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- World Cup '94
- Delta V

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ISSUE 17 AUGUST 1994

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- Living Books Demos
- Classic Shareware
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See Page 16 For Full Details, Installation And Playing Instructions

FREE! Overlord Keyboard Template

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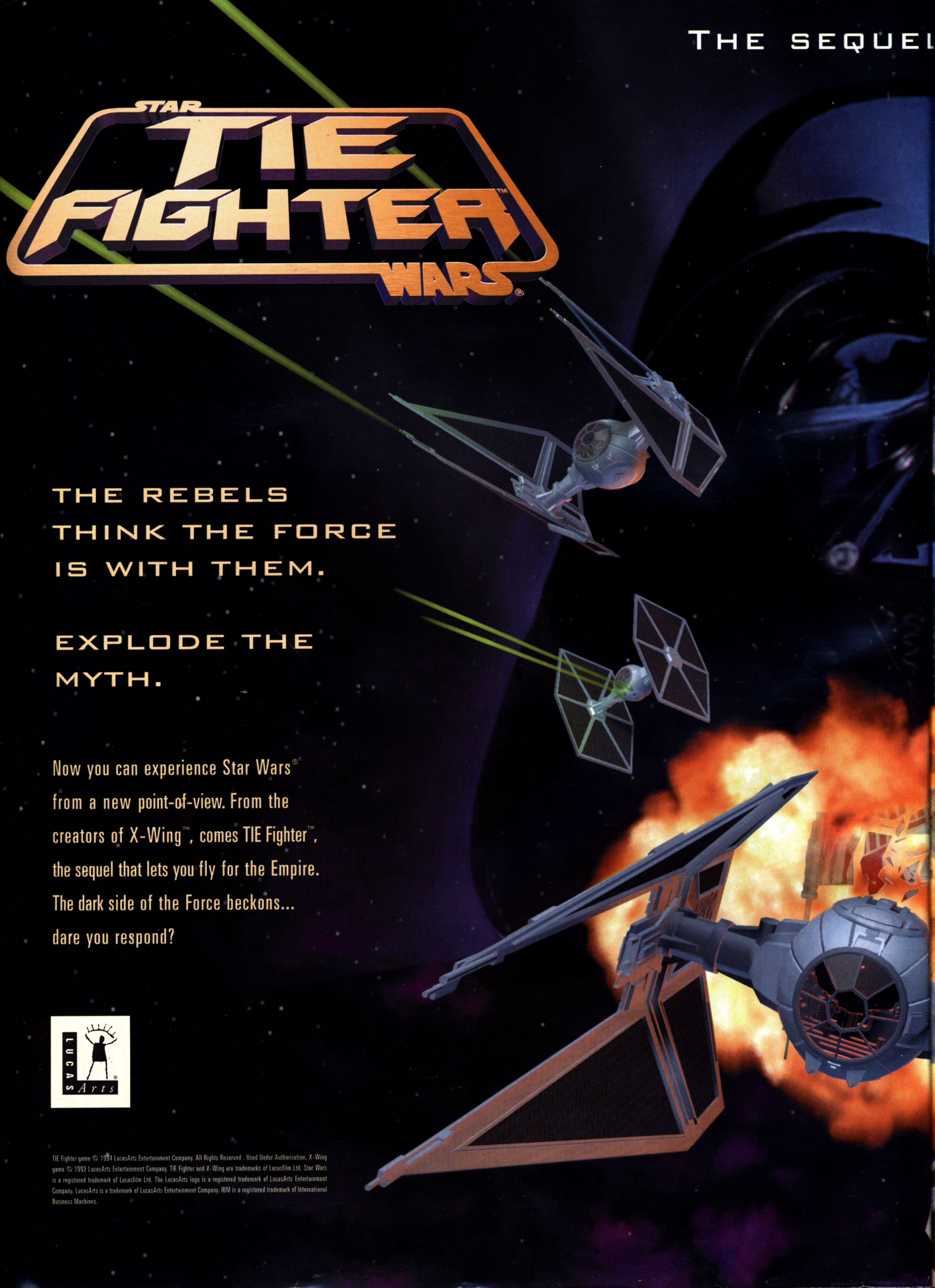
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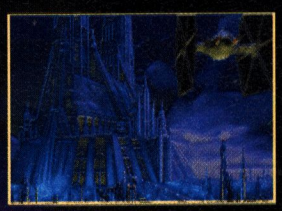

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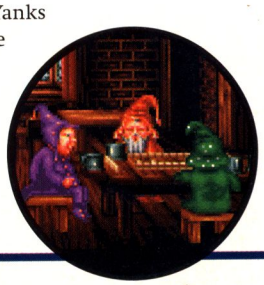

PC ZONE

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Dennis PPA

PC Zone is published monthly by Dennis Publishing Ltd. Company registered in England, number 1138891.

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100% GAMES
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WAHAY! ATHENS without pollution. Find out how its possible in this preview of Luminaria's adventure.

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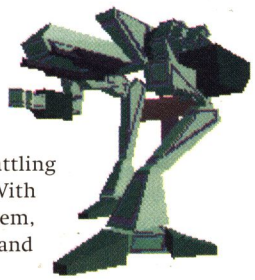

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THE BATTLETECH universe is back on line in the second battling robots sim from Activision. With its advanced 3D graphics system, strong artificial intelligence and sophisticated multi-player options, this could be the best head-to-head experience of the decade.

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18 Anime Action!

WE'RE GIVING away Anime goodies aplenty to mark the release of Megatech's *Metal and Lace*.

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FIND OUT all about memory management software and then win yourself some in our bumper compo.

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130 Mr Cursor

OUR RESIDENT incompetent faces up to a quandary and introduces SPOOK.DOS.

FREE!

Overlord Keyboard Template

DON'T SCREW up *D-Day*, just slip our free overlay onto your keyboard and you'd need never be lost for keys again.

COVER DISK

HD Disk Version

Hocus Pocus



CHECK OUT Apogee's latest platform romp – it knocks spots off everything else around.

Arcade Classics

ALL NEW versions of the calssic games *Space Invaders* and *Frogger*.

Windows Fun

A GREAT new puzzle diversion for *Windows*, based on the ancient game of *Skulls*.

Game Trainers

WHY GO mad when you can get even with our trainers for *X-Wing*, *Imperial Pursuit*, *Jurassic Park*, *SimFarm*, *Megarace* and *Gods*?

CD-ROM Version

THIS MONTH CD-ROM owners are in for a treat. Our CD is a special celebration of LucasArts' seven year long partnership with US Gold. You'll find demos of major products from *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe* onwards, including playable samples from *Rebel Assault* and *Sam 'n' Max*.

In addition to these goodies we've included demos of Brøderbund's Living Books series, 100s of levels and utilities for *Doom*, and all the programs from this month's 3.5" HD disk.

Bulletin

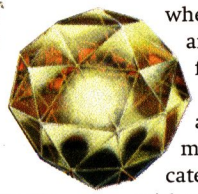
From *Crystal Maze* to Terry Pratchett. Everything and everyone is getting into PC games these days. So with fingers on the ever beating pulse of what is PC news and gossip, *PC Zone* reports.

Get Trucking

German software house, Greenwood Entertainment, have two new releases in the pipeline. *Transexpress* is a freight forwarding management game, presumably aimed at Yorkie-toting truckers who fancy having a bash at managing their own truck company. The player starts the game as a lowly employee with a truck transport company and has to work his way up the ladder to owning his own firm. Along the way he will have to deal with his personal problems (impossible stuff like keeping his wife happy, etc.) as well as trying to increase his status as a high-flying tycoon. For extra realism, the game was produced in conjunction with leading European truck manufacturer, Mercedes-Benz, who supplied technical data and additional help for the project. Would-be burglars are also in for a treat with *The Clue*, which promises to be the weirdest and most controversial simulation of the year. The game positively encourages you to nip in and out of houses and shops and pinch everything you can get your hands on. You can hire other people to help you with your criminal activities or do the burglaries yourself and keep all the loot. If you're really successful you will eventually get a chance to have a go at nicking the crown jewels. We can only assume that either the programmers are making a desperate attempt to come up with something original, or burglary has suddenly been legalised in Germany. Well dodgy. Both games are due for release in August/September of this year and will retail at £39.99 on both disk and CD-ROM formats. For more info contact Greenwood Entertainment on 0438 840004.



Crystal Maze for the PC



Sherston Software are producing an adventure game for the PC, based on Channel Four's popular adventure show, *Crystal Maze*. The game was well received when it was originally released on the Acorn 32-bit machine last year. The PC compatible version is now under development and is planned for release this Autumn. It has an icon-driven interface and closely follows the format used by the television show. Players can choose their games in each of the four zones – Aztec, Medieval, Futuristic and Ocean. They can also choose which category to play in – Skill, Mental, Mystery and Physical. Just like the real show, contestants will be battling against the clock, and the time spent in the Crystal dome at the end will depend upon success in the game zones. It's an ambitious project which attempts to combine several different game elements within one scenario. The Physical category will provide the main arcade section of the game, where players will have to leap around the play area platform-game style. The Skill category is a test of hand and eye co-ordination and is mouse controlled. The Mental category will present players with a series of mind-bending puzzles to solve. As you would expect, the Mystery category has no set game style, and players just take a chance on whatever comes out of the bag. Some of the games in the Mystery category will be crosswords and mazes. From what we've seen of the pre-release screen shots, the graphics have a hand-painted look about them and are vaguely reminiscent of early Dynamix adventure games like *Rise of the Dragon* and *Heart of China*. The game will (allegedly) have stunning graphics and the original music from the TV show. It all sounds well smart and exciting to us. If the gameplay lives up to the multi-game style concept, *Crystal Maze* could be a winner. The game will retail at £39.95. Contact Sherston Software on 0666 840433 for more information.

Prepare to be Amazed

Here's a quick look at the sort of stuff you can expect from the PC version of *Crystal Maze*.



This is the Aztec Zone. Well, a picture of it anyway.



This is an Aztec Zone skill game. It's called Gag The Gods. It is, really.



Mumsey. She's a fortune teller, she is. You'll find her in the Medieval Zone.



The Ocean Zone. This is a mental slide-puzzle game.

DISPATCHES

+++ 4 – Nil To Empire

Just when you thought you'd never want to see another footie game on your PC, Empire Software have just released *World Cup Year '94* – a compilation featuring the classics, *Sensible Soccer* and *Championship Manager '93/94* along with the not so classic *Striker* and *Goal!* Priced at a very competitive £29.99, it's definitely worth a look if you've just got back from a seven year holiday on Mars and don't yet own a copy of *Sensi* or *CM93/94*. Contact Empire on 081 343 7337.

+++ Redshift Better Than Sex!?

Redshift Multimedia Astronomy has just picked up The Grand Prize of the Jury at MILIA '94, and the Gold award for Adult Enrichment at New Media's Invision Awards in the USA. Knocking the CD-I title, *The Joy Of Sex*, firmly into second place, one Maris employee was heard to say after the awards, "Yes I am very lucky, I get to use *Redshift* all day and then go home to my wife at night!" There were, unfortunately, no bearded, non-deodorant wearing men available to comment on *The Joy Of Sex*, *CDi*'s relegation to being second most popular pastime. Contact Maris on 071 488 1566.

+++ Olivetti Go Home

Olivetti has just launched its first PC targeted at the burgeoning home multi-media market. The PCS40 SX/33 Multimedia PC comes complete with built in CD-ROM drive, Sound Blaster 16-bit sound card with CD-ROM interface and a pair of speakers. The package also comes complete with six CD titles including *Grollier's Multimedia Encyclopaedia, Animals, World Atlas, Chessmaster* and *CD Sampler*, and retails for £1,399. Olivetti's marketing manager, Mike Chandler, commented: "The multimedia PC market is being driven by home entertainment and educational applications, yet home users do not want the added fuss of fitting CD-ROM drives and making additional purchases for drives, speakers and sound cards." Contact Olivetti on 081 785 6666

+++ No Previews for Kick Off 3

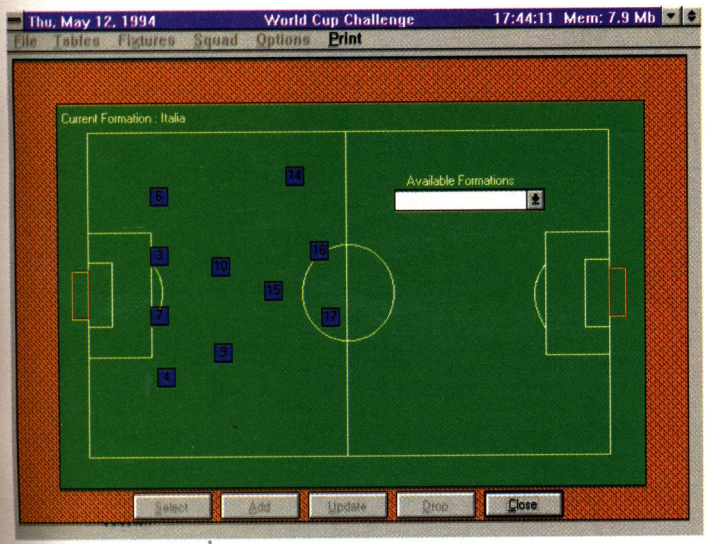
Anco has decided not to send any review copies of *Kick Off 3* for preview to any of the computer press for fear of piracy. Confident that the *Kick Off* brand is strong enough to promote itself amongst the 50 or so football sims currently in the offing, the publishers believe that the launch is too big to be jeopardised by the possibility of the game finding its way onto the piracy circuit before release. We wait with baited breath. Contact Anco on 0322 292513

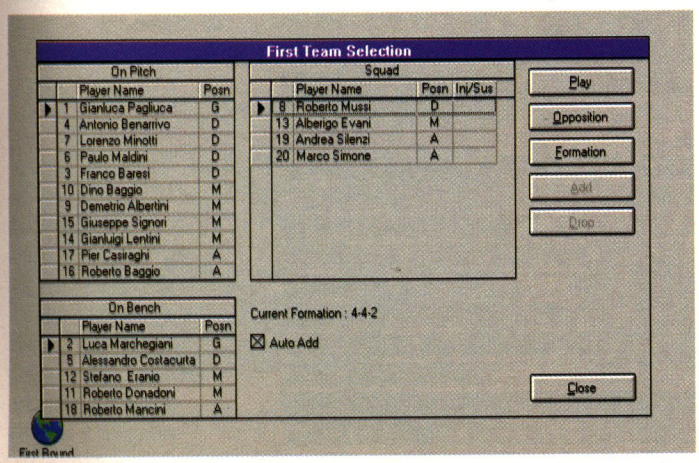
+++ Micro Machines Finally Out of The Pits

After a delay of over six months, the highly

WORLD CUP CHALLENGE UPDATE

Last month we reviewed WinSport's *World Cup Challenge* and stated incorrectly that it was "absurdly memory hungry". Well, we're happy to report that the final version of the game will actually run quite happily on a 386SX machine at 20MHZ with only 4MB of RAM. If you want further information on the specification or availability of the product, please call WinSport on 0628 473315.





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Bulletin

DISPATCHES

successful console game from Codemasters is finally set to hit the PC. Originally due to be released for Christmas last year, the launch slipped back to Easter, and is now due for release this summer. The game, it was claimed, was held back due to "a total overhaul resulting in enhanced gameplay, presentation and sonics". Let's hope it's worth the wait. Contact Codemasters on 081 969 3526

+++ New and Cheaper Amstrads

Amstrad has revamped its current range of PCs by adding new multimedia configurations and dropping the price of its existing machines in keeping with market trends.

Its entry level PC, the 486SX–25 with 130Mb hard drive, has been cut to just under £800 whilst the top of the range 486DX2–66 with 428Mb now retails at a shade under £1,200.

New models include a 486SX–33 in addition to its currently available SX–25, DX2–50 and DX2–66 Mhz options. Amstrad are now also offering their multimedia system, previously only available with a 486SX–25 processor and 130Mb hard drive with a 214Mb drive and a choice of SX–33 or DX2–50 processors. Contact Amstrad on 0277 262326.

+++ Upgrade with Multimedia Solutions

A new brand of multimedia kits have just hit the shelves from CD-ROM distributors, Multimedia Solutions. The MultiPro and MultiPro Plus upgrade kits feature a Panasonic drive, Sound Blaster sound card, a pair of Ross speakers and a Quickshot joystick. Each kit also comes bundled with the current best-selling CD-ROM software or a choice of previous top titles.

Multimedia Solutions can be contacted on 0532 342528

+++ Three on CD from Gremlin

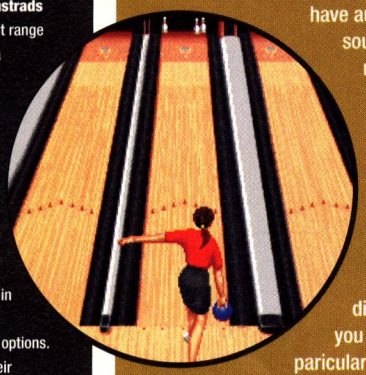
Gremlin join the compilation band wagon this month with a three-game compilation CD. Unlike many of the other compilations on the market however, this one features three top-notch games aimed at the gamer who likes his action fast and furious. Priced at a very reasonable £29.99 and featuring the platform classic *Zool*, the mega-tunderous *Nigel Mansell's World Challenge* and the squillion track *Lotus: The Ultimate Challenge*, this looks set to be one of the more successful compilation bundles. Contact Gremlin on 0742 753 423.

+++ Aztech IDE CD-ROM

Singapore firm, Aztech, have just launched a new IDE Double-Speed CD-ROM drive that is

Sporting CD's

Team 17 are releasing two new sport sims in September. *Arcade Pool* is a multi-featured pool game which promises to bring more bells, whistles and options to the genre than any previous pool or snooker simulation. Up to eight human players can take part in a tournament and choose between different game types, including standard UK or US 8 Ball, 8/15 Ball, Speed Pool and Survivor. The game will have authentic digitised sound effects from a real pool table, trickshot set-up options, different skill levels, 32 computer players with varied artificial intelligence and ability, and even digitised applause if you pull off a paricularly smart shot. The game is being converted by East Point who are also converting the eagerly awaited *Project X* to PC. Also on the way is *King Pin*, a ten pin bowling simulation. This could be the excuse you've been waiting for to pull on a pair of silly trousers and strut your stuff in a high-tech bowling alley. The game features 3D animations of male and female characters, up to six player competion mode, full auto-scoring, aftertouch control system with adjustable power, digitised sound effects, choice of bowling balls and oodles more. Both games will be released on disk and CD-ROM for only £14.99. For more details contact Team 17 on 0924 385903.



Mouse Mat-tastic!



Those cheeky funsters at The Data Business have come up with a new range of novelty mouse mats to brighten up your desk. With twelve designs in the new range, including "Boobs", "Chesterfield" – a gleaming male torso, a "cute" pig, a "lovely" frog, and a spilt coffee cup, the mats feature hard-etched PVC tops for good traction and specially made Matrex-90 high-colour bases. Priced at £6.99 they make ideal gifts for those who want to stand out from the crowd. Contact The Data Business on 0865 842 224.

GALLUP CHARTS

So many games, so little time – these days, shopping for your PC can be a nightmare. But now, with the help of Gallup's handy household charts, you can check out what you should be playing. There's something for everyone here: full-price PC titles, budget games and even a selection of CD-ROM titles.

Top 20 Full Price Titles

1. Sim City 2000	Maxis/Mindscape	£39.99
2. Cannon Fodder	Virgin	£34.99
3. 1942 Pacific Airwars	MicroProse	£44.99
4. Premier Manager 2	Gremlin Graphics	£34.99
5. X-Wing	US Gold	£45.99
6. Frontier: Elite 2	Gametek	£39.99
7. Microsoft Flight Simulator V. 5.0	Microsoft	£39.99
8. Corridor 7	Gametek	£19.99
9. Pacific Strike	Electronic Arts	£49.99
10. Battle Isle 2	Blue Byte	£39.99
11. TFX	Ocean	£44.99
12. Ultima 8	Electronic Arts	£49.99
13. Graham Gooch World Class Cricket	Audiogenic	£34.99
14. Indy Car Racing	Virgin	£44.99
15. Jurassic Park	Ocean	£44.99
16. Sensible Soccer 92/93	Renegade	£32.99
17. The Settlers	Blue Byte	£39.99
18. Lemmings/Lemmings 2	Renegade	£32.99
19. Links – Mauna Kea	US Gold	£22.99
20. FM Fleet Defender	US Gold	£45.99

Top 10 PC Budget Titles

1. Doom (TS)	Titanium Seal	£4.99
2. Monkey Island	Kixx	£16.99
3. Dune	Hit Squad	£14.99
4. Sim City Classic	Hit Squad	£16.99
5. Eye Of The Beholder 2	Kixx	£16.99
6. Harpoon	Hit Squad	£14.99
7. Doom (MS)	Micro Star	£6.99
8. Theme Park Demo Disk	Electronic Arts	£2.99
9. Battle Of Britain	Kixx	£16.99
10. Jimmy White's Snooker	Hit Squad	£14.99

Top 10 CD-ROM Titles

1. Rebel Assault	US Gold	£45.99
2. 7th Guest/Dune	Telestar Fun & Games	£49.99
3. Sam And Max Hit The Road	US Gold	£45.99
4. Mega Race	Mindscape	£39.99
5. Jack Nicklaus CD Compendium	Accolade	£19.99
6. Sim City	Interplay	£49.99
7. Animals	Action 16	£16.99
8. UFO: Enemy Unknown	MicroProse	£44.99
9. Space Shuttle	Action 16	£16.99
10. Star Trek: 25th Anniversary	Interplay	£49.99

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PC STRATEGY PC ACTION PC ADVENTURE

Bulletin

Coming Soon From Psygnosis

All is definitely not quiet on the Psygnosis front. With five big new releases on the way, over the next few months, including a super slick shoot'em up, three sprawling RPG's and a new blood'n'guts seek and destroy battle simulator, Psygnosis are looking to corner the market in just about every genre.

Wizard turns to Hexx

Many will already be familiar with the stunning new RPG known as *Wizard*, which has been under development for some time now and has already received much critical acclaim on the preview circuit. Well, *Wizard* is now due for release under the new name, *Hexx*.



A texture-mapped, 3D, first-person perspective RPG, *Hexx* combines the most up-to-date features that every serious role player has come to expect, with the addition of fast-moving, monster-bashing combat in an attempt to bridge the gap between RPG and arcade action. Developed by master RPG-programmer, Tag (who brought you *Legend* and *Bloodwych*), *Hexx* looks to be one of the most innovative and exciting role-playing games currently in development. With stunning graphics and a whole host of features including 16 start characters, automapper and intelligent inventory system, character regeneration chambers and four "realms" of magic, it certainly promises playability and depth. Check out the next issue for a full review.

Theatre Of Death

If you liked *Canon Fodder*, then *Theatre of Death* will be right up your battle field. You must control your ruthless platoon of battle hungry commandos in a fight to the death against hordes of homicidal maniacs in this fiendishly addictive and challenging game. With 50 blood'n'guts splattered missions to choose from and four war-torn environments to explore, you must guide your men, equipped with the most lethal military hardware, over grass planes, desert, polar icecaps and even the moon in search of the enemy.

Boasting an impressive list of features, including air strikes, animals for target practice, traps, an extended target area, guard dogs and jet packs, *Theatre of Death* looks to carry on where all other isometric shoot'em ups left off.

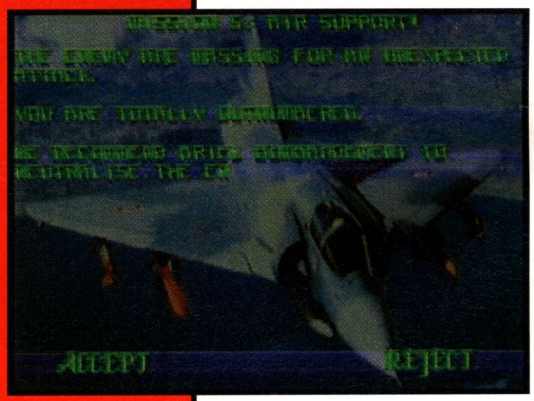
Nibelung's Ring

Combining German mythology with the stirring and evocative sound of Wagner's *Ring Cycle* opera, *Nibelung's Ring* is the first in a trilogy of RPGs based around the Middle Earth fables that so inspired Tolkien and Wagner. *Nibelung's Ring* promises to fully explore the potential of mixing such a powerful sound track with a rich and varied game scenario that will immediately be familiar to anyone with an interest in the Teutonic mythology that Wagner himself used as source material.



Valkries will soon be strutting their stuff on your PC in Nibelung's Ring.

With development well under way, this new and completely innovative idea looks set to change the way RPGs are designed in the future.



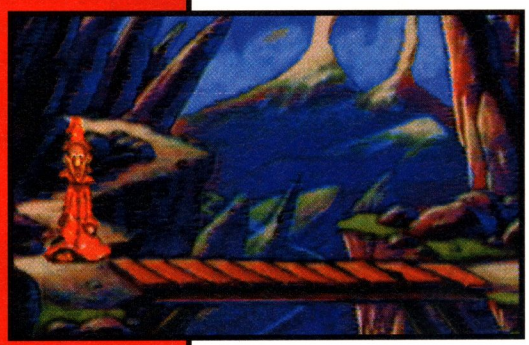
Fight to the death against hordes of homicidal maniacs in Theatre of Death

Scavenger 4

Set somewhere in the future (as all the best space shoot'em ups are!) *Scavanger 4* is set to leave *Microcosm* and *Rebel Assault* behind in a galactic vapour trail. Promising stunning Silicon Graphics rendered backdrops, lightning fast 3D action and a heart-pounding digital audio soundtrack, *Scavenger 4* could to take the gamer to planet fantastic and back again when it is released in the Autumn.

Discworld

Unlike so many other licensed products currently on the market, the novels of Terry Pratchett, immediately lend themselves to a game translation. The games draws on the rich variety of characters and scenarios found in his best-selling novels. Pratchett, a keen game player himself, is currently working very closely with the developers to ensure the project retains all the humour and complexity of his original work.



Discworld is set to include a full-screen vieing mode and a gaming environment at least three times bigger than present market leaders.

DISPATCHES

compatible with the industry standard IDE interface. The new easy-fit drive will help to eliminate the need for an interface controller card to run the drive and remove the compatibility problems which clout many CD-ROM drive interfaces.

Featuring a buffer size of 256Kb, the drive is capable of caching more data before transferring to the CPU, hence the CPU utilisation is much lower, allowing more applications to be opened within *Windows*.

The drive supports MPEG Video on CD and comes bundled with the UltraCD cache utility program, which helps to increase the access speed of the drive to five times faster than any other CD-ROM drive currently available. Contact Silica Systems on 081 309 1111.

+++ Maxis Unveils Scientific City

If you're down London way this month, why not pop into the British Science Museum's new City Limits exhibition where you can try you hand at *Scienceville:* a new interactive version of *SimCity 2000 – The Ultimate City Simulator*. Specially created for the new exhibition, *Scienceville* features a totally reworked and enlarged toolbar, enabling the game to be played with both touch screen and mouse, putting the player in the decision-making hot seat as he or she attempts to build the city of the future. The exhibition, which was opened by Sir David Attenborough in May, has so far proved to be an enormous success and will run until late September. Contact Maxis on 071 490 2333.

+++ Tecnoplus – Loud And Clear For Under £100!

Tecnoplus are releasing a new 16-bit stereo sound card for under £100 next month. The TecnoPlus AudioSound 16 has 20 voice FM synthesis and is *Windows 3.1* and general midi compatible.

If you want to go the whole hog and update to a full multimedia system, they are also offering two upgrade bundles. The TecnoPlus CD562 package includes a Panasonic multisession drive, is MPC and Kodak Photo CD compatible with 64K cache memory and retails at £199.99.

For a complete multimedia upgrade system, the TecnoPlus CD-ROM Multimedia kit retailing at £299.99 represents good value. Consisting of a CD562 drive, a TecnoPLus AudioSound 16 sound card and a pair of TecnoPlus PowerSound 2 speakers, it's one of the most impressive upgrade kits on the market. Contact TecnoPlus on 0604 768711.

+++ Deutch of The Day

If you can't get enough of football at the moment, and fancy playing a management sim with real, top-quality footballers and teams, Zeppelin Games have released a management sim based on the German Budesliga. The game features updated

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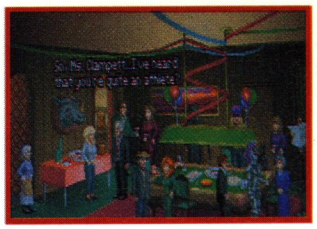
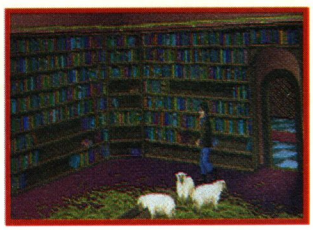
the Dreamers Guild





Bulletin

The Beverly Hillbillies Are Comin' Atcha!

SCOOP * PREVIEW *

The most famous family from Arkansas are about to make it onto the big screen this month in a new film from Twentieth Century Fox. They're also hittin' on your PC in a new graphic adventure game that'll have you struttin' around from swamp to swanky mansion in search of clues and the kidnapped Granny.



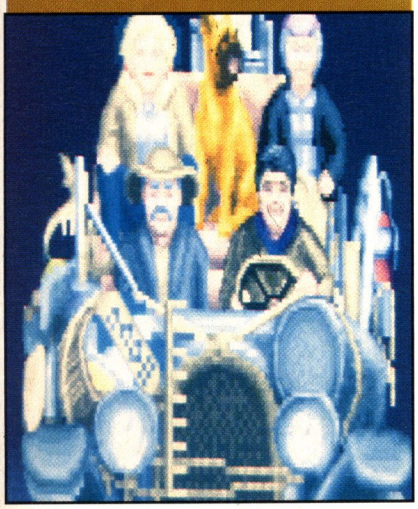
Meet The Clampetts

Jed Clampett – The head of the Clampett clan, Jed, discovers oil whilst out huntin' in the swamp and moves his family to the swanky Beverly Hills.

Granny – Dragged kicking an'a screaming to Beverly Hills by Jed, she is kidnapped by a conniving bunch of villains who have their eye on the Clampetts' fortune.

Elly May – The beautiful and innocent young gal from the swamp, Elly May, charms the birds from the trees and fights off thousands of suitors to boot!

Jethro – The sweet-spirited dim bulb with big dreams and an even bigger appetite.



Keep It In The Family

Surprisingly, the game follows the plot of the film closely, whilst retaining much of the humour and familiarity of the original TV show. Unlike many film/game crossovers, where the only thing in common with the film is the title and possibly the main character, *The Beverly Hillbillies* makes full use of all the colourful characters in the film, whilst the well-known game scenarios will certainly be familiar to Hillbillies fans. A testament in itself to the strength of the Hillbillies story and the originality of the Clampett family clan.

The gameplay is based around six main stages, and, like the film and TV series, you must mix with your snooty new neighbours whilst trying to maintain your good old-fashioned hillbilly values, avoiding unwanted advances from would-be gold diggers. You play the part of head hillbilly, Jed, who after accidentally discovering oil in the swamp whilst out on a huntin' trip, sells his land for a fortune and packs his family into the Clampett jalopy and heads for LA.



"Hey Uncle Jed – can ya remember where ya left the sheep?"
"I dunno Elly May, but there's a funny rustlin' noise comin' from the library!"

On The Road To LA

Once you're on the road you have to negotiate your way through the busy traffic and then attempt to find your new mansion located somewhere in the plush suburbs. Not an easy task when your neighbours, believing you to be a tramp or vagrant, treat you with the kind of disdain normally reserved for double-glazing salesmen.

After finally moving in, a hoedown is thrown to meet the new neighbours. The festivities are quickly brought to a halt when it is discovered that Granny has been kidnapped by greedy no-gooders who want to get their hands on the Clampett's loot. It's up to Jed to rescue Granny and revive her by mixing up one of her famous tonics, but first you have to get together the right ingredients. Hair of the weasel may be in plentiful supply on the shelves of the local store in Arkansas, but definitely not in Beverly Hills!

With large bright sprites and a host of colourful backgrounds, *The Beverly Hillbillies* faithfully retains much of the humour of the original TV series and the blockbuster film. The plot twists and turns like a rattler, whilst the tricky puzzles and colourful characterisation promises to make this game a rip roarin' adventure that fans of the hit show will love.

Available from: July at £29.99
Information: Gametek 0753 553445

COMPETITION

WIN YA'SELF SOME HILLBILLY CLOBBER!

See the film, play the game and wear the clothes! *The Beverly Hillbillies* promises to be one of the hottest film releases this summer, and to celebrate the long-awaited return of the Clampetts we're givin' away a whole kabundle of Hillbilly clobber plus five copies of the latest arcade adventure game based on the hooting exploits of Arkansas' most famous family.



Everyone knows and loves the Clampetts – there's Uncle Jed, Granny, Elly May and Cousin Jethro. They all used to live in a shack way out back in the Ozark mountains, until Uncle Jed struck it lucky whilst out a huntin' in the swamp and then came home wavin' a billion dollar cheque. Now they're all livin' in the lap of luxury in down town Beverly Hills in the snooty suburbs with doctors and lawyers for neighbours instead'a bears an' snakes!



With nothin' but a billion dollars to help them, they sure find the Beverly Hills way'a life a bit strange at times! Their swanky new mansion may have the latest in home comforts, but where's a man s'posed to keep his pigs an' collect wood for the fire? An' how do ya'll keep away all them pesky gold diggers from knockin' at the door? It seems as though everyone wants to git real neighbourly with the Clampetts all ova sudden, an' it's gettin' harder an' harder to git ya'self some privacy 'round here!

Drop in on us from the middle'a of July an' see for ya'self, in the mean time git ya thinkin' caps on and answer the spectacularly easy questions below to win ya'self some Hillbilly clobber and a copy of the new Beverly Hillbillies game. Five runners up will also receive a copy of the game.

Question 1. With who did Erika Eleniak co-star in the blockbuster hit, *Under Siege*? Was it: a) Steven Fry b) Sooty & Sweep c) Steven Seagal?

Question 2. Where is Beverly Hills? Is it in: a) Los Angeles b) South Africa c) Off the M25?

Question 3. Where does Jed Clampett discover oil? Is it: a) At the gas station b) Under his bed c) In the swamp?

❒ Please indicate here if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers or new products.

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Bulletin



Origin Flying High

Origin continue to push the limits of current technology with two new shoot'em up flight simulations scheduled for release this month. We've news of the latest, possibly greatest, game in the *Wing Commander* series and an update on *Wings of Glory*.

Wing Commander Goes Head To Head

The latest instalment of the *Wing Comander* series from Chris Roberts is set for release this month. *Wing Armada* enables the player to pit his or her wits against either a human opponent or a sinister computer.

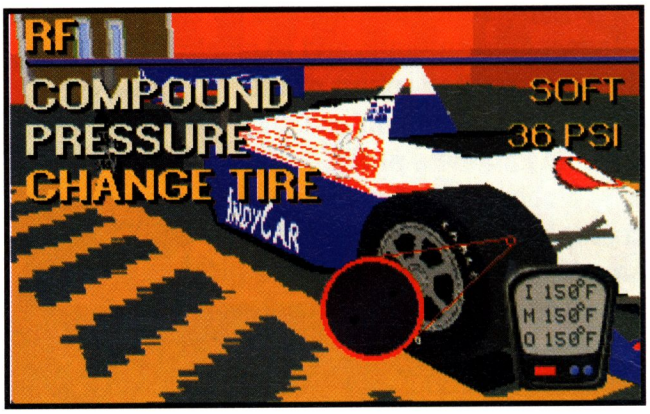
After years of following orders and losing ships and friends, you are now the sole commander, responsible for heading up a momentous strike against your enemies' homeland. The war requires real strategy, not just hot-shot piloting, and you will have to determine where to fight, how to fight and what ships will get the job done. In *Wing Armarda* you have the freedom to construct your own universe, your own missions and your own campaign.

The programming team have listened to what *Wing Commander* players want and as a result have now attempted to turn these dreams into reality. *Wing Armada* now offers the option of flying head-to-head against another player using a split-screen, modem or network, whilst you can now choose loyalty to either the Empire of Kilrat or the Terran Confederation; decide on the intricacy of combat; whether to play full campaigns or single dogfights, whilst being given the option to customise your own fleet.

Offering three levels of play, intense dogfight scenarios, strategic search and destroy battles or extended campaigns, *Wing Armarda* is Origin's first user-configurable action strategy game that, as mentioned, allows head-to-head combat between two players, offering new and exciting levels of gameplay. With over 2,000 planets to explore, it is guaranteed to keep even the most discerning strategist and hot-shot player happy for eons at £44.99.

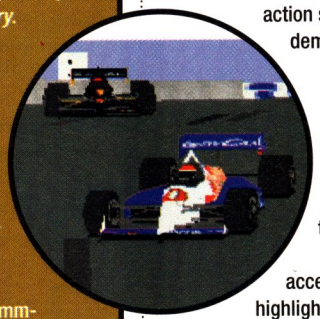


IndyCar Gets Green Light



Just when you thought you'd mastered the most realistic and stunning race simulator, Virgin and Papyrus have come up with two extension packs in which to pit your skills behind the wheel of your 800-horsepower IndyCar.

The first, *IndyCar Circuits*, boasts seven new tracks, and now completes the PPG IndyCar World Series circuit, including Surfers Paradise, Burke Lakefront Airport and Pacific Place. All tracks are precision modeled replicas of the actual circuits and feature high-velocity super speedways, rapid-action short ovals, concrete-lined city street courses and demanding road courses to push the driver's skill to the limit.



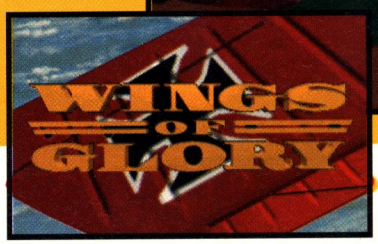
Indianapolis Motor Speedway is a customising RaceCar Paint Kit which allows the user to update colours and decals on cars to keep their simulation current to the season, or design their very own custom colour combination. Also included in the package is the painstakingly duplicated Indianapolis Motor Speedway — the world famous site of the Indy 500.

Both packs also feature enhanced modem play and time acceleration, a Replay Cut Utility which allows the user to clip highlights of driving experiences and a Settings Print Utiiity which enables the user to view or print custom car set-ups as opposed to being restricted to viewing set-ups only inside the garage.

The two packs are scheduled for release in July and September respectively and we'll be giving a full review of each in the next issue. Contact Virgin Interactive on 081 960 2255.



Wing Commander players can now fly head-to-head against another player using a split-screen, modem or network.





Harpoon Hunted

Three Sixty Pacific's classic naval wargame, *Harpoon*, has been re-released by Digital Integration for the bargain price of £17.99 just as it's sequel (pictured above) is about to be published. Created by naval expert, Larry Bond, *Harpoon* has been one of the best-selling strategy games of recent years and has received much critical acclaim. Other new releases in the Action 16 range, also at £17.99, are Three Sixty's *Patriot*, and its World War II game, *High Command*. The bomber simulation *Megafortress* will be available as *Mega Pak* which includes *Operation Sledgehammer* and a mission editor. Digital Integration are on 0276 684959.

Custom Upgrades From DiscteQ

Looking to upgrade your current PC to a full multimedia system? DiscteQ has three new bundles now on the market from the basic bundle consisting of a Panasonic CR562 Double-Speed CD-ROM drive, 16-bit sound card, caching software and all cables and manuals at a very modest £199, to the more sophisticated QCD Video Multimedia Upgrade Kit consisting of an Intel Smart Video Recorder, Sony CDU33A Double-speed CD-ROM drive, 16-bit sound card, speakers and microphone, Asymetrix Asymedia PE and MediaBlitz for for sound and full-motion video capabilities to their PC for under £600. Products come with full technical support and are also available through mail order. Contact DiscteQ on 0844 208 448.



DiscteQ's new multimedia kits.

On A Wing And A Prayer

Wings Of Glory puts you in the cockpit, right at the very centre of the action, as a young novice pilot flying for the British Royal Flying Corp during World War I. Boasting superb realism and historical accuracy, *Wings Of Glory* lets you take control of one of five different planes, each with their own characteristics, and pit your wits against the German Hunter Squadrons. Using Origin's RealSpace graphics engine, planes fly at you in incredible detail whilst four-channel sound gives you the roar of the dogfight the way the first knights of the skies heard it.

With a detailed mission structure that progresses with each pilot, *Wings Of Glory* offers superb graphics and realism in this historically accurate and graphically stunning flight simulation.

DISPATCHES

+++ Swing out with Sensi Soon

Just when you thought that it was all quiet on the Sensi front, those masters of the mini sprite have revealed that they're currently working on a sports sim, to be called, as you might have guessed by now, *Sensible Golf*. They're not giving too much away at the moment, except that it will be highly playable and very, very good indeed!

+++ FAST Catches Frauds

A lengthy investigation by FAST (Federation Against Software Theft) revealed that company directors from Dunstable-based Computer Express Limited were importing and distributing counterfeit copies of the WordPerfect word processing package. Mrs Shoba McClean and Mr Babur Yaqub pleaded guilty to charges at Luton Crown Court. McClean was fined £15,000 and given 48 hours to pay or face a year in prison. Yaqub was fined £5,000 and given 7 days to pay or face a year in prison. The judge, Mr Hart-Leverton, said: "Courts must make it plain that when software is copied, severe penalties will follow." WordPerfect were understandably delighted with the outcome of the case. Games software houses will also be well chuffed, having seen bootlegged copies of some of their products show up at car boot sales. Anyone with information on illegal software should contact FAST on 0628 660337.

+++ The Soundest Cards?

A market summary from Dataquest shows that shipments of sound cards, including those incorporated in multimedia kits, almost doubled in 1993. Creative Labs is still leading the market with its Sound Blaster range, however, its losing a portion of its coveted market share to other 16-bit sound card manufactures. The growth in sales of all sound cards is expected to continue this year; the majority of which being sold as part of full multimedia kits.

+++ All-Star Football

Sport Accolade has announced the release of All-Pro Video Football on CD-ROM. The game is officially licensed by the National Football League and simulates an All-Star American football game utilising the names and statistics of 51 real players from the NFL. Up to two players can "coach" a team of NFL All-Stars, based on recent All-Pro teams of the AFC and NFC. Plays are selected just like the real game and the results are then played out in full-motion colour video using original footage shot specifically for All-Pro Video Football. Accolade can be contacted in the US on 081 788 0200.



COVER DISK

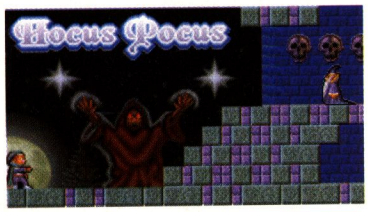
August

This month's CD-ROM is a tribute to LucasArts. We've got demos of six top LucasArts products ranging from *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe* to *Sam & Max*. But that's not all. *Doom* addicts will find over 130 new levels on the disk along with a selection of editors and other odds and ends. We've a real treat for Apogee fans too: two new games – *Raptor* on the CD and *Hocus Pocus* on both CD and HD disk.

EXCLUSIVE TO PC ZONE

Hocus Pocus

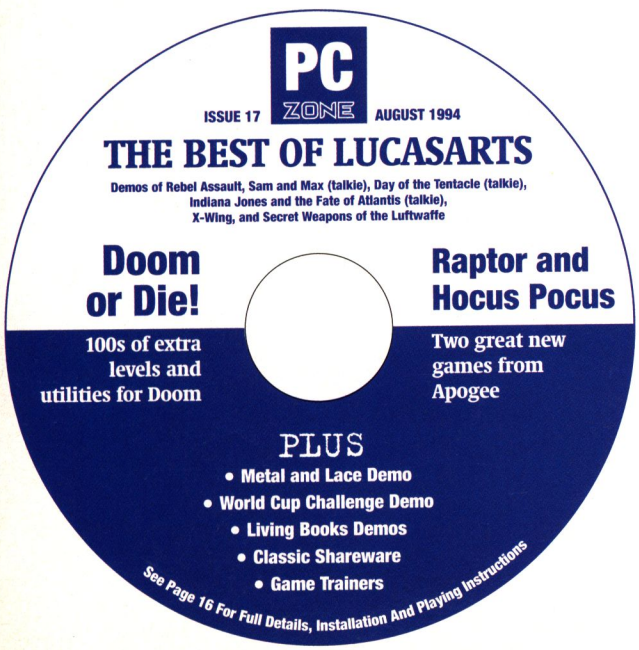
The hot new game from Apogee!



PLUS! **Great new versions of Invaders and Frogger!**

Skulls – addictive strategy game for Windows. Trainers for X-Wing, Imperial Pursuit, Jurassic Park, SimFarm, Megarace and Gods.

- These programs require VGA or better.
- Full instructions on page 16.



LucasArts Demos

The LucasArt's demos can all be run by making the drive containing the CD current. You do this by typing, for example:

D:

and then typing:

DEMO

This will display a menu from which you can directly run any of the LucasArts demos. Before you run them you should select the CHANGE CONFIGURATION option and select the appropriate sound and control options.

The first time you run the *Sam & Max* demo you should type

PLAYDEMO

instead of DEMO. This will give you the opportunity to change the settings for that demo. From then on you can run the demo as normal from the LucasArts menu.

Rebel Assault



This is the first CD game to be based in the ever popular *Star Wars* universe. You play a young rebel pilot who is out to prove yourself a real "man". To do this you must take on a range of increasingly difficult missions. This demo presents some scenes cut from the full game and two short playable sequences in which you must attack AT-AT walkers and defend a freighter against TIE fighters.

Sam & Max Hit the Road

Sam & Max are the hilarious and bizarre creations of American cartoonist, Steve Purcell. They're a pair of detectives. There's nothing unusual in that, except that Sam happens to be a bloodhound and Max is a psychotic rabbit!

The game received the prestigious *PC Zone* Classic award when it first appeared on disk, and now the full talkie CD is even funnier. But don't take our word for it, take a look at the playable demo on the CD.

The demo plays the introductory sequence and then a cut scene. Once the cut scene has ended you can play through a couple of scenes with *Sam & Max*. Use the left button on the mouse to "do" things and the right button to select an action.

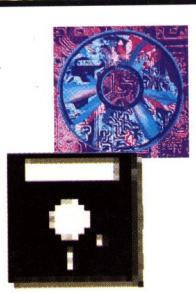
Day of the Tentacle

This wacky graphic adventure was reviewed back in issue 6 of *PC Zone* and received a Recommended award. It is a hilarious sequel to *Maniac Mansion*, an earlier LucasArts adventure. Purple Tentacle drinks some industrial effluent and mutates into a super tentacle. It's up to three wise-cracking college kids to save the world from the menace of the tentacle. This is a rolling demo with speech that shows a few scenes from the game.

X-Wing

To quote Patrick McCarthy, *X-Wing* is "one of the most addictive games I've played in quite a while." This game received a

What's where!



So that you can easily identify which demos are to be found on which cover mount, each item on these pages is accompanied by one or both of the logos below, depending on whether it is on the CD, HD disk or both.



(above and right) Relive classic 70's movie action in X-Wing.





Indy's latest and greatest adventure now comes with speech.

