DRAW -7,0
9010 RETURN
9100 REM  ONCE PROGRAM HAS BEEN
9101 REM  COMPLETED IT CAN BE
9102 REM  SAVED TO AUTO-RUN WITH
9103 REM  SAVE "ORG" LINE 0
```


The Puz

Stuart W. Booth and
David W. Ratcliffe

The Atari ST range of computers are undoubtedly the most powerful computers in their price range. They are also fortunate to have a very powerful operating system (TOS) and also an exceedingly friendly front end (GEM).

"THE PUZ" is a GFA BASIC program which accepts a NEOchrome or Degas picture, displays it for 4 seconds and then randomly jumbles it. The puzzle is to unjumble it by rearranging the pieces. This is easily done by pointing at the piece you want to move with the mouse and clicking with the left button on any part of it – it will then be highlighted by a dotted line and the pointer will change to a hand. Place the hand where you want to position the selected piece and press the left button. The two pieces will then exchange places. To help you, you can view the unjumbled picture by pressing the right button. However, you can only do this three times so be thrifty! If at any time you want to leave the program press the ESCape key.

The whole program is run from within a single "DO" loop using only procedures to branch to the necessary code when needed. This enables the program to be adapted by only changing the relevant sections of code.

Procedure Load-picture

This presents the user with the standard GEM file select dialogue box by using the

```
Rem ************************************************************************
Rem *  THE PUZ picture jigsaw by: Stuart W. Booth &                         *
Rem *                             David  W. Ratcliffe                       *
Rem *                             August 1987                               *
Rem ************************************************************************
Rem * GFA Basic stores a menu bar as a predefined string array.            *
Rem * It then uses the array number of the string to indicate which menu   *
Rem * choice has been selected.                                            *
Rem ************************************************************************
Dim A$(23)
A$(0)=" Desk "
A$(1)="   About THE PUZ   "
A$(2)="--------------------"
A$(3)="1"
A$(4)="2"
A$(5)="3"
A$(6)="4"
A$(7)="5"
A$(8)="6"
A$(9)=""
A$(10)=" Options "
A$(11)=" Load NEO picture   "
A$(12)=" Load DEGAS picture "
A$(13)=" Start THE PUZ "
A$(14)="--------------------"
A$(15)="  Quit  "
A$(16)=""
A$(17)=" Help "
A$(18)=" Loading picture "
A$(19)=" Starting THE PUZ "
A$(20)=" Moving pieces "
A$(21)=" Quiting "
A$(22)=" Statistics "
Rem ************************************************************************
Rem * The menu is 'switched on' by calling Menu with the desired string    *
Rem ************************************************************************
Menu A$()
Menu Off
Setcolor 15,0,0,0
Rem ************************************************************************
Rem * The 'On Menu Gosub' is used whenever a menu choice is selected.      *
Rem * this then calls the Procedure INFO which determines which choice was *
Rem * selected and calls the relevent procedure.                           *
Rem ************************************************************************
On Menu  Gosub Info
Do
  If Chosen%=False
    Menu 13,2
  Endif
  On Menu
Loop
Procedure Info
  Flag%=False
  Value=Menu(0)
  If Value=1
    Alert 1,"        THE PUZ|By D Ratcliffe and S Booth|   Written in GFA
Basic!       August 1987",1,"  OK  ",B
  Endif
  If Value=11 Or Value=12
    @Load_picture(Value)
  Endif
  If Value=13
    @Jumble
    @Main
```

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◀ continued from page 45

command FILESELECT. The required file name is returned in Orig-pic$ variable.

The picture specified by the file name is loaded into the screen memory using the standard BLOAD command. The screen start address is found by using the XBIOS function. The colour palette is then loaded into the palette address in a single command using the standard XB10S call. SGET is used to capture the full screen and store it into the string ORIG-pic$.

Procedure Jumble

The screen is divided into one hundred blocks in a ten by ten matrix. Four random integers are found using the RANDOM function, these numbers correspond to the piece number to move from and to. After being converted into actual screen co-ordinates, the two pieces to swap are stored in variables BLOCK1$ and BLOCK2$ using the GET command. The PUT command is used to place the two blocks in transposed positions.