Recommended award (which isn't unknown for LucasArts games), when it was reviewed back in issue 2, and it hasn't lost its edge. On the CD is a rolling demo showing some of the cut scenes from the game.

Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis

When they ran out of films, the development team at LucasArts decided to create a fourth Indy adventure with a totally original plot. Indy has what may be his greatest adventure to date as he, once again, races the Nazi's, this time to find the

HD DISK HELP

If your cover disk won't load or does not operate as expected, you can call our technical helpline:

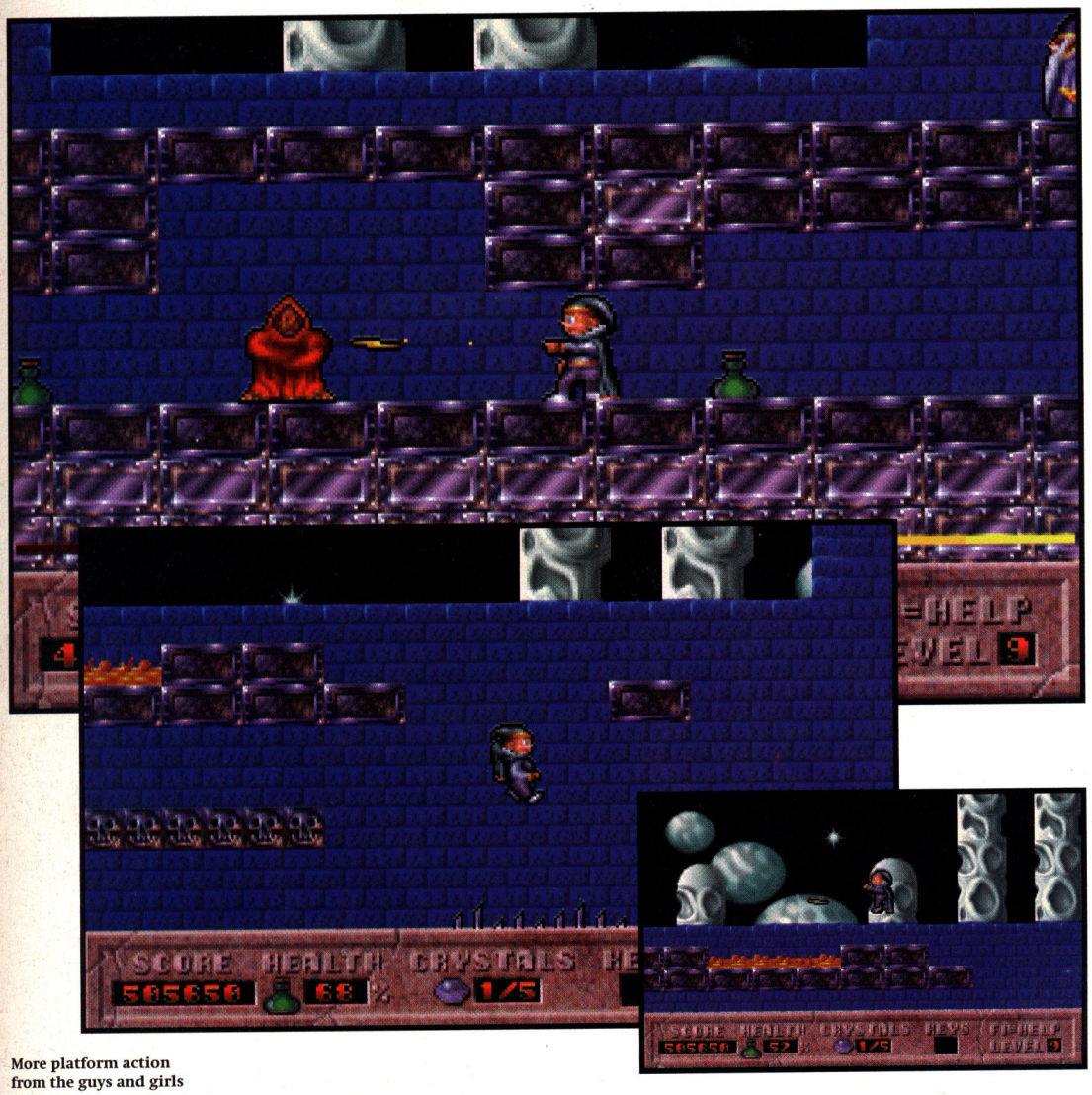
Matthew
0274 736990
(9am-4pm weekdays)

- If possible, please have your computer operating and your cover disk ready when you call the helpline.
- If your computer is not near the phone, please note down as much information about your system and the nature of the fault as you can
- Have a pen and paper handy when you call.
- If, having called the helpline, you are advised that the disk needs returning, please place it in a padded envelope, along with your return address and two 19p stamps, and send it to:

***PC ZONE* DISK RETURNS 17,**
TIB PLC,
TIB HOUSE,
11 EDWARD STREET,
BRADFORD,
BD4 7BH.

- NOTE: This helpline and return address is for the HD disk only. TIB PLC cannot help with problems concerning the CD cover mount.





More platform action from the guys and girls at Apogee.





lost city of Atlantis. The CD has a short rolling demo of one of the scenes from the CD version, which includes speech.

Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe

This was Lawrence Mulholland's third flight simulation for LucasArts. It gave you the opportunity to fly a range of secret planes that, fortunately, the Nazis failed to put into active service on a grand scale. In this playable demo you are in an ME262 (The first jet-powered fighter), heading towards your target (a formation of B-17 flying fortresses). You can use a mouse, joystick or cursor keys to control the plane. Other important keys are:

R	Arm rocket packs
ENTER	Fire rockets
+	Increase thrust
	Decrease thrust

To bring up your Fire 20mm cannon, press SPACE or left mouse button.

F	Flaps
B	Brakes



Doom Extras

We know that you're all still playing *Doom* to death out there. So you're probably sick to death of the levels that are supplied. Well you need not be any longer because we've got over 130 (yes, count 'em) new levels for you to try. Our resident *Doom* gurus, David McCandless and Miles Tudor, have also assembled a collection of editors and other add ons.

You'll find the files within a directory called DOOM.

All of the files are zipped up, so you'll have to use the PKUNZIP.EXE program supplied to unzip them. To do this, make a new directory to receive the files, e.g.:

MD \DOOMLVLS

then go to that directory by typing, e.g.:

CD \DOOMLVLS

Finally, unzip the file you are interested in by typing, e.g.:

D:\DOOM\PKUNZIP -d D:\DOOM\WADFILES\NEWLEVEL.ZIP

substituting the correct drive letter for D: and the correct filename for NEWLEVEL.ZIP.

We advise that the best approach is to unzip everything into your DOOM directory and use one of the file managers we've supplied to keep everything in order.

Here's what we've put together for you:

1. In the DOOM directory.
DOOM14BF.ZIP
A bug fix for the operating system. It updates DOOM to version 1.4.

2. In the EDITORS subdirectory.
Various doom editing utilities including:
Level Editors.
Sound and Music Editors.
Graphics Editors.
Unzip everything into the DOOM directory and read the relevant text files.
DEUGP1, 2, 3 and 4 are tutorials for the infamous DEU editor.

3. In the FILEMANG subdirectory.

DMWADR.ZIP	Wadrun, a wad file manager.
DFE131.ZIP	A front end for Doom.
DOOMENU4.ZIP	A networking menu.

4. In the WADFILES subdirectory.
Over 130 new *Doom* PWAD files.
Run them from the command line using:
DOOM -FILE <WADFILE.WAD>
Where WADFILE is the name of the wadfile (of course!).
We recommend using one of the front ends.





Hocus Pocus

The latest game from the stars of shareware, Apogee. This is another platform game, but its extremely addictive. You play a little wizard out to teach a few big wizards a lesson or two.

CD Users:
Make the drive containing your CD current by typing, for example:

D:

then type:

CD \HOCUS

followed by:

INSTALL

Follow the on screen instructions.

HD Disk Users:
Make the drive containing your disk current by typing, for example:

A:

then type:

INSTALL

Follow the on-screen instructions.

To Run The Game:
Make the directory in which you installed the game current and type:

HOCUS

Full instructions are available from within the game.

Raptor

Another great new game from Apogee. This one's a massive shoot 'em up in which you face wave after wave of enemy attack vehicles.

To install the game, make the drive containing your CD current by typing, for example:

D:

then type:

CD \RAPTOR

followed by:

INSTALL

Follow the on-screen instructions. If you have an AWE32 Sound Blaster card, you should also install the upgrade. To do this, from within the RAPTOR directory on the CD type:

CD UPGRADE

then type:

INSTALL

and follow on-screen instructions. Full playing instructions can be found from within the game.



Metal and Lace: Battle of the Robobabes

This is the first of Megatech's Anime games that will be officially on sale in the UK. To mark its release we've included this rolling demo.

The demo has been preinstalled on the CD to run with Sound Blaster compatible sound cards. If you have such a card you can run the demo directly from the CD by typing:

D:

to log onto the drive containing your CD. (Substitute the correct drive letter if it is other than D:.) Then type:

CD \METAL

and finally:

MLDEMO

If you do not have a Sound Blaster compatible card, or you have difficulties with your Sound Blaster card, you will have to copy the demo to your hard drive and run it from there. To do this, log onto your hard drive, by typing, e.g.:

C:

then type:

MD \METAL

followed by:

CD \METAL

then:

COPY D:\METAL*.*

substituting the correct letter of your CD drive if it is different. Now type:

INSTALL

to change the demo's configuration and then:

MLDEMO

to start.

World Cup Challenge

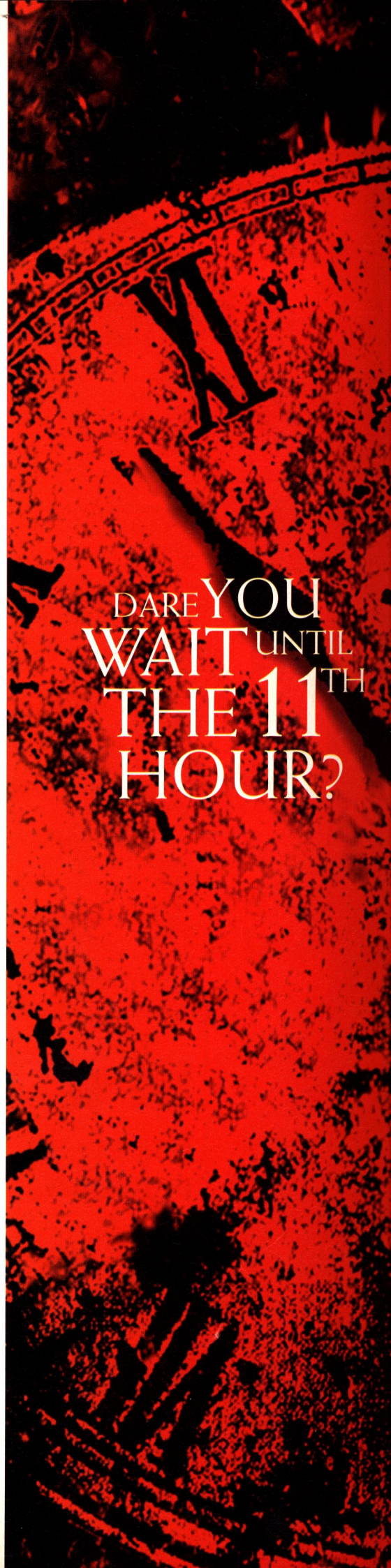
Now that the World Cup is drawing to a close, perhaps you'd like to try your hand at managing your own World Cup team. Well you have the perfect opportunity now, because we've included a playable demo of Winsport's *World Cup Challenge*.

To install this demo, create a new directory on your hard drive by typing, e.g.:

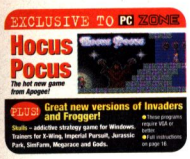
MD \WCC

now type:

CD \WCC







then copy all the files from the CD into this directory by typing:

COPY D:\WCC*.*

Now start *Windows*. If you want to create a Program Manager icon for *World Cup Challenge* you should open the window you want it to appear in and then select NEW from the FILEMENU. Select NEW ITEM and enter:

C:\WCC\WORLDEMO.EXE

as the filename, substituting the correct drive and directory. This will create a new icon which you can double-click to start the demo. Otherwise, select RUN from the FILE menu of either File Manager or Program Manager and enter:

C:\WCC\WORLDEMO.EXE

as the filename, substituting the correct drive and directory.



Living Books

This is an interactive demo of four games from Brøderbund's Living Books series: *Arthur's Teacher Trouble*, *Just Grandma and Me*, *New Kid on the Block* and *The Tortoise and the Hare*. To install the demos, start *Windows*, then select RUN from the FILE menu of either File Manager or Program Manager and enter:

D:\INSTALL.EXE

substituting the correct letter of your CD drive. The install program will create a new group in Program Manager called Broderbund Software. Within this will be icons for the four demos.



Shareware programs

We've also included three great shareware games: *Intruders*, *Leaper*, and *Skulls*.

CD Users:

Make the drive containing your CD current by typing, e.g.:

D:

then type:

CD \DISK

now type:

DISKZONE

and follow on-screen instructions to install the games to your hard drive.

HD Disk Users:

Make the drive containing your disk current by typing, e.g.:

A:

then type:

DISKZONE

and follow on-screen instructions to install the games to your hard drive.

To start Intruders, type:

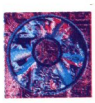
INTRUDER

To start Leaper, type:

VLEAPER

To start *Skulls*, from within *Windows* run:

SKULLS.EXE



Trainers *

You'll find the trainers in a directory called TRAINERS. The trainers are for:

X-Wing (US Gold)

We had one of these way back in the misty shadows of Issue 3, but such is the demand that we've done another one. Just copy the file XWTRN.COM into your XWING directory and type XWTRN. The game will load as usual, but now, if you hit F6 you can use the built-in trainer function and still complete a mission, or you can thumb F7 to give yourself unlimited time.

Imperial Pursuit (US Gold)

One thing our original trainer for *X-Wing* didn't do was cope with the subtle changes that *Imperial Pursuit* wrought on the game's code. So, if you possess, and have installed, the *Imperial Pursuit* add-on disk, use this trainer instead. Same rules apply as above, except this one's called IMPTRN.COM.

Jurassic Park (Ocean)

We've had a hack for *Jurassic Park* floating about for months, but we haven't been able to find a way to *Debug* or *PC Tools* it – until now. If the dinosaurs are making you extinct, just copy the file JPTRN.COM into your *Jurassic Park* directory and then just type JPTRN to activate it. The game will load, but now F1 will boost your health and F2 your ammo.

Sim Farm (Maxis)

Not as popular as *Sim City 2000*, nevertheless, this rural gerr-orf-moi-laand sim has its attractions. For much more profit when playing, copy SIMFTRN.COM into your game directory, run it by typing SIMFTRN, and then press "M" (for "moulah") in play. Nothing could be simpler.

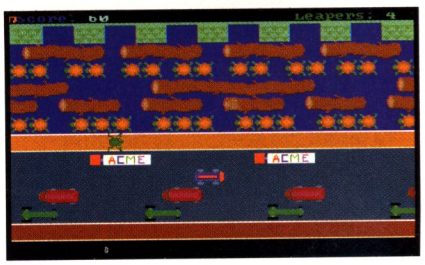
Megarace (Mindscape)

Could this be the first ever trainer for a CD game? Probably. Whether it's a "game" at all is open to some debate, but here's a trainer for it anyway. Just copy RACE.COM into your game directory, run it and press "E" in mid-race for more energy.

Gods (Renegade)

This game is almost as ancient as the concept of God these days, but they still write in. "Please, have you got a hack for *Gods*?" they say. "I'm stuck on *Gods* – can you help?" They say also. So to finally stem the flow of obsequious begging letters, we, the HackMasters, give you a *Gods* trainer.

Nostalgia can be what it used to be if you play our arcade classics.



CD-ROM HELP!

For help with the PC Zone CD-ROM, call 071-631 1433 between 2pm and 6pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, or between 10am and 1pm on Wednesdays, and ask for the PC Zone CD-ROM Helpline. Please note that the helpline will not be able to assist you with problems concerning the HD disk covermount.

IMPORTANT

PC Zone makes every effort to ensure that its disks and the programs contained on them are fault-free, virus-free and work as advertised. However, *PC Zone*, and its suppliers and distributors cannot accept liability for loss or damage to hardware or software however caused. The cover disks supplied with this issue are used at the discretion and risk of individual readers. Use of this cover disk implies acceptance of these terms.

Some of the programs on these disks are shareware. they are supplied as an evaluation service to our readers. If you like these programs and intend to go on using them, you should register them. In return you will usually receive updated or additional programs and other bonuses.

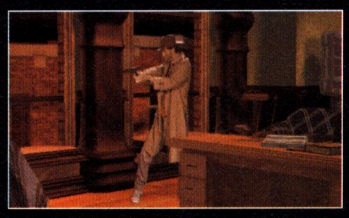
THE FIRST TRULY INTERACTIVE MOVIE

UNDER A Killing Moon

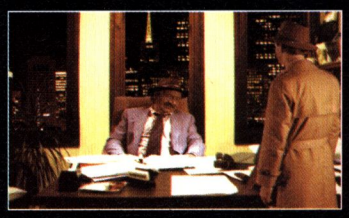


"THE NEXT MULTIMEDIA SENSATION"

CD-ROM AND MULTIMEDIA NOW







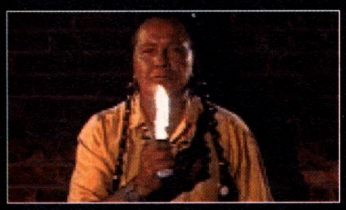
"A STUNNING TECHNOLOGICAL ACHIEVEMENT"
PC REVIEW



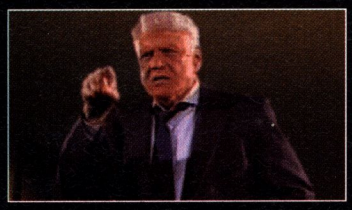
"ONE THAT'S GOING TO BE WORTH WAITING FOR"
PC POWER



FEATURING...



RUSSELL MEANS
(THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS, NATURAL BORN KILLERS)



BRIAN KEITH
(PARENT TRAP, HARDCASTLE & MCCORMICK, YOUNG GUNS)



MARGOT KIDDER
(SUPERMAN I & II)

AND YOU AS THE HARD BOILED PRIVATE EYE

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ASK TO SEE IT AT YOUR LOCAL RETAILER

ACCESS™ U.S. GOLD®



ACCESS SOFTWARE presents a CHRIS JONES production UNDER A KILLING MOON story by AARON CONNERS artistic direction by DOUG VAN DEGRIFF music by JON CLARK set design by NATHAN ZARSON, NEIL GALLOWAY, RALPH YARRON, technical direction by BRUCE WARD, BRUCE JOHNSON.

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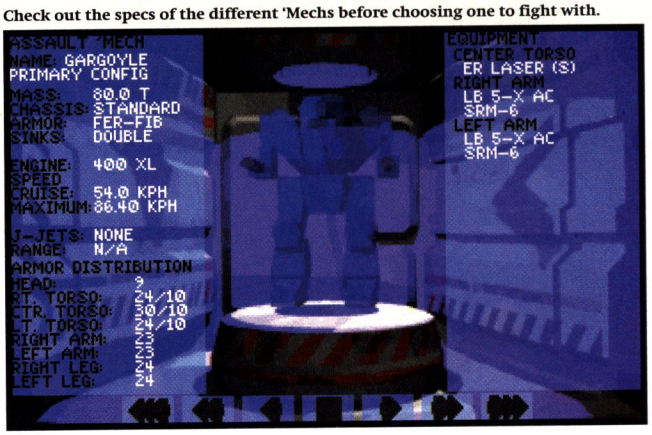
Blueprint

MechWarrior 2

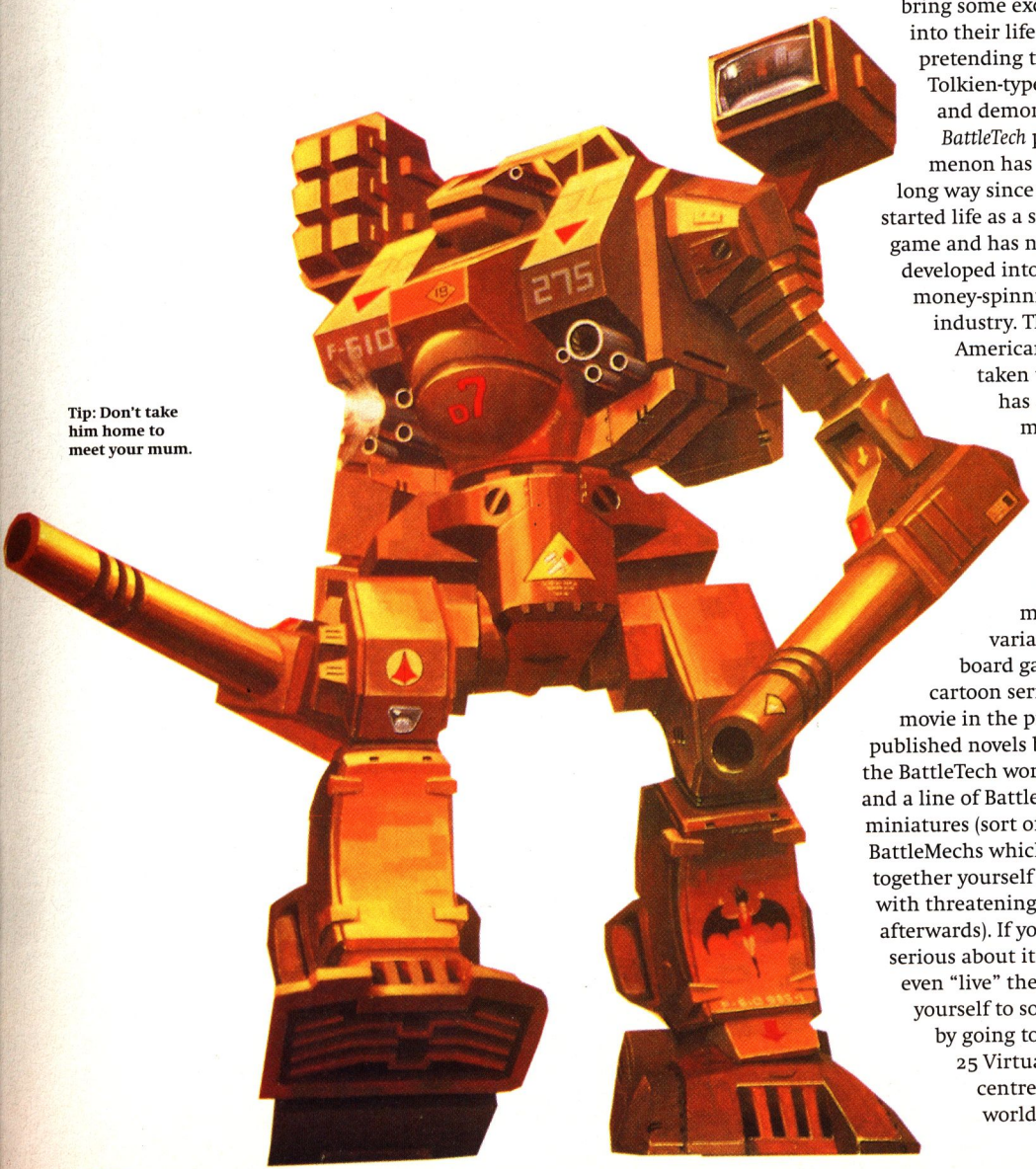
PUBLISHER: Activision	PRICE: £39.99
TELEPHONE: 081 742 9400	RELEASE DATE: 30 Sept '94

Check out the specs of the different 'Mechs before choosing one to fight with.



Activision are building what may become the most amazing multiplayer game to date. Chris Anderson climbs into his homemade suit of armour and trundles off to investigate

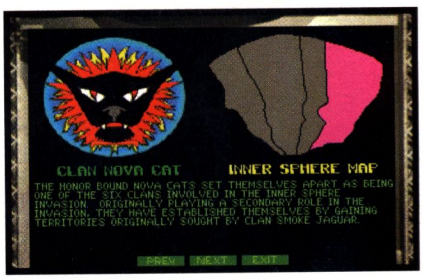
WAY BACK in 1984, Fasa Corporation released a board game called *Battledroids*. It was a turn-based futuristic war game in which players controlled giant robot-type killing machines called BattleMechs which were armed with awesome 31st century weaponry. It was similar to the famous *Dungeons and Dragons* board game that caught the imagination of train spotters everywhere who wanted to bring some excitement into their life by pretending to be Tolkien-type wizards and demons. The *BattleTech* phenomenon has come a long way since then. It started life as a small board game and has now developed into a major money-spinning industry. The Americans have taken the "if it has a tiny modicum of success, milk it dry" approach, and there are now multiple variations on the board game: a cartoon series and movie in the pipeline, published novels based on the BattleTech world to date and a line of BattleTech miniatures (sort of "airfix" BattleMechs which you put together yourself and paint with threatening colours afterwards). If you're really serious about it you can even "live" the experience yourself to some extent by going to one of the 25 Virtual World centres opening world-wide. These centres give you the chance to don your VR helmet and climb into the cockpit of a BattleMech and shoot it out for real (well, nearly real). Not surprisingly, all this activity has not escaped the attention of the PC game world. There has already been three PC games released based on the BattleTech universe (*BattleTech 1* and *2* and *MechWarrior*), and Activision are about to release the fourth in the series, *MechWarrior 2: The Clans*. We took a look at the first working version of the game and it looks set to take the PC games world by storm. Eye-popping graphics, amazing sound effects, a superb pulsating sound track and, of course, wonderfully gratuitous bouts of wanton destruction are the hallmarks of Activision's new release. For those of you who are unfamiliar with the BattleTech world, here's the story so far.



Tip: Don't take him home to meet your mum.

Death or dishonour

In the 31st century, Earth and hundreds of other planets make up a part of known space called the Inner Sphere. The Sphere is ruled by competing Houses who, after centuries of fighting among themselves, are faced with a new threat in the form of the Clans. The six Clans are made up of exiled soldiers from various planets who have come back to the Inner Sphere to take it over. Having consistently defeated the Houses in battle, the Clans now control a large part of the Sphere and have set their sights on getting the rest. The Houses and Clans have now declared a 15 year truce, and most of the Houses are using the period to get themselves ready for the war that will undoubtedly erupt at the end of the truce. Bound by honour not to fight with the Houses, the six Clans start to fight among themselves. This is where you come in. You start the game as a young MechWarrior for one of the Clans. Your



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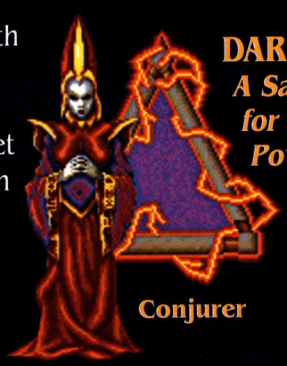

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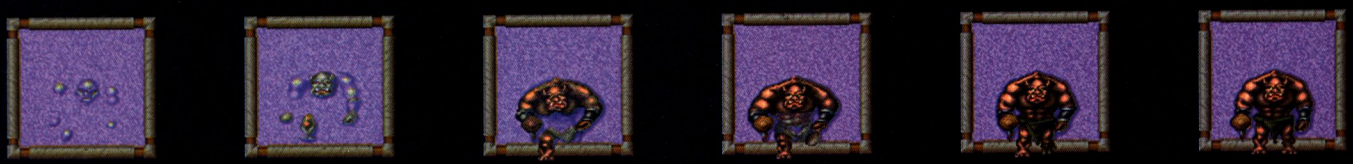

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The Changing Face of BattleTech

MechWarrior 2 is the fourth in the *BattleTech* PC game series and shows a significant improvement over the early games. It doesn't have the more traditional RPG elements seen in the first two, but it has better arcade action and more depth of game play. Also, as you can see from the screen shots, it's light years ahead of the others in terms of graphics. If you want to take a look at the early games, you can now buy all three in a compilation which Activision has released as part of its Powerhits range. This is an overview on how the game has developed since the early days.

BattleTech: The Crescent Hawk's Inception

The first *BattleTech* game was a conventional RPG effort, with a top-down view of the playing area. Players could travel to 4 million locations and form their own battle strategy. It has no sound support and the graphics are a bit basic but it's still reasonably playable, despite its age.

BattleTech: The Crescent Hawk's Revenge

Yep, you guessed it, it's the sequel. *BattleTech 2* offers 27 scenarios on five planets. You can also choose from more than 55 different kinds of 'Mech. Sound support and better graphics were incorporated into this sequel and it has a very atmospheric feel to it. It's similar in style to the first one, but looks and plays better.

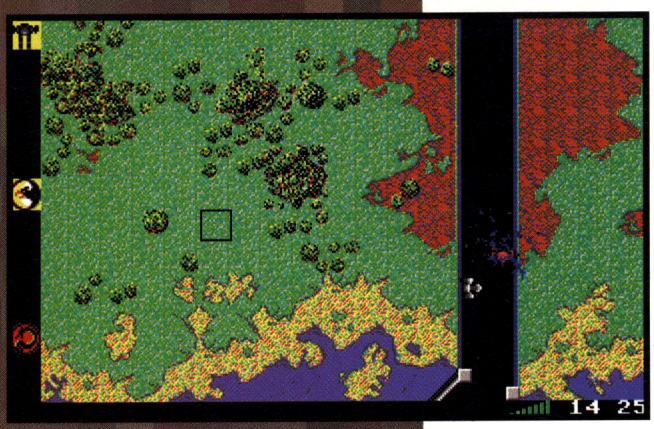
MechWarrior

This was the first *BattleTech* game to feature 3D graphics and give you a first-person perspective viewpoint from the cockpit of your BattleMechs. It looks a bit long in the tooth now compared to modern 3D sims, but it was considered sophisticated when it was released. It's more action orientated than the first two and has a wider variety of terrains.

MechWarrior 2: The Clans

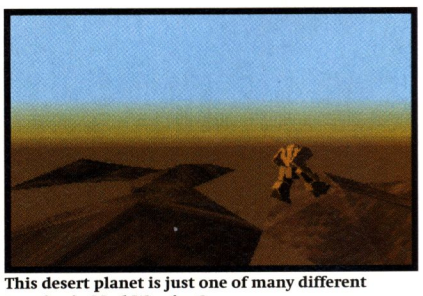
MechWarrior 2 offers the same cockpit perspective as it's predecessor, but demonstrates major improvements in every department. It has more depth of game play, gives you the opportunity to design the BattleMech of your dreams, and the stunning graphics are matched by the equally impressive sound effects. If you liked the first *MechWarrior game*, you'll soil your undergarments over this one.











This desert planet is just one of many different terrains in MechWarrior 2.



This 'Mech has jump jets. Better take him out before he disappears.

goal is to rise up through the ranks of the Clan and become the ultimate MechWarrior. To achieve this, you must consistently prove yourself in battle, but before you embark on a career with one of the Clans, it's wise to familiarise yourself with the different 'Mechs and hone your battle skills with the Instant Action option.

Trial and error

When you enter the Instant Action screen, you can select the BattleMech you want to use for the fight, decide how many 'Mechs will be on your side and how many opponents you will face. You can customise all aspects of the battle to get a feel for what lies ahead of you in Career mode. You can decide what the weather conditions will be, what planet you'll be fighting on, and even the gravity of the planet itself. The range of user-definable options to choose from on the Instant Action menu is so comprehensive that, by the time you've gone through a few battles and got a feel for the action, you should be well prepared to take the plunge and go for the ultimate challenge. The cockpits for the BattleMechs are pleasingly uncomplicated and uncluttered, so it's easy for novices to get going straight away. As is the case with most simulations these days, the number keys at the top of



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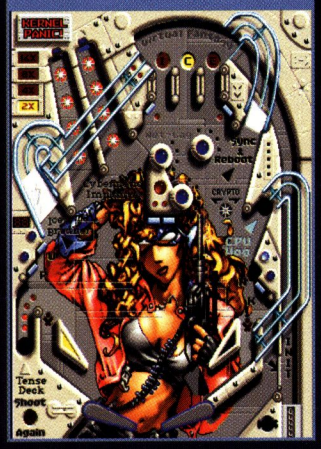
Cyborgirl



Pangaea



Toy Factory



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"Epic Pinball rings up a high score" - Computer Gaming World

"Up there with the best of the commercial releases", rated 91% - PC Format

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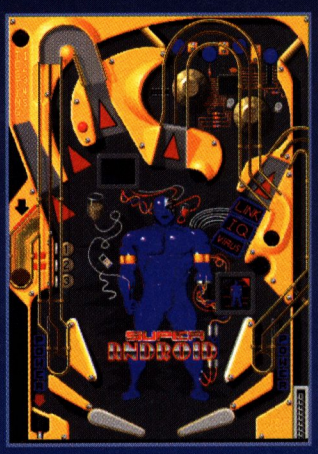

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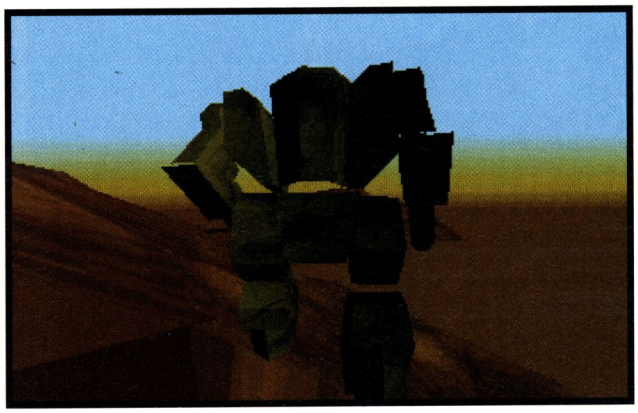
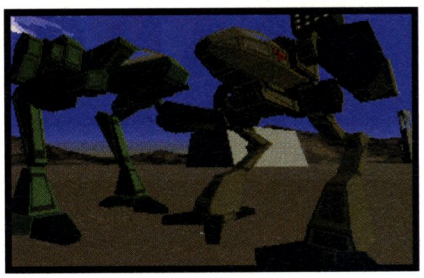
MechWarrior 2

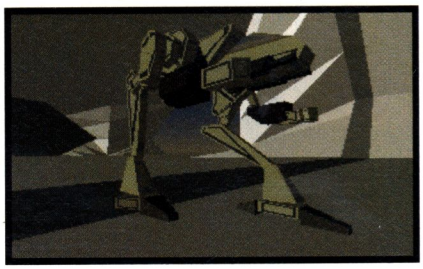


(Right) Get mission briefings and run-downs on all the 'Mechs in the library.

(Below right) Take control of 100 tons of menacing metal.







Way of the Clans

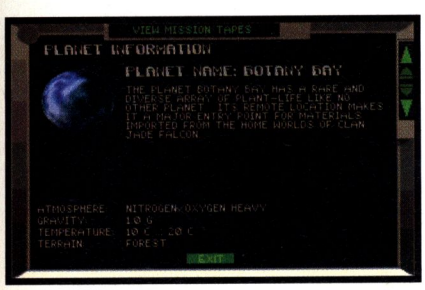
MechWarrior 2 **is loosely based on the background in Robert Thurston's novel,** ***Way of the Clans,*** **published by ROC. The book follows the progress of Aidan, a young cadet, as he makes his way through basic training in his bid to become a MechWarrior. Apart from being a good read, the book gives you real empathy with the BattleTech world, and consequently adds more atmosphere to the game when you play it. I highly recommend this book to anyone who plans to play** ***MechWarrior 2*** **when it's released.**



The attractive presentational sequences add to the atmosphere.

the keyboard control your speed. You move your 'Mech left or right using the cursor keys or joystick, wait until an opponent comes into your sights and then blast the hell out of him, simple as that. Well, it would be if it wasn't for the unfortunate fact that the enemy have similar un-neighbourly feelings towards you. On-screen arrows point you in the direction of your enemies, but if you don't find them quickly you'll be history in a flash. Defeating your foes is not just a case of blasting away at them until they blow up, either. BattleMechs have a tendency to overheat if you use your weapons too much or run too fast, and when that happens, your 'Mech becomes immobilised. If you get into this situation, you may as well be standing on the battlefield with a big white flag waving to your enemies and inviting them to come and blow you into tiny little pieces. The best strategy is to move at a leisurely pace and only use your energy-consuming weapons if you know they'll hit their target. All the different 'Mechs have their own strengths and weaknesses, so if you really get to know your 'Mechs, you'll be in a good position to decide which strategy to use against different opponents.

Full info on the planets is available before going into battle.



View to a kill

There are multiple camera angles from which you can view the action, including independent and tracking views, so you'll be able to keep track of your enemies at all times. The tracking view is particularly impressive and shows off your BattleMech in all its wonderful glory. The whole game has a very atmospheric feel and the view perspective and 'Mech animation is so convincing, it makes you feel as though you really are in control of a giant, 100 ton mass of deadly BattleMech. For that extra bit of realism, you can play against human opponents via modem or serial link. You can either play against your friends, or join forces with them and fight for the same Clan. If you perform quite well for a particular Clan, you will receive medals and promotions. If you perform exceptionally well, you may even have your genes added to the Clans gene pool to be passed on to future warriors. *MechWarrior 2*'s excellent combination of strategic and action game elements puts it streets ahead of most PC simulations and if you like the game, the story doesn't end here. Activision is planning to release a series of add-on disks. The first one should be released soon after the game itself, and will feature 17 new BattleMech designs. Additionally, Activision is considering a sequel, which will give you the chance to take part in the invasion of the Inner Sphere. *MechWarrior 2* will be in the shops in October, and if the potential inherent in this early version is realised, simulation fans are in for a superior game experience. PZ

Mech Mechanics

On the surface, ***MechWarrior 2*** **looks like just another glorified shoot'em up. But nothing could be further from the truth. In the construction plant, you can design your own 'Mechs. A multitude of options include choosing the total tonnage, which type of engine to use, what type of weapons to use and where to place them on the 'Mech. There's a certain amount of pride to be had from striding across the battlefield, blowing your opponents away in a BattleMech of your own design. It also adds an element of strategy to the game.**





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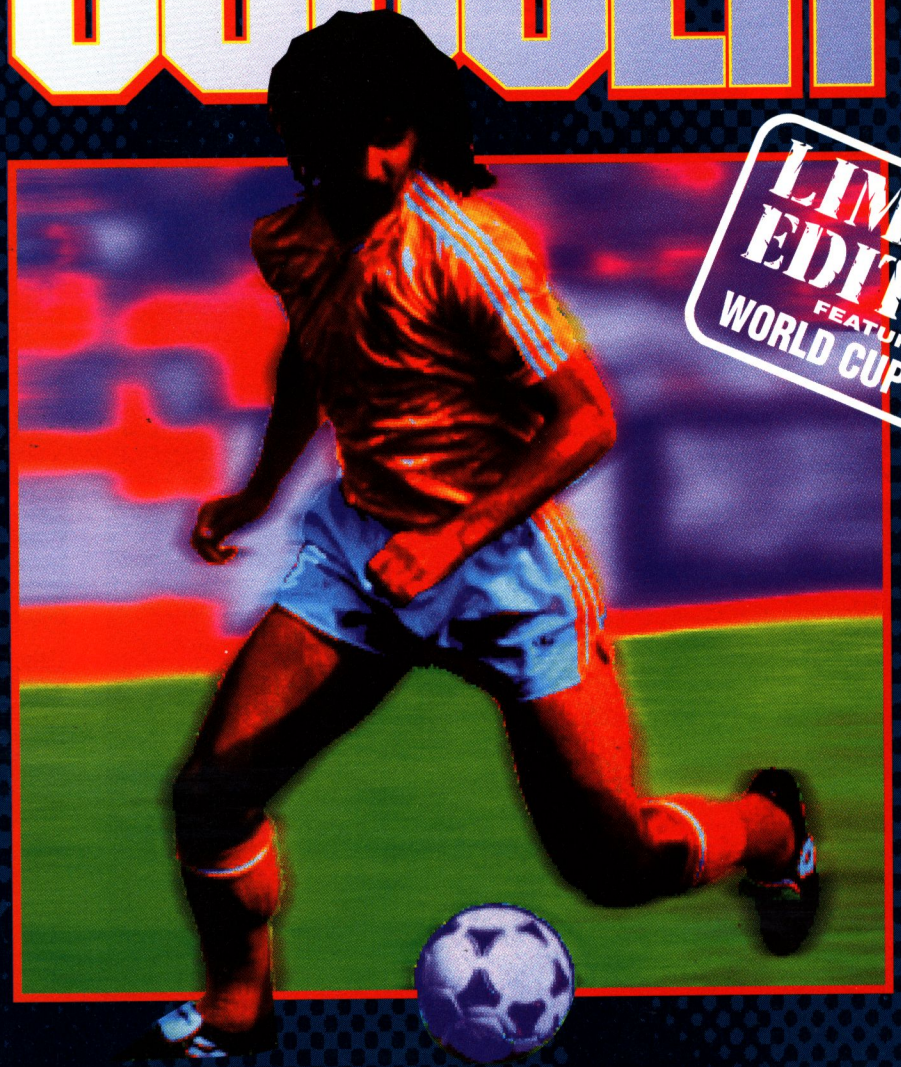

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Blueprint

Outpost

PUBLISHER: Sierra | PRICE: £49.99

TELEPHONE: 0734 303322 | RELEASE DATE: 4 July 1994

Sierra's soon-to-be-released space colonisation game is based on detailed NASA research and some nifty 3D-rendered animations. Andrew Wright takes a peek at what happens when *Civilisation* meets *Sim City* somewhere in space.





(Top) The mother ship preparing to leave a doomed earth. (Above) Preparing to land on the chosen planet.

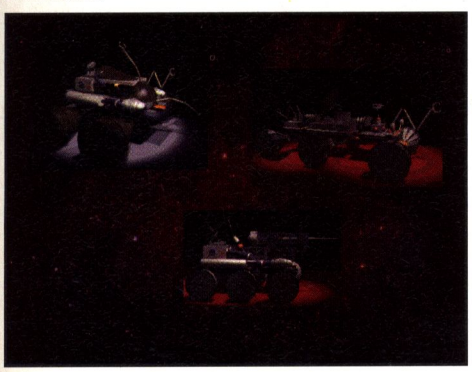
THE FIRST thing that hits you when you launch into Sierra's new space-strategy game, *Outpost*, is undoubtedly the graphics. The 3-dimensional rendered animations of various spaceships and robotic helpers is, not to put too fine a point on it, stunningly done. Add some original gameplay, a cleverly designed user interface, background music from Gustav's Planet suite, stick it on a CD, and it certainly has me interested.

Outpost is a strategy/simulation centring on the human race's fight for survival somewhere in outer space. Whether the human race actually deserves to survive isn't clear, but if the mind-bogglingly complex problems we came up against in the beta version are anything to go by, it probably won't.

Hell for weather

The game is set 50 years in the future with the earth about to be hit by a large solid object, one hundred miles across. Presumably, the Volvo owners amongst us stand a good chance of survival but the rest of us will have to face environmental disasters, such as 100-foot tidal waves, firestorms, intense heat and, of course, nitric oxide pollution.

(Below) Robots are your best weapon. There are explorers for mapping much needed resources, miners for getting them out of the ground, diggers for building underground tunnels for habitation and dozers for smoothing the surface for future construction.



Everybody with half a brain has climbed aboard your nuclear fusion-powered mother ship, now orbiting the earth and awaiting your decision on where to settle. Your mission, whether you choose to accept it or not, is to send long-range space probes winging their way around the known universe looking for likely planets to settle on. Once you've found one, it's off you jolly well trot to set up a new colony.



(Right) This little beauty just has to be the mother of all mother ships.

Under offer! Des/Res planet

Naturally, you can't just set up a colony on any old planet. You have to be a bit more scientific than plonking the precious remnants of the human race on that big red planet on the right; the one next to the cute looking asteroid belt. Your probes will feed you all the information you need to make the decision, but there's no turning back if it's the wrong one. While you're orbiting around the planet, you can send down as many probes as you have stocked up with to determine the best place to start. Then in goes the SEED factory: an automated landing unit that sets up the first few buildings using robots.

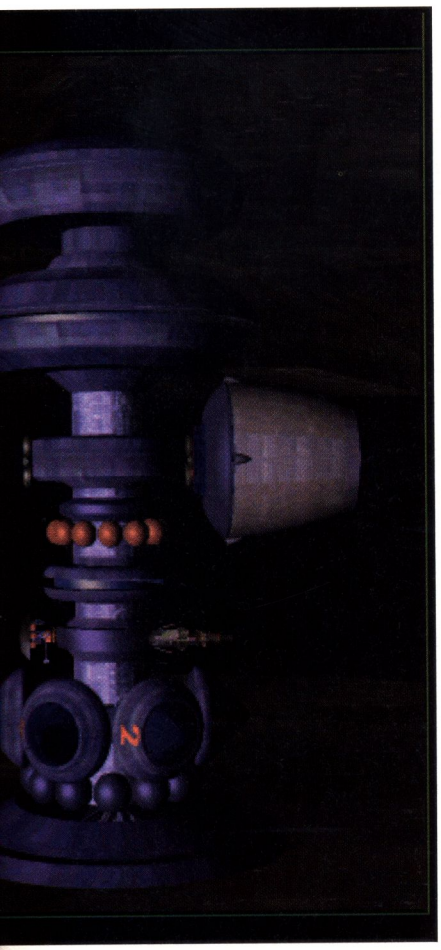
Once on terra firma, or whatever firma you're going to call home from now on, it's up to you to send out explorer robots, keep up with the building, get more power going, knuckle under to a bit of research, start some agriculture to keep the humans fed and, if I know my humans, start polluting the bloody place. Oh, and you might need to think about oxygen too, as the inhabitants of Red Dwarf Two, or whatever affectionate nickname you give your craft, don't seem to do very much without it.

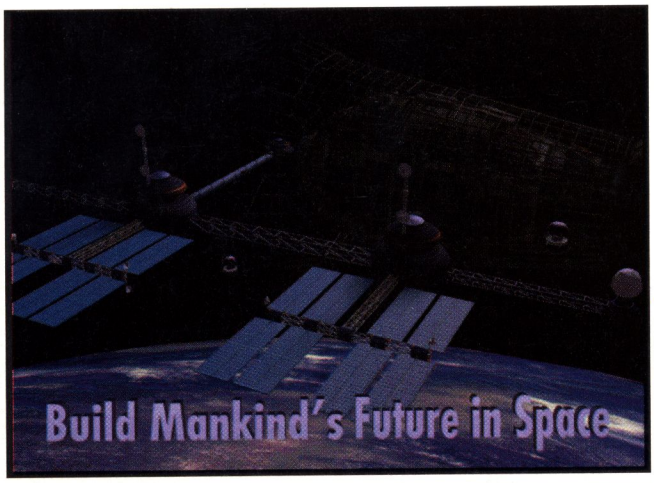
You can set up more and more colonies and allow trade between them – flattening and generally lousing up the surface of the planet in the name of progress, but don't be surprised if you get the occasional rebel who thinks he (or she) could manage things better. You're always going to be unpopular with someone, especially when you've been travelling together, deep-frozen in space for 50 years and your automatic deodoriser failed shortly after take-off.