Procedure Peep-at-picture

Before allowing you to peep at the original picture, the jumbled picture is saved to memory using the SGET command. The original picture is displayed with the SPUT command for four seconds, before being replaced with the jumbled picture again. The variable looked is used to hold the number of times you have peeped at the picture.

Procedure Do-you-want-to-quit

An Alert box is displayed to confirm your request to quit. Variable answer% stores which answer you gave. The program is either terminated or resumed depending upon this variable. □

```
  Endif
  If Value=15
    @Do_you_want_to_quit_the_program
    If Flag%=True
      End
    Endif
  Endif
  If Value=18
    @Help_load_picture
  Endif
  If Value=19
    @Help_starting
  Endif
  If Value=20
    @Help_moving_pieces
  Endif
  If Value=21
    @Help_quitting
  Endif
  If Value=22
    @Help_statistics
  Endif
  Menu A$()
Return
Procedure Main
  Menu Kill
  Do
    Rem ************************************************************************
    Rem * The whole program is controled from within this "DO" loop,          *
    Rem * using only procedures to branch to other program segments.          *
    Rem ************************************************************************
```

```
    If Mousek=2 And Looked<4  !Is the mouse's 2'nd button pressed? and have
you
      @Peep_at_picture        !peeped more than 3 times?
    Endif
    If Mousek=1               !Is 1st butto
      @Move_block             !Yes, prepare to move that block.
      If Complete=True        !Have you completed the picture?
        @You_have_done_it     !Yes, Congratulations!
      Endif
    Endif
    If Inkey$=Chr$(27)        !Is the ESC key being pressed?
      @Do_you_want_to_quit_this_picture    !Yes, ask if you want to quit.
    Endif
    If Flag%=True Then
      Goto Leave_main
    Endif
  Loop
  Leave_main:
  On Menu  Gosub Info
Return
Procedure Load_picture(Type%)          !Type% indicates if the selected
picture was a NEO or DEGAS format file
  Moves_made%=False
  If Type%=11 Then
    Offset%=128
    Palette%=124
    Filetype$="\*.NEO"
  Endif
  If Type%=12 Then
    Offset%=34
    Palette%=32
    Filetype$="\*.PI*"
  Endif
  Cls
  Fileselect Filetype$,Dum$,Orig_pic$
  If Orig_pic$=""           !Why did you press on 'CANCEL'?
    Goto Leave_load
  Endif
  Bload Orig_pic$,Xbios(2)-Offset%  !Load file into screen memory.
  A=Xbios(6,L:Xbios(2)-Palette%)    !Reset the colour Palette.
  Sget Orig_pic$                !Store the screen display in variable.
  Chosen%=True
  Leave_load:
Return
Procedure Jumble
  Rem ************************************************************************
  Rem * Procedure to jumble to screen about                                  *
  Rem * Variable Loop% controls difficulty: The higher, the harder!          *
  Rem ************************************************************************
  Resolution%=Xbios(4)
  If Resolution%=0
    Res_offsetx%=32
  Else
    Res_offsetx%=64
  Endif
  Res_offsety%=20
  Add Res_offsety%,20 And Resolution%=2
  Alert 2,"How hard do you want the PUZ",2,"NOT SO|SO-SO|ARRGGHH!",Answer%
  Sput Orig_pic$
  For Loop%=1 To 50*Answer%
    From_x%=Random(10)
    From_y%=Random(10)
    To_x%=Random(10)
    To_y%=Random(10)
    Get
From_x%*Res_offsetx%,From_y%*Res_offsety%,From_x%*Res_offsetx%+(Res_offsetx%-1
),From_y%*Res_offsety%+(Res_offsety%-1),Block1$
    Get
To_x%*Res_offsetx%,To_y%*Res_offsety%,To_x%*Res_offsetx%+(Res_offsetx%-1),To_y
%*Res_offsety%+(Res_offsety%-1),Block2$
    Put From_x%*Res_offsetx%,From_y%*Res_offsety%,Block2$
    Put To_x%*Res_offsetx%,To_y%*Res_offsety%,Block1$
  Next Loop%
  Prog_start_time%=Timer
Return
Procedure Peep_at_picture
  Rem ************************************************************************
  Rem *Procedure to peep at the original picture (3 times only!)             *
  Rem ************************************************************************
  Sget Jumble_pic$    !Store jumbled picture in variable.
  Sput Orig_pic$      !Re-place original picture.
  Pause 100           !Gaze at original masterpiece!
  Inc Looked          !Increment variable, to ensure that you don't cheat!
  Sput Jumble_pic$
Return
Procedure Do_you_want_to_quit_the_program
  Alert 2,"Do you really want to QUIT|this wonderful program",2,"QUIT!SORRY!!
BOOBED",Answer%
  If Answer%=1
    Flag%=True
  Endif
Return
Procedure Do_you_want_to_quit_this_picture
  Alert 2," |           Well?| | What do you want to do now?
",2,"QUIT!|NFO|CONTINUE",Answer%
  If Answer%=1
    Chosen%=False
    Flag%=True
  Endif
  If Answer%=2
    @Show_infomation
  Endif
Return
```

continued next week

Print 4

Jonathan Lewis

This routine for the Amstrad prints a block of 4 characters at the text position. Enter the routine and use CALL 40000,C1,C3 to execute it. C1 is the character number printed at the top left, the top right is ASCII code C1+1. The bottom left is C3 and bottom right is C3+1. For example, CALL 40000,65,67 prints

AB
CD

□

```
5 ' PRINT A BLOCK OF 4 CHARS AT THE CURSO
R POSITION
10 ADDR=40000
20 READ A$:POKE ADDR,VAL("&"+A$):ADDR=ADD
R+1
30 IF A$="C9" THEN PRINT "CALL 40000,C1,C
3 TO ACTIVATE":END
40 GOTO 20
50 DATA DD,46,02,78,CD,5A,BB,3C,CD,5A,BB,
3E,0A,CD,5A,BB,3E,08,CD,5A,BB,3E,08,CD,5A
,BB,DD,46,00,78,CD,5A,BB,3C,CD,5A,BB,C9
```

Scroll

Jonathan Lewis

The ability to scroll the screen is quite handy when writing text-based programs from wordprocessors to adventure games. Scrolling up or down is even more useful. This routine for the Amstrad will go in either direction and allow selection of the background to be used to fill the empty space that is scrolled onto the screen. Simply type in the program, run it, and use CALL 40000,ink,direction, ink is from 0-255 and defines the filling pattern, direction is 0 for down, and any other value less than 256 for up. □

```
5 ' Scroll
10 addr=40000
20 READ a$:POKE addr,VAL("&"+a$):addr=add
r+1:IF a$="C9" THEN PRINT "Param scroll i
nstalled:call 40000,ink,direction(0='down
' - any non zero='up')":END
25 GOTO 20
30 DATA DD,46,00,DD,5E,02,7B,CD,4D,BC,C9
```

Interesting Cursor

Ivor Hewitt

This routine for the BBC is intended for inclusion in any program that requires input from the user. It makes the cursor more interesting to watch.

For those BBC users who have the older Basic, lines 280-320 can be changed to:

```
9
280 .dur
285 ]
290 P%=P%+1
295 [
300 .count
305 ]
310 P%=P%+1
315 [
320 .du2
325 ]:P%=P%+1
NEXT
```

To get around the fact that EQU does not exist. □

```
 80 *TV0,1
 90 MODE1
100 *FX13,4
110 e=5:s=7:REM change to e=8:s=16 FOR MODE 7
120 FORP=0TO2STEP2
130   P%=&640
140   [OPTP
150   PHP:PHA:TYA:PHA:TXA:PHA
160   INCcount
170   LDA#3
180   CMPcount
190   BNEend
200   LDA#0:STAcount
210   LDA#10:STA&FE00:LDAdur:STA&FE01
220   LDA#11:STA&FE00:LDAdu2:STA&FE01
230   DECdu2:INCdur:LDAdur:CMP#e:BNEend
240   LDA#0:STAdur:LDA#s:STAdu2
250   .end
260   PLA:TAX:PLA:TAY:PLA:PLP
270   RTS
280   .dur
290   EQUB0
300   .count
310   EQUB0
320   .du2:EQUB(8)
330 ]:NEXT