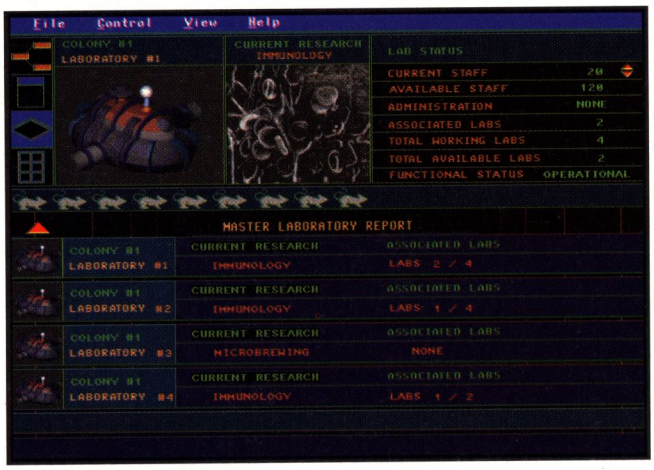
Who needs neighbours, eh?

Naturally, all this is far too easy for the *Sim City*-hardened strategy fans, so there are random events thrown in like meteorite strikes, plagues, 300-mph wind storms and blistering temperatures, not to mention visits from other life forms. I haven't come across any yet, but the giant crab people of Formalhaut Four don't sound like the people you'd choose for neighbours. Unless you live in North Wales where most of you would probably exchange them for the present incumbents quite happily.

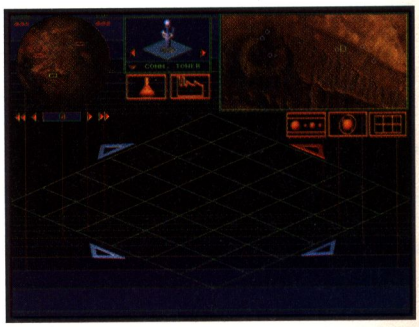
Outpost looks good from every angle. The concept is good, the gameplay is there and the graphics are simply the best I've ever seen on any game. However, a strategy game like this depends on its long-term playability – it's no use going through all that work setting up a colony only to find out that life after earth is pretty boring and that you'd rather have collected your life insurance and disappeared to Alpha Centauri. I've been looking for a game that would get me off that blasted *Civilisation*, and *Outpost* certainly looks like it's the one to do it. At least I'll stand a better chance of playing with those lovely nukes when I get my hands on the finished version....

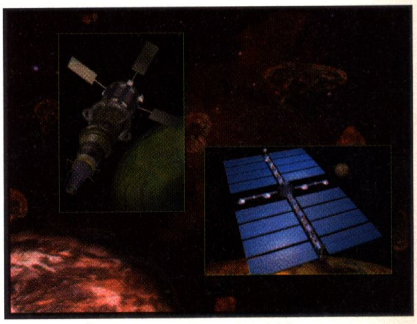






(Left) ...and boldly go where no man... yeah, yeah.
(Lower left) Down to the lab for a quick check on how the Microbrew is coming along.
(Below) With planning permission no longer necessary, you can site home sweet home just about anywhere – but it's best to put it near resources such as iron ore and groundwater
(Bottom) "Oi! Watch where you're going with that... that thingy."
"Bog off you Sunday driver, you!"





Science Fact Or Fiction?

Sierra claims the game to be a science fact-based colonisation strategy game. Apart from putting it squarely into a category all of its own, it begs some explanation.

Fortunately, that's present in the shadowy shape of the designer and producer, Bruce Balfour. According to the PR bumf, Bruce is a space boffin par excellence, having worked on NASA's space program as a systems manager and written a few sci-fi books. Apparently, while at NASA he carried out some detailed studies on proposed martian and lunar colonies, orbital labs, terraforming, robot factories and artificially intelligent computers. No wonder the American public is moaning about the squillions of wasted dollars. Unless, that is, they haven't told us everything, of course.

Actually, the simulation element isn't as far fetched as it sounds. The scientific details have been thought through in some depth and clearly someone knows what they're talking about, even if they've never actually landed on Beetlejuice 3 or been anywhere near it. For example, the initial actions involve sending out Very Long Baseline Interferometry (VLBI) and Ultra Long Baseline Interferometry (ULBI) probes – music to the ears of *Star Trek* fans, but just plain enjoyable, believable bunkum if you live in the real world.



(Above) See, I told you – Sim City in space.
(Left) The superb 3D-rendered terrain makes for great atmosphere. Well I hope it does. The buggers in the back of this 'ere spaceship have got to breath it for the rest of their lives.

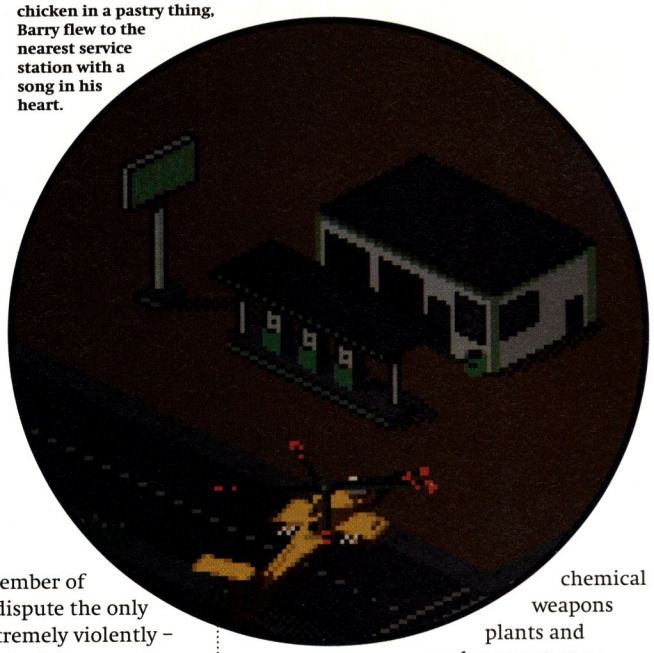
Blueprint

Desert Strike

PUBLISHER: Gremlin | PRICE: £34.99

TELEPHONE: 0742 753423 | RELEASE DATE: June 1994

Few things in life excite Patrick McCarthy as much as the chance to re-enact a real-life "conflict" with a game, so his fat-encrusted heart gave a life-threatening shudder when we asked him to have a first look at *Desert Strike*. Unfortunately, it wasn't quite life-threatening enough.



Desperate for a hot can of Fanta and a microwaved chicken in a pastry thing, Barry flew to the nearest service station with a song in his heart.

REMEMBER when, back in the good old days, an Amiga or ST game that had been pretty highly rated in its own format was awaited with great suspense by PC gamers forever starved of decent entertainment? Inevitably, after a delay of five years, it would eventually appear in cocked-up form, with its formerly gorgeous sprites now looking like something to do with a rather horrible farming accident, its background graphical splendour reduced to four-colour EGA and its toe-tapping soundtrack sounding uncannily like a sample of *The Clangers*. Times have changed. Nowadays, if an Amiga or console game makes it onto the PC it has a lot to do to make any impact. You know what's coming....



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Console ahoy!

Desert Strike first emerged into the world as a console game, and a rather rare one at that. It's one of the few console games to concern itself with industrial action by registered tree surgeons in an area with few opportunities for gainful employment. You play a chisel-faced, gimlet-eyed, chain-smoking, gun-toting renegade member of ACAS, out to settle the dispute the only way you know how: extremely violently – after an extensive period of time spent lounging around in top hotels taking Michelin star-standard working lunches. To this end, you are equipped with a large leather briefcase with your initials embossed in gold on the flap, a set of matching executive rollerball pens in an attractive leather-look presentation case and an Apache AH-64 attack helicopter with front-mounted cannon and a full complement of air-to-ground missiles.

Shoot-em-up ahoy

Desert Strike could best be termed a tactical shoot-em-up. Or even a great tactical shoot-em-up. In fact, I'll go further: it could safely be described as *the* great tactical shoot-em-up of the console games world (apart, just perhaps, from *Nigel Short's Sucker Dart Chess Challenge*). It's a shoot-em-up because everything you come across in the game can be shot up. And it's tactical because

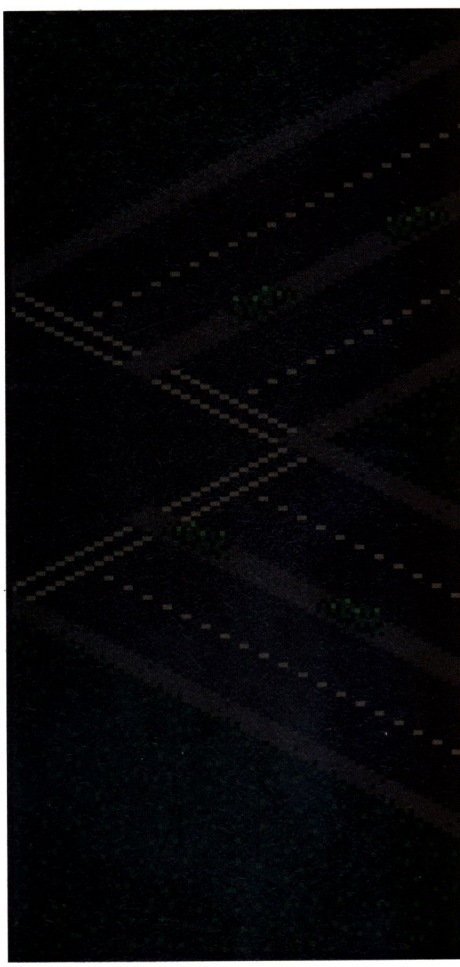
> "You play a chisel-faced, gimlet-eyed, chain-smoking, gun-toting renegade member of the ACAS..."

you don't have everything you need to shoot everything up with you at all times; dotted about the parched desert landscape are hidden caches of weapons, fuel and aviator Ray Bans. You can see where they are by consulting your on-board map, but you can also see that there are numerous SAM sites, SCUDS, tanks and quite a few other unpleasant things that would very much like to hurt you.

Very untopical joke ahoy

Bear in mind also, that you can't just fly about willy-nilly, having fun. You're not Mike Smith. There are definite set objectives to each mission you're given – and there are 30 missions, spread over four different levels. You might be called upon to rescue a comrade from behind enemy lines, destroy entire oil fields, blow up chemical weapons plants and nuclear reactors or drop leaves on the railway lines. The tactical part involves insuring that you pick your way through the things that are out to get you, get the things you're supposed to get, and don't run out of weapons or fuel while doing so.

It's played from an isometric viewpoint, and the helicopter never varies in height above the ground. Taking off and landing are achieved, rather like horrible Brummie accents, by the influence of environment rather than by any active learning process.







(Left) The early lessons on the course always took place in areas where there was a good chance of immediate medical assistance...
(Right) ...the only drawback being that it sometimes exposed the pilots to ribald comments from local office workers.

All you do is fly over a landing area slowly and it does it all for you. Despite this lack of proper flying, the helicopter handles pretty much as you expect – the nose points down when you fly forward and up when you fly backward, and even further up when you crash.

Hopeful final paragraph

Even though it's only a console game that's been put onto the PC over a year after it first appeared; even though the original game had something of a steep rise in difficulty levels and even though it isn't a first-person viewed shoot-em-up like every other game that's around at the moment; it might be a playable little number when it appears in a month or so's time. (Not that we'll notice – we'll all be glued to the World Cup, out of our heads on top-quality Belgian beer and bloated to the gills with deep-fried pigs' nostrils in crispy batter.) EA's games have generally survived the transmutation to the PC fairly well – yes, this was an EA game, even though Gremlin are publishing this version of it. How that will affect matters remains to be seen. Z



The Weapons

There are three types of weapon available to you in your quest to purge the sands of evil enemy scum: a gun, some powerful death-dealing missiles and some even more powerful death-dealing missiles. Caches of these weapons can be found dotted liberally around the landscape – well, liberally on the first level, anyway. Later, they become few and far between and a great deal of careful planning is called for. Generally they're hidden in buildings which you have to destroy (carefully) before the goodies are revealed, but they can also be found under mounds of sand and beneath huge piles of belly-dancers' jewellery.

To shoot stuff, all you have to do is point the helicopter/chopper vaguely in the direction of the item you wish to flambé and push the button. Your allegedly intelligent co-pilot will then do his stuff: fine-tuning the aim to take out what he thinks you've taken a dislike to. (Some of the co-pilots are better than others – in fact, one of your later missions involves locating and winching up an ace co-pilot who's been shot down somewhere out in the hellish wastes with only a bottle of Evian and some Ambre Solaire SPF60 to keep him going.) Sometimes this aiming method didn't work as well as it might have on the Megadrive version, usually because of the isometric view rather than the incompetence of your co-pilot, but we'll have to wait and see how it goes in this version.

Big Gun

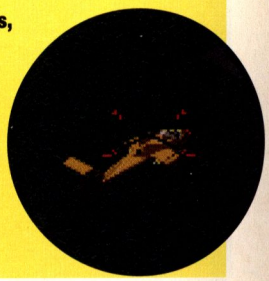
It's a fairly powerful thing, your big gun, and it's more than capable of wrecking buildings if you have (a) the time, (b) the patience, (c) 8,000,000 bullets, and (d) no-one running up to you with a SAM in his back pocket.

Hydras

The less powerful of the two missile types available to you are all very well, but they don't really pack much of a wallop. They're best used for taking out light-armoured vehicles or ice cream vans. Their range seems to be about 30 yards to scale, so you'll find you have to get in closer to your intended victim than you'd like.

Hellfires

If missiles were *Coronation Street* characters, Hellfires would be Alf Roberts. They're that mean. Powerful and with a good range of fire, their only downside is that there aren't that many of them. You can only pick them up in batches of eight and just one rush of blood to the head later, they're gone. But, happily enough, so is the bloke who cut you up at the lights.

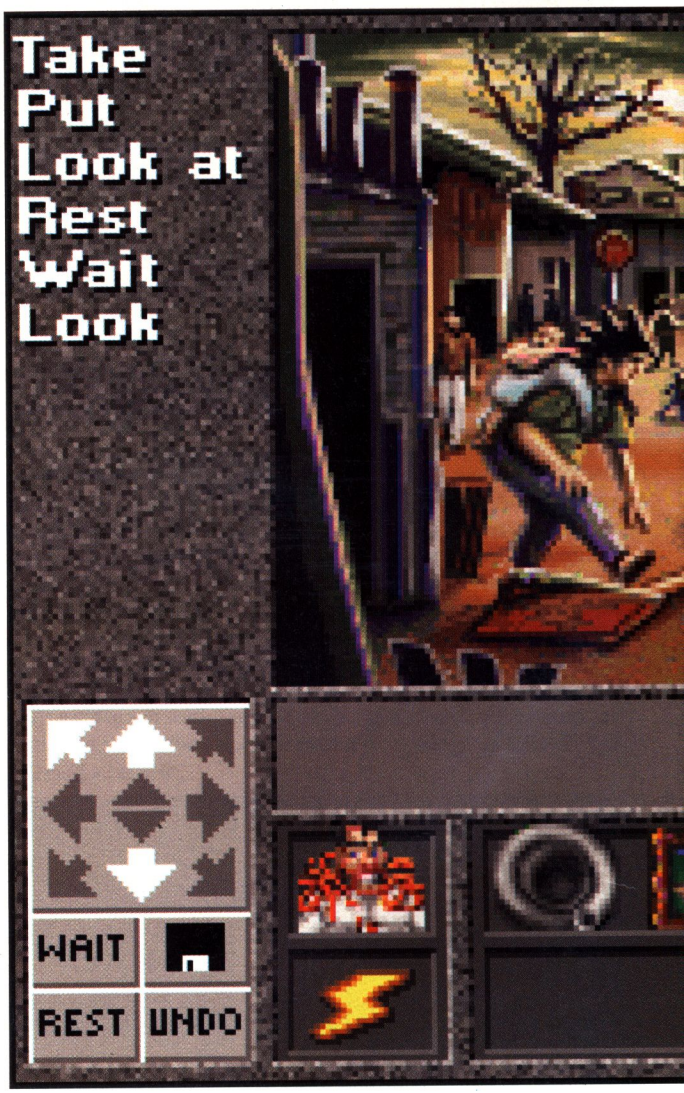


Superhero League of Hoboken

PUBLISHER: Legend | PRICE: £39.99

TELEPHONE: 081 788 0200 | RELEASE DATE: June/July

You'll never believe a man can fly? Nonsense! Besides, Superman's really a bit crap compared to the heroes on offer in Legend's great new comedy adventure *lark*. Caroline Westbrook grapples with a few men in tights....



FUNNY THINGS, superheroes. They seem to spend most of their time prancing around in shockingly-snug lycra numbers, doing untold damage to no-gooders and returning peace and harmony to the planet as we know it. And all that with their underwear peeking precariously over their tights. Great, fantastic, but there never seems to be a superhero around when you actually need one, for example, when your toilet floods or the local confectionery emporium has run out of Curly-Wurlys.



At least the motley selection of superbrains in Legend's latest role-playing adventure romp, *Superhero: League of Hoboken,* seem to have been blessed with a few more earthly powers. After all, when did Superman (for all his actually managing-to-move-around-in-a-phone-box abilities) ever manage to eat spicy food without showing the slightest sign of distress, put animals to sleep, or see inside pizza boxes? He couldn't, could he? Not even in his so-called New Adventures.

Superhero: Legend of Hoboken comes across as an eco-friendly, environmentally-sound, caring-sharing, let's slip on a catsuit and cape and trounce some baddies kind of game for the 90s. It's set in a futuristic New York (not terribly original, I know, but who cares?) where everything seems to have gone horribly wrong: toxic waste is rife, radioactive monsters are running loose in the streets, the polar ice-caps have become insignificant pools of water, and there is a desperate shortage of oat bran! Gasp! Even worse, normally innocent sheep have turned from cute woolly barr lambs into bloodthirsty carnivores! It's just all too much!



(Below) With baddies ranging from two-headed radioactive babies to writ-waving lawyers, you're gonna have to make sure your team of superheroes have got a good few tricks of their own up their sleeves

What's a superhero to do?

Well, the ones in this game don't seem to have much trouble deciding – they band together in a remote part of New Jersey to go out there and take on perilous streets dominated by chemical waste and roaming bands of mutant villains, with only a pea-shooter and an Ace bandage for protection! The eventual object of the game is to reach the Empire State Building, wherein lies the evil Dr Entropy, the man determined that New York should remain festering in toxic waste forever and who, naturally, is none too pleased when a whole bunch of heroic sorts bound into town proclaiming the rebirth of a new society. Defeat the Doc and New York will, once again, be a civilised place where, as it says here, superheroes can always find a date on a Saturday night.



You take on the role of the Crimson Tape, a cheesily grinning heroic kind of guy with the astounding ability to create organisational charts. With him, you get to choose a further three superheroes to take on your quest, from such dignitaries as The Iron Tummy, the aforementioned spicy-food nosher, and Robomop: an android with the ability to clean up almost any mess. Each level on the game consists of a series of missions, which the foursome have to use their logic, intelligence and general ability against all things inhuman to complete, move on to the next level and be that step closer to reaching Dr Entropy.

Starting off from your headquarters, you head off around town by means of an on-



By making your way through the maze of locations, you collect various items. These items will help you on your journey, either by assisting in the solution of puzzles, or to use for bargaining with the other characters in return for info and equipment.



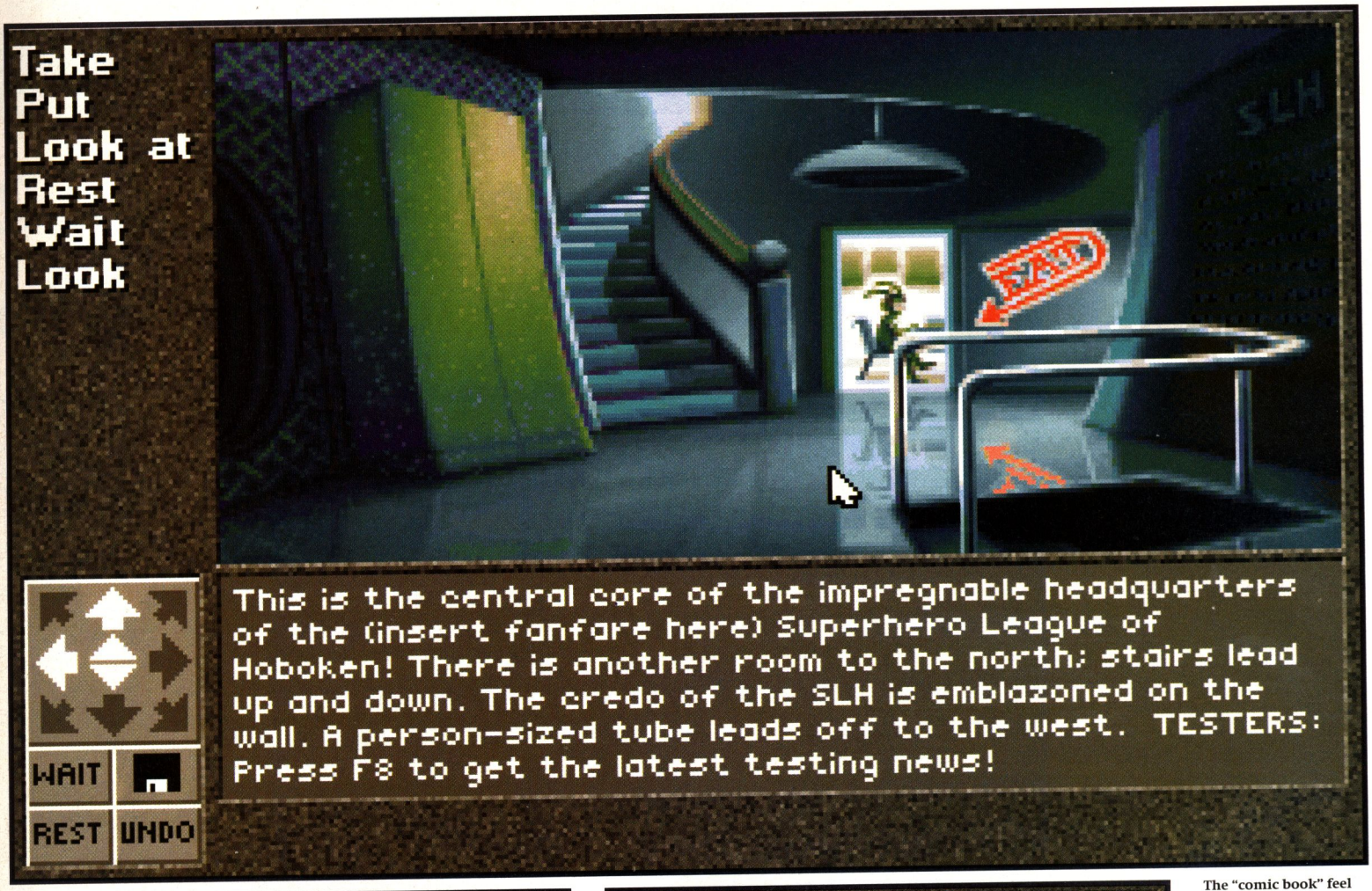




screen location map, showing you exactly where you are at all times and informing you when you reach points of importance or if you bump into a band of nasties. There will be a number of these toe-rags to overcome throughout the game, ranging from The Terrible Two (wailing two-headed radioactive babies), to McMutants (walking mutant hamburgers – yes, honestly!), to writ-waving lawyers through to Supermom, a demented mother who will kill you by forcing you to – lordy! – wear horrible sweaters and eat Brussels sprouts. However, you can overcome all evil-doers by a choice of methods, including pea-shooting them into submission, using your superpowers, or, if you're really a complete coward, just running away (but this is inadvisable as you'll only come across them later in the game). Expect to die a number of times



Superhero League Of Hoboken







The "comic book" feel of the game is evident everywhere – in the locations, the characters and the gameplay. The number and variety of the different baddies range from McMutants (waling mutant hamburgers) to chests of drawers (left) each with their own special attack and weakness.





before finally working out which is the best way to defeat your foes.

Experience points are gained every time you are victorious in combat, which will go towards advancement in the game and (hopefully) your eventual invincibility. Each time a certain amount of experience is gained, you advance to the next class of superhero, until eventually you reach First Class. Continued experience points on this level lead to decorations: medals of honour and the such like, which basically mean that you can belt the living daylights out of enemies without a shred of harm being done to yourself. As the game progresses and more missions are completed, expect new-found riches (which can be used to buy even more evil-looking weapons and other assorted goodies) and a wider selection of superheroes to choose from (which means you no longer have to put up with the rather weedy-looking, Tropical Oil Man, whose shirts look as though they were ironed by his mum, and the not-entirely-useful, Mademoiselle Pepperoni (who looks inside pizza boxes for fun).

Ahahh! a bit of useless paper

There are an infinite number of rooms for you to explore and objects to pick up, all of which will serve a purpose at some stage in the game, even if at the time they do just look like useless bits of paper blowing around all over the place. Although it all threatens to become very complicated, more and more logical moves fall into place as the game goes on. If you do happen to die and have to start again from the beginning, use the Rapid Fight section to whizz through conflicts that you've already done, to speed up the gameplay and generally keep things moving along.

Superfun?

The entertainment factor here is good. Even though the chances of you being killed before you've even had a chance to complete your first mission are fairly high, the whole thing will withstand repeated play to discover more of the absurd monsters, available superheroes and witty dialogue peppering the gameplay, and the graphics look set to be pretty eye-catching too! Every room is worth exploring, and every object worth tampering with just to find out what witty riposte the game will come up with in response to each little detail you explore. It's likely to appeal most to fans of schlock horror movies and anybody with a sense of humour. This is far from being the easiest game in the world to master, but chances are you'll have such a good time attempting it you'll be past caring within five minutes.

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SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY

WINDOW

With *Windows 4* (*Chicago*) just around the corner, it finally looks as though DOS will get the boot. Huw Collingbourne looks at the current crop of *Windows* games and asks what the future holds for games under *Windows*.

THESE days just about all the best PC software is developed to run inside Microsoft *Windows*. With one notable exception – games.

Bearing in mind the fact that most PC users now own a copy of *Windows* and just about every new PC comes with *Windows* pre-installed, it might strike you as more than a little odd that you still have to resort to DOS when you want to have fun.

Not that DOS itself is a barrel of laughs. The truth of the matter is that life would be much simpler for all of us if only more games ran under *Windows*. Never again would we have to be bothered about dealing with messy stuff such as incompatible video or sound cards. Some DOS games won't play sounds unless you have a "100 per cent Sound Blaster compatible" sound card, and others won't load at all unless your video card "conforms to the VESA standard".

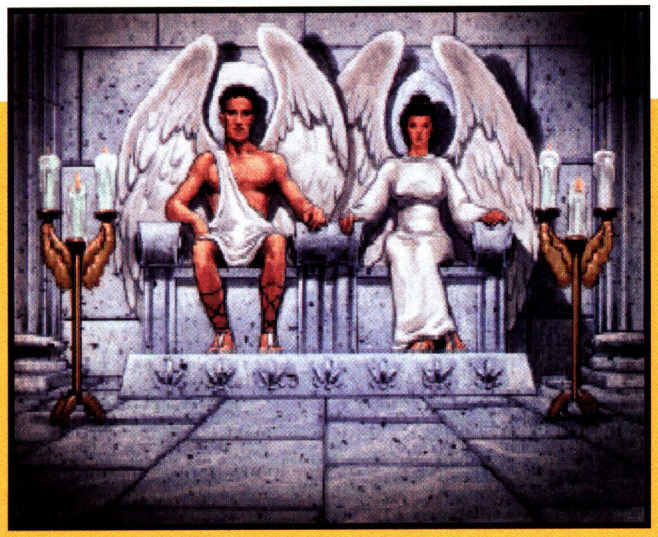
If those same games had been written for *Windows*, those problems would never arise. Just as long as your video or sound card can be installed for the *Windows* system itself (and all but the very dodgiest of them can be) they would automatically work with your games.

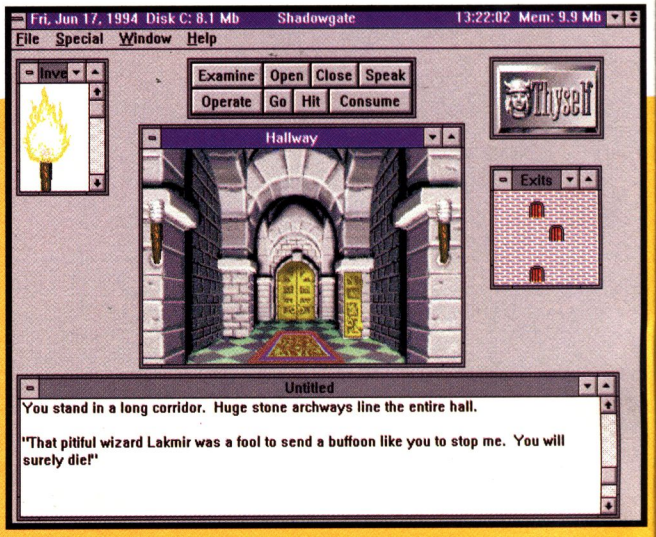
Better still, you wouldn't have to worry about configuring your PC's memory in all kinds of bizarre ways. To get many DOS games to load, you often have to go

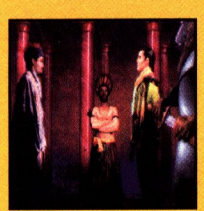
Top 5 Games for Windows

1. King's Quest VI
2. Chessmaster 4000
3. SimLife
4. D/Generation
5. SimCity

Reviews



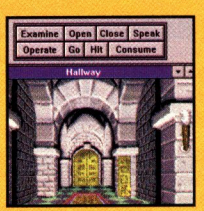




King's Quest VI £49.99

This is one of those hybrid games that can be run either from DOS or *Windows*, though the *Windows* version is recommended since this has some additional features, such as *Windows* video clips. One video shows how the game was made (with a claimed budget of one million dollars). If you've enjoyed earlier episodes in the *King's Quest* series of animated adventures, you'll no doubt enjoy this one too. The only negative point is that it doesn't really make good use of the *Windows* environment.

Sierra-On-Line 0734 303322



Shadowgate £29.99

This is an adventure game which uses multiple windows with pictures shown in one window, text in another and the player's itinerary in the third. Unlike many other games, it really seems fully at home in the *Windows* desktop. Items can be selected in one window and simply dragged and dropped into another window using your mouse. Unfortunately, it has to be said that the graphics are a bit naff and the gameplay a bit dull. Nice try, though.

Viacom/Mindscape: 0444 246333

WS V DOS

hunting around in your AUTOEXEC.BAT and CONFIG.SYS to remove or REM out statements that load up various memory-hogging programs and device drivers. Sometimes you may even need to make a special "boot disk" that starts up an optimised version of DOS from your A: drive. What a mess!

It's all the more annoying that most DOS games insist on using only the first 640K of memory even if you have another 4 or 8 megabytes of "extended memory" available. For historical reasons, the PC is built in such a way that memory above the 640K boundary is, in effect, hidden from DOS programs.

Windows, on the other hand, automatically manages extended memory and allocates it to any programs that need it. In fact, it can even use a portion of disk space, called a "swap file", to simulate more memory than you really have.

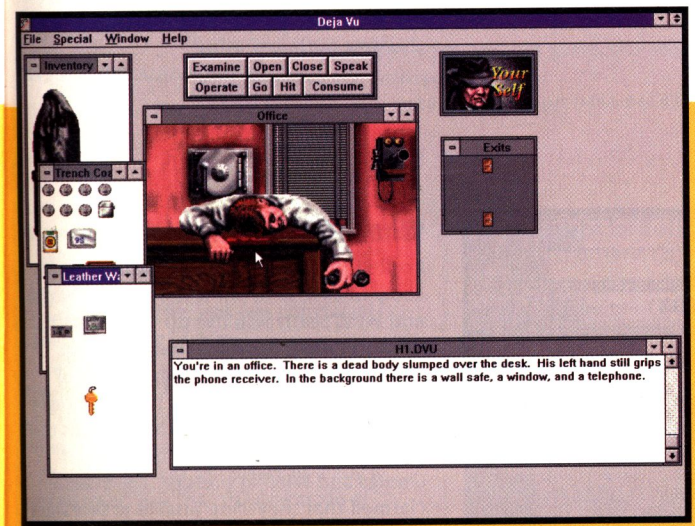
So with all these wonderful advantages, why do games continue to ignore *Windows*?

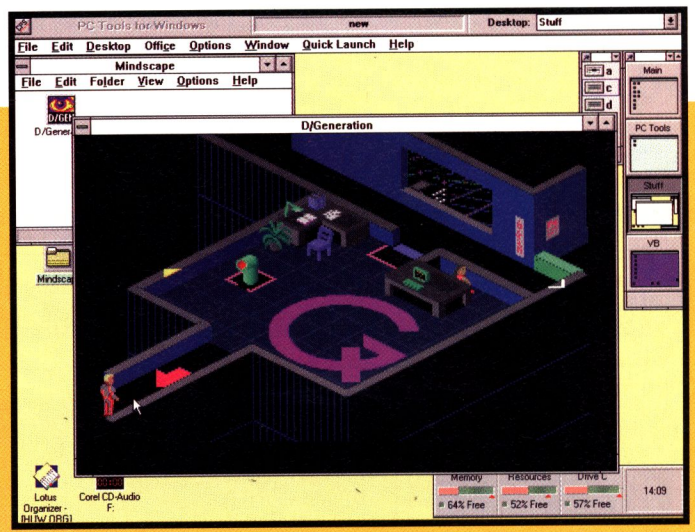
I need speed...now!

There is a simple answer: speed. The graphics system used by *Windows* is plenty fast enough for business applications, such as word processors and spreadsheets, but it's too slow for most fast-action games. Many graphics games like to communicate directly with hardware, such as your video card and disk. *Windows*, however, insists on taking control of these operations and may even deliberately delay them when some other program in the *Windows* environment also wants to access the hardware.

However, this could all be about to change. Microsoft is currently putting the finishing touches to the next release of *Windows*, code-named *Chicago*, which will have its own new games "engine", *WinG*. This should, in theory, make *Windows* the perfect games platform.

Chicago will have a 32-bit architecture, which means that games will be able to access large amounts of memory more efficiently and will be less likely to interact with other *Windows* applications and as a result there will be less chance of those hair-tearingly annoying crashes. There will be an improved video system to let games display full-screen, smooth-action video clips instead of the jerky postage-stamp videos supported by *Windows 3.1* that leave your eyes looking as though you've swalled a dozen "horse pills". And DOS games will be run inside their own DOS sessions which will automatically load any device drivers (say, for the CD-ROM or mouse) into higher memory. This means that you should never have to worry about freeing up those last few kilobytes ever again.







Deja Vu I & II £29.99

This two-game package features adventures from the file of private eye, Ace Harding. It uses the same interface as *Shadowgate* and has the same strengths and weaknesses. Nevertheless, if you enjoy tongue-in-check private dick stories, it could be worth giving this one a shot. Moderately entertaining it may be. The future of PC gaming it most definitely isn't.

Viacom/Mindscape: 0444 246333



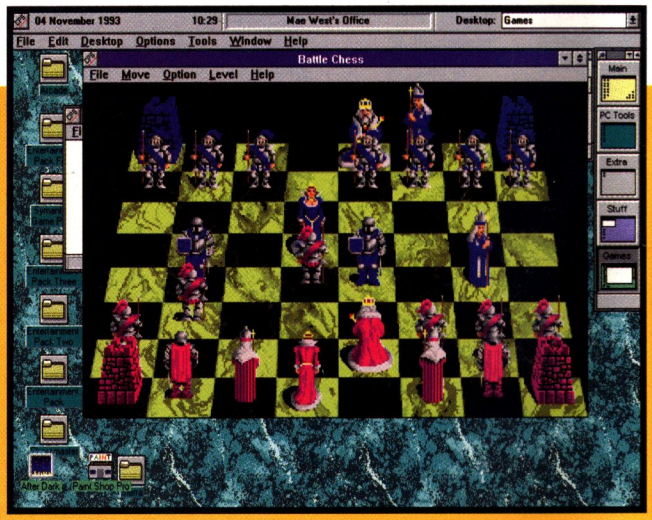
D/Generation £19.99

D/Generation started life under DOS but has recently been converted to live in harmony with *Windows*. You play the part of a jetpack courier of the future who has to negotiate a variety of maniacal security devices in a high-rise building while attempting to deliver a package to a scientist. The game is great fun and quite addictive. But it behaves in a very un-*Windows* like way: the action is controlled using the keyboard rather than the mouse; the window cannot be resized; and standard *Windows* keys, such as F1 for help, have no effect.

Mindscape 0444 246333

Reviews







Chessmaster 4000 £34.99

This is generally regarded as one of the best chess programs available for the PC. It lets you play at eight skill levels, from newcomer all the way to championship, and you can customise the environment by selecting different chess pieces or varying the window layouts. *Chessmaster 4000* is almost the ideal *Windows* game since, although its graphics are good, they do not require fast animation. All in all, a chess game that deserves to be taken seriously by experienced players.

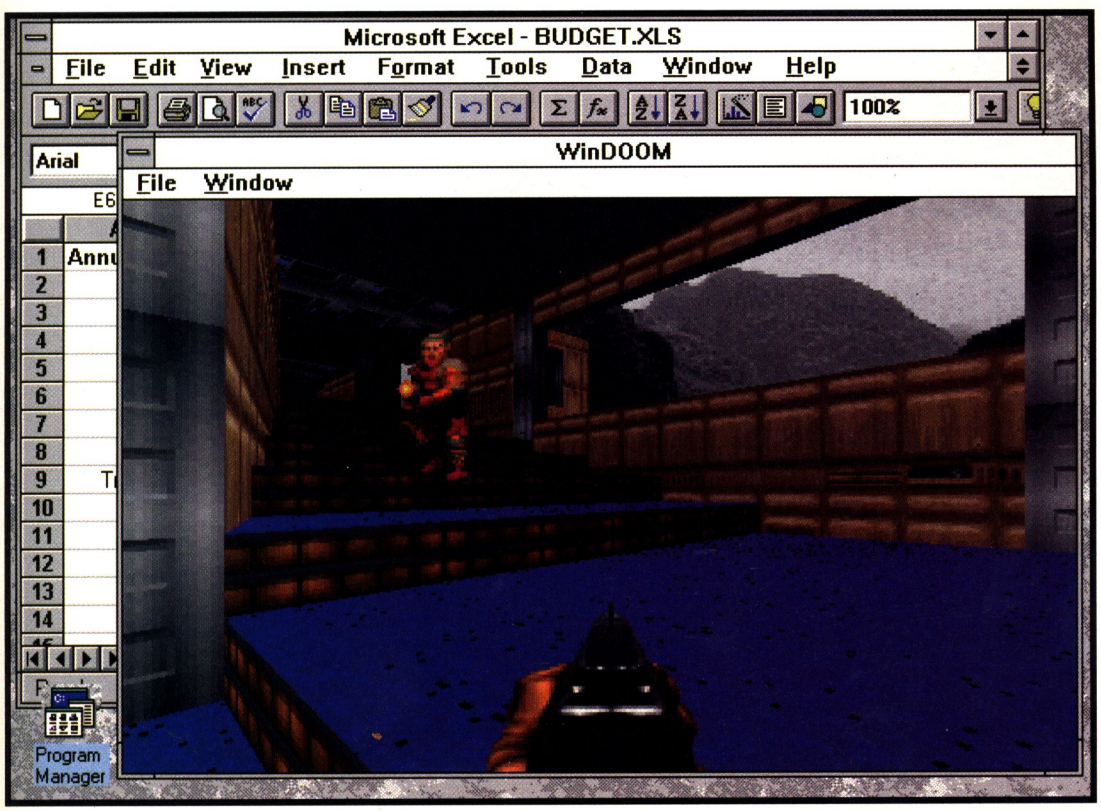
Mindscape 0444 246333



Battle Chess £29.00

Less serious chess players might have more fun with *Battle Chess*. This game displays the pieces as little animated soldiers that walk around on the board and have fights when one piece takes another. The Queen even has a magic power that lets her aim death rays at her victims. But its level of sophistication is not up to *Chessmaster*'s. And, after a while, its initially cute graphics can become quite irritating.

Windowline: 081 401 1177



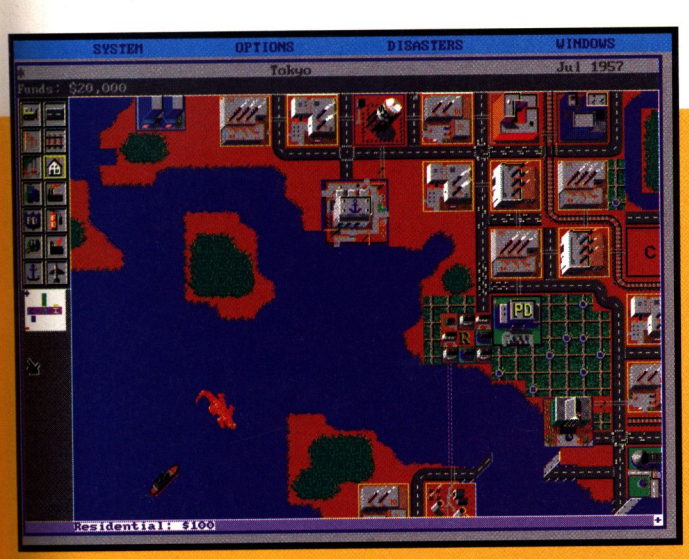
What The Developers Say

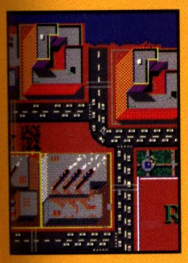
I called round a few of the leading games companies to find out if they think *Chicago* and *WinG* really will live up to Microsoft's promises. Unfortunately, none of them were prepared to go into a great deal of detail about their plans for future *Chicago*-hosted games. Some companies told us that they simply didn't know enough about *Chicago* and *WinG* at present. The others claimed that they were unable to reveal any specifics due to a "non-disclosure agreement" with Microsoft.

Nevertheless, Bullfrog admitted to being "...very excited by the new games engine. Up to now, *Windows* has just been too slow. But if *WinG* is as good as it appears we shall definitely be releasing more *Windows* games in the future."

Activision reckoned that Microsoft's domination of the PC market place is, in the long run, going to force games companies to move to *Windows*. A point of view that was endorsed by Virgin who told us, "Eventually the DOS interface will be

Doom in Windows? Surely not. Well, yes – according to Microsoft, even hardened game players will soon be able to kiss DOS goodbye.

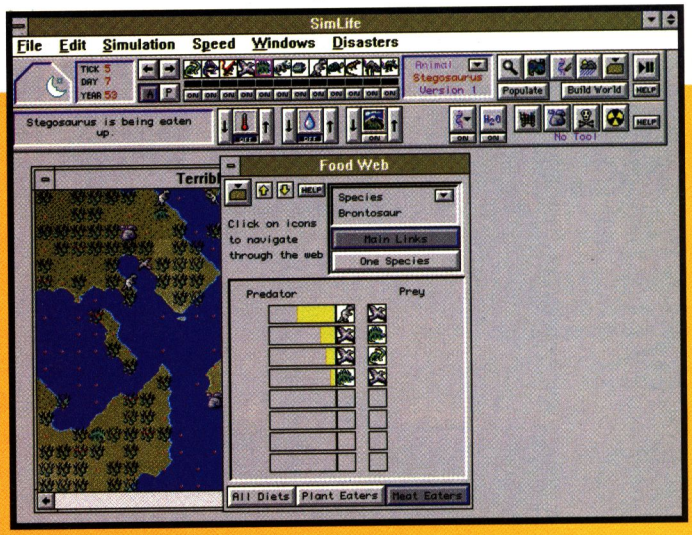


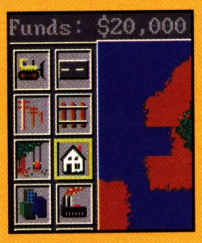


SimCity £44.99

Maxis used to release its PC sim games for DOS alone, but the company has now started to launch *Windows* versions too. In *SimCity* you have the task of looking after the resources and inhabitants of a small town which, if you are careful, should eventually grow into a prosperous i.e. money-making, large city. You can either create your own towns from scratch or load up pre-defined scenarios, such as San Francisco before the 1906 earthquake. A fair enough game, but the graphics are uninspired.

Maxis/Mindscape: 0444 246333





SimLife £39.99

SimLife for Windows is a genetic engineering game for megalomaniacs. You start off with a world and a gene pool at your disposal and, by manipulating a mixture of chromosomes and environmental factors, you try to start up your own version of the Evolution of Life Itself. In spite of the serious subject matter, *SimLife* is pure entertainment with only the bare minimum of "educational" content. It's just a shame that it hadn't been able to evolve a more *Windows*-like user interface.

Maxis/Mindscape: 0444 246333

virtually unknown to most users."

Mike Singleton, the developer of such classic DOS-based games as *Flames of Freedom* and *Ashes of Empire*, was less convinced about the death of DOS.

"We've never seriously thought of developing for *Windows*," he told me, "For one thing, I don't like the *Windows* look. When I'm playing a game, I don't want it to look the same way as when I'm using a spreadsheet. But the real downside of *Windows* is the graphics speed. Most graphics games work in 320 x 200 resolution, but *Windows* normally uses higher resolutions, like 800 x 600 or greater. That would slow down games and there would be a bottleneck when trying to shoot graphics down to the PC hardware."

Singleton is interested in *Chicago*'s DOS emulation, though, which should give transparent access to extended memory.

"At the moment we have to use some memory management software to get at that memory," he says, "If *Chicago* will do that automatically, then obviously that will be an advantage to us."

For an alternative point of view, I also spoke to Matthew Brown at WinSport, a company which has already released two *Windows*-based football simulations, *Premier Challenge* and *World Cup*.

"*Windows* is much better than DOS from a developer's point of view," he said, "The DOS memory limitations are a real problem. And the *Windows* environment is much easier to work with from the player's perspective too. Initially we did encounter speed problems. We develop our games using Visual Basic. By default, this works with one second "time slices". What this means is that if we wanted to move 22 players on screen it would have taken 22 seconds. But there are lots of great utilities to help get round limitations like that. We use a tool which reduces time slices to milliseconds so we can make our players move almost instantaneously. Whatever DOS games developers may say, the simple fact of the matter is that *Windows* is the face of the future. Already in the States, *Windows* games are taking off in a big way. I'd say they are about twelve months ahead of the UK so I'd expect to see *Windows* games really making a mark in the UK about a year from now."

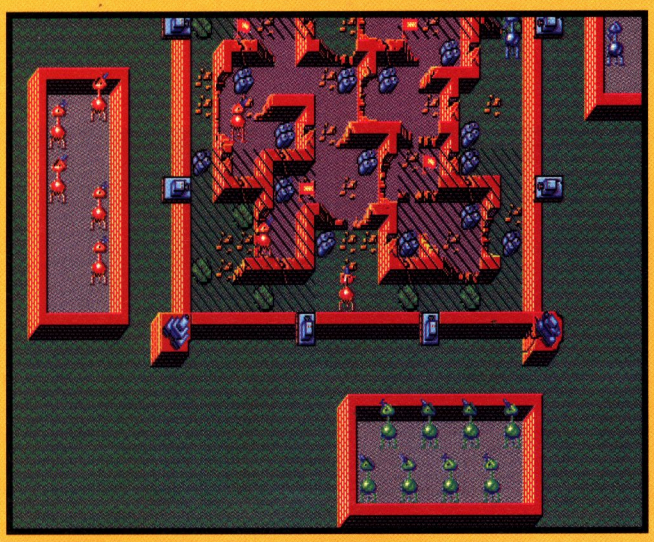
In an attempt to prove once and for all that *Chicago* really will be able to cope with fast-action games, Microsoft has even been previewing a *Chicago* version of everybody's favourite 3D splatter game, *Doom*, which appears to run about as fast as the current DOS release.

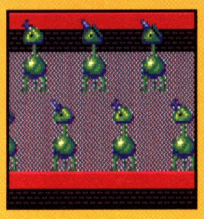
If games this good start appearing in large numbers under *Windows*, maybe this really will signal the end of DOS. Frankly, I won't be shedding too many tears....

MORE WINDOWS GAMES

Other *Windows* games to watch out for include Symantec's *Game Pack*, which includes traditional "kiddy" games such as hangman and join-the-dots. From *Words & Pictures* you can get a Trivial Pursuit clone called *Brainpower* and a boat-bombing game called *Frigate*. *Windows* games due for imminent release include Activision's *Shanghai – the Dragon's Eye* and a fantasy flight simulation called *Magic Carpet* from Bullfrog.

Reviews

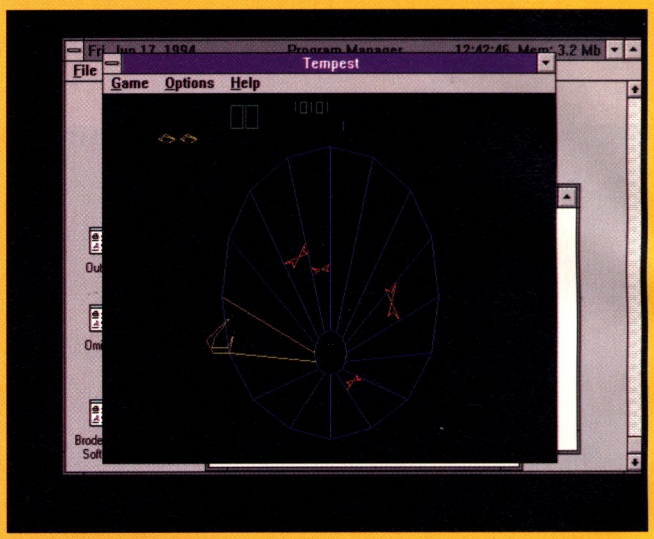


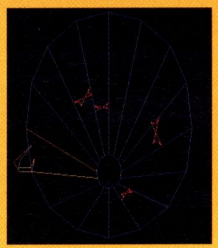


RoboSport £35.00

Taking time out from simulating things, the people at Maxis have created a futuristic robotic war game. The player has to record the actions of a team of armed robots moving round a battlefield. The idea is that you then play back the actions you've recorded to see if your robots will win. It takes a certain sort of mind-set to have fun out of the laborious effort involved in playing this game. Once again, the Maxis graphic and interface leaves a lot to be desired.

Maxis/Windowline: 081 401 1177



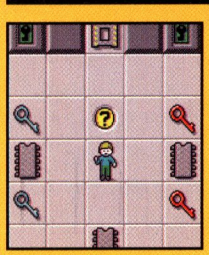


Microsoft Arcade £17.00 (typical retail price)

If you want to know what arcade games used to be like in the dim and distant past, get yourself a copy of Microsoft's *Arcade*. This has *Windows* versions of five ancient wire-frame classics: *Battlezone, Asteroids, Centipede, Tempest* and *Missile Command*. Most of them are variations of a shoot-em-up theme. Primitive stuff really, but fun for nostalgia-freaks.

Microsoft: 0734 270000





Microsoft Entertainment packs 1 to 4 £19.00 each (typical retail price)

The games in these packs (1 to 4) make excellent use of the *Windows* interface; with pull-down menus, 3D-effect buttons and drag-and-drop mouse control. Pack 1 includes a pretty good version of the classic, *Tetris*; 2 has a good pipe-joining game; 3 has a nice word-building puzzle; and 4 has a good variant on *Tic Tac Toe*. Each pack includes several other entertainments, like moderate card games. Nice interface. Variable game-play.

Microsoft: 0234 270000

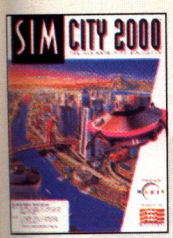




Championship Manager For Windows £29.99

This is the *Windows* version of an old DOS-based football management game in which you have to buy and sell players, select game strategies and so on. In common with its DOS predecessor, *Championship Manager* is still one of the best games of its type. It's a shame, though, that it does nothing to utilise the features of *Windows*.

Domark: 081 780 2222



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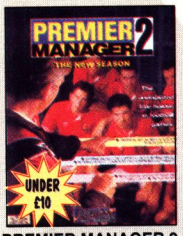

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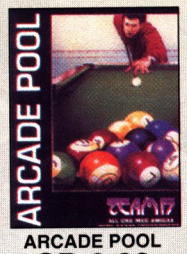

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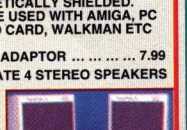

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Games reviews is what *PC Zone* is all about and this is where the reviews start. On the next 50 pages you'll find reviews of all the latest disk-based software. However, before you launch yourself into the most authoritative reviews pages around you might like to check up on what it all means.

ALL GAMES receive an overall mark out of 100. So, by definition that's a percentage, but if you want to call it "Out of a hundred" then you go ahead and call it "Out of a hundred". As a rough guide to interpreting the scores here's the guidelines we give to reviewers. (Not that they ever read them mind you. It can be quite heartbreaking at times....)

90+ (PC Zone Classic) Highly original idea or an exceptional, near "definitive" version of an old idea. Flawless in all departments and crammed to overflowing with long-term playability. Alternatively, the software company took the reviewer to Paris for the weekend.

80–89 (PC Zone Recommended) Extremely well executed and strong in all/ all but one department. High degree of originality.

70–79 Strong idea and well executed, but not necessarily very original. Weaknesses do not seriously impair playability, and it has a reasonably long life.

60–69 Games falling into the "If you like this style of game you'll like this, if not you won't" category.

50–59 Seen it all before, take it or leave it. Nothing special to recommend it but not abysmal either.

40–49 Dodgy. Still playable but probably only the once.

30–39 Seriously weak in idea and execution.

20–29 The game is hopeless or the software company forgot the £50 cash bribe.

10–19 Bin jobs

0–9 It didn't work. It crashed the PC and got jammed in the disk drive.

Is there anything worse than buying a game only to find it's not compatible with your machine? Yes, lots of things. Still it is a pain (and a waste of money) so check out the Specs box for a guideline to what memory, graphic and sound support you will need (or can use) with each game. However, please note that this is only a guideline – you should also check the packaging or confirm information with the retailer or software company.

Finally, the In Perspective box. Often, all that a review is saying is that a game is as good as that one but not quite as good as the other one. In Perspective attempts to illustrate this visually by rating the game in terms of other similar products. The "scores" given in this graph are relative to each other i.e. all examples might score highly in their own right but not against each other. ☞

WHAT'S ON OUR HARD DISK?

Some games get installed, reviewed and then deleted. Others hang around a lot longer. This is what's currently nestling on our hard drive. Not necessarily the best games around, but the ones we keep coming back to.

- Settlers
- Theme Park
- Sim City 2000
- Doom
- Raptor

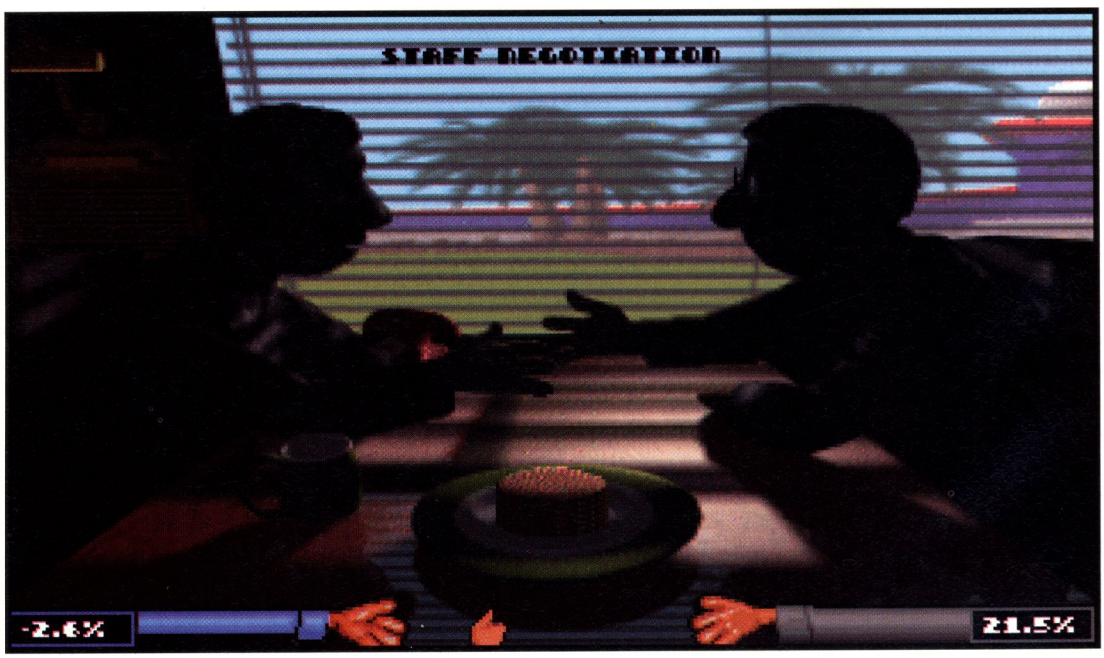


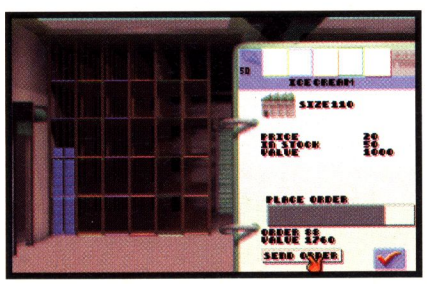
(Question): What do you install on your hard drive after you've finished with *Sim City 2000*? (Answer): Bullfrog's *Theme Park* very probably, if you've got any sense. Duncan MacDonald explains why.

PROBABLY the easiest way to "explain" *Theme Park* (and chances are that you will have guessed from the intro) is that it's like *Sim City* or *Sim City 2000*. You start off with so much cash, a blank canvas and an aim (i.e. make the most pop-ular Theme Parks in the world), and then, using the mouse and the relevent icons, you drag features onto the screen and click them into place. However, that brief explanation is actually doing *Theme Park* a disservice because, when you get down to it, the sheer depth of the thing actually makes the *Sim City* duo seem a bit "empty".

Empty???

Yes, empty. In *Sim City* there wasn't actu-ally a "game". Well, there was and there wasn't, but you know what I mean: it was a software toy, and there's nothing wrong with that. However, in *Theme Park*, there most definitely is a game – it sets its own pace and you have to do as well as you can within its structure. For instance as you progress, the difficulty level ups itself. And there are all kinds of variables happening below the surface, too... there's a stock-market sim hidden away, and loads of compu-ter-controlled rival theme park owners – all vying to be number one in the charts. So as well as worrying about the everyday design and running of your park, you also have to worry about possible take-over bids and the such like. (You can dabble on the stock-market yourself.)







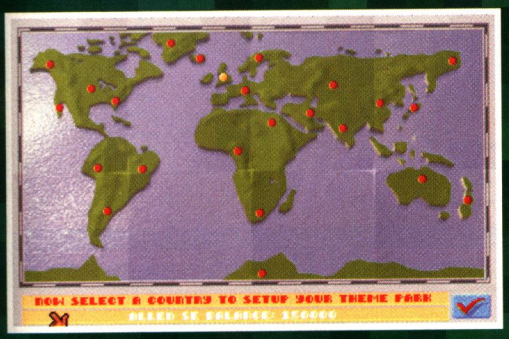
(Above) Yup, it's a deal. If only life were that simple for Jimmy Knapp. (Right) Creaming it in with overpriced corn-ettos for the punters.

The wages of sin...

There are other neat touches that add to *Theme Park* making it a greater overall experience than the Maxis equivalents. Wage negotiations, for example. When you've got a thriving park you really are dependent on your staff: especially the ☞

Storyboard

If you're wondering how a game of *Theme Park* might actually go, check this storyboard out. It's a reconstruction of my very first attempt (which ended in abject failure admittedly, but I've learnt a thing or two since then).



❶ Just like *Syndicate* before it (and *Risk* before that), in *Theme Park* you have to "conquer" the world... you have to fill the map with places in which a carton of coke-flavoured ice costs £3.25. At the very beginning of the game you have 100 grand at your disposal but even so, the only site you can actually afford to develop is the UK. (It's free.) The other, more difficult sites will have to wait, depending on how well you did initially. Get the drift? Okay, let's move on.



❷ Right, so here we are. It's the opening screen of the game proper, with icons akimbo and an in-game calender that marches onward inexorably. (You can slow it down a bit, but it's still pretty scary when you consider that you're only exempt from land taxes for the first couple of years.) So what now? Well, how about plopping down a path? That's always a good start. It's like a gun really, and the punters are like bullets... you can "aim" them at things.



❸ And to add to the path, it's probably a good idea to offer the punters an instant attraction of some sort. Er... on second thoughts, sod the instant "attraction", let's go for an instant "shop" instead. After all, once they've paid the ticket price, all the rides are free – whereas, for instance, balloons aren't. And don't forget: punters entering our park are in high spirits, meaning they're ready to spend, spend, spend. So it's best to be ready to sell, sell, sell. Yes? Good.



❹ And here it is, nestling against the path prepared before entering the shop purchase screen. Yup, it's Balloon World. Looks good, doesn't it, but behind that friendly facade lies a secret the punters won't be aware of... namely the profit margin. How does 250 per cent sound to you? Too much? Not enough? If we set it too low we can always up it later, but it's not a good idea to have any whingers spreading the glooms. 250 per cent it is then, for now.



❺ A couple of trips back to the shop screen and we now have the following: a Mr Whippy Ices stall (220 per cent mark-up with added sugar to get the kids barking for more); (b) a Balloon World... as already shown; (c) a Coffee Shop (only 200 per cent mark-up, but with caffeine levels set to max); and (d) lots of pretty trees to please the parents with kids in tow who are themselves only interested in aesthetics. (This park could almost have been designed by Manet, goddamit.)



❻ So now what? Well, maybe some actual "rides" might be in order. But first things first, so it's into the Research And Development screen. Hmmm. Er, ignore safety for the moment. And ignore new shops, too. And forget staff training, extra amenities, bigger warehouses and so forth. Nope, it's time to pump all resources into the design of faster and more exciting rides. The goal? Who knows, maybe a manned space colony on Neptune. Let's wait and see, eh?



❼ Okay, the R&D team has been put into action – and so it's back to reality. In other words it's finally time to place the first couple of rides. So what have we got? Well, there's a bouncy castle. And a maze. And a treehouse, and a ghost train... and a Merry-Go-Round. Yawn City. And we've still got to worry about the budget, so it's eeny meenie miny mo decision time. Close eyes, spin round 20 times, squint so you can just see where the ride menu is, and jab a finger forward at random.



❽ The Merry-Go-Round it is then. Looks crap, doesn't it. But needs must when the Devil rides and all that, so I'll try to make the best of it. Using a couple of the icons at bottom right you can make the attraction more exciting (i.e. faster and more dangerous) and also cram on as many people as it can possibly handle. Furthermore, you can also reduce the time the ride takes... because punters waiting too long in the ludicrously long queue might get pissed off.

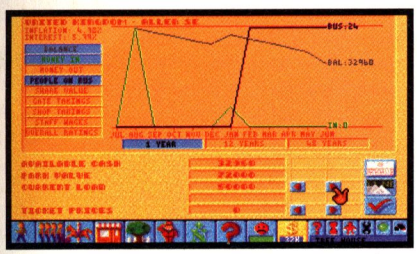


❾ So that's the ninja Merry-Go-Round sorted, and now we've got the snoozy Tree House ride to finish off. But wait. Just as you start thinking about the shape and size of the queue-path, a flashing light bulb appears at the top right of the screen. Lawks! It's the R&D people, interrupting to tell me that something new has just been invented. Ignore it until later? Bollocks I will – it might be an interstellar drive or something, and illumination is but a mouse click away...



So What's The Verdict?

Probably the greatest accolade that I could give *Theme Park* is to say this: it's easily as compulsive as *Sim City 2000*, but at the same time it's actually fun as well. (And yes, I know you'll probably be saying *Sim City 2000* was fun, but I'm talking "fun fun" here – a proper game and all that.) If there are any complaints, it's that the interface can get a bit fiddly at times... but you do get used to it eventually. That very minor gripe aside, however, and we get to the fact that Bullfrog has gorn an' done it yet again. Great game, great graphics, great sound, original, imaginative, all very clever, and with a sense of humour. It's strange, actually, when you consider all the different companies over here who at one time or another have claimed to be the British version of LucasArts: and it's always on the back of a derivative graphic point 'n' click adventure. Well, the way I see it is that Bullfrog is the British version of LucasArts. The chaps at Bullfrog always have been, and as long as they keep producing games of this calibre, I reckon they always will be. Top notch stuff, basically, so hoorah for Britain. (And it's not often you get to say that, is it?)





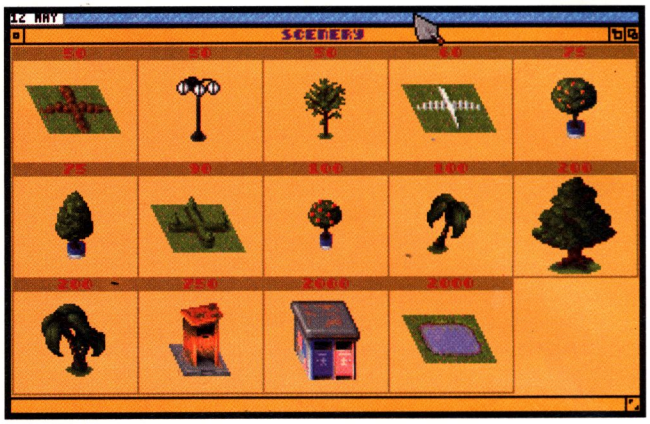
mechanics. If a ride goes wrong and isn't attended to in time, there's a danger of it blowing up – which not only has disastrous effects on your reputation, but also damages the ground on which the ride was placed. (Rocks appear which you can't get rid of, meaning you have to rebuild around them.) So imagine the scene. You've got a large park with, say, 20 rides. At least one will be on the blink, and so you've got four mechanics on the payroll. Hunky dory. Then shazam, up pops the Wage Negotiation screen. You've got about 30 seconds to agree a new set wage with the trade union geezer, and failure to do so will see the staff walking out on strike. It's a nightmare, believe me. Ditto this for the Supplier Negotiation screen... the people who sell you the meat for your burgers may increase their prices. You have to haggle them down. Fail to reach an agreement in time and they'll pull their services.



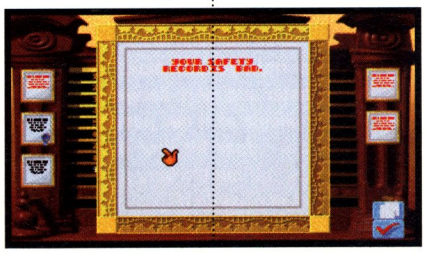
And more...

And there's so much more. Loads of hidden things that leap out at you when you least expect them to. Suffice to say, and I've said it already, that *Theme Park* is deep – which is something you wouldn't guess from the jokey graphics. Oh, and on the subject of the jokey graphics, they're brilliant. Really funny. Typical Bullfrog attention to detail. You'll be content to click on an individual and just sit back and watch him/her strolling about the park and getting beaten up by thugs or whatever. ZZ

(Below) Shopping for vital accessories is the way to a cool theme park – and here's one we made earlier.







(Above right) Rivetting "people on buses" ratios. (Above middle) Why you hate the punters. (Below) How you wreak your revenge (heh, heh).



A highly inventive "business" sim that's fun, fun, fun all the way. Hip hip hoorah for Bullfrog!

Minimum Memory: 4Mb

Minimum Processor: 386 DX/MSDOS 5.0 or higher

Hard Disk Space Required: 18Mb

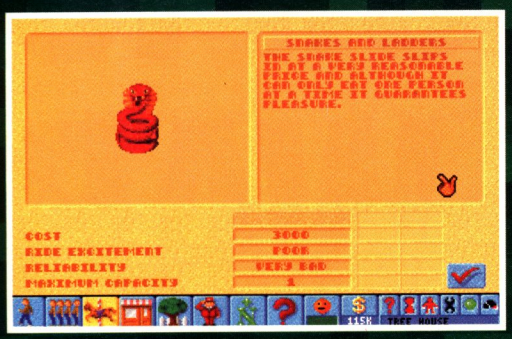
Graphics Modes Supported: VGA/SVGA

Sound Cards Supported: Sound Blaster and compatibles, Wave Blaster and compatibles, general MIDI, Roland MT-32, AdLib Gold

Controls: Mouse

Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** Out Now
Publisher: Electronic Arts **Tel:** 0753 549442

Storyboard



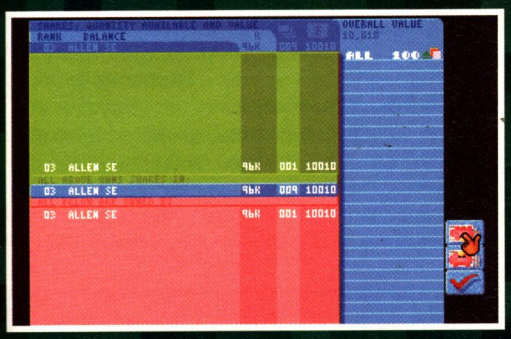
⑩ Yaaaaargh! Wankers! They've gone and invented something shite! This ride only takes one person at a time, has a low excitement quotient, and is extremely unreliable to boot. It makes the Treehouse jobbie look like a freefall parachute jump from 700 feet (without the parachute). But the kids'll like it you say? Yeah, forget about it, because I'm going for reputation here: and what I lose on the swings, I'll gain from having a rollercoaster from Hell. (Hopefully.)



⑪ So ignore the Snake Ride for now. Maybe I'll try it out later, maybe not, who knows. But anyway, the Treehouse is ready at last, and so I reckon it's time to open the park to the public. But not without staff, of course, so it's quickly onto the hiring and firing screen. Right. A couple of cleaners, a couple of mechanics (ready for when the rides are about to blow up) and some out-of-work actors/entertainers (i.e. the cast of *Eldorado* dressed in animal suits).



⑫ Bingo! There they are! My first eager punters. Imagine how happy and excited they'll be at this precise moment. And imagine all the cash they'll have stuffed inside their pockets, purses and whatnot. And now imagine how happy they'll be once they realise that I've only got two rides, and that their ice-creams, balloons and cups of coffee have all but cleaned them out. Not very happy at all, actually – but it's all part of my master plan, and a sacrifice I'm prepared to make.



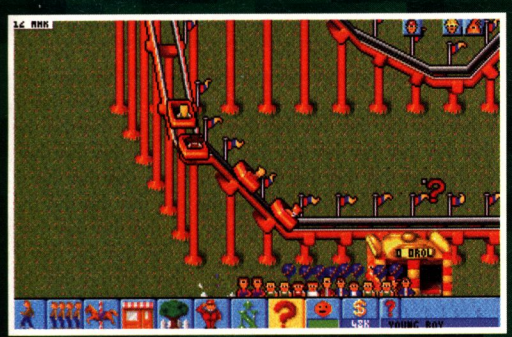
⑬ I'm so confident in my master plan (and have saved so much dosh by not building many rides) that I've decided to buy some shares in myself. There may well be some iffy times ahead, but if I stick to my guns and end up with a theme park stuffed to overflowing with roller coasters, big dippers, space stations on Mars and so on, then the few thousand invested here is eventually going to be worth something like 99 trillion. I could buy a whole country, and retire. Mexico!



⑭ Wahay, the punters aren't half as pissed off as I'd expected them to be. Okay, so there are a couple of dozen outside the gates, waiting for the next bus home, but I don't want to talk about those ones. Let's be positive here. Just look at that queue for the crap treehouse ride, for instance. And when they've all finally got to the top and realise there's nothing actually there, they're going to be wanting another ice-cream, or a cup of coffee. Or maybe even a balloon? *(No. Ed.)*



⑮ *(Much, much later.)* Okay, I'll admit it... maybe my stingy approach didn't work quite as well as I'd expected. Well, I've been running at a loss, have been forced to sell the shares I originally bought (again at a loss), and have had to borrow heavily from the bank to boot. But look! I'm now ready to add the latest ride invented by my R&D boffins. Yup, they've now reached the rollercoaster stage. Piss off Disneyland, and move over Magic Mountain. Yippee!



⑯ And here it is. I call it the Mega Mutha. It may not be quite as high, long, fast and dangerous as I'd intended, but I had to place and design it all without time on my side (what with the bank baying for my blood and so forth). But it's not bad for a first effort, I'm sure you'll agree, and there'll be far more and better to come... after all, the R&D dudes have still got heaps of stuff up their well-oiled sleeves. Loops, corkscrews, water splashes, black holes. Who knows?

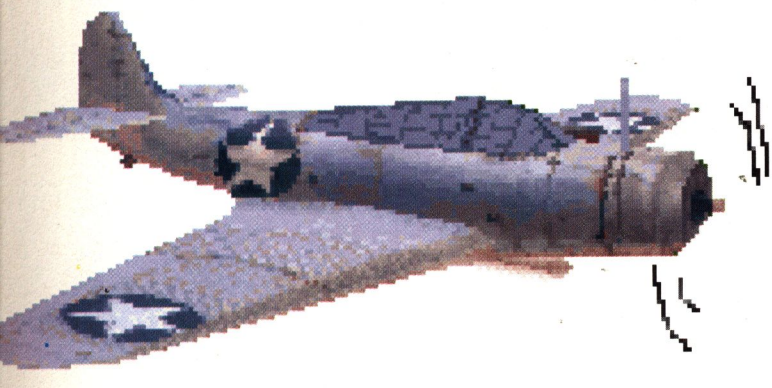


⑰ Er. I've had a bit of bad news. I've been told that if I don't move from the red into the black before the beginning of next year then I'm stuffed. Bankrupt. Kaput. My only hope is that everyone who rides the Mega Mutha goes straight home afterwards, telling their friends to come and try it out. I've upped my entrance prices in readiness. Let's check out the Boy In Jeans, who's queueing for the ride right now. He hasn't been in the park long, and is still okay, boredom-wise.

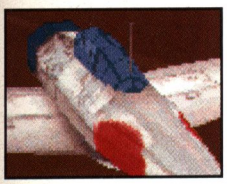


⑱ And now he's had his ride on the Mega Mutha, and is as happy as can be. So go on then, you little sod, bugger off home and tell your chums how excellent my park is. This is urgent! *(Later.)* Er, unfortunately he was so happy he hung around and joined the treehouse queue. As did numerous others. So I'm being closed down. But the last laugh is mine: I install the odious snake ride, climb to the top, release an over-priced balloon as a tribute to the Gods of capitalism, and leap into oblivion.

1942: PACIFIC AIR WAR



MicroProse's is no stranger to simulations, but even it has never produced anything on this scale. Duncan MacDonald explains why this may be one of the best W.W.II tactical flight simulations to date.



(Below) Coo! What a lot of instruments.
(Below right) Another winner from the formation landing team.
(Right) Gotcha!

I'LL GET STRAIGHT to the point and simply say that *1942: The Pacific Air War* is quite special, although it's not something that necessarily hits you instantly – it takes a couple of hours of piddling about before it dawns.

1942 is a W.W.II South Pacific extravaganza in which you get to fly for either the Yanks or the Japs. There are ten planes on offer overall, and the chance to specialize in fighters, dive bombers or torpedo bombers. There are more single missions than you could shake Delia Smith's drippy hairstyle at, and as for the ongoing war career, well, make that *six* ongoing war careers.

The mission builder

1942 contains an extensive mission builder. In fact, it's the same one the programming team used to make the missions in the game itself, meaning that everything they've done, you can do as well. The inclusion of the mission builder is quite generous when you consider the norm for this type of thing is to hold back until a game is reaching the end of its shelf life, and then release it as an add-on disk for £20 or whatever.

The film editor

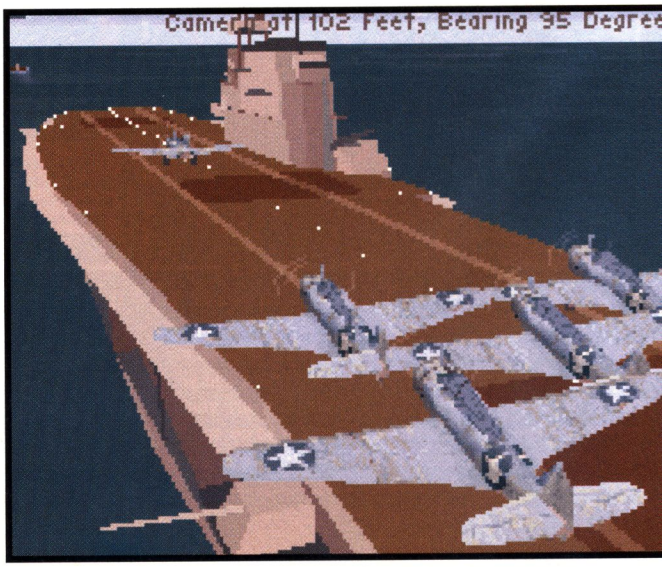
Borrowing heavily from the Dynamix games, *1942* contains a full, mega, ninja-flight film editor. Not only can you summon up exterior views of all the planes in the sky, but you can even plop inside them at will and use all the side views, cockpit instrumentation views, padlock views, rear gunner views and so on. And, of course, there's a free-floating camera which can be placed anywhere, zoomed in, out and so forth. Oh, and one more thing about the film editor is that, if you stuff up in a mission, you can replay the film to the point just before the disaster and simply jump back into the action.

Task Force revisited

1942 :The Pacific Air War contains *Carrier Battles*, the follow-up to a *Task Force 1942*, which was actually quite good. This all-new package is sort of "tied together" at a genetic level. For instance, *Carrier Battles*, like *Task Force* before it, is essentially a strategy game: you play it from the scrolling map, zooming in and out, clicking on







your ships, issuing orders, sending spotter aircraft aloft in the search for your enemy, and on and on. And in the original game, that was about it – it was kind of "watch the dots and control everything from afar" – something that doesn't appeal to everybody. However, the difference with *Carrier Battles* is that when you send out a bunch of aircraft to attack, say, an enemy ship convoy, you get a box up on screen asking you this important question: "Do you want to join the strike?" Click on "yes" and you're strapped inside the cockpit of the lead plane.

The graphics

As you can plainly see, we're talking a guru-shaded extravaganza of rotary bitmaps in a sauce of texture mapping. The good news is that, even with a 486DX 33MHZ machine, you get some pretty good results. The only real problem that arises is when dogfighting, because that's when you'll be wanting to use the padlock view. It's an excellent padlock view, by the way, but very possibly because of this fact it eats into the frame rate like a starving elephant. So you have to knock the texture mapping off the ground and sea. (Mind you, dogfighting is so hectic that you don't really notice.)

The realism

The standard flight model is like the hard flight model on many other sims, while the "realistic" flight model is, well, "realistic". It's brilliant, in fact. But better than that, it's not generic, and all of the planes feel totally different. They even stall differently; with, for instance, one giving you a few moments notice, while another just falls away and goes into a spin. The enemy intelligence is also pretty good, with things like pilots ganging up on you (or more annoyingly, running away), and ships that veer about to avoid incoming torpedoes.

There is one point in the game where MicroPose have gone too heavy on the realism, though. For example, in the single missions, when flying any of the bombers, you can switch to the rear gunner position. However, it's been decided that you shouldn't have access to the rear gun when in Campaign mode, mainly because the designers felt the player might stay in the gunner position and allow the plane to complete the mission on its autopilot. Woolly thinking though, because in Campaign mode you lose access to your autopilot when in range of your target anyway.

The bugs

Aaaah! I've only come across the one bug, but it's bloody annoying. To fully use the time-compress feature, you need to be on autopilot. Several times it's happened that I've reached the target, done the business, pressed the autopilot key, and been told that we've just arrived at the target so it can't be used. A check on the map screen and I'm informed that my flight of three is on its way home. So I've had to fly all the way back under manual control.

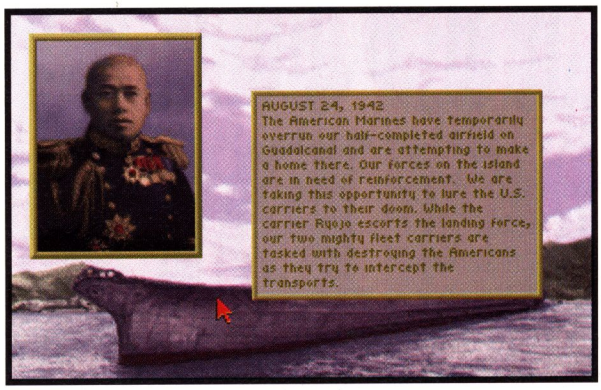
Another difficulty is that the manual doesn't tell you how to lock onto targets when using the padlock view. So I'll tell you, just in case you buy the game and need to know. It's the "J" key. Now you know.



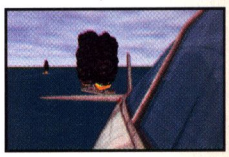
And finally...

MicroProse has been through a very long crap phase (as far as I'm concerned), but *1942* is a release that augers well for the future: a quality game with superb realism and a "flash" graphics engine that isn't dead fussy about the platform it's running on. Obviously, with a 386SX you'll have the detail toggled down to a minimum most of the time, but with a 386SX or greater you should be fine. So, if you've got a DX2, you'll be smiling from ear to ear, and if you've got a DX2 or a Pentium, you'll be laughing so hard your head will probably fall off. PZ











Another one bites the dust.

(Left) Torpedoes away! You can choose to take part in an air attack that you have planned in the Carrier Battles game.
(Bottom left) See that geezer? He's about to go and lose his job he is.
(Below) The action from the fiery end of the plane!

89 SCORE

Two great games in one package – it's a winner!

Minimum Memory: 575k
Minimum Processor: 386
Hard Disk Space Required: 15Mb plus
Graphics Modes Supported: VGA
Sound Cards Supported: Sound Blaster, Roland, AdLib, Pro-Audro, Spectrum
Controls: Mouse, joystick, Thrustmaster
Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: MicroProse **Tel:** 0454 326532

IN PERSPECTIVE

Finally, after so many near misses, someone has cracked the WWII tactical flight simulation on the head. The other three games are still worth having, but they've all got faults.

Aces Over Europe

Reach For The Skies

1942

Pacific Strike



Pinball Dreams 2

Due to the uncanny resemblance between Patrick McCarthy's head and a rather large pinball, we naturally chose him to be the one to run his slimy flippers over this latest pub-based pastime sim.



Neptune

As you might expect, this has an underwater theme and features a prominently displayed mermaid with gigantic buttocks, which is surprising for a creature whose lower half is supposed to be 100% prime cod, but that's retro design for you. It's one of the easiest to get into and has a soothing colourway, as my uncle in the mail order catalogue racket would put it. But the music is a missed opportunity – where's the theme to Marine Boy?

I USED to hate pinball. It started after an early harrowing experience with a red plastic bagatelle game from a Christmas stocking: the ball flew from the machine and put my rabbit's eye out. Weeks later, he escaped from his cage and was run over by a milk float which was approaching from his blind side. I could, of course, have blamed the milkman and developed a loathing for dairy products. After all, the milkman must have seen the patch Binky was wearing over one eye; he could have taken evasive action – at three miles an hour, it wasn't as if his reflexes were being pushed to the limits. But I chose to blame the bagatelle game, and buried it with my beloved companion.

Then I started to hate people who played pinball. Especially the ones who thought pinball was "cool" or "rock and roll". Pinball is no more cool than darts, bar billiards, vomiting or any other popular pub activity, but these people go on and on about it until you want to introduce their face to the inside of one of the tables. Rooted in 1972, they're equally convinced it's "cool" to drink Jack Daniels, wear rock-band tee-shirts and cowboy boots with skin-tight jeans and have Roger Dean posters on the walls of their "pads".

Nowadays, pinball doesn't bother me much. I can approach a computer game based on the formerly hated symbol of Binky's demise with an open mind. I have to admit that the frequent release of several hundred computer pinball games every month has probably gone a long way towards dulling my inner pain.

They call him Flipper...

The current trend in computer pinball is towards retro-style simplicity. No more pinball/shoot-em-up hybrids with hunch-backed aliens clomping about the screen and you taking them out with a well-directed pretend steel ball; no more "warp space" experiences with games taking place in a badly drawn area of a little known galaxy. Instead, games companies are going for the "down the end of the pier surrounded by scary people with tattoos and knives" feel. In other words, they're trying to emulate the feel and the sounds of the old clanking, rattling chunks of metal of the 50s and 60s. They're keeping the layout of the tables fairly authentic and leaving the gameplay firmly in the traditional areas of getting buttons and lights in order; spelling out words; and hitting the right ramps and utilising flipper trickery to the full. 21st Century Entertainment, who obviously know when they're onto a good thing, have already released *Pinball Dreams* and *Pinball Fantasies*, so lets see how this latest sim compares....

IN PERSPECTIVE

Of the six million pinball games available, *Epic Pinball* is our current favourite and it's shareware, too.

Epic Pinball

Pinball Fantasies

Pinball Dreams 2

Pinball Dreams



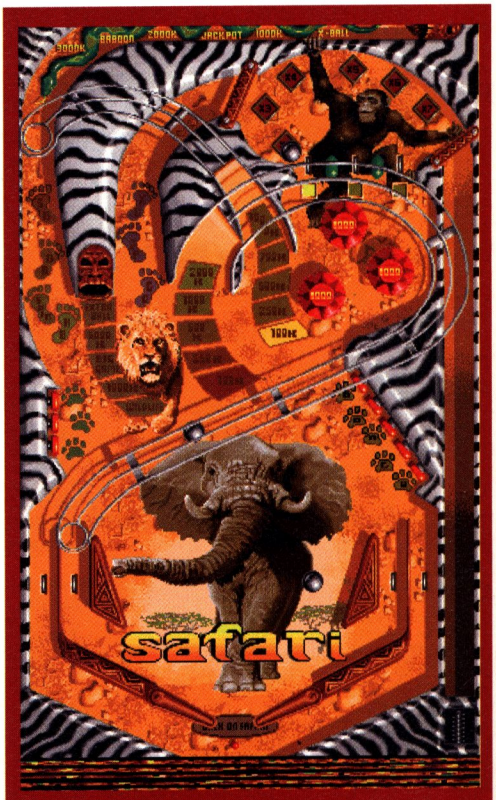
Revenge of the Robot Warriors

Based firmly in the realms of 50's sci-fi B-movies, the table, perhaps not surprisingly, features pictures of a large robot warrior and a Wonderbra advert. The soundtrack includes sampled screams when you lose a ball, and it's all generally nicely tacky, but there isn't as much to do on this as on the other tables.



Stall turn

This "circus stunt flyer" table was the one I liked least at first. Don't ask me why. Perhaps it's because it looks most like a Bagatelle game, with its tin-toy colours and drawings. Maybe it was the whackable face of the pilot – who knows? I came round to it in time, but the music's still a bit naff.



Safari

This jungle-based table has music that sounds like the theme to the Um Bongo adverts. It's arguably the easiest table on which to get a good score; you can hit the ball onto the high-scoring ramps several times in succession, and it's also the easiest table to nudge the ball back into play from the gutter.

Faster than lightning...

Pinball Dreams 2 comes with four tables to play, with up to eight players able to take part at once. There's a basic three-balls-per-play bonus balls available, but no multi-ball play. Some games (such as *Crystal Caliburn*) like to fit a full table on screen at once; they're certainly fast, but the argument against it is that the graphics are too small; robbing the game of atmosphere. *Pinball Dreams 2* takes the more usual approach of having a scrolling screen. The argument against this is that after an hour or so of playing in front of a screen that moves around the more garish tables, your eyes feel like they've been stuck on the end of a vacuum cleaner.

No-one you see...

The authentically nostalgic feel of the tables means that two of the four tables feature scantily clad women. Another features a scantily clad elephant, presumably this is to capture the vote of those who prefer their fantasy partners very big and very wrinkly.

Is smarter than he...

Although all the tables are pretty well done, generally speaking, *Pinball Dreams 2* just doesn't quite match up to the standards made by its predecessor: *Pinball Fantasies*. It features identical installation and set-up screens and controls, but it doesn't play the same way. Basically, it doesn't scroll as quickly. This may be fine and dandy when playing on a fast machine, but you'll certainly notice the difference when you try playing them on something like a 386sx, when *Pinball Fantasies* still flies along, but *Pinball Dreams 2* is markedly slower. I find this a bit weird – if they can get one game to scroll so quickly, why not all of them? Generally, though, *Pinball Dreams 2* is alright. It's one of the more enjoyable ways to play pinball without having someone in purple cowboy boots looking over your shoulder and tutting. But then it should be – they've certainly had enough practice by now. Z



Not bad at all. There's plenty for pinball wizards to get their flippers into.

Minimum Memory: 560K
Minimum Processor: 286 (386 recommended)
Hard Disk Space Required: 2.2 Mb
Graphics Modes Supported: VGA
Sound Cards Supported: All major sound cards
Controls Supported: Keyboard

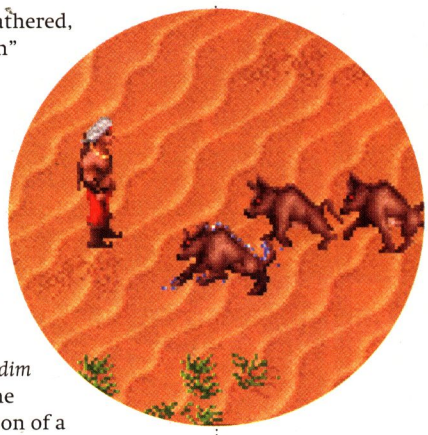
Price: £19.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: 21st Century Entertainment
Tel: 0235 851852



AL QADIM: THE GENIE'S CURSE

What's the new thing in D&D circles? Personalities? No. Social life? No. Gargarothia The Eleven Temptress and Her Magic Breast Plate? No. It is, as David McCandless will inform you, non-other than Middle-Eastern, Aladdin-based Persian, baggy-trousered adventure-thons. (Is it? Ed.)

AHOY! SSI – purveyors of all that is troll-packed and Tolkien-esque – have changed tack. Pack away your leather hosiery, ye RPG stalwarts, shove all your +3 armour and vests of shimmering mithril in a dragon-skin chest and hide it in yonder dungeons (i.e. your cellar). The new colours for this season are Persian. What's out: steel boots, cloth tunics, magic broadswords and the Helm of Kakkanda. What's in: Pointy shoes, baggy trousers, scimitar, a turban, and a distinctly European complexion despite the fact that the protagonist is quite obviously Arabic. *Al Qadim*, you may have gathered, has a distinctly "eastern" feel about it.



It's difficult to work out why SSI have plumped for the Arabian Nights style setting. It's too late for an Aladdin tie-in, and too early for the Islamic invasion of the West (Nostradamus, Century v, Quantrain 79). Nevertheless, *Al Qadim* has you in control of the youngest and feistiest son of a rich Middle-Eastern nobleman. Years spent being a corsair, riding the wild seas, battling sea serpents and storms, making close friends among the all-male crew of your rugged boat, has not diminished your affections for Kara, the beautiful, but ultimately docile, daughter of Caliph, the big cheese in these parts. Now, after years spent rubbing rum in to the pores or your fellow seamen, you've decided to go straight and trek your way back to your much-missed, beloved, middle-class love chum.



Things are compounded, of course, by several foreign bodies. First is your mentor, Master Corsair Sinbar, who insists you pass an agility test of death (a sort of Krypton Factor assault course with scythes) before you can continue. Then, when you survive this, you have to contend with all manner of monsties, God-like genies, feuding families, sorcerers, and some mumbo-jumbo about a prophecy and some shadowy demons.

"Al Quadim... is basically a top-down Prince of Persia..."

(Top) Some might say Al Qadim is a little "boaring". Ho bloody ho. (Above) Another large jug gives Al Qadim it's unrivalled and authentic depiction of Arabian culture.