340 ?&220=&40:?&221=&06:*FX14,4
```

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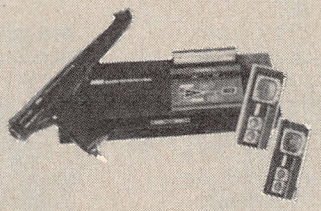
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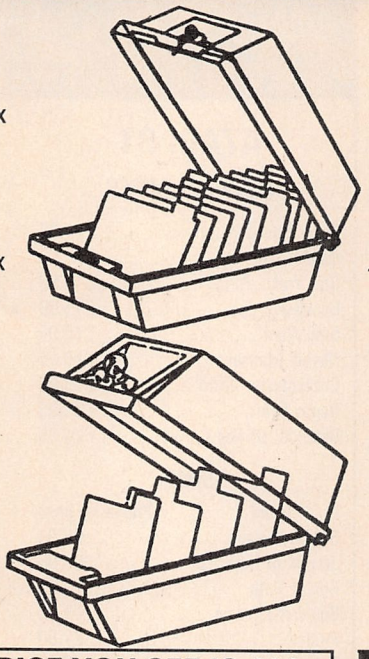
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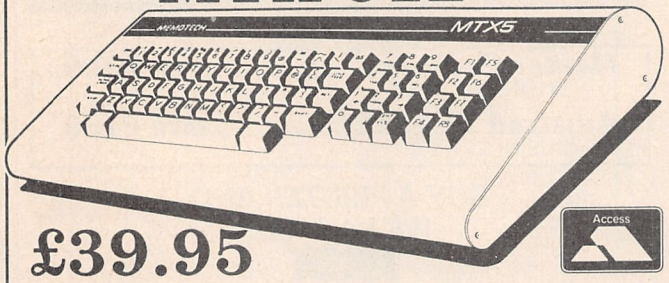
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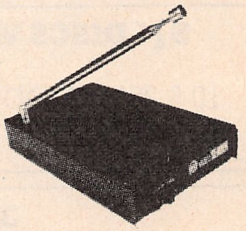
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COMMENT

The slow decline of adventure games

A few years ago, adventure games were a growth area.

Today this is not so. Adventure games no longer sell in anywhere near the numbers of any moderate arcade game. The major software houses no longer accept adventure games of any traditional format. It has been a slow process but an inevitable one. First, the text adventures were dropped to be replaced by graphics and text. Now it is difficult to sell any standard adventure game in any numbers, the only exceptions being the spoof games of Delta 4 and games with a license behind them.

The first reason it has happened is a reflection of society and overall standards of basic education and literacy.

The second reason is also to do with standards - of programming, presentation and content. The adventure game market was given a boost when *Quill* and other adventure game designers were introduced. It also caused the death of the standard adventure game.

With the *PAW*, successor to *Quill*, it is possible to produce a text and graphics adventure with comparative ease. It led many people to the belief they could create a text adventure and now the market is flooded with them. As the poorer games failed to sell, distributors and shops became wary of all but the big-name adventure games on the bigger machines.

Adventure game producers never seem to have been able to adapt to new styles and forms of game in the way arcade producers have done. Most of the adventure games crowd seem happy to plod along with the same old, tired format and to stagnate.

Everything must adapt and I feel that unless the adventure game does, it will soon become a quiet backwater.

Mike Lewis

PUZZLE

I have just finished reading the latest bestseller. I began the book last Sunday and read a certain number of pages each day until I finished it on the following Friday; a total of six days.

On each day after the first, I read as many pages as indicated by the sum or the digits of the page number reached the previous day.

If this sounds complicated, let me explain:

Suppose that on the first day I had read to page 84, the following day I would read 144 more pages, since 144 is equal to the square of eight plus four. This would take me to page 228, which is where I would continue on the third day.

In fact, I found that when I reached Friday, the quota of pages I had set myself to read brought me exactly to the final page in the book.

If there were 411 pages in the book how many did I read on each of the six days?

The answer will be in next week's issue.