Plot stop

Most of the action of *Al Qadim* revolves in and around The Crowded Sea: an isolated pocket of islands, famed for its magical mystical goings-on, and in particular, Sorcerer's Isle: home of the world's, er, sorcerers, and even more in particular, the town of Zaratan: a mystical magical place where all sorts of hocus-pocus, witches

☞

IN PERSPECTIVE

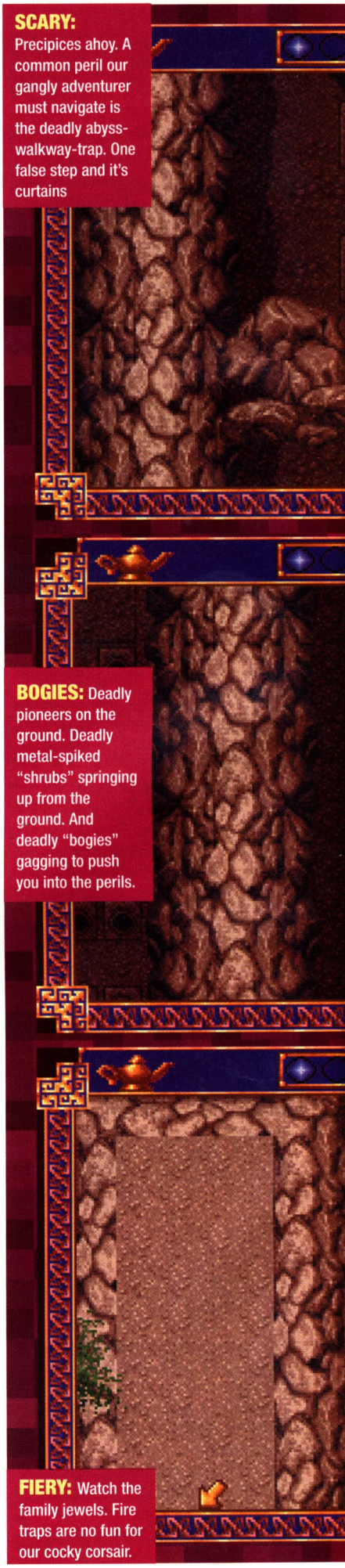
***Al Qadim* has bits and bobs in common with lots of games, being as it's an amalgam of several game styles. It has an affinity with *Ultima VIII: Pagan*, since both try and add "arcade" angles to the tired old RPG genre. It's scenario and setting is also big chums with *Prince Of Persia*'s. I think it had a fling once with *The Summoning* as they share they same kind of mouse-driven, maze-based game style.**

Prince Of Persia

Ultima VIII: Pagan

The Summoning

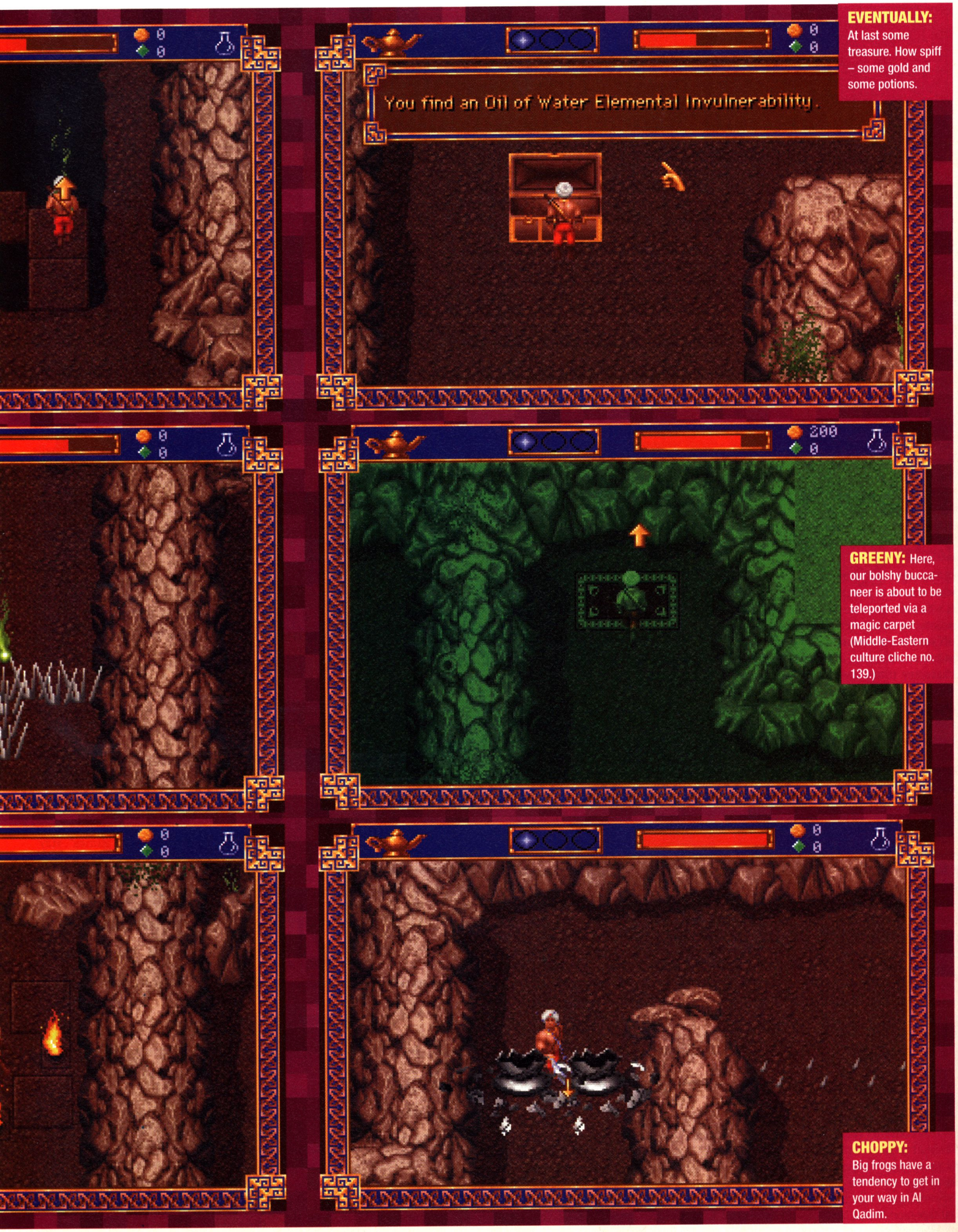
Al Qadim



SCARY: Precipices ahoy. A common peril our gangly adventurer must navigate is the deadly abyss-walkway-trap. One false step and it's curtains

BOGIES: Deadly pioneers on the ground. Deadly metal-spiked "shrubs" springing up from the ground. And deadly "bogies" gagging to push you into the perils.

FIERY: Watch the family jewels. Fire traps are no fun for our cocky corsair.



EVENTUALLY: At last some treasure. How spiff – some gold and some potions.

GREENY: Here, our bolshy buccaneer is about to be teleported via a magic carpet (Middle-Eastern culture cliche no. 139.)

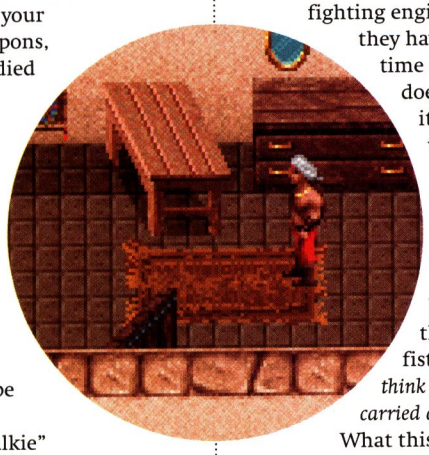
CHOPPY: Big frogs have a tendency to get in your way in Al Qadim.



conventions and the like happens. In the past, Zaratan was a prosperous old place. People skipped gaily in the street. Everyone was well fed and wealthy. Love was in the air. But then some monsters inexplicably attacked the town, murdering its inhabitants and laying waste to its Arabian architecture. The ruler of the town called on his genie, Mirza Gubishbuskin, to destroy the monsters, but the genie refused. Mirza, you see, has been freed from his slavery by some unknown force and he gaily – and some might say, very Robin Williams like – told his master to shove his quaint eastern village up his kyber and zipped off into the sunset. The townspeople rallied and managed, just, to beat off the furious attack. The mysterious force which freed the genie is still as yet unsolved, but the rumour is that a force more powerful than genies – no! (yes!) – is attempting to take over the world.

Zaratan

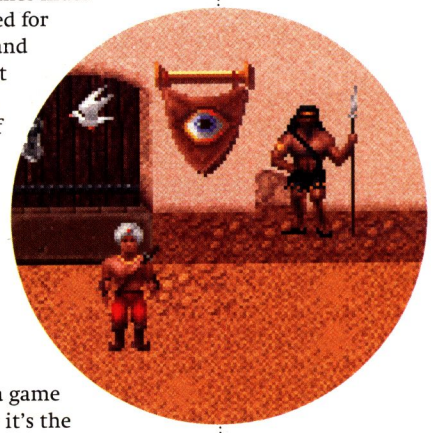
In the eight-way scrolling, view-from-above vista that is the *Al Qadim* world, movement is a doddle. You simply hoist the mouse pointer in the direction you want to go and off your baggy-trousered fellow goes. If the pointer comes into close proximity of your character, it becomes an action icon with which to open doors, slash with a sword and pull switches. An inventory is also on hand in which to stash your magic potions and weapons, all of which can be readied in your hands for combat. Combat is in real time with you dashing about the screen, slashing and dodging monsters. Characters and domiciles are scattered hither and thither throughout the sandy sub-tropical landscape. People can be spoken to and a list of Monkey Island style "talkie" alternatives can be selected to milk info.



Objects are restricted to potions, gold and magic things. Potions are generally for healing and making you invulnerable to various elements. Gold and gems allow trading for weapons and potions, while rings and magic shards increase your offensive and defensive potential. Magic Shards contains spells which will be familiar to those breast-fed on AD&D ale. Cone of Cold? Magic Missile? Lightning Bolt? You know the drill. The nasties, however, are a hotch-potch of traditional SSI fare (zombies, ghouls, giant spiders) plus some new Muslim monsters. Among these are Ettins (two-headed cavemen), Nas Nas (one-legged re-animated corpses which, surprise, surprise, hop about), Markeens (lesser genies), and the snappily-titled, Miniature Copper Automaton (a small metallic robot thing).

The verdict

Al Quadim: The Genie's Curse is basically a top-down *Prince of Persia* with "interactive" bits. You can almost see the thought processes going on at SSI HQ. They're of the *Ultima VIII* concept variety: the "our games are alienating in their techy adherence to a long since defunct RPG ethos" type thoughts. The "people want easily digestible lumps of action and interaction as part of a balanced gameplaying diet" line of musing. See? This is what the console generation has done to PC gameplaying. All games must now be custom-designed for short attention spans and game players who want to "jump" and "fight". Yeah, yeah, so reams of saddo RPG is yawn-city, sometimes. But what games developers fail to see is that it's not the quantity of techy RPG elements, the amount of dwarves, magic scrolls, treasure or whatever, that makes a game inaccessible and dull – it's the way these mainstays are presented. They take out the masses of characters because "they're boring", disregarding the fact that the characters are only boring because they haven't made them interesting. They swap their turn-based combat with a real-time fighting engine and think that's all they have to do. If the real-time engine is crap, it doesn't matter because it's *still* real time, in vogue, on the cutting edge and, above all, "what the people want". Nah. I'd rather have a slow-poke but challenging turn-based combat sesh, than a limited, ham-fisted real-time one. *(I think you're getting a little carried away – Ed.)*



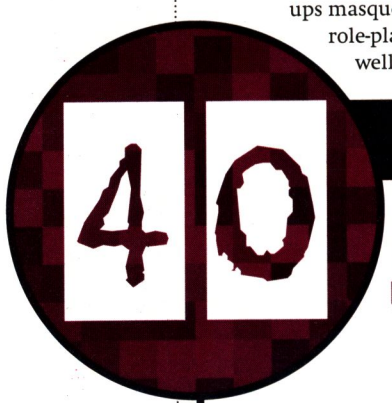
(Above) Ever get the feeling you're being watched?

What this bile-soaked angst-ridden sermon is all leading up to is that *Al Qadim: The Genie Curse* is not very good. On the aesthetic side it has several bad points. The scrolling, although fast, is blocky. Dashing about therefore, as you do, makes Genie look like a mid-80s shareware game. The graphics are poor: poorly animated, poorly coloured and not at all scary or convincing. However, the sound is good: sampled cut and thrust, metal-on-metal type noises accompanies combat, monsters roar and grunt, while a Middle-Eastern sitar ditty plinks on in the background. The control system works; you can hare it around at a rare old pace, avoiding this, slinking around that, but it's the "this" and "that" which spoils it. There's too much combat. You can't stroll anywhere without being attacked by a whirlwind, wild boars, rats, spitting flowers, spikes, flameballs, green snot-like monsters, magic forcefields – everything. There's barely a moment's rest. And the combat system is awful: you have one scimitar move – a slash – which can be powered up to a massive three as you gain experience. So, basically, you run away from things and then attack things. And like *ShadowCaster*, there are few interesting objects to find and none to manipulate. The interaction adds something, but when your character is a cocky-like corsair with crap lines to address to thin Middle-Eastern stereotypes, it's all hardly worth it. And to add insult to injury, the manual is totally patronising and obviously written with pond life in mind e.g. "Hint: flipping a switch may affect an area." Oh really?

All in all, SSI groupies may find something of interest here if they look hard, but those with too long an attention span and an adversity to thinly-disguised beat'em ups masquerading as "all-action role-playing games", stay well clear. PZ

A Potted SSI Discography

If there's one adjective you can attach to SSI, its "varied". While the quality of their games has been patchy, they're never at a loss for scenarios or new game systems – although not always successfully. From the early horrors of the "Gold Box" series, yawn-a-second top-down RPGs with names like *Pools Of Radiance* and *Death Knights Of Krynn*. They were the gameplaying equivalent of a dead leg. Things improved big time with the release of *Eye Of The Beholder: a* spiffo first-person perspective *Dungeon Master* romp. The trilogy marred only by the third episode which was badly programmed and not much fun. *The Summoning* came next. I thought its isometric mouse-driven gameplay and interesting puzzle-based quest was good fun, but most people thought "non". The next two big SSI releases were also not so well received. *The Elder Scrolls: Arena* was a massive, rambling and ultimately disappointing "RPG world" sim, as was the plan-view *Ultima*-like *Dark Sun*. Recently, *Ravenloft* has appeared, and while not creating a storm, it has certainly stirred a breeze with its quasi-SVGA graphics (320x400 instead of 320x200) and expansive, *Wolfenstein*-style graphics engine.



The thinking amoeba's beat'em up.

Minimum Memory: 640k
Minimum Processor: 386
Hard Disk Space Required: 15Mb
Graphics Modes Supported: VGA
Sound Cards Supported: All
Controls: Mouse, keyboard, joystick
Price: £35.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: US Gold/ssi **Tel:** 021 606 1808

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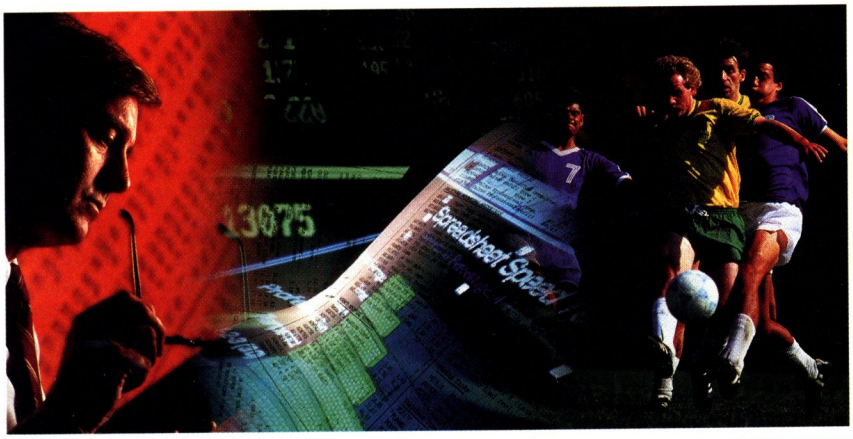

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To play *Zool 2* requires lightening reflexes and co-ordination. Shame then that only Paul Lakin was left in the office when the game arrived.

Zool 2

THE ORIGINAL *Zool* was a bit of a ground breaker. This may have had something to do with the lead-lined packaging and, as I attempted to explain to the shop manager at the time, the poor quality of modern shop floors. However, it was more to do with the great leap forward it represented for PC platform games.

Prior to *Zool*'s release, it was virtually a truism to say that PC platform games were crap. The scrolling tended to be abysmal and the gameplay, jerky. If you wanted a platform game you bought a SNES. But, then came *Zool* – the first platform game to be fast, smooth and exciting. A veritable Nigel Mansell among PC games, except it was fast, smooth and exciting, so it wasn't really like Nigel Mansell at all. Damn. That's the last time I buy a cheap Dictionary of Metaphors.

Anyway, to sum up: *Zool* was the first decent PC platform game. *(Yes, I think we'd gathered that. Ed.)* It was also only the second time this century that a masked ant had tried to become famous.

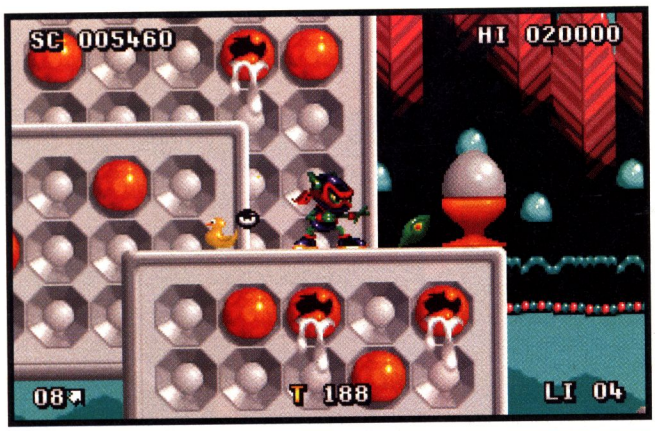
Ant-icipation

Now the ant is back to wage battle once more with the evil and far from polite, Krool. The forces of boredom are on the march. They've conquered Saturday night TV and now they're after the NTH dimension. Krool, the victim of highly unimaginative parents, has dispatched Mental Block – a creature with the morphing abilities of a toon and the table manners of a hyena – to destroy the mind lines and bring victory to boredom. Don't look at me like that. I don't write these scenarios you know.

Think of it like a nightclub. Someone's got in and is playing their unrivalled collection of Chris Rea albums. You're the bouncer. You've got to plough through the six floors of the club, sort out all the bovver, find Mental Block and chuck him out. I'm afraid you don't get to call all the women darlin' or refuse entrance to corduroy-clad men called Derek, but then you can't have everything.

Fast 'n' furious scrolling finally comes of age on the PC





(Right) Garishly colourful graphics, super-smooth scrolling and an imaginative combination of screens and baddies are enough to convince any hedgehog lover that with the new Zool crew on the scene, his days are most certainly numbered.

Anti-cedents

The first difference the *Zool* veteran will realise when confronted with the sequel is the large "2" that follows after *Zool*'s name. Having recovered from the shock of Gremlin's fiendish marketing strategy, the player will then look for what's new in the game. And what will he/she find?

Well it's all a lot slicker, of course. The game's even more garishly colourful than before. And the graphics are superior – I know that because it says so on the press release. However, *Zool* and *Zoolz* are very well drawn and extremely well animated. There's a pretty wide range of monsters (if you can call a chicken with a chocolate egg on its head a monster) and some of them are quite imaginatively thought of. There are a few nice touches as well (and when you get to my age, a few nice touches is all you can hope for). For instance, on the ice level, leaping on top of ice cubes produces beautiful ice sculptors. *Zool*'s not just a ninja, he's an artist too.

More impressive than the way *Zool* looks though is the way he moves. Very smooth and very, very fast. In fact, if, like me, your central nervous system has been shattered by years of sustained alcohol abuse, you may find it rather too fast. Everything rushes past at an alarming rate and you can easily lose control of the game. The programmer has clearly received a degree in Super-Bloody-Speedy Animations from the University of Platform Games, which makes platform hopping something of a nightmare.

However, speed is of the essence and *Zool* is the fastest platform game I've ever played. In a rather cheeky nod at Sonic, the game includes a high-speed tube, which *Zool* can jump or fall into and then hurtle along at a rare old rate of knots. Rather a case of cocking a snook at the blue hedgehog – as my Great Uncle Ernie would have said.

Zool or *Zoolz* are pretty manoeuvarable and all that. However, one hangover from the original that's a real downer is the irritating climb/jump feature. Trying to get *Zool* to let go of the rock or cable and jump is rather like trying to persuade John Major to resign. Except





Is it a bird..? Is it a plane..? Don't be stupid! It's Zool!

Two Pay!

There are two reasons for the "2" in *Zool 2*. There are so too! Firstly, of course, this is the second instalment of the game. Secondly, there are two characters for you to choose from.



Zool: The hero himself. The most famous ant since Adam. A quick-moving *Zool* can reek destruction either by jumping on things or shooting them. By pressing fire when he's jumping you can cause the insectoid one to spin around like a dervish, shattering everything in sight. He's also nobody's fool when it comes to bashing through false ceilings.



Zoolz: Since she's a female ant she should of course have been called Anette (Ant-ette?...oh please yourself). Anyway, she's easily as tough as *Zool* and tooled up with what could be a whip or she could just be using her hair. (Rather like the girl in *Naked*, he said in a noncey, film critic kind of way.)

If The Hat Fits – A Beginners Guide To Corporate Identity

Not as violent as *Gods*, not as blood-curdlingly sweet as *James Pond – Zool* inhabits a sort of middle ground in the world of platform games (or should that be the middle platform). The Ninja of the Nth dimension emerged about the time when software companies – casting jealous eyes over the success of characters like Sonic The Hedgehog and Mario – were all desperately trying to create their own corporate character. We had James Pond – the aquatic secret agent; Bubsy – the psychotic Bobcat; we had Dingo – the baby-loving canine *(Are you sure about that one? Ed.)* and, of course, we had *Zool*. Each character came with his own endearing characteristic; how we smiled as James Pond concertinad his stomach, how we chuckled when an impatient Bubsy rapped the TV screen, how we howled with laughter as Dingo bit... *(I think that's enough. Ed)*. They also came complete with a range of baseball hats, T-shirt and other high mark-up marketing toys. It may seem strange that a company would attempt to increase its profile by developing a character which is basically just a large, wicked-looking ant – but look at television. Mr Blobby's career has sky rocketed since he invented that turd with a beard as his sidekick. *Zool* really isn't so weird when you remember that someone invented Noel Edmonds.







(Above) There are literally loads and loads of baddies to be sorted out, including chickens with chocolate eggs on their heads and many others that you can send to the great platform in the sky with a swipe of your tail or a crack of your whip. (Right) There's even a sort of pinball bonus screen – sound familiar?

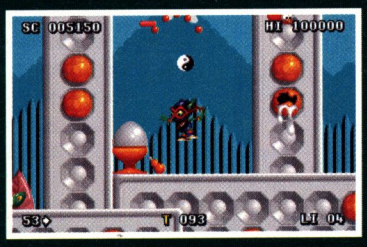


Sweets For My Sweet

Of course, no platform game would be complete without it's power ups. As you travel through the game you'll come across boxes marked Chuppa Chup. All you have to do is head-butt them and they'll reveal an icon which will float off the screen as you frantically try to jump and catch it. Here's what they do (if you ever catch them).



Bomb: Any guesses? Yes it's the good old smart bomb, wiping out all enemies on screen when activated. If you pick up one of these it follow you round the screen like a fly round...(*Let's stick to a bee around honey, heh? Ed*) until used. You can carry up to three smart bombs around with you at a time.



Ying and Yang: Ever wondered what those strange badges mean? Well to *Zool* they mean schizophrenia. Two *Zools* for the price of one. Guaranteed to confuse the enemy. (And you if you're not careful.)



Shield: Another old favourite. The shield gives you temporary immunity, demonstrated by three shields buzzing around you like flies around...er...honey.



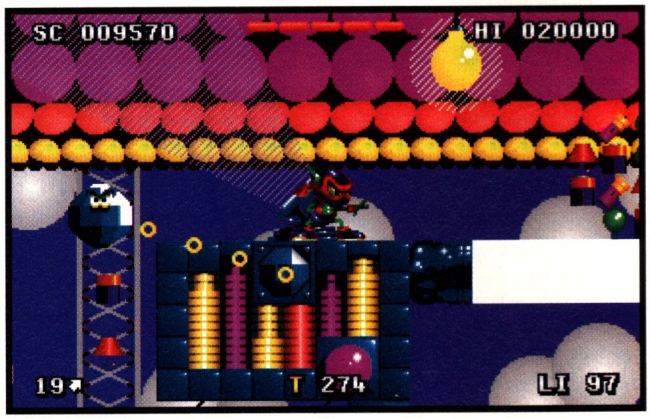
Time: Since *Zool 2* is a race against time as well as against death, there'll be times (sorry) when you're more than glad of a fistful of extra seconds.

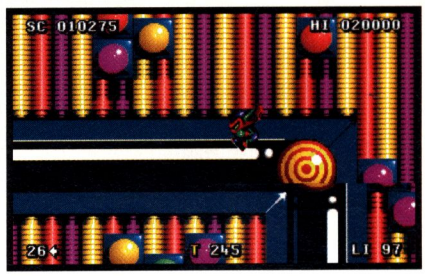


Chuppa Chup: Restores you to full health. More than a little useful.



Rings: Er...I never really worked out what these did. *(They give you a super-missile. Ed.)*





The two-player option adds extra depth to the gameplay, whilst the usual splatterings of bonuses, power ups and hidden rooms make this game everything you might expect and a little more besides.

82 SCORE

As they say, if you liked *Zool* you'll love this.



Don't be fooled by the mask and leather gear – he's not really a Tory minister, just your average fun lovin' psychotic ant!

Minimum Memory: 550k
Minimum Processor: 386
Hard Disk Space Required: 1.5Mb
Graphic Modes Supported: VGA/SVGA
Sound Cards Supported: Sound Blaster and 100% compatibles
Control Supported: Keyboard, joystick
Price: £34.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Millenium **Tel:** 0223 844894

when you don't want him to of course, when suddenly he loosens his grip and drops to his doom.

The sound is also an improvement on the original game, though I wasn't completely bowled over by it (good, not brilliant). The music track is a sort of muted piece of rave, while the sound effects have a strange whooshing to them.

Anti-climax?

The gameplay itself is fairly standard. Each of the six worlds is divided into levels (three in all the ones I got to) To complete a section you have to amass 99 points and then find the exit (not too difficult since there's an arrow at the bottom of the screen pointing you in the right direction).

At the end of each world, you have to do battle with Mental Block. There's a bonus puzzle screen for you to complete with the aid of Zoon, your trusty ant-dog (provided you've collected three Zoon bonuses). In general the game is standard. Full of bonuses, power ups and hidden rooms.

Oh yes, there's also a two-player option which allows one of you to play Zool and one Zoolz, or for you to play two of the same character. Unfortunately, I haven't got any friends so I can't tell you what that's like.



Anti-Disestablishment

If you've ever played *Zool* then just try to imagine what you'd expect *Zool 2* to be like. You've got it. *Zool 2* is a very good sequel to an excellent game. However, it's not really that different from the original. The graphics do seem a bit more impressive, but maybe I'm falling victim to the power of suggestion and hence, am just believing what I'm told (I haven't got a copy of *Zool* here to compare them with). To be honest, I reckon most people would have trouble distinguishing *Zool 2* from *Zool* – except for the inclusion of Zoolz, of course. Maybe that's no bad thing. *Zool 2* is an extremely good platform game, it's just not an extremely different one. Z

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EMPIRE SOCCER

"Football football footbmmll foomball football...footbalmm...." (Patrick McCarthy was last seen wandering off towards Oxford Street in a daze, mumbling to himself. Please report any sightings to our office – he owes us money.)

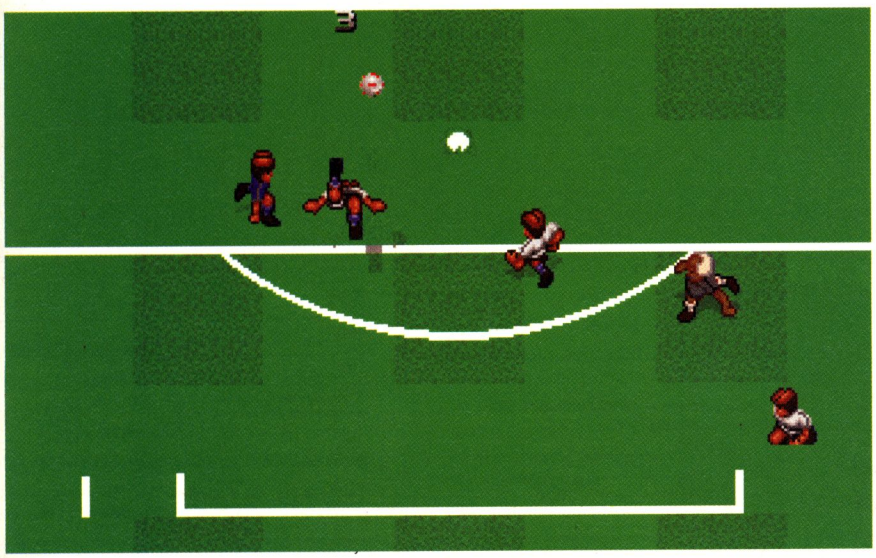


"The main problems lie with the players' occasional stupidity."

IF FOOTBALL games were restaurants, *Empire Soccer* would be a hamburger stand outside a tube station. If football games were films, it would be a film by Ron Howard. If football games were items of male underwear, it would be a yellow leatherette g-string with feathers above the pouch and a message down the front saying: "You Know You Want It" in diamante studs. *(What's wrong with that? Ed.)* We're talking trashy, here. Well, maybe trashy isn't the best word for it. Not having a thesaurus to hand, I can't think of anything less pejorative for the moment.



(Right) Er... Yo? (Below) Players from some of the more backward countries simply don't realise that break-dancing is passé these days.





"It's not over yet!"



"Goal! It is now mate."

Kitsch? *(Stylish? Ed.)* No, not stylish. *(So you're a bit of an underwear snob, are you? Ed.)* I give up. It's arcade action all the way, basically. (The game, not our esteemed editor's "stylish" underpants. I can't speak for them.) Perhaps realising that everyone will be churning out football games that lay elaborate claims to being the most tactically accurate, the most beautifully animated or the most ridiculously crowded with advertisements from official sponsors, Empire have gone for the all-action blast approach. Perhaps. Or perhaps they couldn't do it any other way. Who are we to guess? It's what they've done, anyway. They say they meant to do it. And we trust them.

Ooh, ah, Em-pi-ah

After all, there are plenty of football games around that have tried for "Big Serious" and failed miserably – *Dino Dini's Goal* and *Striker* spring to mind. Come to think of it, there are plenty of football games that haven't tried to do that, but failed anyway.



(Above) This kind of goalmouth action almost always ends in tears. (Below) They're football fans, Jim, but not as we know them.



That's not to say that just because they've gone for the fun approach, it doesn't have any subtle tweaking available to those of us who like to tweak subtly; for example, there are five levels of difficulty, and you can make the ball stick to your players' feet by selecting Novice level. Each team is graded in ability, but you can give everyone the same skills if you want a perfectly matched game, and there are variable period lengths. There are 32 teams available – the 24 who qualified for the World Cup, plus eight assorted no-hopers like England, Scotland and France. When you play the World Cup, you can opt for the

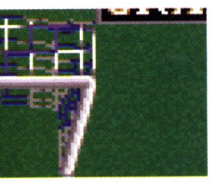




proper groupings, make up your own (to put the really crap teams in your group) or just go wild and select "Randomise" from the options, which sounds like something Studio Line might bring out for Predictable Hair. There are also Training matches that help you to get used to playing the game, and Exhibition matches, where all your players are naked from the waist down.

The view

The controls allow you to perform the little moves that are more or less accepted standards for a football game; short passes, overhead kicks, headers and trapping the ball are all easy to do, but long passing is largely based on guesswork. This is easily the smallest screen view I've ever seen on a football game, and there isn't a radar facility. And although the screen scrolls quickly, it often doesn't scroll quickly enough. Many a screaming 25-yard shot has hit the net before the view catches up with it. Under the circumstances, it's lucky the goalkeepers are computer controlled.





Special moves

The Special Moves (see boxout), which you can select for your team at the start of each game, certainly whack the Good Laugh Factor up a notch or two, and this cartoony approach is continued with the little cameos that pop up after goals – weeping goalies, aghast fans, triumphant goal-scorers, and so on. It all adds to the effect they're going for: like trying for the footballing equivalent of *Speedball 2*.

But...

They haven't quite managed it. It's a good laugh as a two-player game and it almost makes it as a one-player. But, the main problems lie with the players' occasional stupidity (they can often be spotted standing motionless while the ball bounces nearby), and the scrolling. It's all very well going all-out for the arcade fun angle, but the scrolling still has to be spot-on. Overall, it's not a bad attempt, though – it certainly plays better than some of the "serious" football games around. You just have to play it in the spirit it's intended. Z



Let down by the small viewing area, unintelligent player reactions and poor scrolling.

Minimum Memory: 570K

Minimum Processor: 386 or better

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA

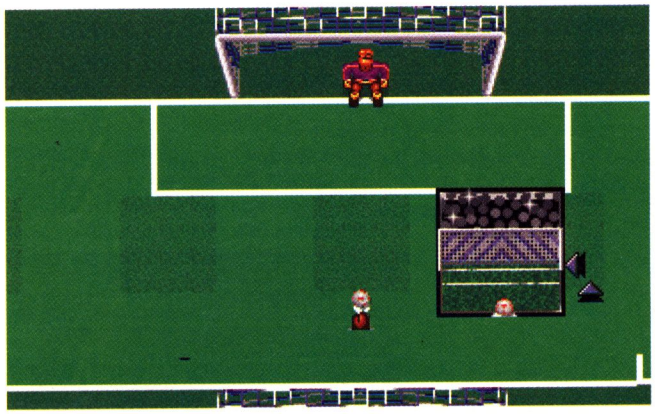
Sound Cards: Roland, AdLib, Roland, Sound Blaster

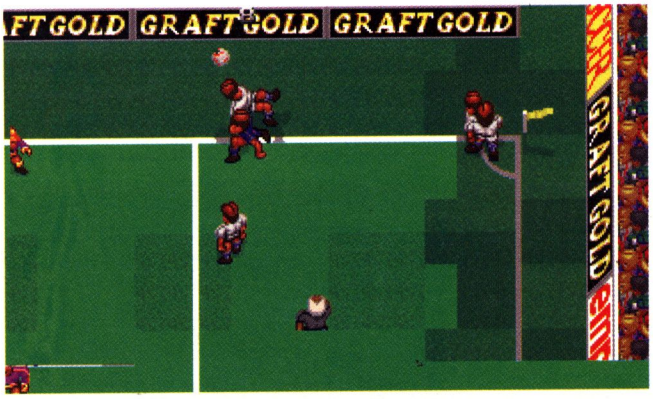
Controls Supported: Keyboard, joystick, mouse

Price: £29.99 **Release Date:** Out now

Publisher: Empire **Tel:** 081 3437337

(Below, top) Chris Waddle, where are you now?
(Middle) It's this kind of challenge that gives the Italians a bad name.
(Bottom) One of the tougher qualifying groups, perhaps?







Those Special Moves In Full

Before the start of the game you can decide which of the six special moves available will be used by your team. Everyone in the team can do the move, but you have to wait until their number is flashing and then, when you've performed it, there's a slight wait before you can do it again. What I want to know is, why has the Amiga version got nine moves and we've only got six? Eh? Eh?

Power Drive

It's Peter Lorimer time. Use this often enough and the opposition goalkeeper will finish the match looking like he's spent the afternoon handling nuclear waste with his bare hands, so befouled with unpleasant weeping sores will they be.

Snap Shot

It's Gerd Müller time. Whichever way you're facing when you use this, a quick shot will be fired at the goal, ideally catching the goalie out while he's busy rubbing liniment on his thighs, or picking his scabs or something. (In Bonetti Mode, basically.)

Banana Shot

It's Rivelino time. Or even Rivelino at high altitude with a ball filled with a helium/oxygen mix time. Wherever you're standing when you use this, the ball swerves violently toward the corner of the goal – with up to 90 degrees of swerve. Blimey O'Reilly.

Super Barge

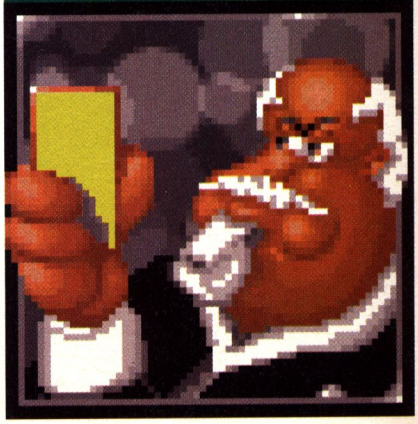
It's Roy Keane time. With this option selected, the player who uses it will pole-axe everyone he touches. The bargee will stay down for a long time, while the barger won't even draw a raised eyebrow from the ref – exactly as if he played for Manchester United.

Speed Burst

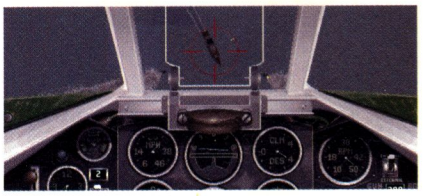
It's Jan Molby time. Press the button and your player will be off up the pitch, darting from side to side and whizzing through the pathetic tackles of your opponents faster than a necrotising fasciitus bacterium through a major muscle mass.

Super Dribble

It's Old Man's Trousers time. *(Not that kind of dribble. Ed.)* Oh, alright. Using this allows your player to make his way quickly downfield, the ball stuck to his foot like a balloon to a polyester tank-top. At Novice level, everyone can do this (to a lesser extent).

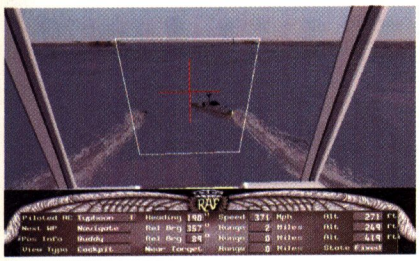


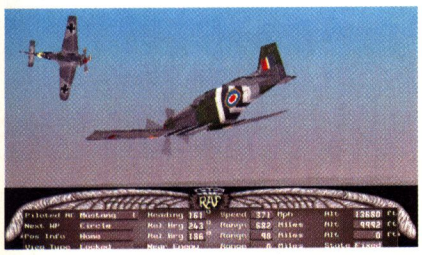
OVERLORD



All this fuss'n'talk about D-Day and summit called Operation Overlord, coinciding, funnily enough, with the launch of Virgin's new game, *Overlord*, got Simon Bradley suspicious... could there just possibly be a connection?







IT IS UNLIKELY I know, but some of you may not yet have realised that D-Day was almost exactly 50 years ago. In that case, you probably also won't know that the landings were known as Operation Overlord, so you will have no idea what this game is all about. Those of you who have been on the planet for more than a week, however, will have guessed that this is indeed something to do with the D-Day landings. And, my smug friends, you would be right. *Overlord* is a combat flight simulator, and jolly pretty it looks too. Okay, so it's not all roses, but allow me to show you the garden before concentrating on the individual flowers. And pricks.

(Left) Unlike those brave heroes of the skies of fifty years ago, you get to choose whether you fly a Typhoon, Spitfire or a Mustang. Each aircraft actually handles very differently and it is up to your skills as an airman to get the most out of the different planes made available to you.

Back in the bad old war days of 1944, Mr Hitler was still sitting in France (and most of the rest of Europe, come to think of it) pulling faces at us and saying rude things about our mums. Naturally, being British, we were having none of this, and we invaded France (again), along with a couple of colonials, and stamped on his choc ice. This upset him a lot, and he blew his brains out. Well, that's an abbreviated version of it, anyway. During this time, the RAF were knocking seven bells out of pretty well anything that moved and wasn't made in Birmingham. They were doing this with a variety of aeroplanes, but the bulk of ground-attack work was carried out by Typhoons, while the glamorous/exciting jobs went to the Spitfires and, to a lesser extent, the Mustangs.

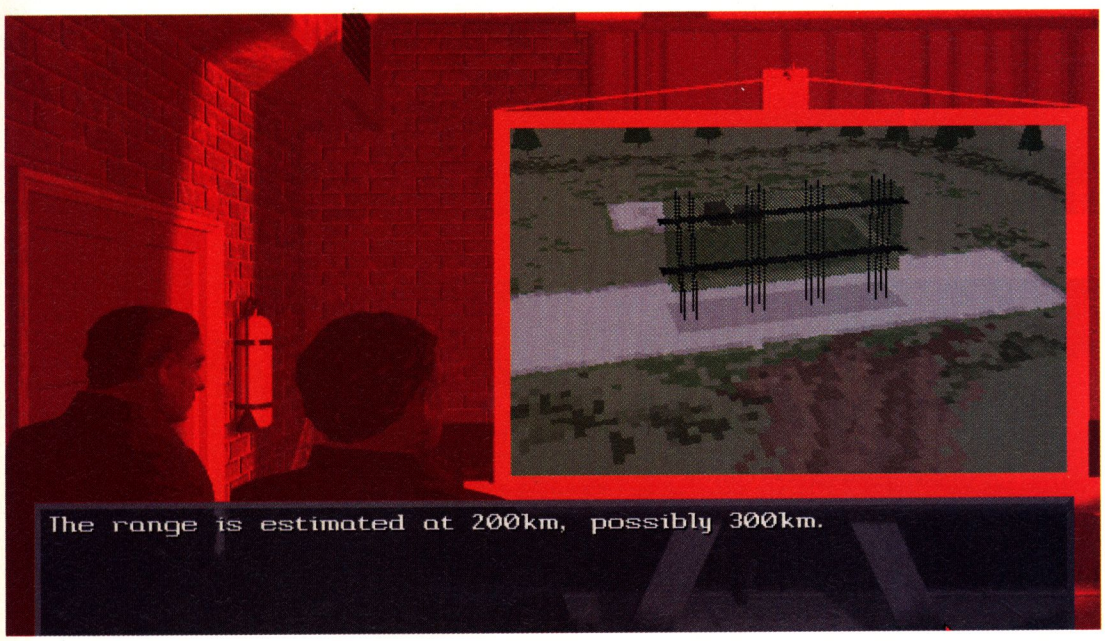
"Fortunately for you, Virgin have seen fit to include no less than two padlock views..."

(Right and below) Your missions pit you against a range of mainly surface-based enemy with the odd dogfight or bomber intercept for good measure.

So what does it do then?

Overlord gives you the chance to fly either the Typhoon, Spitfire IX or Mustang against a mainly surface-based enemy. You may be attacking E-boats, tank convoys, radar installations, bridges or almost any other ground target you can think of, as well as the occasional dogfight or bomber intercept. You have the choice of servicing your target with either cannon, bombs or rockets, depending on your choice of mount, and the enemy will try his best to kill you with a range of flak and fighter attacks. The aeroplanes fly very differently, and the cockpits are beautifully rendered, along with any external details that may be visible from within. Control is fairly conventional, with support for all major sticks as well as the Thrustmaster WCS and separate rudder pedals (Hoorah!). External views are truly stunning, and enemy aircraft appear complete with squadron markings and proper camouflage, as do your wingmen. However, the ground is nothing to write home about, although the targets are quite detailed. Despite this, they do suffer slightly from the "stuck on" look that we first encountered and slagged off in *Strike Commander*. The real graphical treat for me, though, is the way that other









aircraft gradually get bigger and easier to see as they loom out of the haze. They are really difficult to spot until less than two miles away – just like the real thing. Fortunately for you, Virgin have seen fit to include no less than two padlock views to help you find the bad guy and terminate his contract. These padlock views, although not quite as useful as those found in *Falcon 3*, are pretty damn good, and after you get used to them they work very well, with little danger of disorientation, though the ground does still get in the way at times.

Two padlock views? I hear you say. Yes, you get a choice of padlocking from inside



the cockpit or outside. This latter version, although it takes a fair bit of getting used to, is extremely useful when you find yourself caught up in a real tangle, because it allows you to keep an eye on both what's going on around you, and on your target at the same time. However, take warning: the first few times you try to use it, you will find yourself either over controlling massively or, failing that, moving the controls the wrong way altogether.

Tell us about the game, then.

Okay, on to the game itself. *Overlord* is unusual in that you don't get to create a pilot of your own when you start. Instead, you choose the level at which you wish to fight, and the program then assigns you three personae; one for each aircraft type. Each time one of your pilots goes for a "Burton" (as they used to say), you are treated to a superbly drawn view of the station adjutant reporting your demise to the c.o., accompanied by suitably sombre music. Then, assuming that you haven't goofed up too badly, the same guy, looking a lot happier, tells the c.o. that he has replaced you with the next pilot on the list. Neat, huh? Trouble is, when you die, you don't really die at all, so the whole thing takes on a slightly surreal air as your reincarnation attempts the same mission that killed you earlier. What does happen, though, is that if you really screw up badly, you are advised that operations have been suspended and the invasion, postponed. In other words, you lose. Another option, if you prefer, is to leave the aeroplane at the last second and jump into the next in line. This means that although your original mount has been destroyed, you are now your wingman and you are free to carry on as before. Needless to say, if the aeroplane you jump into is getting the crap knocked out of it, you're going to have to repeat the process soon. So, as you see, all the while you have aircraft in the air you can leap into one at will. Spooky, huh? What this does give you is a fair amount of flexibility in how you want to go about doing things, and it does mean that you can keep a good career running without having to resort to rebooting if you get shot down.

"Hullo there!, I'm Quentin, your steward for flight D-DAY44 to Normandy. Can I interest you in some duty free — or maybe you'd just like some more coffee?"



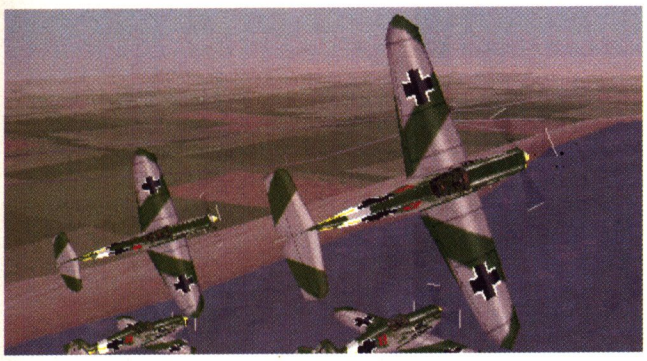
(Above) External views are all quite stunning. (Below) Each different aircraft has its own controls and handling characteristics for that extra bit of realism.

As a new pilot, you are given a choice of aeroplanes, mission preferences, difficulty and reality levels. Then, after a briefing which certainly looks good, although it doesn't always tell you much, it's off to bash the baddies. You can choose to start on the field or in the air near the enemy. Either way, you'll receive a constant stream of information from both ground control and your fellow fliers, advising you of enemy air and surface vessels, along with their range and bearing. You will have been advised of your mission prior to take off, so after administering to whatever target you have been allocated











and then nailing anything else convenient, you should head for home, debriefing and a welcome pint in the bar.

Nothing really out of the ordinary so far then. As usual for games of this genre, you will be carrying either bombs or rockets, along with the ubiquitous 20mm cannon (except the Mustang, which only has weedy .50cal machine guns). Targets vary, but will usually be either boats, bridges or buildings. You can, if you wish, choose to specialise in trains, airfields, radar sites, V-1 launch sites etc. What you will find, whatever your chosen target type, is that air resistance is pretty minimal. This is fair, because at this stage in the proceedings the Luftwaffe were pushed to muster many planes anyway. Be advised, though, that when you do come up against an enemy aircraft you'll have a seriously hard time. The enemy pilots have been gifted with a high level of intelligence and are often able to guess your next move. Indeed, even the gunners of the bombers will often be able to anticipate your next move, resulting in your untimely and fairly messy demise (unless, of course, you first remember that you can bail out by rolling inverted and pressing CNTRL-Q, and second, that you remain in control of the aeroplane). Then it's back to the sombre music and the adjutant reporting your loss....

Does it look any good?

The main thing that makes this game stand out from the others is the quality of the between-missions graphics which, assuming you have the hardware, are beautifully drawn in SVGA. Actually, it's fair to say that, visually, this game is stunning. Nevertheless, there is a catch, and that catch is that *Overlord* is very demanding on hardware. However, it is very smart and configures itself to the ideal levels of detail and the like for your processor. It also has an adaptable viewing screen which shrinks as there are more demands to try and cope with the levels of info being pumped through it. Actually, although the idea of a continually shrinking and expanding screen is pretty wacky, in practice it is barely noticeable, although it makes a noticeable difference to refresh rates. You can also force the program to turn off haze, graduate horizons and reduce the detail level. Be warned, though, that although the higher graphic levels look superb, if you push the machine into giving you more detail than it can

IN PERSPECTIVE

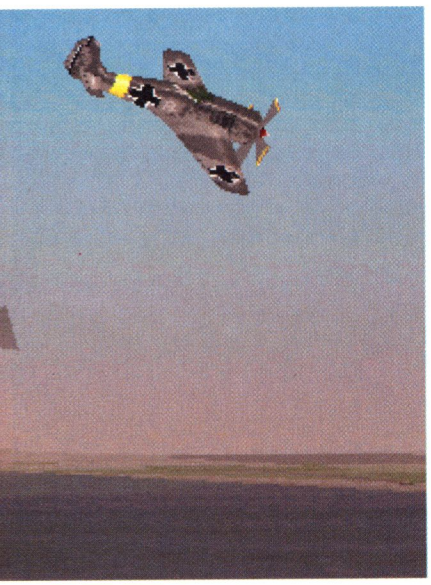
Overlord **may not fly as well, or be as graphically stunning as some other flight sims, but as an all-rounder, it gets top marks from me.**

Overlord

Aces Over Europe

Aces Over The Pacific







cope with, the aeroplane will be uncontrollable as it lurches from one control input to the next between screen refreshes. I suppose that what I'm saying here is that you do not know better than the program. Unlike some alleged self-configuring games, *Overlord* has been designed properly and it does actually work. So leave it alone and you shouldn't have any problems.

But is it any good?

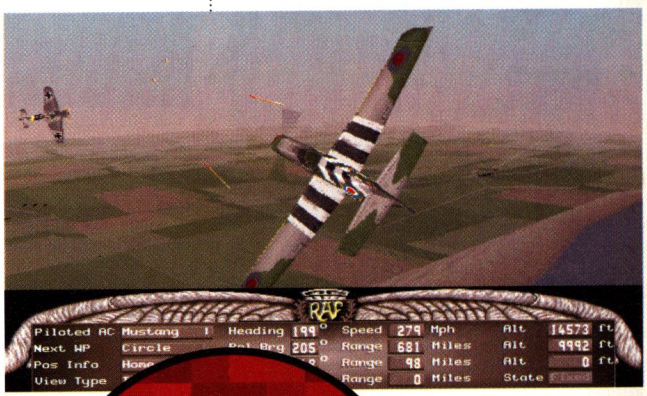
Well, to summarise, *Overlord* is a very well presented and historically, fairly accurate, flight simulator, which, despite the limited world area and fairly restricted range of missions, is challenging enough to stay interesting for a reasonable length of time. Combat is excellent and the padlock views help in dispatching the fast, manoeuvrable and heavily-armed opponents that you will encounter, although surface targets seem to be a little soft and can often be frayed with a good burst of cannon. The graphics and sounds are both superb, with the important proviso that you will need at least a 486DX/33 VLB to get even nearly the best out of it. The manual is so comprehensive that even a confirmed prophead like me can learn something from it. What can I say? So long as you have the hardware to use it, you can buy this game in the almost certain knowledge that you have one of the best simulators in its field (and probably the most powerful PC on the block, as well). There are sims which fly better but look crap. There are sims which look better but fly like trains. *Overlord* combines nice looks with an acceptable flight model, without expecting you to do a Mavis Beacon touch-typing course just to stay alive in the sky. Sure, all the controls you need are there, along with the obligatory pointless couple, but the interface is pretty intuitive all in all, and basic flight and combat can be dealt with using the minimum of keys. Yes, in spite of (or perhaps because of) the quirks built in, I like this game a lot.

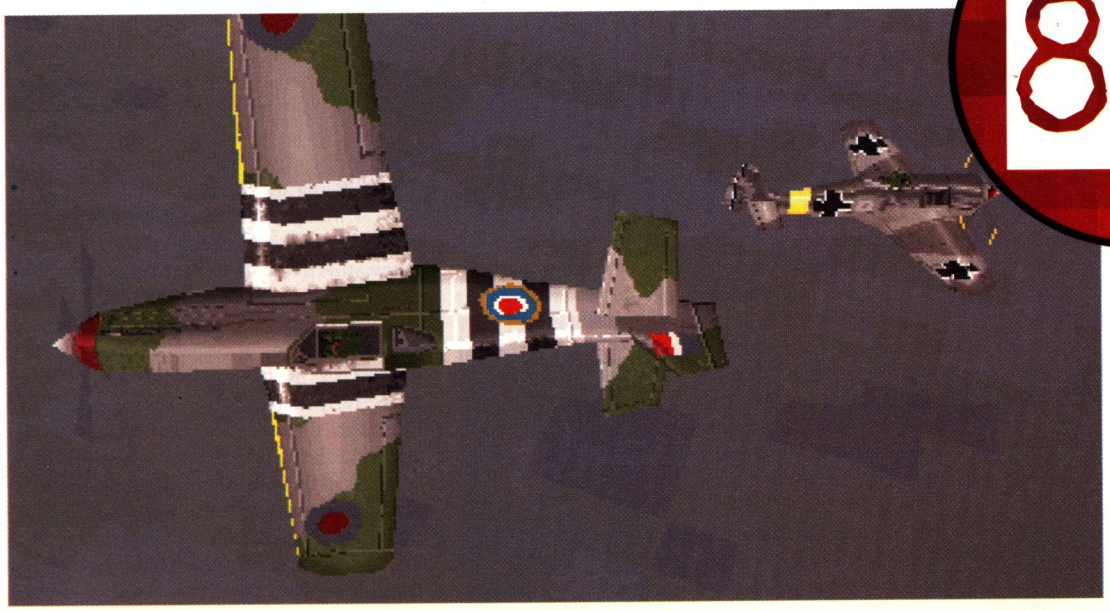
Time to remember.

On a serious note... yes, I know I was pretty flippant about D-Day and the background to it earlier on, but joking aside, the success of the Overlord landings was the real turning point in the war. It cost the lives of thousands of people; both combatants and civilians, from both sides, but those same people saved countless more lives by bringing hostilities to an earlier end. Z

As if bombing the Bosch and tilting your hat at the Hun wasn't enough, true knights of the sky can only achieve "All round good egg" status by completing over fifty sorties without disturbing a hair on their brillcreamed heads. Not an easy task, especially if you're forced to bail out over the drink.







SCORE

85

An old idea made new with some interesting tweaks.

Minimum Memory: 490k base (580k for VGA) plus 2.2Mb expanded memory

Minimum Processor: 386

Hard Disk Space Required: 23Mb

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA 640 – 400 SVGA

Sound Cards Supported: AdLib, Roland, Sound Blaster

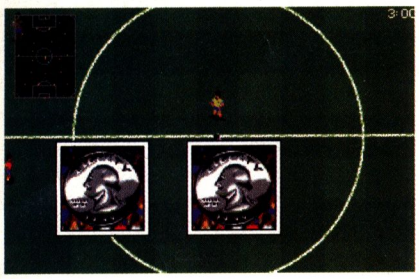
Controls: Mouse, keyboard

Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Virgin **Tel:** 081 960 2255

WORLD CUP USA '94



Seventeen down, nine hundred and forty-three to go: Patrick McCarthy continues his self-sacrificial effort to look at every football game that comes out in this beautiful year of years.



Ha ha, I've won the toss, so I get to bat first (wrong game. Ed!)

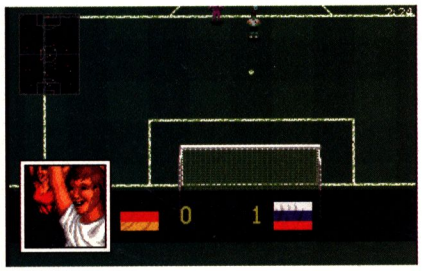
APPARENTLY the World Cup is taking place in the USA this year. By an incredible coincidence that once again raises the whole question of Chance versus the Existence of a Supreme Being, US Gold is bringing out a game with a title that could almost have been devised to take advantage of this fact. Lucky old US Gold.

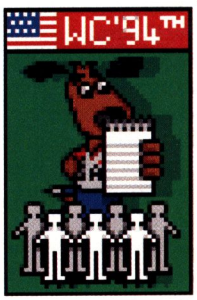
The World... er... Cup?

That's right. This will be a unique first for America: it will be the first sporting competition to take place in America with "World" in the title that actively invites competition from the teams of more than one country. Unfortunately, none of the American viewing public will notice, since there will be vital bottom of the table baseball clashes at that time between the Omaha Onanists and the Nashville Nipple Clamps. Or there'll be a repeat of the Evel Knievel Christmas Special, where he tried to jump an eight-inch ceramic hob blindfolded on a unicycle. He punctured his tyre, pitched face first into the crowd, tore his nostrils open and crushed five vertebrae.



There are oodles of disgusting colour combinations to choose for your teams.





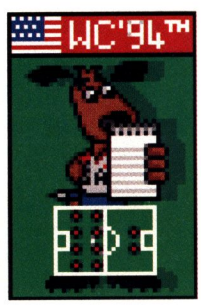
It's called füt-bõl

Except in America, of course, where it's called sahker. Naturally, for the benefit of first-time buyers into the lifestyle investment that is a football simulation, there's a short explanatory section in the front of the manual that starts "What is soccer?" I looked in vain for the sentence telling us that soccer is a shortening of the term "Association Football", first used disdainfully by rugby-playing public school snobs who wanted to collar the term football for their own bastardised version of the sport. Instead, however, there was the usual old guff about defensemen, middle of the fielders and striker-guys, carelessly type-casting players into these narrow definitions almost as if the Dutch side of the mid-70s had never existed.

"If you don't like too many icons, this could send you on a mad spree of armed mayhem..."

Gasp! Icons!

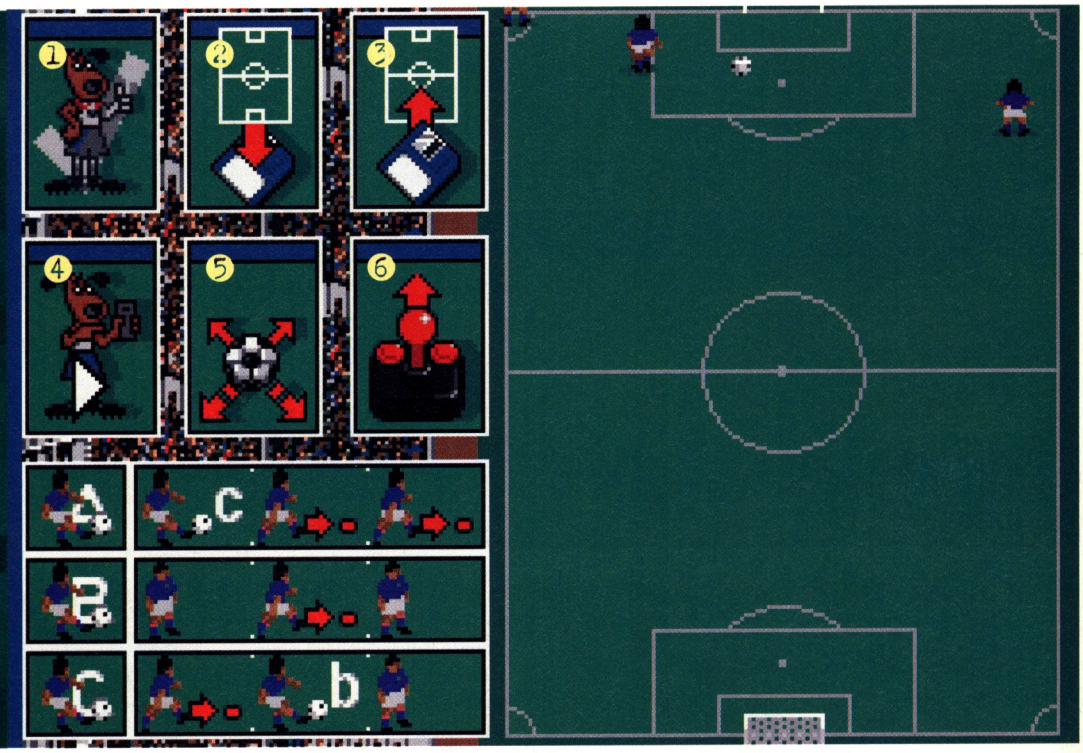
If you're the sort of person who doesn't like to see too many icons in a game, this could well be the one that tips you over the edge and sends you out on a mad spree of armed mayhem and sudden death. In *World Cup USA '94*, all options, editing screens and other facilities are controlled via icons and, when you first start the game, you won't have a bloody clue what they're supposed to represent. Let's face it, there are, after all, only so many positions in which an official dog mascot (or Striker, as he's been inventively named by the Yanks) can be depicted. For example, how would you draw the official dog mascot-based icon for the Set-Piece Editing Screen? And how would you make that different from the official dog mascot-based icon for the Squad Selection Screen? You have been warned. Don't lose your manual.



Formation editor

The Formation editor is your opportunity to emulate the big boys of the management world. This is your chance to develop a three-man defence and a flexible midfield arrangement like Johan Cruyff; cultivate an almost basketball-style pressing game like Fabio Capello, or just make everyone run about like wind-up toys until they die, like John Beck.

❶ Chooses a starting point, in the form of a basic formation.
❷ Saves your hours of tactical brow-furrowing under a new name.
❸ The formation modifier customises player positions within the formation you've chosen: for example, your spinally misaligned winger might prefer to play a little deep and have his longer leg to the outside of the pitch, to better facilitate a monotonous Ryan Giggs-style cutting-in movement.
❹ Shows you how your formation will adapt to the flow of play
❺ The player modifier lets you fine tune a player's positioning in relation to the ball.
❻ Set piece/open play selector: Clicks between the two modes to allow you to plan your set-piece moves to a similar degree of finesse.



What you get...

What you get is a World Cup game with the qualifying teams in their correct groups and all more or less accurately rated. (Except for the USA's skill rating, which is silly.) You get the choice of playing a full World Cup with these teams, or practice and exhibition games with these teams plus eight other non-qualifiers. (Practice games are exhibition games where the referee makes all decisions in your favour – it's just like being an important club and having Roger Milford as ref.) You can practice set pieces and penalties if you want, and there's a Customise World Cup facility, too. Any number of human controlled teams can take part in the World Cup; you can even play two-player against the computer.



Options galore

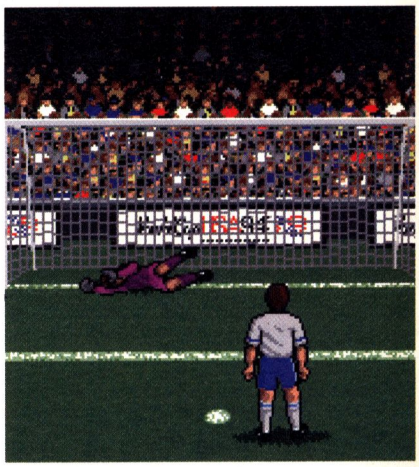
There are loads of things to fiddle with. The usual stuff like match length (up to 90 minutes real time) and human or computer-controlled goalkeepers are there, but you can also decide whether your players trap the ball before kicking it. Then there's the Glue Factor which controls, within a range of four settings, whether the ball will stick to your feet like in *Striker*, or bounce off your shins like in *Dino Dini's Goal*. In fact, even the loosest glue setting still feels like "stickiness" rather than like bringing a ball under control, as it ideally should. *Sensible Soccer*, for all its faults on the PC, is still the only game that's got it right in that respect. Still, with the glue factor on minimum, this feels like a good second best.

The other thing you can switch on and off is Offside. There's a good, concise definition of the offside rule in the manual, so whoever wrote it is clearly familiar with the rule. Unfortunately, the programmers, equally clearly, aren't. Players are called offside if they're in the clear when the ball reaches them, even if they were ten yards onside when the pass was played. (We've checked this with the game's own multi-speed instant replay. Trust us.) The programmers seem to be using the ice hockey offside rule instead. So if you don't want to end up smashing your machine, it's best to turn this option off.

Gameplay

Generally, it's not too bad. It looks like a cross between *Striker* and *Sensible*, and it plays like it, too. There are adjustable speed





He's going to save this easily. There's a bloody big arrow where I'm aiming the ball!



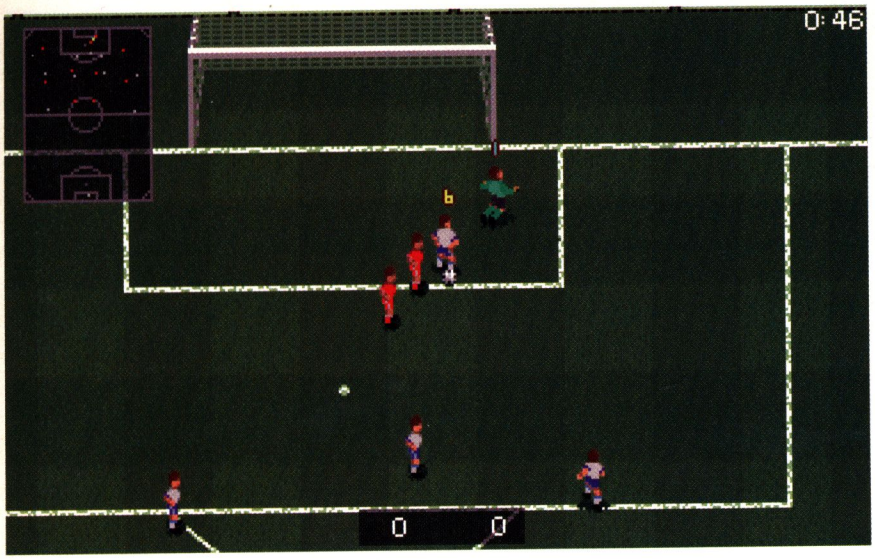
Strip Designer

Perhaps the most popular part of any sports game, the strip designer gives you the opportunity to select the most hideous combination of colours you can think of and then upset your opponent by playing football in it.



This one goes further than most: instead of being restricted to selecting colours from a set range provided by the game, it uses a system of three slider bars to mix red, blue and green until you have the nauseating colours you're after. This can even be used to get exactly the right skin colour for your players. Here, with a deferential nod in the direction of Yves Klein, we've decided to give our players bright blue skin. Later, we will pay them to lie down naked on large white canvases and make a lot of money from the results.

World Cup USA '94





(Above) Striker proudly reveals his enormous joystick.
(Left) Meraccy the goalie.

The Set-Piece Editor

Like the Formations editor, the other potentially confusing facility in the game, the Set Piece editor has a mass of icons that aren't really very clear – they don't exactly tell you what they do by looking at them, so you spend all your time looking through the manual, which tells you what the icons do without showing you how, or walking you through an example. When you do use it, you'll find it awkward to use and a bit limited in its scope. Still, Americans love a "play", don't they?



settings which should help you find the right speed for your machine. There's some debate in the office as to whether it's too easy or not. Personally, I don't think so. I found myself working up a healthy hatred of the computer-controlled team and what it was getting away with, which is a good sign that there are skills and/or sneaky tricks to learn. Then again, one chap in the office did win the World Cup at his first attempt, using Brazil and beating Germany in the final. He was probably just showing off.

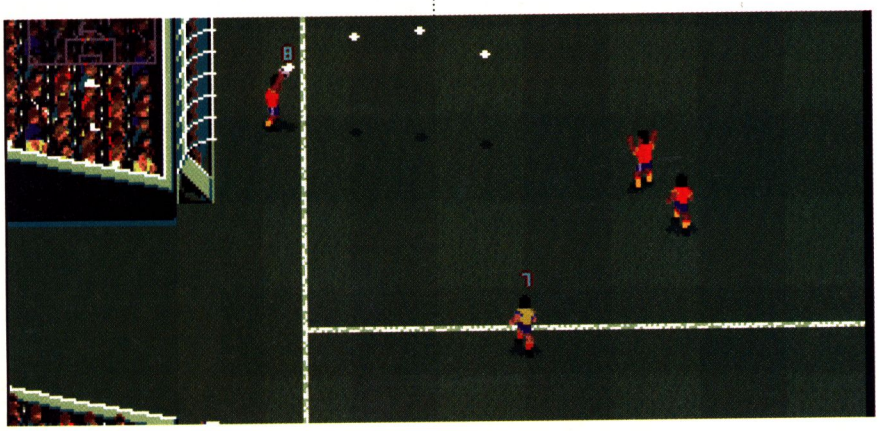


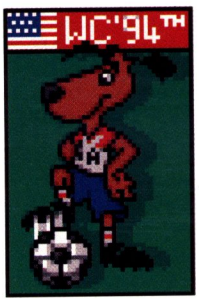
The claimed range of special shots, diving headers, overhead kicks and so on, simply aren't there. All we could get was overhead kicks, even if the ball was about six inches off the ground, and sliding tackles even if the ball was yards above the head. This caused much mirth. Well, not that much, actually. Player intelligence leaves something to be desired; there's nothing worse than seeing your defenders stand motionless amidst violent, hectic action. And I really don't like the passing game – it's impossible to pass the ball into space; the ball goes to a player, even if he's standing in the opposite direction to the one you aim the ball.

There's also a "do something within 10 seconds or we'll do it for you" thing. I don't mind if it's done properly – after all, it stops cheaty types time-wasting (thankfully, the clock runs properly). But when, after dribbling half the length of the pitch with my goal-keeper doing an inspired Rene Higuita impression, the computer took over and performed a belated "goal kick" on my behalf, I was aghast. Especially as it went straight to an opponent, and he lobbed it back into the empty net. If Trevor Brooking had asked me how I felt at the time, I would probably have admitted to being "disappointed".

These faults drive you mad when playing the computer, but are never as bad in two-player mode, of course – you know the idiosyncrasies are making your opponent suffer as well. The true test of a sports game is the two-player option, and this one plays all right. Some people like it, others don't – I have to say I thought it was going to be a bit better. It's no Amiga *Sensible*, of course, but then what is? Overall, though, it's a pretty playable game, and the mass of options just about raise it above the current PC version of *Sensible Soccer*, if only because it's rather more contemporary. Bear in mind, though, that FIFA *Soccer* and the new *Sensible World of Soccer* are on their way. PZ







(Above) The best place for this dog is firmly lodged inside a finger roll.

IN PERSPECTIVE

***World Cup USA '94* doesn't quite match up to Amiga's *Sensible*, but its masses of options give it the winning touch over *Sensible Soccer*.**

World Cup USA 94

Sensible Soccer

Empire Soccer

Striker

Dino Dini's Goal

78 SCORE

Good features; difference of opinion over the gameplay.



Minimum Memory: 2MB RAM
Minimum Processor: 386SX, 25MHz
Hard Disk Space Required: 5Mb
Graphics Modes Supported: VGA
Sound Cards Supported: Adlib, Roland, Sound Blaster
Controls: Keyboard, joystick, mouse (joystick recommended)
Comments: DOS 5.0 or above essential
Price: £32.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: US Gold **Tel:** 021 606 1800

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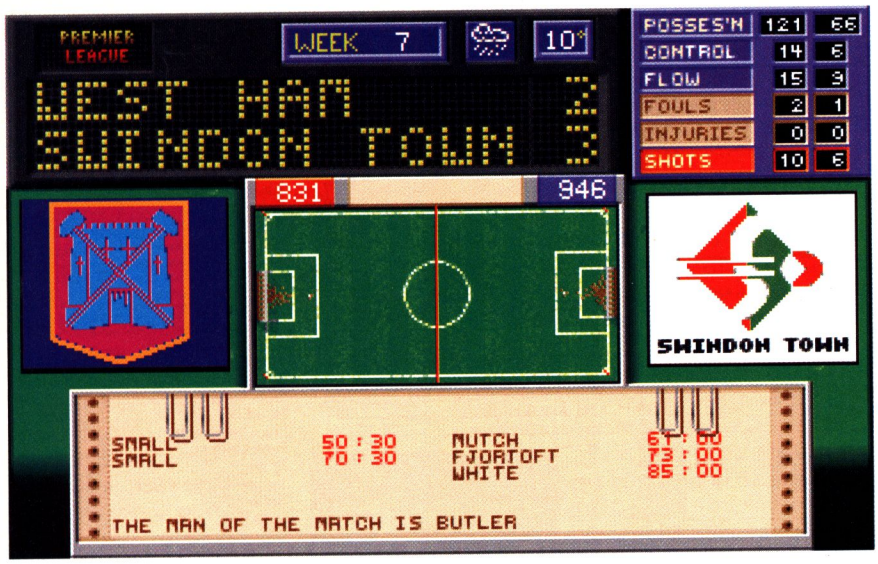
TACTICAL MANA

It's a football management game and it's got tactical decisions to be made. That seems a good enough reason to call it "Tactical Manager". The decision to give it to Patrick McCarthy, however, is far less understandable.

THERE really are an awful lot of football games appearing at the moment. And, heaven help us, there are even more on the way. I blame Nick Hornby myself. The Italia 90s-inspired football popularity boom was more or less dying down until his book came out a couple of years ago. Then suddenly it was very trendy to be into football again, and now you've got the BBC running evenings of football programmes, "poets" reading elegies to a one-two on the edge of the box, new operas based on the controversial refereeing decisions of the last European championships and ballet dancers shattering their ankles because they can't control a *brisé volé* in aluminium studs. You can't walk into a pub without some pretentious twerp quoting large segments of the various writings of Nick Hornby at you – it's worse than being stuck in a corner with a Monty Python fan. Sometimes I long for the days when people were embarrassed to say they liked football; they preferred to carve their poems into the doors of railway carriages. At least it was quieter. Of course, the flip side was that the football simulations at the time were utterly abysmal. Every cloud, and all that... where was I? The game, the game....



(Above) Always ensure you have at least two player's names in your team that commentators can't pronounce.



(Above) West Ham dominate in terms of possession, but lose out to Swindon's renowned opportunist strikers (well, that's what it says here).

The game (at last)

It's a management game which allows for up to 46 human-controlled players at once. The logistical difficulties of getting everyone into the same room for the game on a regular basis seems just a little daunting to me, but at least the facility's there if you want it.

At the start of the game you'll find that you're in a position somewhere between that presented to you by *Championship Manager* and *Premier Manager*. *Championship Manager*, the undisputed office favourite, gives you the complete freedom to choose any team you want to manage, even if you want to start your career right at the top by ousting Alex Ferguson or Kenny Dalglish. *Premier Manager*, despite its name, insists you start at the very bottom with a Vauxhall Conference side, and stay there for the rest of your natural life (sort of). *Tactical Manager* reaches a compromise between the two: everything is based upon ratings and your managerial rating when you start the game is three. This means that you can start with any club whose team has a rating of three or less. Only the Premier League and the First Division are included in this rating, so in practice this means you'll start in the First Division, since teams are rated from one to eight, and you'll only find teams rated at three in the First Division. It's not as bad as it might be, because this includes teams

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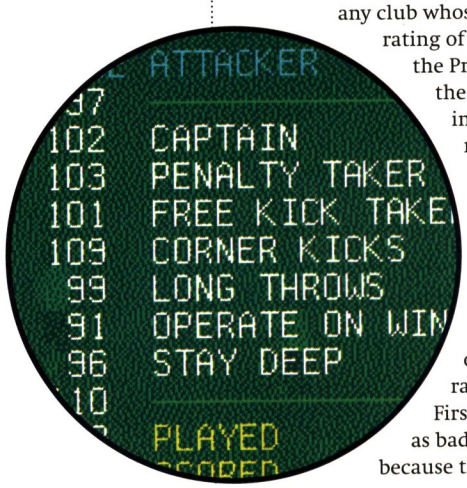



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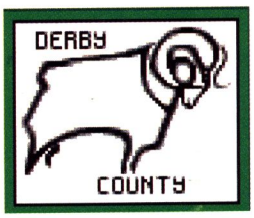




like Derby and Wolves, although the likes of Crystal Palace are rated at a mighty four. Only Manchester United, Blackburn and one or two others get a rating of eight.

What do points make?

This rating system is the hub of the game. Unlike most football management games, the emphasis is more on the performance and success of the manager than on the team. A team in this is basically the tool with which you achieve personal success, and failure means you get the boot. Obviously, that applies to all management games to a certain extent – if your team spends all season creating records in the "Goals Against" column and you get relegated, you can be pretty sure you'll be down the dole office fairly shortly afterwards. But *Tactical Manager* goes even further. If you do well, you' re awarded "win" bonuses multiplied by the team rating. If you win five games in a row (not as easy as it sounds when you think about it) you get an "extra ratings" point, which theoretically allows you to apply for a job with a team rated at four. Win a trophy and you get another point; get promoted and you're awarded two ratings points, and so on. Eventually, you might have earned enough points to enable you to apply for a job with a far better team.

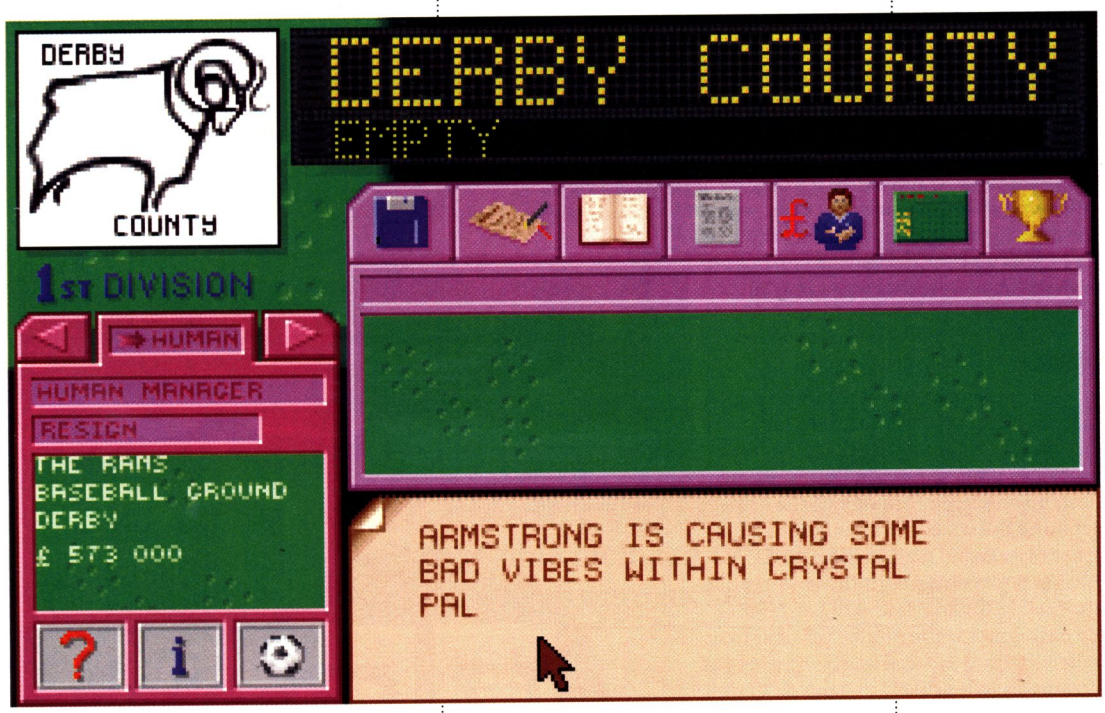
I've always found a problem with approaches like this. In *Premier Manager*, for example, which runs on a similar but less blatant system, you find that by the time you manage to achieve enough points to be offered a job with a better team, your own team has obviously had enough success to already *be* one of those better teams. The team you're offered generally isn't that much better – sometimes it isn't even as good any more as the one you already have. Add to this the fact that you no longer want to abandon your current team for this other, supposedly better (but by now, possibly inferior) team because you've also become attached to the one you've carefully put together. I can see similar situations arising in *Tactical Manager*.

Transfers

One thing I do like about the game is the transfer system. You have access to a fair degree of information about the player you're considering buying, and an all-knowing scout looking over your shoulder telling you things like "It's a backward step" when you want to buy Chris Waddle or Teddy Sheringham, and stopping you from doing so, the bastard. It's a trifle annoying, and anyhow, I prefer to make my own decisions if I'm the manager. But the bit I do enjoy is where you can try to entice a player that is still in contract away from his club with offers of a house, a BMW or a life-time's supply of amphetamines.

Eeek! Real footballers!

Perhaps the main selling point of the game, though, is the digitised footage of real footballers running about on a real



(Above) Well, like, hey man, why not see if, like, he's enough of a bread head to be, like, interested in a transfer, maaaan?

Player Positions

Each player has an assigned position, along with a selectable role. There are five outfield positions: DEF, DEF-MID, MID, MID-ATT and ATT. These can be further refined by the role you give the player – players with dual-named positions have more roles available to them; a defensive player could be moved to sweeper, but players capable of playing in defence or midfield could be sweeper, defender or midfielder, and so on. Basically, it's a very roundabout way of doing what *Championship Manager* does so simply with its graphical representation of the team tactics screen.

There are additional refinements available in the player's role screen though, which do add something new. You can look at players' ratings and decide yourself who takes free-kicks, long throws, penalties and corners. You can also tag someone as a midfield playmaker or ballwinnner, make someone an attacking fullback, a deep-lying midfielder or even assign your official "goal hanger". Again, it's not the best-presented system, but it is quite a nice touch.



IN PERSPECTIVE

Tactical Manager's a pretty good game, but Championship Manager is in a league of its own.

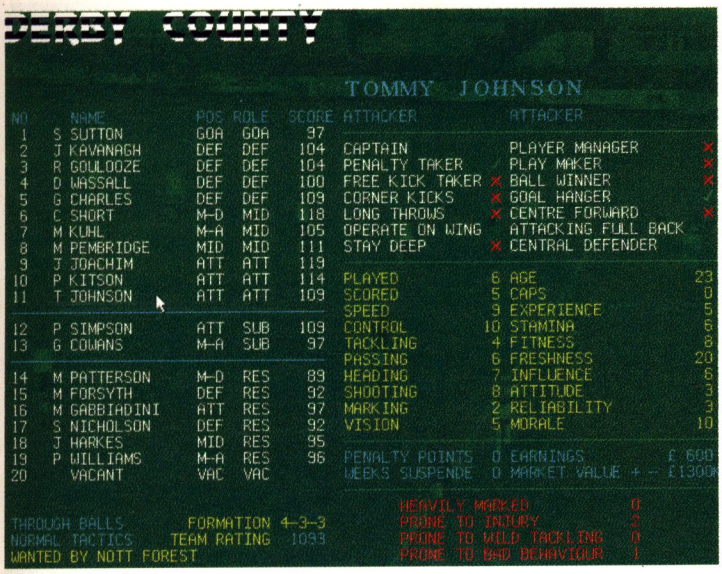
Championship Manager 94

Tactical Manager

Premier Challenge

Premier Manager

Tactical Manager





Player Ratings

Tactical Manager has a wide variety of areas in which players are rated. It includes shooting, vision, control, heading, passing, defensive abilities (tackling and marking) and general areas like stamina, fitness, vision and speed. Mental abilities are taken into account too: experience, attitude, influence on other players, reliability and morale are all calculated for each player. To work out an overall rating of a player, these figures are simply added together. A total of around 100 denotes an average player; 110 signifies a particularly good player; and 120 or more is an elite, world-class individual whose feet probably hover a fraction of an inch above the ground wherever he goes, and whose drink and drugs problem will no doubt end his career within months.

Among the special ratings is one which shows how prone the player is to injury (presumably this rises automatically if Dean Saunders or John Fashanu are his opponents). Another shows how keen on bad behaviour a player is; it doesn't specify whether this is restricted to on-field behaviour or to extra-curricular activities like urinating on fellow airline passengers or beating up pizzas in night clubs while drunk. The final one is the Gascoigne factor, indicating how prone the player is to lunatic tackles likely to endanger not only the life of the tacklee, but also that of nearby match stewards and anyone in the first ten rows of the crowd.

pitch, which pops up in a small window on-screen as you play. This sounds good in theory, but it's a bit naff in practice. There isn't enough footage (it's all taken from one game) and what's there is often wildly inappropriate to the running commentary. An "inspired shot" by Paul Kitson appears as a hopeless, bouncing-ball sequence that looks more like a backpass, and there are only two different "goal" sequences. It very quickly becomes repetitive and you soon find yourself switching the thing off to make the matches run a bit quicker.

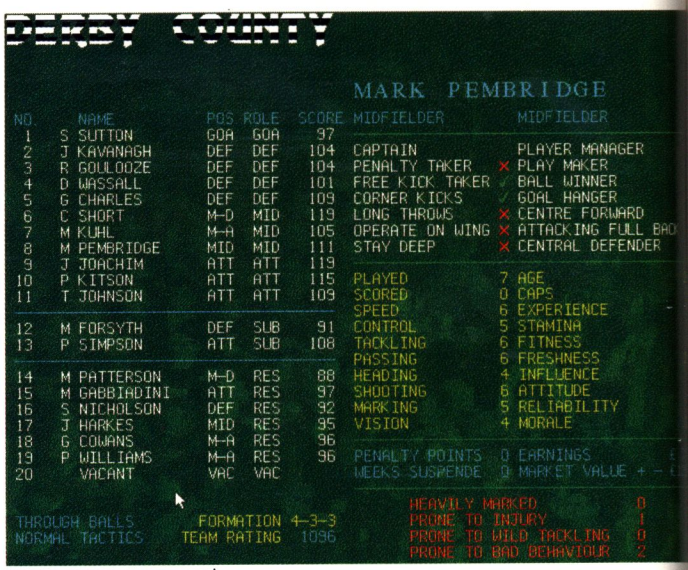
Wee downies

Generally, *Tactical Manager* is a pretty good game, but I don't think it's as well-presented or as easy to use as *Championship Manager*. Picking players and moving them around becomes very finicky, and sometimes you find that when you start the game you have a different team to the one you thought you'd chosen. It doesn't help that the team screen doesn't appear before the start of a match. The other problem is with the player assignments: it's all very well being able to choose who takes your penalties (Tommy Johnson, in my case), but it's a bit of a pisser if someone else does it in the match (especially when they miss – yes, Julian Joachim, I mean you).

Uppies

In its favour, however, there's quite a good sense of being involved in a "proper" season. This is thanks to the regular and seemingly endless news bulletins which flash up on screen throughout the game, detailing the trials and tribulations of other players and clubs – what Paul Warhurst was doing with the power cable attached to his anal hair still baffles me. My only doubt is the number of "star footballers" who are placed on the transfer list – teams seem less likely to hang on to their big names than they do in real life.

Another positive point is the facility to edit players at the lowest level, meaning that you don't have to cough up for a new game every season: a phone call to Kompart will get you a passcode which allows you to re-name players and give them ratings and the like. Then there's the data disks: it's the only game to provide teams for Serie A and B, the Bundeslige *and* the top two Scottish divisions, which will all be available as data disks (but still only as stand-alone games). *Tactical Manager* is also the only game I've seen where you can save your best games on to disk with which to bore the arses off your friends at a later date. This means that you don't have to do it verbally any more, but will reduce the conversations around here by about 95 per cent. PZ



(Top) It's digitised action all the way (until you get fed up with it and turn it off).



SCORE

An interesting little number with the odd weakness, but several nice ideas.

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Minimum Processor: 286
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Controls: Mouse

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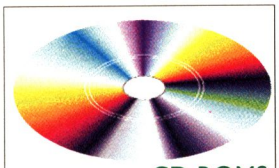

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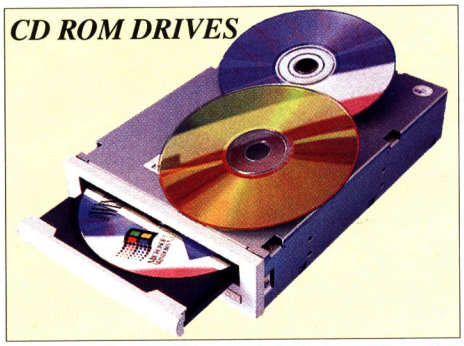

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Using the main map, you're able to plan your travel routes through the beautiful world of Burntime. Explore the ruins or do a spot of sunbathing in the desert for that envied nuclear-kissed glow.

Burntime

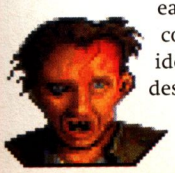
If you, like our chirpy Charlie Brooker, have been holding your breath waiting for Armageddon, hold no more – the wait is over. Thanks to *Burntime* you can now experience the end of the world as we know it in you're very own home!

BURNTIME is a strategy game set in a post-apocalyptic wasteland. The object of the game is to gain control of what's left of the world. You do this by conquering ghost towns and assembling an army of followers (although why on earth you should bother when the most logical thing to do would seem to be to sit down and start crying, is never explained). The action takes place against the clock, with computer-controlled opponents or a real live human battling against you.

Step one is to choose a face and name for your character. Choosing a face was easy enough (they range from ugly to very ugly to Nigel Lawson), but for some reason I found choosing a name extremely tough – I dearly wanted to call my character Noel Edmonds, since I figured that the idea of taking control of Noely boy as he went scavenging for maggots in the middle of an irradiated desert would cheer me up a little and help offset the overriding air of total bleakness that the game inspires. Tragically, I couldn't fit his surname in, so eventually I decided that "Bungle" would suffice. Oh well.

Apocalypse Now

You begin the game armed with a knife, a flask of water and a lump of meat. Now that every single branch of Sainsbury's in the world has been razed to the ground, these meagre supplies aren't going to last you very long, so the first step is to find a source of water and some more food. From the main map you can see your current location, the position of your opponents, and the travel routes available to you. Since each journey takes a couple of days, it's a good idea to choose yourself a destination that looks like it may well lead on to somewhere else – the last thing you want is to get stuck in some dead-end, post-holocaust version of Reading without so much as a boiled snake to eat. Furthermore, some places are still so radioactive you need a protective suit to go anywhere near the place, so you'd be well advised to steer clear – unless you're considering a new career as a glow-in-the-dark skeleton in a fairground ghost train.







(Above) Click the mouse to get an overhead view of your quaint location. (Left) Burntime's very own dating agency. (Below) Who said the art of conversation's dead?



Once you arrive at a new location, a simple click with the ol' mouse button lets you explore it in detail. An overhead view of the area pops up, complete with run-down buildings and the unlucky inhabitants wandering hither and thither. You control your character with the mouse á la *Cannon Fodder* or *Syndicate*, but unlike either of those games the characters are monumentally stupid and can never work out how to walk around the tiniest of obstacles. Clicking on another person will enable you to talk to, or fight, them. There's loads of people to talk to, but unfortunately, like heavy metal fans, many of them look alike and hardly any of them ever have anything interesting to say. There don't seem to be any women either. Everyone is either a fighter, a technician, or a doctor, each of which are useful in different ways. Fighters will help you dish out a few good shoeings to your

Burntime





(Above) Oh oh, you're running low on supplies. Time to turn to your trusty little mutt...and...have a barby. (Left) "Come on now, I've sorted out that in-growing toenail, now stop being a wimp – get up and pay up."

enemies; technicians are handy for constructing water pumps, rat traps and the like; and doctors will tend to all your wounds. Occasionally you'll bump into a tradesman with whom you can barter ("I'll give you two chunks of rat meat and this rusty spring in exchange for that snake-trap, mate."). Building up a large following is highly advisable – not only does it mean that you can carry more objects, but more importantly, members of your party can be ordered to stay behind and defend any new locations you come across, thereby preventing your rivals from getting a look in.

So that's it really: you stumble around from here to there, exploring, recruiting and gathering supplies. But is it fun?

Fun & giggles then?

No, it bloody well isn't. It's an endless struggle. You can never find enough food. You can never find enough water. Everybody you meet is ugly and bad mannered. Wandering con-men habitually rip you off. Dogs bite you. Mutants dribble on you. Opponents attack you with axes. Ninety per cent of the buildings you search are totally empty. Members of your party drop like flies. Your health points seem to decrease by the second. Towns with names like "Nirvana" turn out to be bombed-out shells inhabited by two dogs and an incoherent, slavering mutant. It's all a bit like one of those package holidays that the viewers of programmes like *That's Life!* and *Watchdog* always seem to get sent on.

Okay, okay, the subject matter is inherently depressing anyway – but the game structure itself isn't any better. The controls are fiddly. Combat is ludicrous – you have to make the members of your party chase their would-be victims around all over the place in the most ineffectual way imaginable – in fact, it's so bad it's almost impossible to describe. (Remember that stage in *It's a Knockout*, where a blindfolded team member, usually dressed as a gargantuan Tweedle Dee, had to negotiate their way round an obstacle course, relying solely on the crys of "Right a bit!", "Left a bit!" from their other team mates for navigation? Well, the combat in *Burntime* is almost like that.)

There are very few things to discover and the things that you do discover usually kill you. The graphics, in places, are so bad they appear to have been designed by a team of pre-school children, and stupid ones at that. The sound effects appear to switch themselves on and off at random and the music stinks like a decomposing wino with a bowel disorder.

As for the strategy element – well, who cares? After you've starved to death in the desert for the umpteenth time and had to restart yet again, you simply no longer give a toss who wins. It's hard enough just trying to keep your main character alive and kicking for more than five minutes, let alone worrying what the computer-controlled smartarses are up to. The two-player option will be of interest only to pairs of patient, forgiving *Doom*-mongers, or schizophrenics who warmly welcome the opportunity to play against themselves. This has to be *Burntime*'s major flaw: it simply does not inspire the will to succeed. It just makes you want to smack the Reset button and play something – anything – else. PZ



Food, Glorious Food

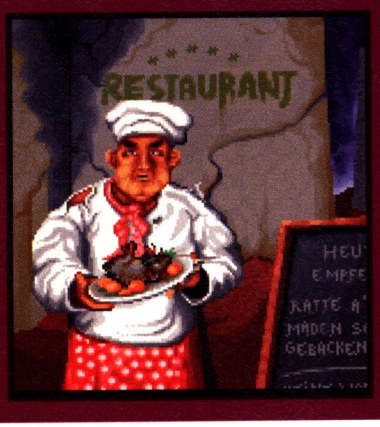
The world of *Burntime* is a vegetarian's nightmare. In order to survive in this post-nuclear hell, you've got to be prepared to chow down on the most disgusting food imaginable. Your diet consists mainly of maggots, rats, snakes and dogs. Lentils don't get a look in.

You're not going to find food just lying around either. To catch snakes and rats, you're going to have to construct a trap, and that means finding all the components first. Dog meat is slightly easier to come across. In almost every town and outpost you'll find at least one scraggly mutt wandering aimlessly around. This is the one moment of light relief in the game – I laughed out loud as I watched my on-screen persona, brandishing a pitchfork, frantically running after a tiny little pooch in the belief that it was dinner time. Well, I found it funny anyway.

Another option is the restaurants and cafes you'll occasionally encounter. They serve up generous portions of Rat Souffle and Snake Wellington, but you'll have to barter away half of your belongings first to get fed.

Ronald McDonald, where are you now that we need you?

It's tough to think of another game which you could compare *Burntime* to. It has the odd *Civilisation*-esque element, a few role-playing style bits, some *Dune*-y bits and a tiny, tiny *Syndicate*-like element. But all of those games are great. *Burntime* isn't.



"Who'll give me a dagger for this very tasty bit of snake?"

SCORE

43

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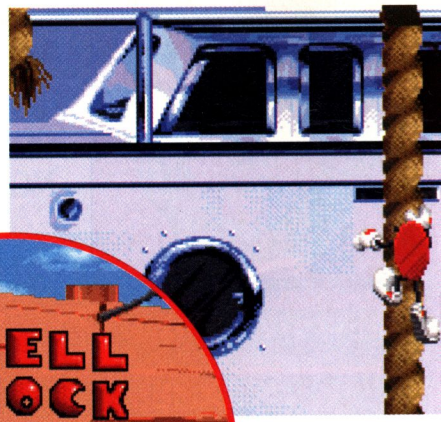


Virgin Interactive Entertainment teams up with 7-Up to bring you the latest and most bizarre platform hero to date – a red circle with shades. Media junky Laurence Scotford investigates yet another interactive advert.