Solution to puzzle 3-9 Dec

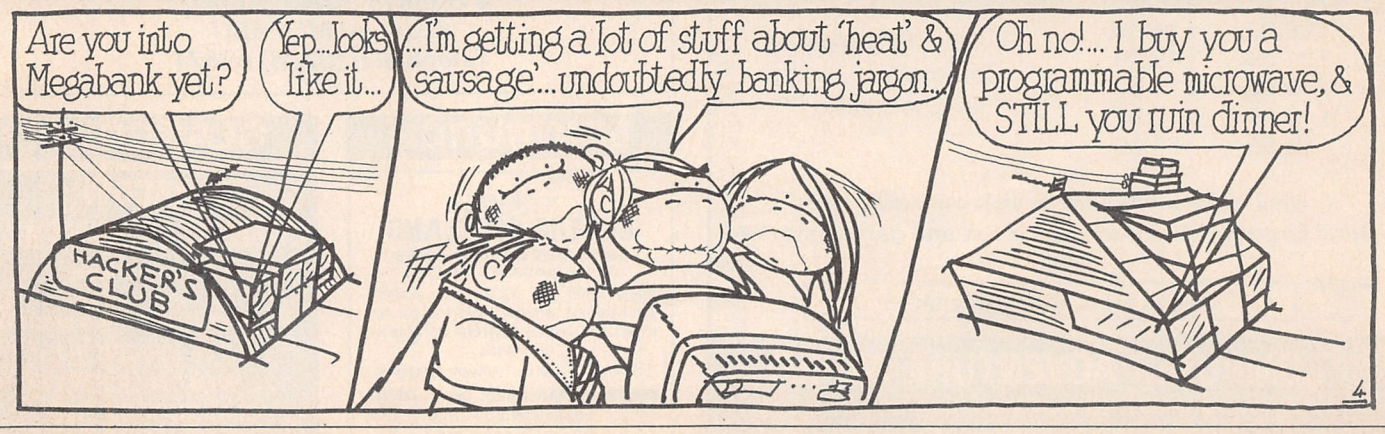
Answer: The correct distances for each of the nine days were: 157, 162, 98, 113, 93, 98, 65, 101 and 122. They total 1,009 miles.

Solution: The estimates for each of the three men on the nine days of the race is held in the two-dimensional array M(9,9). The values are read into the array from the DATA line at 1000.

Each day is represented by one of the nine loops A to I. As no man was correct on two consecutive days, certain values can be eliminated from the test. This is done in the IF/THEN part of lines 50 to 120. As each man was correct three times out of the nine there must be three values of '1', three of '2' and three of '3' in the loops. Thus, the product of values A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H and I must equal 216. The order of the numbers will not affect this total but will indicate each of the men having three correct guesses. Finally, the grand total is assessed - line 150. If this equals 1,009 the results are printed-out.

```
 10 DIM M(9,3)
 20 FOR T=1 TO 9:FOR D=1 TO 3
 30 READ X:M(T,D)=X:NEXT:NEXT
 40 FOR A=1 TO 3
 50 FOR B=1 TO 3:IF B=A THEN 250
 60 FOR C=1 TO 3:IF C=B THEN 240
 70 FOR D=1 TO 3:IF D=C THEN 230
 80 FOR E=1 TO 3:IF E=D THEN 220
 90 FOR F=1 TO 3:IF F=E THEN 210
100 FOR G=1 TO 3:IF G=F THEN 200
110 FOR H=1 TO 3:IF H=G THEN 190
120 FOR I=1 TO 3:IF I=H THEN 180
130 T=0:P=A*B*C*D*E*F*G*H*I
140 IF P<>216 THEN 180
150 T=T+M(1,A)+M(2,B)+M(3,C)+M(4,
    D)+M(5,E)+M(6,F)+M(7,G)
    +M(8,H)+M(9,I)
160 IF T<>1009 THEN 180
170 PRINT A;" ";B;" ";C;" ";D;"
";E;" ";F;" ";G;" ";H;" ";I
180 NEXT I
190 NEXT H
200 NEXT G
210 NEXT F
220 NEXT E
230 NEXT D
240 NEXT C
250 NEXT B
260 NEXT A
1000 DATA 144,124,157,197,162,155,
98,107,76,100,113,125,93,72,85,107,
115,98,65,
83,50,88,101,92,134,157,122
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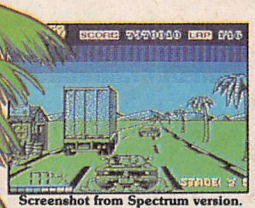
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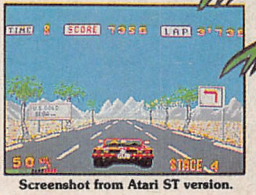
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