IF, LIKE ME, you realised long ago that adverts are the only things worth watching on TV these days, then you probably need no introduction to Cool Spot. If, on the other hand, you are one of those unenlightened souls who still watches the programmes that television companies insist on interrupting the adverts with, then I'd better explain that Cool Spot is not, in fact, a suave and sophisticated zit, and introduce him, her or it, as the star of the media campaign for 7-Up. Cool Spot also enjoyed a considerable amount of attention last summer when he (she or it) became the rather unlikely protagonist of one of the best games to appear on the Sega Mega Drive. Now the little chappie (chapesse or, er... chap-it) is setting out to impress PC owning Seven-Up drinkers.



In the time-honoured tradition of character licensing this is, of course, a platform game. The objective of the scarlet pimple-nell is simply to fight his way through a series of two-dimensional scenes to find and rescue a fellow spot who has been incarcerated in a cage. This task is made more difficult than it sounds on two counts. Firstly, our hero (heroine, or um... hero-it) has to collect a specified number of bonus spots first. (These spots, you understand, while most certainly red, are of the inanimate variety.) Secondly, he has to fight off a variety of malign beasties who prefer their environment to be spotless (sorry about that!).

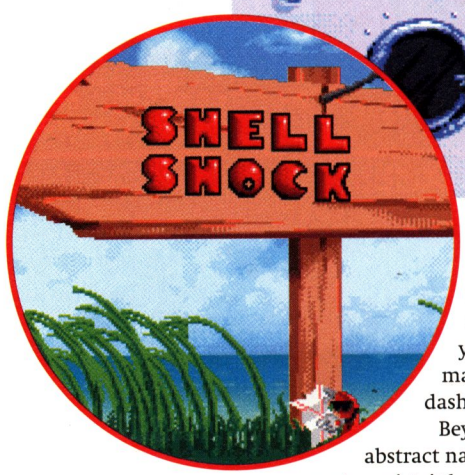
Death by bubbles

The levels range from the shore, on which Cool Spot is beset by a motley selection of shellfish, to a steam train going full-pelt, complete with gun-toting bandits. Cool Spot dispatches these creatures by firing a stream of bubbles at them (and for those of you with overactive and scatalogical imaginations; (a) don't be so disgusting, and (b) you're totally wrong). The bubbles can be aimed in any direction, a fact which you miss at your peril, since you will soon find yourself in situations where enemies have to be destroyed from odd angles, or even when they are just out of sight off the edge of the screen. The reason being that many of the little sods fire projectiles back or drop bombs on you, so half the trick is finding a location where you can attack them without fear of reprisal. Even in the throes of death many of the enemies find ways of getting their own back at you by exploding or making a last mad dash in your direction.

"...the spot performs a host of ridiculously energetic activities."



"Help me! Help me!" shouts the little red circle in distress. It sure is tough being a 7-Up logo.



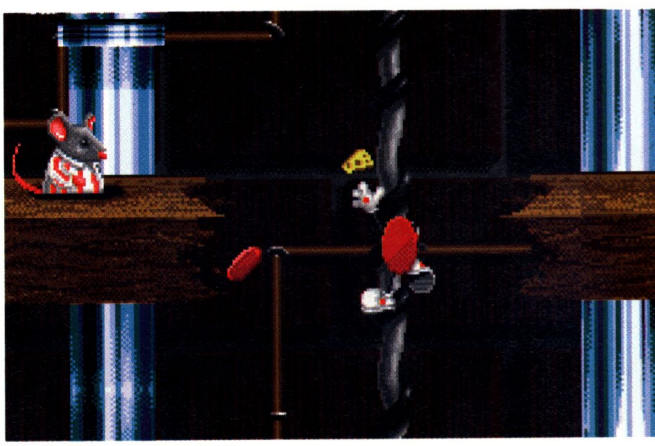
Beyond the extremely abstract nature of its protagonist, it has to be said that *Cool Spot* doesn't really offer anything you haven't already seen if you've played the likes of *Robocod*, *Trolls* or *Zool*, with the possible exception that the central character is dextrous to a painful degree. You can make the spot spin, roll, do somersaults and a host of other ridiculously energetic activities that will have any self-respecting couch potato feeling quite ill. Leave it alone and the bloody thing still insists on fidgiting all over the place, clicking its fingers and messing with its sunglasses.

The level designs are, on the whole, pretty uninspired, although there are two which merit particular attention. One is composed entirely of slides and air tubes and has you alternately sliding rapidly from the top to the bottom of the level and riding back up to the top on a current of air only to slip all the way back down again. That is until you get the knack of defeating



Hey, it's not that hard to be cool when you only have a wussie mouse to deal with.









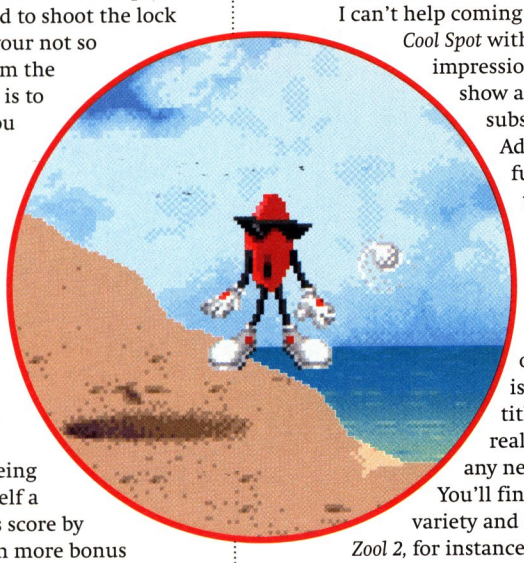


gravity and jumping back up the slides, an exercise that is somewhat akin to running the wrong way up a down-moving escalator. The only other level that has a real spark of originality is the steam train, which is superbly done in mock Western style.

In the can

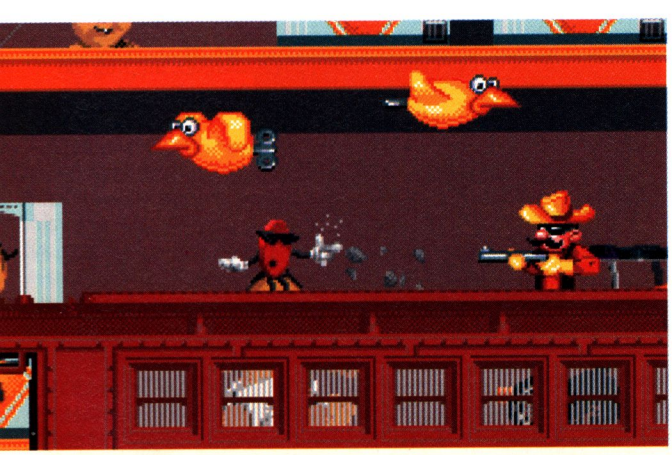
On each level you must collect a particular percentage of the available bonus spots before you are allowed to shoot the lock of the cage and free your not so cool buddy. Relief from the normal run of events is to be had, however, if you manage to collect a higher percentage of spots. In the latter case, before you are cruelly thrust into the next mad world, you find yourself running the gauntlet of the bonus level which is set, wait for it, in a 7-Up can. The objective here being to collect yourself a nice, fat bonus score by collecting even more bonus spots. Wa-hay!

This is where some of the acrobatic skills you gained in the normal levels really come in handy, because to reach most of the spots you have to jump between balloons, which involves leaping from one and trying to grasp the string of another in mid-air, or by riding in bubbles which take you only a short distance before bursting. A badly timed move at this stage will send you plummeting to the bottom of the can. Fortunately though, the end result is not bits of dead Cool Spot floating around in your 7-Up, since our hero is more flexible than Access and simply flops around pathetically, pretending to do the dying-fly for a while when he hits the deck.



Knocking spots off nothing

I can't help coming away from *Cool Spot* with the overall impression that it's all show and very little substance. Admittedly, the funky soundtrack and excellent animation really add something but, at the end of the day, this is a platform title which isn't really breaking any new ground. You'll find a lot more variety and invention in *Zool 2*, for instance, which is reviewed on page 56 of this issue. *Cool Spot* seems to have substituted difficulty and challenge for variety and length. That will please some accomplished game players, but not many. Having said all that, this is, notwithstanding the original game design, an outstanding conversion of the Mega Drive game which loses absolutely nothing in terms of style or playability over the original. ZZ







(Strip, left to right) The little red dude indulges in a variety of frighteningly acrobatic, back-breaking antics.

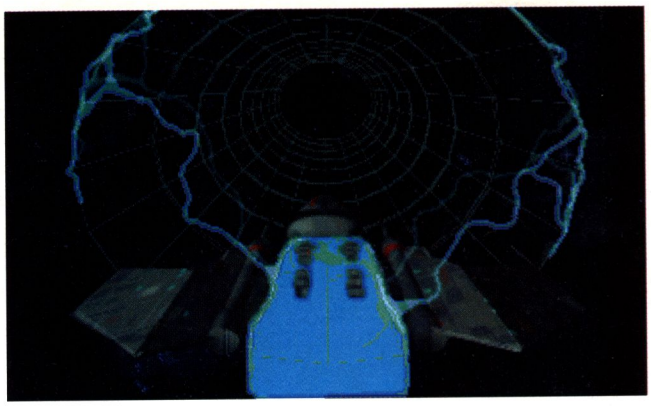


SCORE

Charm and accessibility save it from being stricly seventies-up!

Minimum Memory: 580K
Minimum Processor: 386 SX 25
Hard Disk Space Required: 1.5Mb
Graphics Modes Supported: VGA or better
Sound Cards Supported: Sound Blaster, AdLib, Roland or compatibles.
Controls: Joystick/keyboard
Price: £29.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Virgin **Tel:** 081 960 2255

DELTA V



After admitting that he's always had a thing about tunnels, we volunteered Jeremy Wells to review the new futuristic master blaster from US Gold.

THE YEAR is 2306 and you are a Netrunner for the Black Sun Corporation, one of the five largest Mega-Corporations in the world. In order for the corporation to maintain its predominance, it requires vast amounts of data. What data Black Sun does not already have, it secretly steals from those who do. The key to these covert actions are the Netrunners. These cybernetically-enhanced individuals navigate cyberspace, penetrating corporate data defence systems by using cunning guile or force.

To put this in 20th century norm-speak, you're like one of those people who hover about in the high street with clip boards, and, on seeing an unsuspecting victim, pounces on him, asks him four squillion stupid questions about what kind of toothpaste they use and jots it all down ready for input into some huge junk mail database – the guile bit. As for the force bit, I suppose you could say this was like one clip-boarder attempting to knock the proverbial stuffing out of a rival in order to get his or her hands on their bulging clipboard, thereby saving themselves a lot of groundwork.

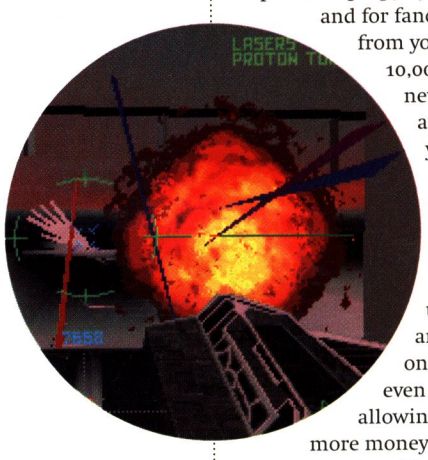
Basically, it's a question of who dares wins. If you consider yourself to be big'n'tough enough then it's easier to smash the hell out of your rivals and steal their data, if you're a bit chicken, you'd better just concentrate on flying your extremely fast Trace ship and settle for getting your own data.



Just give me credits

After what can only be described as a gratuitously spectacular intro sequence, you have to log into the mainframe and register as a Netrunner. The whole aim of the game is not only to "survive" as the mainframe so clearly states, but also to amass as many credits as you can by volunteering your services for various different missions, be they data grabbing raids or acting as defenders of the Black Sun network.

The more dangerous the mission, the more money you receive if you manage to complete it successfully. You are also rewarded for knocking out enemy corporation property such as gun turrets, and for fancy shooting. Ejecting from your ship will cost you 10,000 credits, but then new ships are expensive and life is cheap when you work for the Black Sun Corporation.



(Top) Prepare to enter the net.... (Left) Get yourself some decent hardware and a nice pair of furry dice.

As you become more proficient and your wealth increases, you can upgrade your Trace and buy various add-ons, thereby making it even more invincible, allowing you to make even more money. Quite what you're supposed to do with all this money is never made clear. You could, I suppose, give it all up and set up a home for retired Netrunners, or maybe you'll just want out and retire to a little cottage in Frinton-on-Sea.

Fight them in the trenches

Each corporation (there are five in all) operates within the Globalnet: a massive network of data-carrying tunnels through which the Netrunners must fly in order to extract data. The tunnels or trenches are not actually solid, but rather a form of energy on which the data and your Trace flows. Outside the trenches, the energy is dispelled into heat which can damage your Trace, consequently you are advised to stay low in the trenches in order to gain maximum velocity and avoid overheating. Skimming over the surface of the trench will give you maximum velocity, however, dipping too low into the energy field will cause your Trace to overheat.

> "...once you've reached a certain level, there really is not that much to play for."

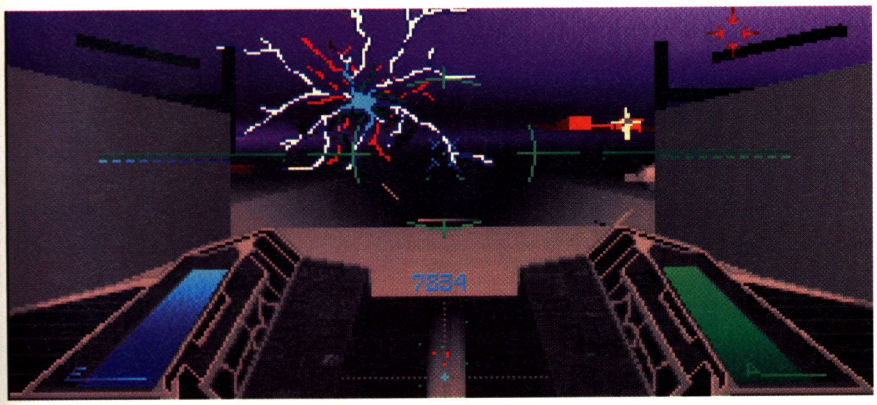
As a result, you have to fly your Trace as low as possible through the tunnel to reach maximum speed, avoiding the various obstacles, whilst shooting out gun turrets, enemy ships and gathering as much data as possible. Simple really!

Go greased lightnin'

The immediate attraction of *Delta V* is the terrific speed at which your Trace zooms down the data grids. Even on the trainer levels, you will find yourself stretched to



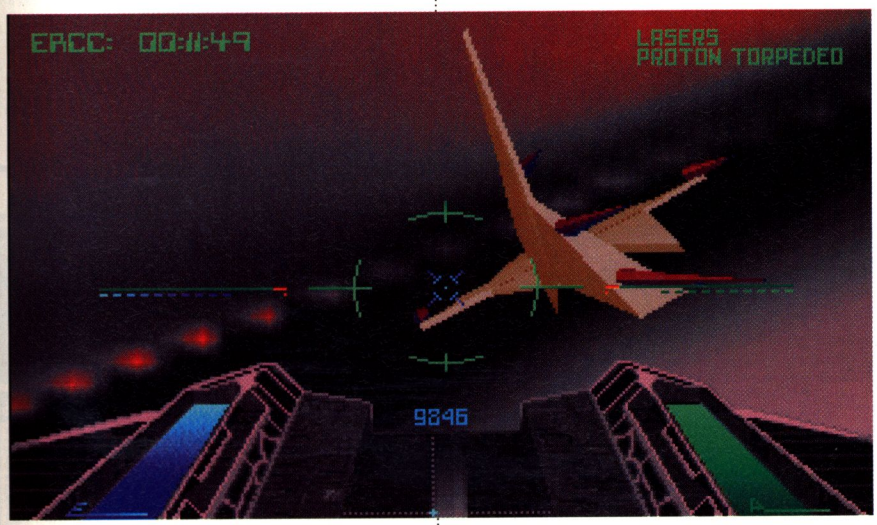
Okay chubby chops, stop measuring our head – you're going in!



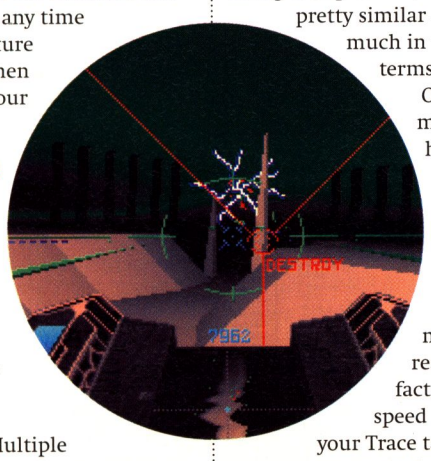


the limit as you attempt to negotiate the many different trenches successfully. All the backgrounds are beautifully drawn, whilst the screen scrolls at an amazing rate, making the gameplay very smooth and fast. For those with less ninja-type machines, you can select to have the backgrounds and texture maps switched off to speed up the scrolling, although you'd be best advised to keep them on until you get used to controlling your ninja craft.

There are two views from which to choose from: either looking out from the



Trace, which allows you to keep an eye on your controls and target system, or the more difficult external view, where you sit behind your Trace and watch it twist and turn as you wrestle with the controls. You can toggle your view at any time during a mission, a feature you'll be thankful of when attempting to handle your super fast ship.



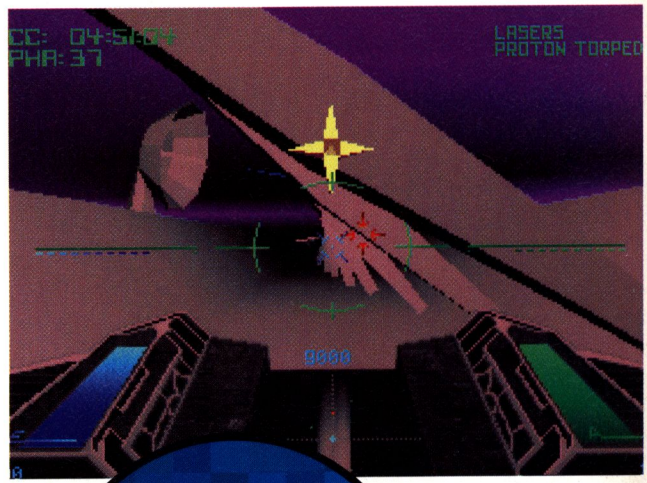
Road to nowhere

As well as the usual cockpit controls which indicate your energy level, armour strength, heat and radar etc., you also have an AI warning device called ARTEMIS (Automated Ranging & Targeting Electronics Multiple Interface Sensors) that constantly reminds you of your ship's status. Although its intentions are no doubt honourable, the constant ringing of the word "Critical – Critical – CRITICAL!" in your ears as you attempt to wrestle your ship from the arms of destruction is a bit of an unwanted distraction to say the least (a bit like the drum roll in *Bullseye* when you're going for the jackpot) and you find yourself giving up just to shut the blessed thing up!

It's all quite entertaining for the first few missions once you get nearer to mastering the ship's controls. You get to build up the spec. of your ship by buying better lazers, missiles, armour and power packs, bank loads of credits, save your games and develop your swashbuckling space cadet. And then, well you do it all again.

Although it all looks quite spectacular, and the speed at which the thing flies along is impressive, the missions are all pretty similar and there's not that much in the way of depth in terms of gameplay.

Once you've built up a mass of credits and have bought the best add-ons for your ship, there really is little else to do. No other planets to explore, no special missions, no special baddies. It's not as though it's all really easy – it isn't. In fact, getting used to the speed and the controls of your Trace takes time. It's just that once you've reached a certain level, there really is not that much to play for. It's all very pretty to look at, but a little too samey to keep you coming back for more.



(Clockwise from top left) Got one! Stay low and stay safe! Uh oh! Horrendous 1950's sculpture coming up! Safely back home. Something's behind you! Metal narwhal on your six!

SCORE

64

Very fast and pretty stunning to look at, but it won't keep you up into the night.

Minimum Memory: 2Mb

Hard Disk Space Required: 386

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA, SVGA

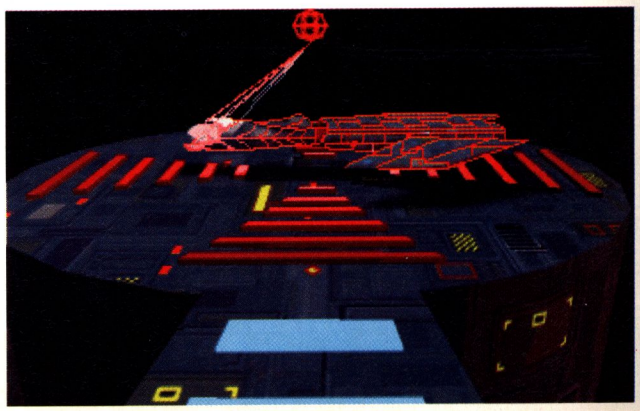
Sound Cards Supported: Sound Blaster (family), Roland, AdLib

Controls: Mouse and keyboard, or joystick and keyboard

Price: £45.99 **Release Date:** Out now

Publisher: US Gold/Bathesda Softworks Inc.

Tel: 021 625 3388



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DINOSAUR DETECTIVE AGENCY



Another dinosaur game? And one that features a dinosaur wearing clothes? The prospect of a cut-out-and-keep jurassic wardrobe was just too much for Amaya Lopez to resist.

WHAT CAN I say about Alternative Software that hasn't been said already. This is the company that brought us *Dr Who, Sooty And Sweep* and *'Allo Allo*. Potentially smart ideas, maybe, but ones which, rather than missing the boat, shot past the entire naval fleet. Not wishing to fall into the same trap again, the chaps have brought out a game about dinosaurs. *(Hold on, Jurassic Park came out months ago! Ed.)* Exactly. But let's not stand accused of judging the book by its cover....

Surprisingly enough, *Dinosaur Detective Agency* stars a prehistoric private eye. What is perhaps a little more shocking is that he's flamboyantly decked out in a ridiculous Sherlock Holmes outfit. And, of course, there's ample cause for hilarity when you find out that his name is Sherloch Ness. I ask you, what would poor old Watson have said? Probably that "Ness" neither rhymes with nor sounds anything like "Holmes", I suspect. Furthermore, to add insult to injury, Mr Ness also speaks funny. Not that he utters a single syllable in the game itself, but the manual contains a communiqué from the great dino dick, which would have you believe that Philip Marlow was a reptile. Anyway, when Ness is given the task of solving a bank robbery, he romps into this platform adventure, with trusty evidence-gathering camera in hand.

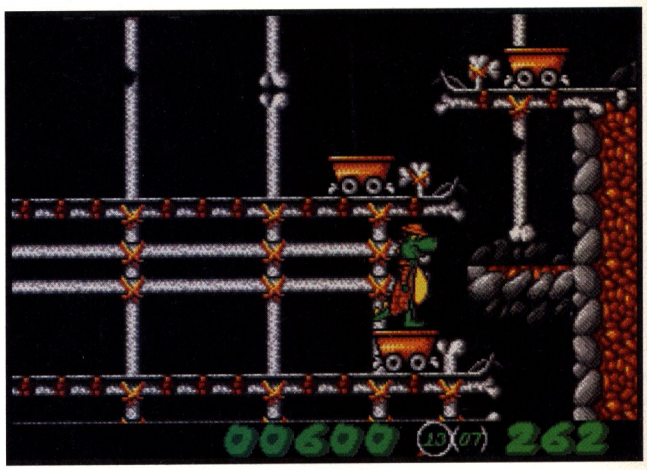
The rest, if it isn't already, should be history. You, as Ness, go hopping from platform to platform, avoiding the on-coming baddie dinos – but, of course, never actually killing any. Being a platform game veteran, it took me some time to work out that on this occasion you didn't have to draw a .44 Magnum or jump on any heads. What you actually do is take the coward's way out by whipping out your box brownie, freezing the baddies, and sidling past them. Rather frustratingly, your camera has a limited number of flashes so you need to collect flashbulb icons in order to keep using it. You also spend time digging to find secret levels, solving puzzles, collecting bonus money and extra lives as you go along.

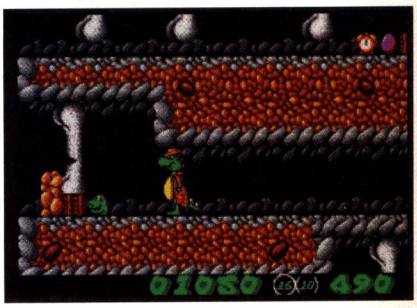


You great big Nessie

And that's your lot. Okay, so this game is aimed at the younger player – but the overwhelming question is: "Why?" Why create a game which is neither edutainment nor a good platform game? But then, why create a game based on a laboured sit-com or inspired by a pair of glove puppets (though Sweep's squeaks were top). But I digress. The fact is the game gets quite tricky in parts – there's a maddening bit where you have to jump from railway truck to railway truck and usually end up falling to the bottom and having to start from scratch. Once your lives run out, which is frighteningly quickly, you have to rush back to the beginning. Another gripe is that it's not always clear when you have lost a life. Yes, your dino head icon disappears from the bottom of your screen, but Ness doesn't change visibly when you get hit and the faint, accompanying sound effect doesn't help much either. As for the graphics; colourful they may be, but basic is a bettter way to describe them. Ness himself is quite well animated and vaguely endearing at times, but so much more should have been done with his character to make this game special or at least give it *some* raison d'être. If you're the kind of person who likes your platform games to feature: dinosaur detectives wearing capes, poor graphics, annoying gameplay, and dodgy soundtrack, then you're laughing. You are also unique. Z







(Top) Two "enemies" for you to "stun" with your trusty box bownie. (Middle) Ness embarks on the railway truck level from hell. (Right) Dino Dick uncovers an extra, much needed, life.



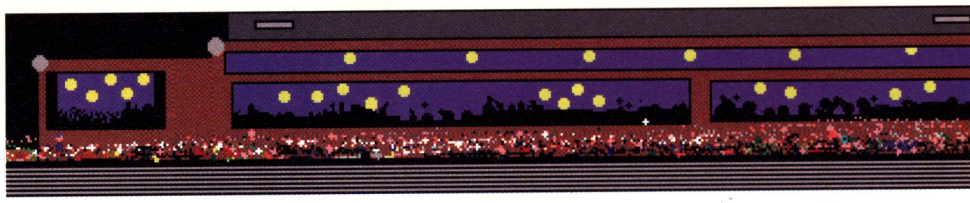


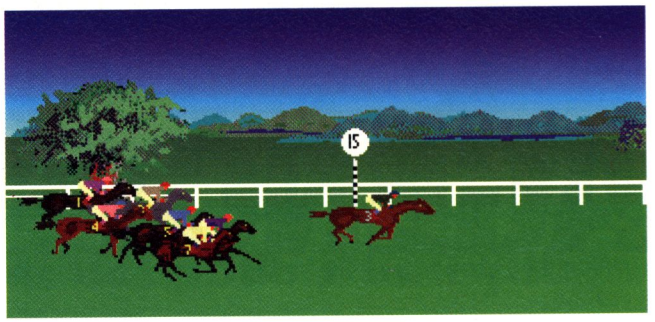
Cheap – but that's no reason to be cheerful.

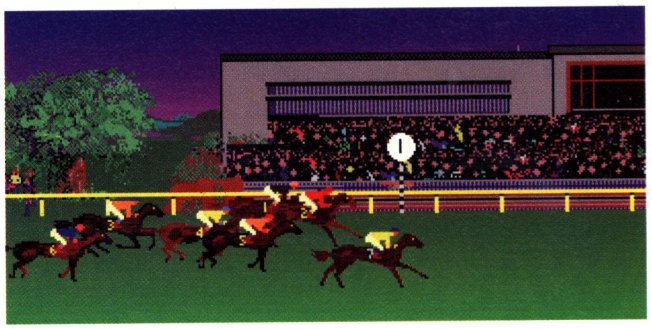
Minimum Memory: 640k
Minimum Processor: 286
Hard Disk Space Required: 700k
Graphics Modes Supported: VGA
Sound Cards Supported: AdLib, Sound Blaster
Controls: Joystick, keyboard

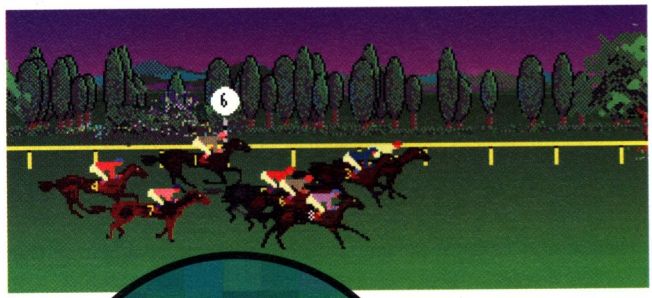
Price: £16.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Alternative Software
Tel: 0977 797777

GOOD TO FIRM









Patrick McCarthy has always had a bit of thing about horses. We managed to prise his very favourite My Little Pony figure out of his greasy fingers just long enough for him to get his hands on *Good To Firm*.

THERE AREN'T that many horse-racing games around on the PC. There was some kind of show-jumping game on the Amiga once, where you viewed the proceedings from the back of your horse, and could beat it across the eyes to encourage it, or whatever show jumpers do; I never played it myself. I know that horse-racing simulations are incredibly popular on the consoles in Japan, but then again, Japanese tastes in games are even weirder than those of the French.

"Basically, it needs more realism. I'd suggest the introduction of terrorists..."

Good To Firm casts you in the role of a ruthless horse trainer – ugly, but strangely attractive to women who go mad for men with pencil moustaches, smelly tweed jackets and a whip. You start with a million pounds and an empty stable, and it's up to you to buy horses, train them, grind them into the dirt and then sell them to a dogfood company. If you don't want to bother with all that, you can simply go to the races and bet pretend money, but like all gambling games that don't involve any real risk, this is about as exciting as Emily Bishop's sex life.

Fun & games at the Pony Club

Horses pop up whenever you want to buy one. It's up to you to work out whether they're worth buying or not. You do so by investigating their parents, reading their school reports and checking out their accents. Once you've bought them, you can re-name them, although the naming field could do with being a bit longer. Interestingly, when I tried to call one of my horses, Shergar, I got the message, "Sorry, Shergar already exists." They obviously know something we don't.

Training could be better done. There is no way of knowing the best distance and ground conditions for each horse, and you can't see what races are coming up to train your horse accordingly. However, the horses are pain-stakingly graded in ability and stamina, and if you quit the game and re-run the race, the same horses win. This makes it very easy to cheat and amass a large personal fortune, which, of course, I immediately did. Huge amounts of dosh always come in handy for building extensions to your stables and taking the Queen Mother out for a fish supper, but your riches won't get you anywhere in the Trainers League, which is the main point of the game. Winning is everything.

Not quite in the saddle

You have the choice of watching each race all the way through, over the last furlong, or just see the result at the finishing post. There are no restrictions on the amount of betting you do, but whacking 30 grand on a horse doesn't affect its starting price, which it really should. There's a wealth of information about the horse during the pre-race sizing-up session – starts, "strike rate", winnings and so on – but there's no information on how its last few races went or what the going was like.

Basically, *Good To Firm* needs a good deal more realism. I'd suggest the introduction of terrorists stealing your horse, drunken jockeys who are open to bribes from St Trinian's schoolgirls and opportunities to inject your horses with massive doses of amphetamines. Another nice touch would be the option of putting chilli-powder beneath the horses tails and small explosive devices under their saddles. That's what real horse racing's all about. Z



"...five to one, seven to two, my ol' man's a dustman, place your bets, coor blimey, luv'a duck..." Well that's what it all sounds like to me.



SCORE

50

Horse-racing fanatics might get something out of it, but the experience *will* pall.

Minimum Memory: 580K
Minimum Processor: 8086 (386 recommended)
Hard Disk Space Required: 950K
Graphics Modes Supported: VGA
Sound Cards Supported: None
Controls: Keyboard
Price: £29.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: new era software **Tel:** 031 3334958



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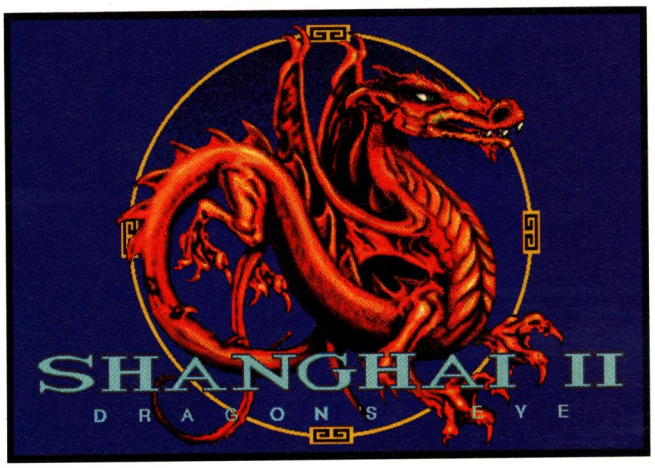
SHANGHAI II: DRAGON'S EYE

The classic Mah Jongg derivative, based around the Chinese horoscope has been given the *Windows* treatment. Laurence Scotford, a horse if ever there was one, sees if it can still keep him up to three o'clock in the morning.



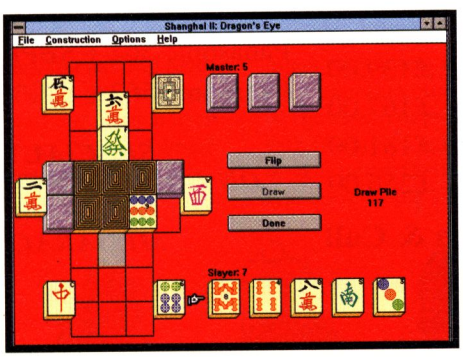
(Above) This is the only picture that I managed to recognize as a dragon, the other pis, as you can see, are a lot harder to identify.

IT'S RATHER odd that I can think of only one computer version of Mah Jongg (EA's *Hong Kong Mah Jongg Pro*), but, if pushed, could probably name getting on for half a dozen versions of the solitaire game that is played using the same tile set. That's undoubtedly got something to do with the relative complexity of the two: Mah Jongg is an involved four-player game somewhat akin to Rummy, while Shanghai is an extremely simple and accessible game based around the removal of matching tiles from a pile. The former takes a while to learn while the latter is picked up in seconds, and is far more likely to have you playing until the early hours.

The objective of the game is very simple. The full set of Mah Jongg tiles is set out in a predefined pattern. The pattern is such that not all the tiles are accessible at the same time: some tiles have to be removed to allow others to be brought into play. On each turn, the player removes a pair of matching tiles. He continues to do so until either all the tiles have been removed or he can make no further moves because there are no more pairs available. The latter situation occurs more often than you might think because there are only two pairs of each tile and the order in which they are removed is often critical. It is not uncommon to remove an easy pair at the beginning of the game only to discover later on that the third tile is blocking the fourth.

Activision's *Shanghai II* made its first appearance, as a mouse driven, DOS-based program, a couple of years ago, and received a warm response because as well as offering the standard square layout, it also included 12 additional layouts based on the animals of the Chinese horoscope and eight new tile sets. Animated tiles, sound effects and a two-player option helped to lift it above a rather lacklustre crowd.

Two further additions, which give you more value for money than you might otherwise get out of this game, are a construction set in the form of a very simple utility which



The standard Shaghai layout looks easier than many of the animal layouts but it is actually quite difficult to clear.

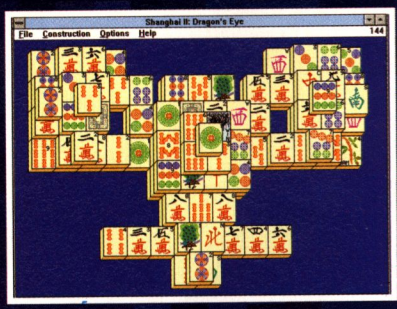
SCORE

88

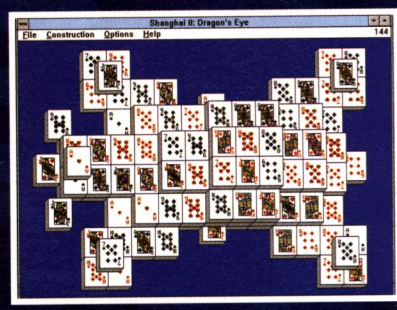
An excellent addition to bolster the rather mediocre range of games available for *Windows*.

Minimum Memory: 4Mb
Minimum Processor: 386 25MHz
Hard Disk Space Required: 3Mb
Graphics Modes Supported: VGA
Sound Cards Supported: Sound Blaster, Media Vision card, Windows compatible sound cards
Controls Supported: Mouse
Comments: Requires DOS 5.0 and Windows 3.1 or later. Music requires 8Mb total memory (can include virtual memory).

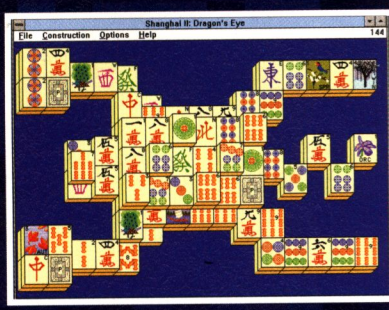
Price: £29.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Activision **Tel:** 081 742 9400



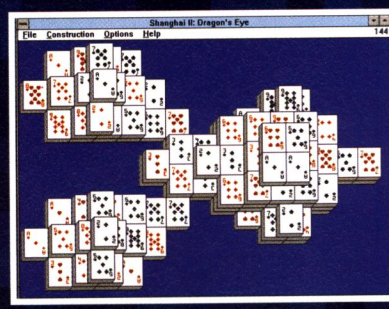
The Rat
Not so much of a rat so long as you take care of the key blocking tiles early on and are careful to monitor the central line for self-blocking pairs. It is important to keep the three main areas even.



The Ox
This is quite a gentle layout with lots of tiles initially accessible. It only becomes difficult if you allow the lines to become too uneven. The Ox models the Hilo tile set.



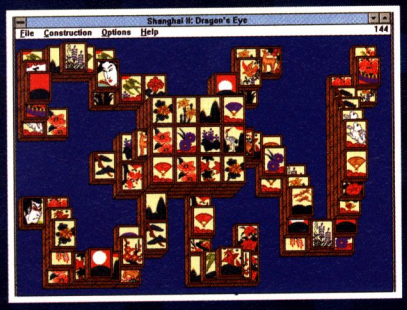
The Tiger
This can be tricky because the main body is blocked at key places by tiles. If you don't manage to shift these quickly enough the number of accessible tiles drops rapidly.



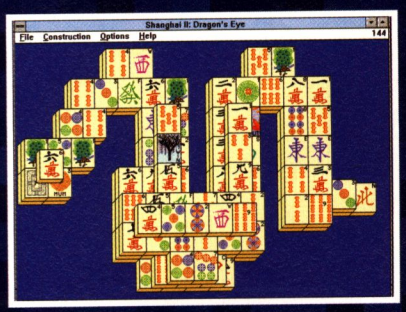
The Rabbit
A layout with plenty of tiles accessible right at the start. The rules for the Ox apply here except that you're dealing with piles not lines. The Rabbit models the Lohi tile set.



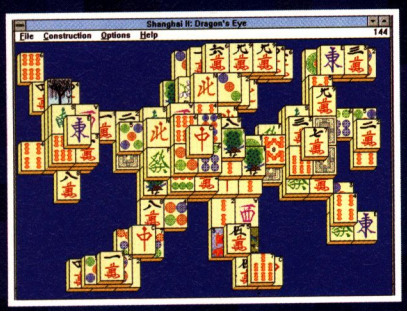
The Dragon
This consists of lots of high piles, making it deceiving because the lack of long lines may look simple but you can still get stuck easily if the piles aren't cleared uniformly. The Dragon models the Fantasy tile set.



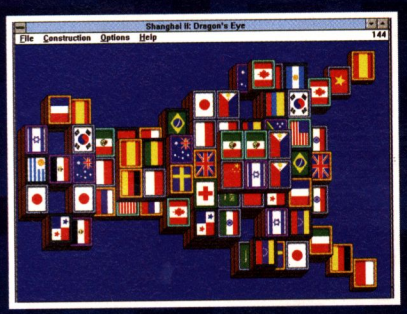
The Monkey
Another harrowing layout. It's very easy to get carried away in dismantling the limbs and ail, but if you neglect that huge pile of a body, you're in trouble. The Monkey models the Hanafuda tile set.



The Snake
Another layout that's piled high. There are less tiles available initially than is at first apparent, so early moves are crucial. Later there shouldn't be too many problems.



The Rooster
To get to that central area, you're forced to remove most of the tiles on the periphery, which means you have to look out for rogue pairs that you're going to be stuck with.



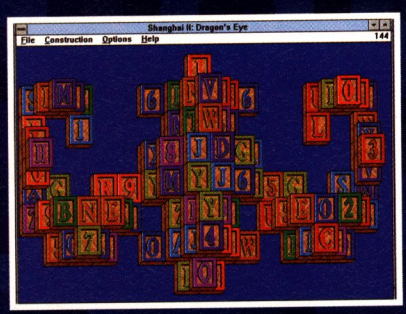
The Horse
The long lines mean that the order in which tiles are removed is crucial. You have to keep looking ahead for potential blocks. The Horse models the Flags tile set.



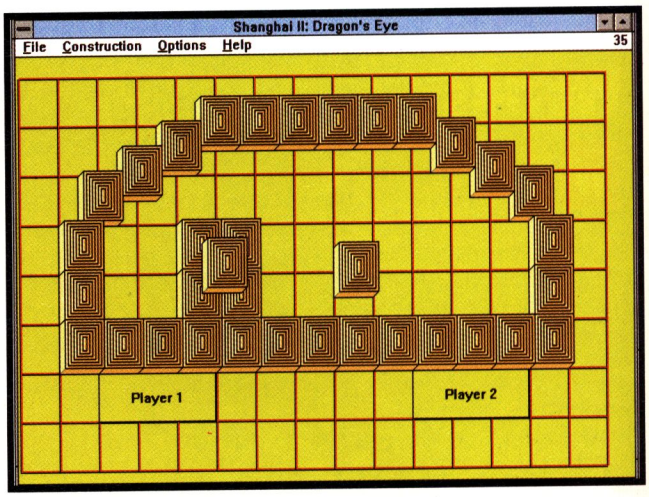
The Dog
This is a relatively easy layout provided you manage to remove the key blocking pieces at the top of each area fairly early on in the game. The Dog models the Animals tile set.



The Ram
This is a deceptively simple layout. That long line at the top is the unmaking of any player who doesn't watch out for blocking pairs. The Ram models the Sports tile set.



The Boar
This layout is almost an upside-down version of The Dog, so, again, the same tactics can be applied. The Boar models the Alphabet tile set.

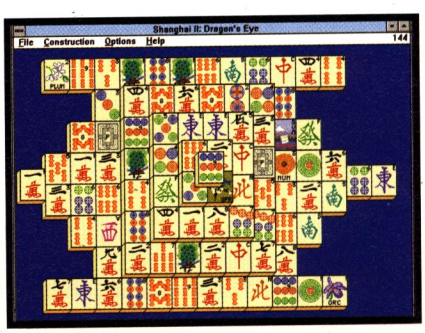


If you get bored with the layouts that are supplied, you can always create your own with the construction set.

enables you to create your own layouts, and the two-player game, *Dragon's Eye*. The latter is a game based on a smaller grid which supposedly represents a dragon. In the centre of the grid are a series of special squares which form the dragon's heart, and these are the only squares on which tiles are initially placed. One player takes the role of the dragon master and the other, the dragon slayer. The dragon master has a hand of three tiles, while the dragon slayer has five or six, depending on whether or not he is waiting to play a tile. Each player takes turns placing tiles on the grid and then drawing more from the stock. The dragon master's aim is to complete the dragon and bring it to life, while the dragon slayer, self-evidently, aims to destroy it by removing all the tiles. This is quite a fun diversion from the main game, although it does tend to be rather one-sided, the dragon master's task being a lot more difficult.

The *Windows* version of *Shanghai II* is identical to its DOS counterpart, with the one exception that it now has all the functionality of any other *Windows* program, meaning you can minimize it, resize the window, switch back and forth to other applications and so on. That change alone will probably mean that *Shanghai II* is going to be responsible for a general decrease in productivity in a lot of offices over the next couple of months. *Shanghai II* is, without a doubt, a worthwhile reworking of an excellent game. Z

A game of Dragon's Eye in progress. The crucial squares are those forming the dragon's heart in the centre.



Bargain.Bin

Once again we delve into the ever budget-conscious Bargain Bin, where games may be old but at least they're cheap.

Worlds Of Legend

What would you do if I told you that your father had been murdered and it was up to you and your companions to journey through the Empire of Moon and wreak vengeance on the evil sorceror, Ti-Mann Mochun? You'd either become incredibly anxious and keep trying to phone your mother to find out what was going on, or you'd sit back in your chair and say "Ah I see, we're in a somewhat *Tolkein*-esque RPG. There'll be dragons and mages before the day's out, I'll warrant."

And, in an irritatingly smug way, you'd be right. *Worlds Of Legend* puts you in charge of four characters: a Beserker, a Troubadour, a Runemaster and an Assassin (whose dad it is that's just popped his clogs). You have no choice regarding the make-up of the party in terms of characters (you have to have one of each), but there is the usual character generation business when the computer pushes itself to its technological limit by simulating the rolling of a 20-sided die. Fans of the game's predecessor, *Legend*, will be pleased to know that it's also possible to import your characters from that game.

Once you've decided which Beserker you're going to use and what colour his or her clothes are going to be (this is the nineties, man), it's time to get into the game proper. This breaks down into three sections. You can travel across tracts of land viewed like a strategy game. On this, you see all the cities plus a flag representing your party. There are other flags representing other armies, which are best avoided. When in the cities, you have a fixed screen showing a person or place and some interaction options. Last and by far the best, is the dungeon section – 3D isometric action which has been done before, and better, but is still pretty good.

Pretty good rather than outstanding is my view of the game. For starters, I'm not overly impressed by a manual that's been so badly reproduced that the annotated screen and some of the icons are just black blobs. Once in the game the graphics, even in the dungeon sections, are far from outstanding. More importantly, I never felt really involved in either the plot or the characters. The plot is laid on with a trowel and isn't a particularly good one anyway. The level of interaction in the towns is far from outstanding while it's frustrating that combat in the dungeons is automatic. You select two fights and then let them get on with it.

The weirdest thing, for me, was the tone of the whole game. At times it seems like quite a po-faced, straight RPG. Then you come across the icon for Elliot the dragon who maps out the dungeons and adds a slightly kiddish element to the whole thing.

On the plus side, the game is relatively competent and is very strong on the magic side of things. This is not surprising since the programmers, who went on to produce *Wizard*, are fans of getting back to that style of RPG with an emphasis on magic and strategy rather than crowd-pleasing special effects. If you're with them on that, then you'll find plenty of entertainment in this game. I'm afraid I'm one of the crowd. *Paul Lakin*

More for the fan than the casual browser.

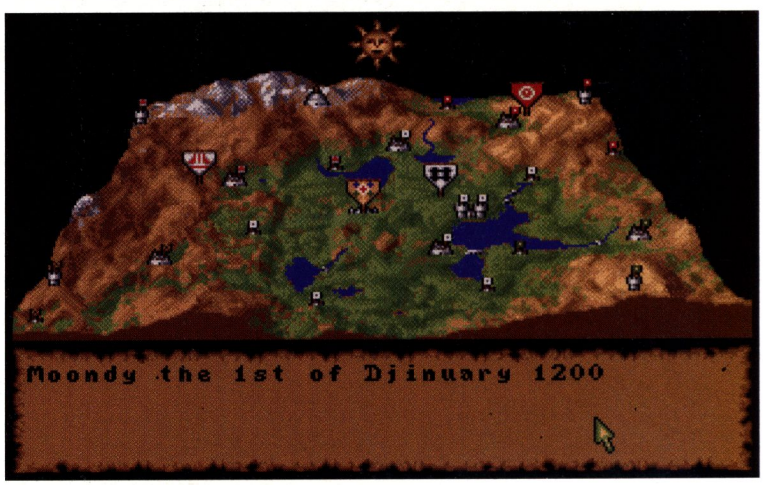
SCORE **72**

Specs **Minimum Memory:** 640K **Minimum Processor:** 286 **Hard Disk Space Required:** 3Mb **Graphics Modes Supported:** EGA, VGA, CGA **Sound Cards Supported:** AdLib, Sound Blaster, Roland **Controls:** Keyboard, mouse

Price: £16.99 **Release Date:** Out now **Publisher:** Digital Integration **Tel:** 0276 684959









(Top) If your best friends look like this, goodness knows what your worst enemies will look like. (Middle) Sushaina's news certainly doesn't bode too well either – maybe it's time to call it a day and let bygones be bygones. (Bottom) Ah, but if only these chaps had paid more attention at school, there might be some chance of victory, some small glimmer of hope. (Left) What's all this eternal champion nonsense? Not so sure old pops would want to be avenged anyway.



Hail friends, countrymen and er... people wearing short dresses.

Walls Of Rome

It may seem rather odd to describe a game about warfare in classical times as "sweet", but I'm afraid that's what I'm going to have to do. To some people it may seem even stranger still to describe a strategy game of siege and defence as "fun", but I'm afraid I'm going to do that too.

Walls Of Rome can be played either as a single battle or a full campaign. Within each battle you can opt to either defend a fortress against the barbarian hordes, or unleash the full range of your own siege materials on one of their strongholds.

The game is relatively simple to play. You merely withdraw units from barracks, send them where you want them to go and then persuade them to fight. Attack is not only the best form of defence, it's also the best way to play *Walls Of Rome*. Endless fun is to be had by sending your men swarming across rivers, slamming ladders up against castle walls or constructing vast siege towers under a hail of arrows.

Graphically, the game is both odd and attractive. There are various degrees of map magnification. At the furthest point you get a view of the whole battlefield. Closer in you can concentrate on where the action is and get an idea which individual unit is doing what. At the most magnified level you have an overhead view of your forces – who appear to be made up from the cast of Trumpton.

If you are a serious strategy fan then you'd find a number of faults with *Walls Of Rome*. I can just see some SSI buff tearing their hair out at the simplicity with which units can construct bridges. Where does the wood come from? What about the percentage chance of the bridge collapsing? And what are you going to do for nails, heh? It's just not war.

The game is certainly not the most deep or realistic wargame ever programmed; the computer opposition is not exactly a product of the Centre For Strategic Studies. Conversely, it's not a terribly flexible game. Your strategic options are far from vast and it can all get a bit limited and a bit samey. Then again this is meant to be small scale skirmish/siege warfare, not the decline and fall of the Roman Empire.

For those of us who jsut don't want to be weighed down by concerns over supply lines and communication problems, this is a good little strategy number. Despite having a built-in terrain editor, which allows you to set up your own battles, I think *Walls Of Rome* may be somewhat lacking in long-term appeal but, all in all, it's quite fun. Seasoned gamers among you might know what I mean when I say that it has something of the appeal that games like *Rorke's Drift* and *Cohort* promised, but never quite delivered. *Paul Lakin*

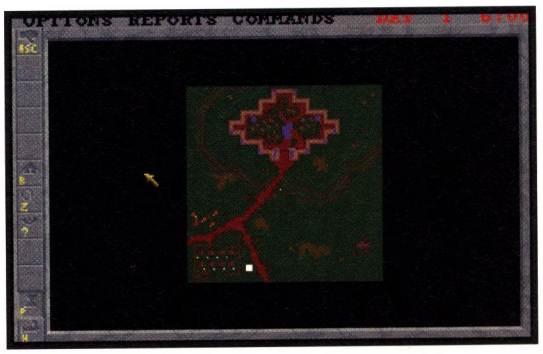
Good, if thin, fun.

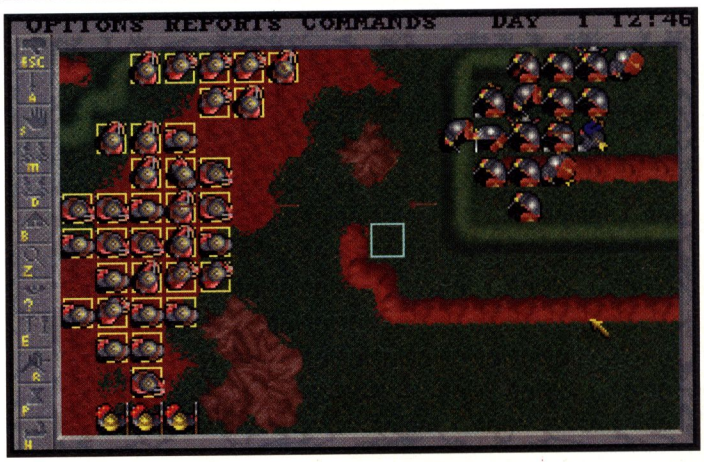
SCORE 74

specs

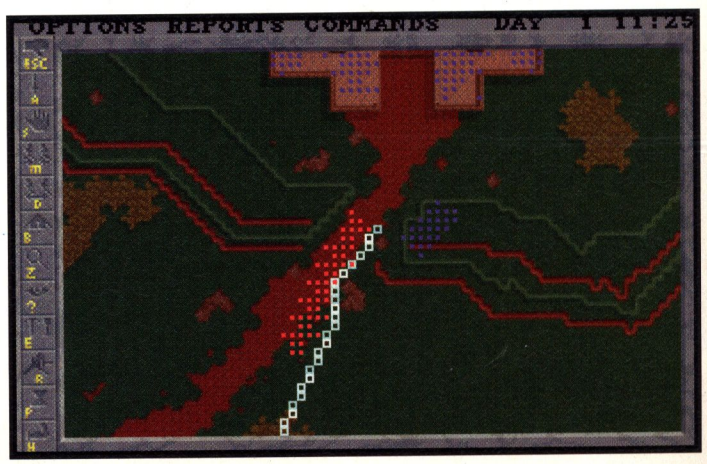
Minimum Memory: 640K
Minimum Processor: 286 12MHz
Minimum Hard Disk Space: 13.5Mb
Graphic Modes Supported: VGA
Sound Cards Supported: AdLib, Sound Blaster, Disney Sound Source **Controls:** Keyboard, mouse.

Price: £16.99 **Release Date:** Out Now **Publisher:** Digital Integration **Tel:** 0276 684959









(Right and below) You plan your attack on the filthy barbarian's fortress, approaching with caution until it all erupts in a sea of mud, spears and fisticuffs – just like one of those over-long Charlton Heston films.

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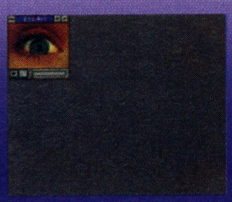

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PC ZONE

CD-ROM Reviews



There are more games than ever before being produced either initially or only for CD-ROM these days and barely a major disk-based release goes by without a CD conversion following. The next 12 pages are devoted to the best the new medium has to offer, and as you'll see, the best is very good indeed.

THE GAMES in this section are subject to the same marking system as the disk-based games we review. You'll find a guide to our marks on page 41.

Games that score between 80 and 89 per cent receive our Recommended award. Games that fall into this category are likely to appeal to you if you have a liking for that particular genre.

Games scoring over 90 per cent are Classics. They redefine the state-of-the-art in computer games and most game players will thoroughly enjoy them regardless of their genre.

Naturally, the In Perspective and Tech Specs boxes work in the same way, but there are some other factors that you will need to take into account when purchasing CD-ROM games.

Drive Speed: Not all CD-ROM drives perform equally well, but generally they can be divided into types according to the sustained access speed. Older games will work quite happily on any drive, but most newer games will need a double-speed drive to function well, and as the year goes on some games will appear which demand triple-speed drives. To avoid disappointment, you should check that your drive speed is sufficient for the game you are about to buy.

Windows: Because Windows is an integral part of multimedia systems, many multimedia games are designed to run in this environment. Although most modern PCs are supplied with Windows, not all PCs are capable of running Windows very efficiently. You may find that some games run very slowly when running under Windows unless you have a Windows graphics accelerator. You can speed up Windows graphics operation by adding more memory, which you should allocate as Extended rather than Expanded memory and setting up a large permanent virtual memory space on your hard drive. You should not attempt to run other Windows applications concurrently with games as this will severely degrade their performance. Finally, running Windows in enhanced mode will help to get your multimedia games up to speed.

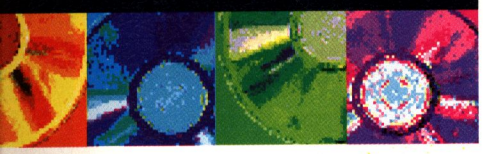
MPC levels: True multimedia games may need to be run on a machine meeting a certain MPC level. Most multimedia games demand MPC level 2. As a rough guide, this is what's needed to meet MPC level 2: double-speed CD drive, 80386 33Mhz PC, 16-bit sound card, SVGA card and monitor, and *Windows 3.1*.☞

WHAT'S IN OUR DISK CADDIES?

Some games get played, reviewed and then lost. Others hang around a lot longer. This is what's currently monopolising our CD drive. Not necessarily the best games around, but the ones we keep coming back to.

- Sam & Max
- Simon the Sorcerer
- International Tennis Open
- Return to Zork
- Star Trek

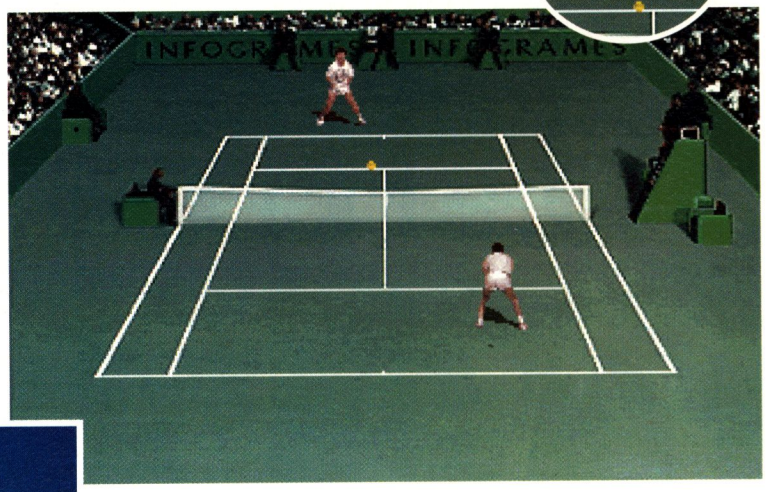
International Tennis Open



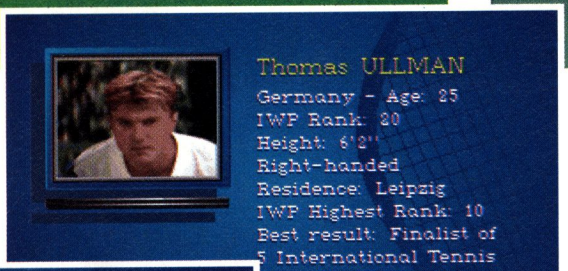


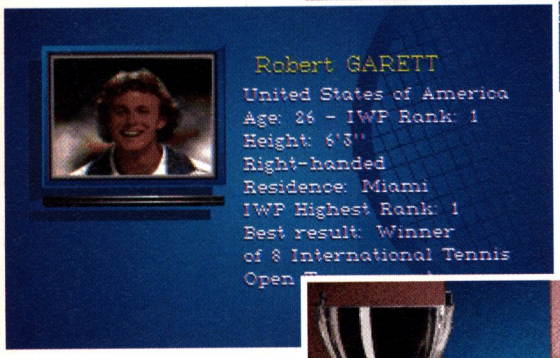




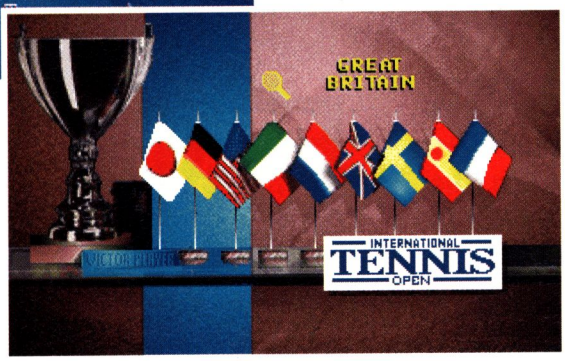


(Avove left) Before venturing on to the court, try playing a few shots with the machine.
(Above right) Now you're ready to face the real thing.





(Above and left) Can the Brits finally beat the Germans and the Yanks? Er, probably not



PC ZONE CLASSIC

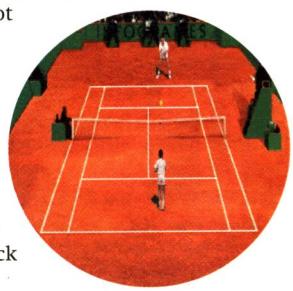
Now that Wimbledon is over, Laurence Scotford is itching to get on court and prove that it is sadly true that Britons can't play tennis. Thank goodness then, that we can keep him happy with the conversion of this CD-i classic.

IT'S PROBABLY the sad fact that tennis balls at school always seemed to home straight for the spot between my eyes (and other eye-watering places) that makes me break out in a cold sweat every time Wimbledon comes around. My only consolation is that I ended up retrieving my balls (sic) from the bottom of the net so often that I'd probably make a darn good ball boy. This is also, perhaps, the reason that I like tennis simulations so much: you can miss easy balls and trip over your own shoelaces as much as you like and there's not even a digitised snigger.

There have been plenty of tennis simulations on the PC but, unfortunately for tennis fans, most of them have been two or three games short of a set. The most impressive offering of recent years has been *Pro Tennis Tour 2*, which is getting a bit long in the tooth right now (as its appearance on no end of budget labels and compilations indicates). So the field is clear for a really first class tennis sim to come along and get PC owners sat round their machines, munching over-priced strawberries again. Enter stage left, *International Tennis Open (ITO)*.

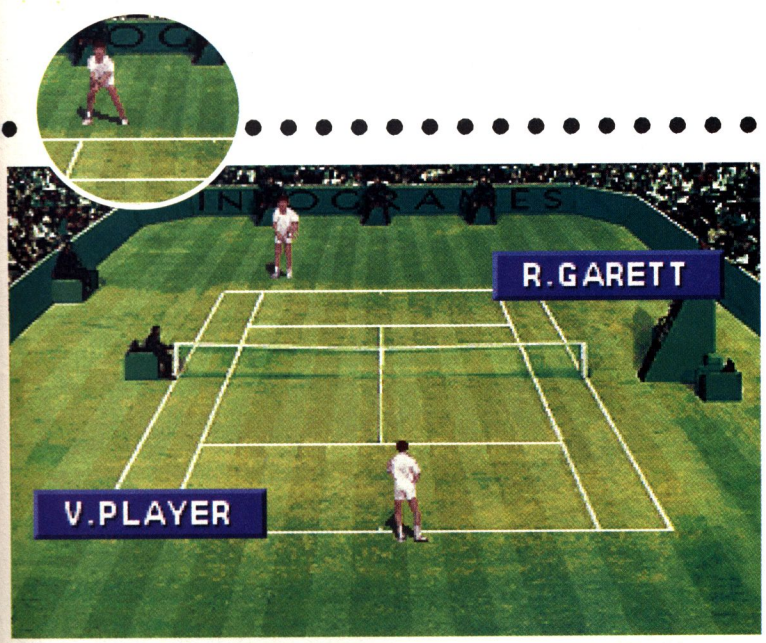
Second set

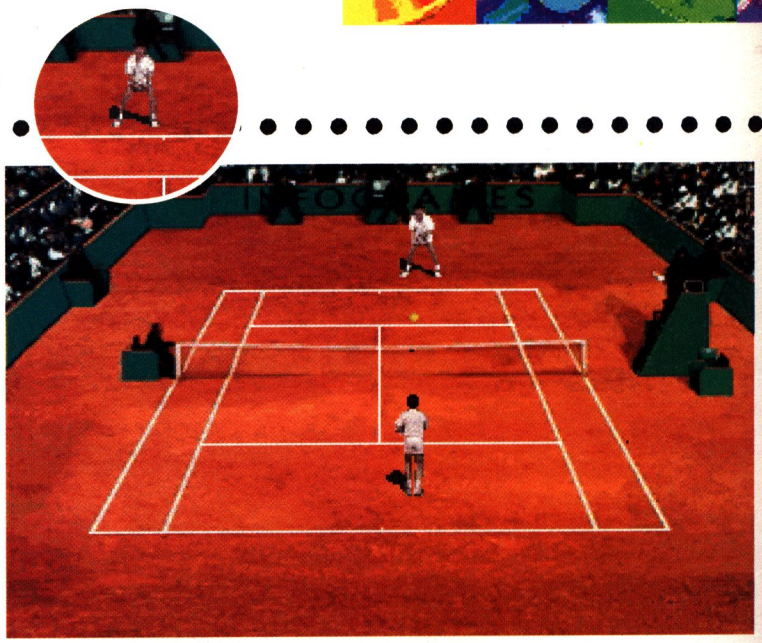
This is not the first time *ITO* has made an appearance. It's first outing was on Philips CD-i machine and it was, undoubtedly, one of the titles that was responsible for generating initial interest in the machine. It's not difficult to see why: the game is not only the sole contender on CD-ROM, it's far and away the very best tennis game available for the PC.



The most striking thing about *ITO* is the presentation. The development team has made good use of the storage capacity of CD-ROM to provide an extermely attractive point-and-click interface and, more importantly,

International





(Above left) Just in case you forget who you are. (Above right) Out? You cannot be serious, man.

atmospheric sounds, like crowd noises, line and umpire's calls and a commentary. The only thing that does become annoying is the commentary which, perhaps understandably, consists of trite and banal phrases like "Jiminez has gone and got himself a break point". Really? Well thanks for pointing that out. You can always switch the commentary off, however.

Training schedule

ITO has enough options to keep even the most avid tennis fan happy. You can choose to play on grass, concrete or clay, and, yes, there really is a difference. You can also elect to play against a friend or against the machine. The machine has four carefully programmed opponents and it makes good use of a limited degree of artificial intelligence, so that each of them provides a different challenge, depending on how good you are and what surface you choose to play on. The learning curve is actually just about right. You can expect to win only the occasional game to begin with, but you soon get used to the controls and begin to plan your shots rather than just returning the ball. Winning your first set, therefore, is extremely satisfying.

Strangely, the one area where your choice is limited is in your identity. You can be whatever nationality you like as long as you are prepared to be (a) male (as are all four opponents incidentally) and (b) called Victor Player. Okay this restriction has been imposed to simplify the graphics and digitised speech, but it is rather bizarre having, for instance, the promising Japanese tennis pro, Victor Player! I mean, come on, it's about as likely as the top Welsh rugby player, Yoshi Yakamoto.

Control freak

There is a choice of either single exhibition matches or a full tournament. But the best choice for beginning players is to check out the training areas in which you can either practice your serve or return balls played out by a machine. The control method is a little more complex than in some tennis games but it is this factor that puts *ITO* at the top of the tree.

Service is accomplished by moving a cross hair to the point of the court at which you want the ball to impact – that's very similar to the way most other sims handle it. The real difference is in normal play. You can move freely about the court, and to hit the ball, you need only press and release the joystick button at the appropriate moment. That will, however, give you little control over where the ball goes. To give the ball the desired trajectory, you must combine the button press with a direction. In certain circumstances you can use the second button to execute a special shot, like a smash or a drop shot.

If all this sounds as if it might take some getting used to, you'd be right. Once you do get the hang of things, however, you find yourself with an unprecedented level of control over the ball. If you do have difficulty getting to grips with it, there is a special mode in which you just have to worry about moving the player while the computer takes care of the shots.

More CD-i please...

This is the first CD-i title that Philips has converted to PC CD-ROM. There are more on the way. If they all keep to this standard, then Philips will definitely make a mark for itself as a quality publisher of PC CD material. Meanwhile, the company's first effort comes highly recommended. If you have a CD drive and you want a first class sports sim, you need look no further than *International Tennis Open.* Z



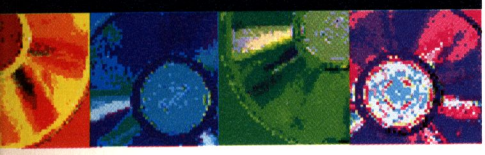
SCORE

Definitely the new number one seed in the field of PC tennis simulations.

Minimum Memory: 640Kb
Minimum Processor: 386SX 33MHz
Hard Disk Space Required: 8Mb
Graphics Modes Supported: VGA
Sound Cards Supported: Sound Blaster
Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick
Comments: Requires DOS 5.0 and MSCDEX 2.2 or later

Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** Out Now
Publisher: Philips Interactive Media
Tel: 071 331 1605

Tennis Open

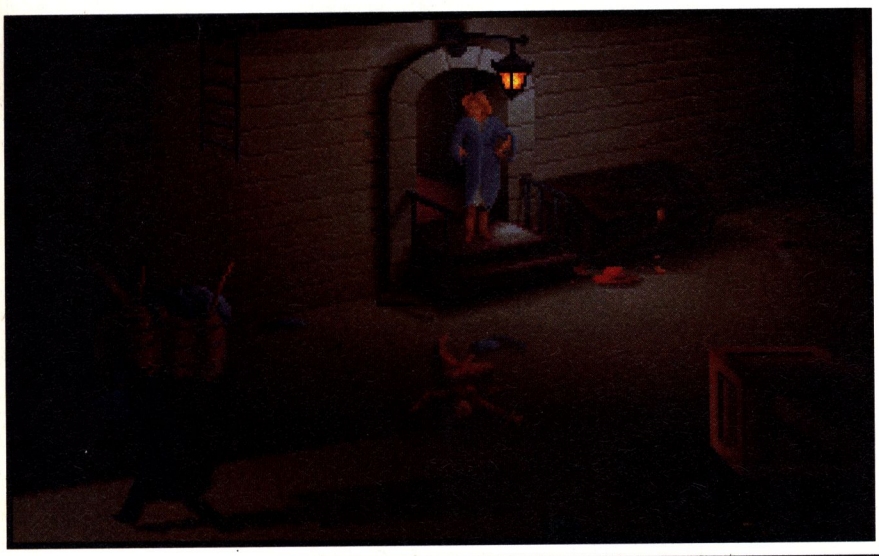


Sherlock Holmes

The Case of the Serrated Scalpel



Mike Gerrard dons his deerstalker and, with magnifying glass in hand, sets about the streets of 19th century London, in search of crimes, misdemeanours and a bit of gameplay.





"Alright, my ducks, fancy buying a lady of the night with a heart of gold a few drinks?" "Madam, I would most certainly oblige, but the murder of a young sweet girl has just been reported. I must find her body and search it for clues – I'm sure it is here... somewhere...." (Left) " Its very kind of you sir to help me pull this 'ere tooth out." "My pleasure. My nick-name used to be "Jack the puller" you know, but now its "Jack the...."

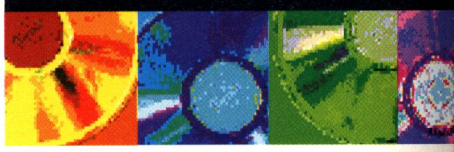
ALREADY a floppy, what does CD add to this "lost" case from the files of that great British hero, Sherlock Holmes? Well, in the words of that even greater British hero, Eric Morecambe: "not a lot". The main difference is digitised speech; a bit feeble really when all the words are on the screen anyway, and the actors speak at the speed of a sloth with its legs cut off. About every three screens you get a sound effect too. 'Scuse me while I wet myself with excitement, but is there nothing more considering this is supposed to be the "enhanced version"?

Jack The Ripper Is Innocent?

The story? A young actress has been murdered in an alley behind the theatre, and your old oppo, Inspector Lestrade, is convinced it's the work of Jack the Ripper (or Jack lo Squartatore, as he's known in Italian). Holmes and Watson are on the scene quicker than you can say "hansom cab", and an important piece of evidence suggests to Holmes that the Ripper is not to blame. Lestrade basically says, "Okay, Sherlock, convince me."

To do so you cab it around London, which you access via a map. The available locations slowly increase as you progress, though this is not exactly difficult. Icons at the foot of the screen allow you to do the usual things – look at, pick up, use and drop objects, talk to characters, etc. All the time, though, it's as if you're being led by the hand. Move the cursor around the screen and you'll find what's there. Look at it, pick it up, look at it again, then try to give it to one of the other characters for their comments. If they don't want it, you can't give it to them, and if they do take it then you'll get some help. So, just by exploring all the options, you move along. Likewise with talking to the characters. A list of two or three things to say comes up on the screen. Click on them all in turn and get the responses. If you get nothing first time round, ask them again. It all gets just a bit monotonous after a very short while.

Here's an example of an early problem:



The Mystery Of The Missing Gameplay

"From the outer covering, Watson, I would deduce this to be a game of hellish complexity, promising 50 authentic locations, digitised voices, a classical soundtrack and stunning animations, yet is it not true that appearances can be deceptive?"

"Unfortunately so, Holmes."

"It would appear that *The Case of the Serrated Scapel* is in many respects lacking in what one might term as 'gameplay'."

"Pray, continue Holmes. Your suspicions intrigue me."

"Well, things are from the start a little too simple. Everything you say and do is automatically recorded, which significantly reduces your chances of failing to select the right option, thereby allowing you to progress through the mystery at break-neck speed. If you make an incorrect choice of action first, or second time round, your third and final option will in most cases bring you nearer to solving the mystery, simply by default."

"But Holmes, were you not at all impressed?"

"Do not misunderstand me, Watson. I felt the scenes of the city, the general chat and the facilities of interaction most becoming, but the biggest mystery to me was simply the lack of gameplay. It could not be found anywhere, despite my rigorous searchings and lengthy interrogation with all the characters. Admittedly, those of less experience may find the thing of passing interest, but..."

"But what Holmes?"

"Oh, I must come right out and say it – I believe that I am dealing with a collection of dunderheads!"

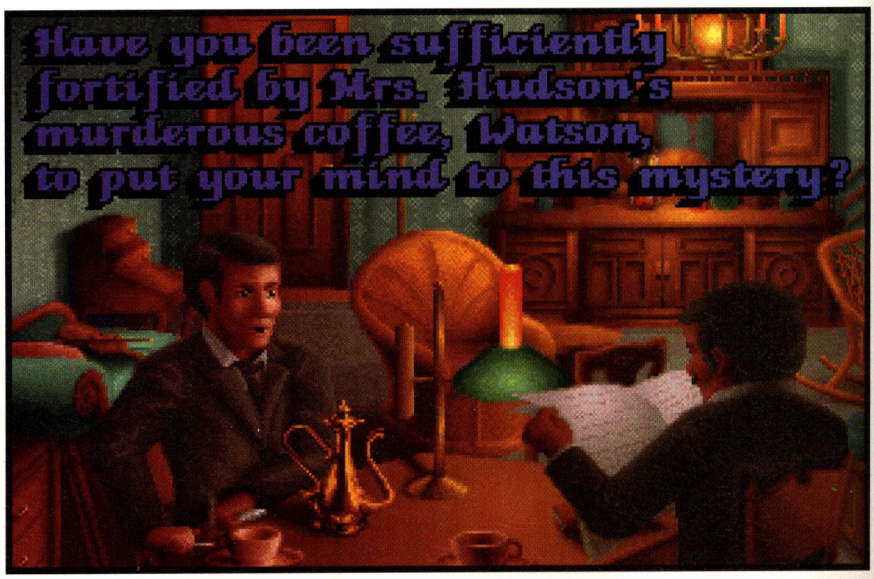
"Dunderheads?"

"Yes, it's almost as if they wanted me to solve the mystery. Those that will not speak on a first acquaintance seem to suddenly spout information if I persist with friendly questioning. I enjoy a challenge to my intellect, not being led by the hand in this namby-pamby way. Why, even you could solve this one, Watson."

"I say, Holmes!"

"No offense, Watson. Shag?"

"You smoke if you wish, Holmes. I shall take solace in my gramophone collection."





The user interface and characters are all very easy to use and interact with, making this more of a gentle stroll around London, rather than a mindnumbingly difficult trek through the capital.

you can't get into Scotland Yard to see Lestrade. At the Southwark morgue where the body is, Inspector Gregson tells you to mention his name to the bobby on the door. You do and it doesn't work. You go back to Gregson and tell him. He comes with you and escorts you inside. You ask to see Lestrade. The desk clerk won't let you. You go outside and talk to a street vendor who says the desk clerk likes flattery. You go back inside and now have the option to sweet-talk the clerk. You do, and Lestrade comes over. Policeman plod or what?

I wanna hold your hand

The best part of the game is the engine which runs it. Real neat, Moriarty. Watson's notebook automatically records all speech and main actions, and you can click this onto the screen any time and flip through it, even search it for specific words or print it out. The characters move smoothly and the graphics are nice enough. But where's the game? Novice players might enjoy this namby-pamby hand-holding, but anyone who's played a Sierra game or grappled with a complex RPG – or even the old Spectrum game, *Sherlock* – will wonder where the problems are. Or to borrow a phrase from great British anti-heroes this time: you're so pretty, you're so pretty... vacant. ZZ



SCORE

Elementary, my dear Watson... and that's the problem.

Minimum Memory: 590k

Minimum Processor: 16MHz 386

Hard Disk Space Required: Nominal

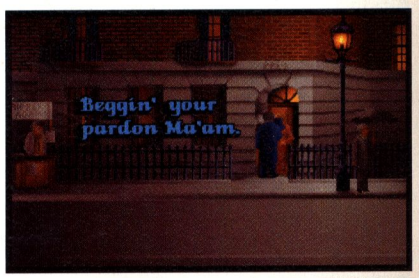
Graphics Modes Supported: 256 Colour VGA

Sound Cards Supported: AdLib, Roland, Sound Blaster

Controls: Mouse, joystick, keyboard,

Comments: DOS 5.0 or above required; Hayes-compatible modems supported; 132-column printers supported

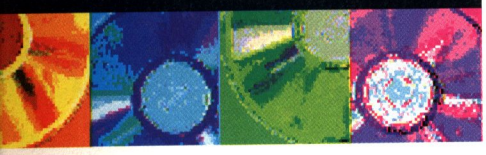
Price: £49.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Electronic Arts **Tel:** 0753 549442



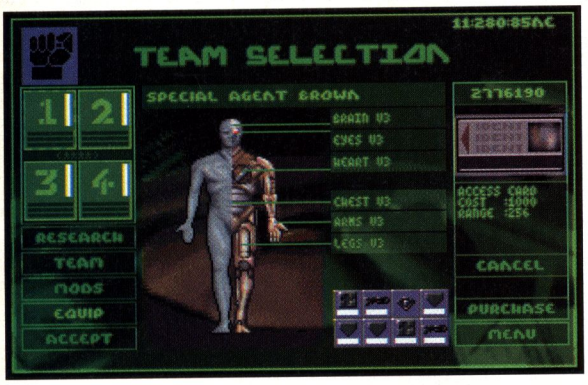


"Let me take you by the hand and lead you through the streets of London." – It's all very pretty to look at, but not quite taxing enough on the old grey matter to be of any real lengthy interest.

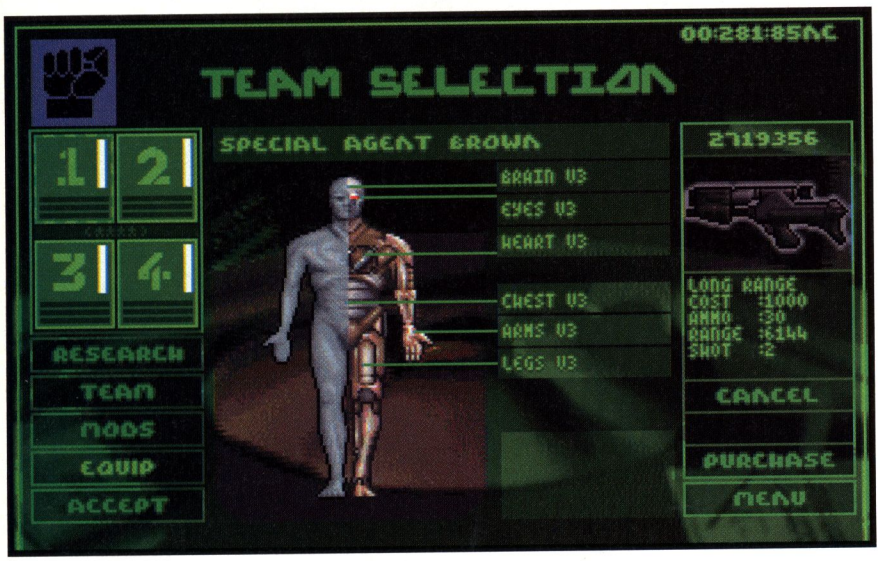
Syndicate











SYNDICATE

IT'S THE future. Huge multinational organisations, like What She Wants and Alf's Mini-Mart dominate the globe; one each based in Europe, America and the Far East. The European corporation invents CHIP, a mind-bending implant that allows the downtrodden citizens to believe they're having a good time, even though they're actually living lives of unalloyed misery (imagine a futuristic *Nine O'clock News*). Control of the CHIPS means control of the people, so naturally the three mega-corps wipe each other out fighting for it. This allows the crime syndicates to move in, taking over what's left.

Crime pays

You're a young executive in a crime syndicate whose aim, thanks to taking part in team sports at school, is to take over the world. The world is divided into territories; you have to acquire them by sending your collection of killer-cyborgs into them and performing a series of missions that resemble the lively bits from a Quentin Tarantino film. Once you own a territory, you tax it to within an inch of its life, remind it how much worse it would be under a Labour government, and use the money to finance the next outrage. There are loads of weapons to develop and many ways to improve your cyborgs' powers, by flying in the face of Olympian ideals and giving them cybernetic limbs. It's a thoroughly engaging game, albeit one that right-thinking people are expected to make embarrassed qualifying remarks about. ("Well, yes, I know I just pan-fried that chap's head with a flamethrower, but it's *satirical*....")

Americans are revolting

In *American Revolt*, an extra scenario, the pesky citizens of North and South America have risen up against the Syndicates, and you have to get in there and Gauss-gun your way through another 21 missions. This time it's considerably more difficult: enemy agents are faster; solo missions mean that your agents have to be pretty damn ninjascopic; the production of Serious Weapons is essential to survival, and it also helps if you happen to have the reflexes of a jittery mongoose.

New weapons

There's a new weapon for when your agents get in a tight spot – Air Strikes. It's extremely expensive to develop and use but it's worth it for the Expressionist film-makers among you, who will enjoy the strange new cityscapes that result, with their nod in the direction of the sets of *The Cabinet Of Doctor Caligari*.

Network play

The other added bonus is the network game, which allows up to eight humans to try to kill each other over a network. There are 10 missions, and the only objective is to be the last one left alive. There's a new weapon for this, too – the Clone Shield enables your

Patrick McCarthy's idea of violent behaviou is crumpling up the draft for one of his love sonnets too vigorously. To upset his delicate sensibilities, we made him play *Syndicate*.







(Top right) That blasted World In Action man gets everywhere. (Middle left and bottom right) Shopping for violent accessories. (Middle right) The moment from hell – Paul Daniels appears with his laser gun. (Top left) The enemy has a sneaky fag behind the bike sheds... (Bottom left) ...Such a shame lighter fuel's so powerful these days.

Minimum Memory: 4Mb
Minimum Processor: 386, MS-Dos 5 or higher
Hard Disk Space Required: 4MB
Graphics Modes Supported: VGA, Graphic card
Sound Cards Supported: Sound Blaster, 8-bit mono and Sound Blaster Pro only
Controls: Mouse and driver or compatibles
Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Electronic Arts/Bullfrog
Tel: 0753 549442

heavily-armed psychotic to appear on other players' screens as a little old lady from Ongar. Imagine their surprise when she pulls out a cannon and sends their agent's head bouncing across the road. What larks. Slapstick humour at its best. Of course, that's assuming their agents don't have the same facility, in which case it's a sneaky, cowardly, unmanly way to behave.

Well?

What more needs to be said? It's got everything the disk version of the game had, it's got the extra (much harder) scenario game free of charge, and it's one of the classic games on the PC. Value for money, I believe they call it. So get down to that gaudy software outlet and shop, shop, shop. ZZ

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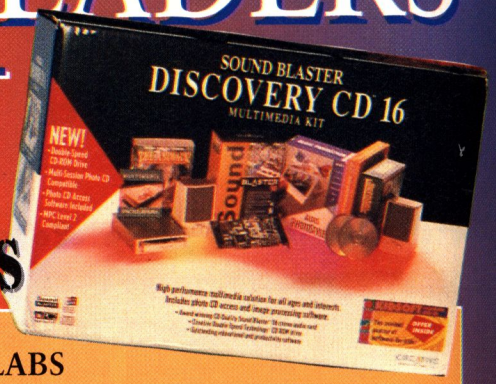

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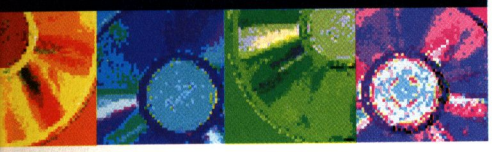


Newsweek 3 Globocop

The title "Globocop" had Duncan MacDonald jumping at the bit, "Whoopee, it must be piss take of the yanks, let me at it! But, sad to say, he was to pay the price for his naive optimism....



"Ya got the flag in?"
"Yes Sir"
"...and the cannon?"
"Right behind us Sir"
"Good, now everyone will think we're real USA soldiers and not the arseholes from Newsweek trying to make another money-making load of crap."

GLOBOCOP, it says on the packaging, in a mega-font not easily ignored, "...the Americans police the world". And to illustrate the point there are pictures of Yanky soldiers peppered about in different global hot-spots, holding guns and whatnot. And other stuff too, all rather gung-ho. "Excellent," I thought, jumping to a naive assumption, "it's some kind of really clever piss-take of American jingoism, packaged within a spoof edutainment-style vehicle." So I ran the installation with gusto. After all, nobody would use a feature title like Globocop for real. Or would they? Er...they would actually. And indeed they have.

To pigeonhole this vile product as quickly as possible, it's a reference library. It's essentially a CD-based compilation of the last 12 editions of the American magazine, *Newsweek*, with a handful of pathetic video "news clips" stitched on for good measure, and some grainy photos for you to browse through (dead people in Bosnia anyone? A whale?). Plus, there's a section called "the secret world of animals" (which is aimed at kids to give the product a "for the whole family" appeal).

> "Of all the releases I've ever seen, this has to be the most pointless."

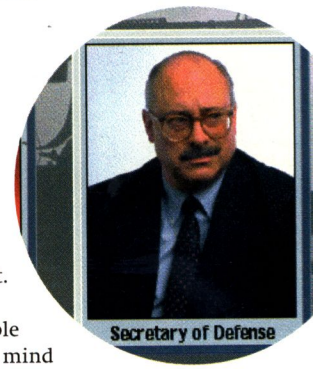
So why should you, the innocent game player, be at all interested? Well, there's also an interactive "game" where you play the President and have to make some top level decisions. Three as it happens: meaning the proceedings last for about nine seconds – although you tend to quit out after one due to indifference.

So much for the game aspect, which isn't anything like as entertaining as the adverts that you'll also find on the disk: one for some stock-market software (which'll have most people reaching for the sick bag) and another for Chevrolet (which is equally hilarious...including the tag line "Chevrolet: what else would you expect from the country that invented rock'n'roll"). Yaaaarrrgh! Get me out of here, quick. Bring in the Anti-*Globocop* spray. Honestly, it really is just too much. Personally I smell the work of some *Globocop* "men in suits" at play... "Hey, bud," says one, "these here CDs hold a dandy amount of data." "They sure as heck do," says another, "let's sorta re-sell back issue packages to true-blue patriots and generate some extra advertising revenue while we're at it."

"'Ere, see those prats dressed up in soldier gear comin' this way?"
"Yeah"
"Wonder what they'd reckon to a load of banana crap landing on em"?
"They'd probably try and sell it !"

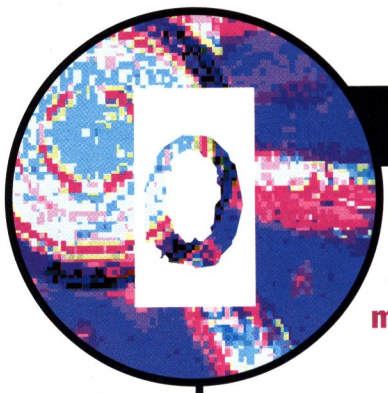


And so on. Basically, it's the most appalling thing in the world. I mean, using CDs as simple storage media is fine in the case of, say, an Atlas. Yeah? Or some clip art. Or the Encyclopedia Brittania. Or anything else as long as it's for viable ergonomics. But who in their right mind would want a bunch of old *Newsweek* magazines tarted up with what can only be described as blatant gobshite? I now quote *PC Zone*'s Mark Burgess (who a few months ago reviewed the "prequel" to *Globocop*, simply called *Newsweek Interactive*): "Of all the releases I've ever seen, this has to be the most pointless," he said. A generous (for him) score of 30 was awarded.



Secretary of Defense

And as for *Globocop* itself? Well, in a way it's even worse than the bollocks Mark had to look at. Okay, so *Globocop* may have the "kids" bit (i.e. the storybook animals: they're so clever/aaah dontcha just luv'em), and it may have the terminally dull so-called interactive "I'm the President" game (which lasts for 17.3 pico seconds, as mentioned), but sometimes the saying "less is more" can be turned on its head – and this is a case in point. Yup, I'm afraid it's "more is less" with regards to *Globocop*, because basically this CD shouldn't even be on sale. Furthermore, everyone involved with the project should be boiled alive, like lobsters. What more can I say? *Globocop* is quite simply the most expensive beermat in the world. Z

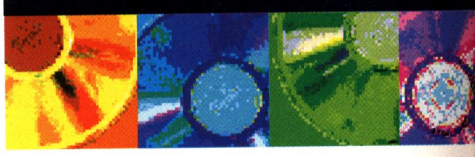


(Top right) "As Secretary of Defense it is my duty to defend, and so in defence of Globocop, I can say, with hand on heart, I think it has its moments i.e. when the cutsey chimps crapped all over those prats dressed in soldier gear."

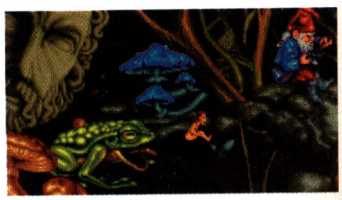
SCORE

***Globocop* CD: The most expensive beer-mat in the world**

Minimum Memory: 4Mb
Minimum Processor: 386 33Mhz
Hard Disk Space Required: 3Mb
Graphics Modes Supported: SVGA
Sound Cards Supported: AdLib, Pro Audio Spectrum
Controls Supported: Mouse
Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: The Software Toolworks



Simon The Sorcerer



The comedy voices really bring this stunning graphic adventure to life.



SCORE

A tricky jaunt boosted by excellent talkie bits.

Fed up with USA imports, Jeremy Wells puts on his Union Jack boxer shorts and goes walkabout in fantasy land with just a talking Woodworm and a Swampling for company

WHEN WE first reviewed this game way back in October last year, we trumpeted it as the proverbial jewel in the current crop of English developed adventure-games crown. With its sparkling wit and humour, colourful scenarios and cutsey-come-sarky characterisation, *Simon The Sorcerer* was enough to make every gamer place his hand on his or her chest and proclaim that they were proud to be British. Finally, a witty, tongue-in-cheek jaunt around fantasy land that wasn't crammed full of Americanisms, gags about blueberry pie and sad characters called Larry, was the cherry on the cake. What more could every Union-Jack-boxer-short-wearing gamer ask for?



A sound move

Well, speech actually. The conversation and dialogue in the original *Simon* was, well, quite entertaining, although it did get a little annoying, whilst cutting in could lose you some vital info. Seeing reams and reams of text flashing up on the screen all for the sake of a weak gag did not do anything much for the frustrated gamer who was left tearing his/her hair out looking for that vital clue!

Now don't get me wrong in a "Oh, he's going to say how truly wonderful this game is now just because they've thrown the warblings of some dodgy amateur dramatics bloke in there and re-released it on CD-ROM, claiming it's really different and great" kind of way, because they haven't. What you've got with *Simon The Sorcerer* CD-ROM is positively quite different from anything that has been developed in the UK before in that it uses English actors to do all the talkie bits. A positive breath of fresh air for all those developing a mild case of Americanaphobia.

Simon says....

For a start it's got Chris (*Red Dwarf/Brittas Empire*) Barrie reading the main role as Simon – a bit of a coup on the part of Adventure Soft to say the least. And although the gags haven't changed, the way Barrie delivers his lines in his ever-familiar Rimmer/Gordon sarky-come-cheesed off voice is a joy to behold or behear, or whatever it is you do when you hear things.

With other voices by Roger Blake of *Spitting Image* fame, and a bunch of other actor types, the characters (who were pretty colourful to start with) take on a whole new depth. Instead of wanting to cut short the dialogue, you actually find yourself going through every option just to hear the characters speak, thereby opening up much more of the game.

Adding voices to a game will ultimately only be worthwhile if the characters that are made to speak are interesting in the first place and the voices that they are then given suit their personality. With this in mind, you'd have to say that Adventure Soft have got it absolutely spot on with *Simon The Sorcerer* on CD-ROM. The speech (over two hours worth) matches the characters and mood of the game perfectly, whilst the vocal performances of The Swampling (singing the praises of his swamp stew), the yokel local wizards (with their dodgy accents) and the ramblings of the Wordworm ("Got any balsa, mate?") are used to excellent comic effect.



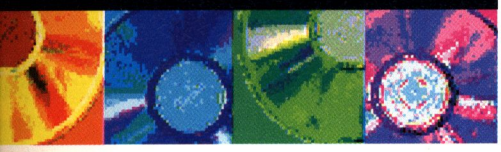
(Above) The game now not only looks brilliant it sounds good too. (Left) The dodgy accents of the wizards will have you rolling off your chair.

Home grown humdinger

With an improved soundtrack, better sound effects and excellent use of speech, Adventure Soft have succeeded in turning what was an amusing and, at times, quite difficult adventure into an absolute belter. If you've got the original game, it may not be worth forking out for the CD-ROM version, but instead wait for *Simon 2* which is due out in the Autumn on disk and CD-ROM. This will once again use the talents of Chris Barrie *et al* and boasts even better graphics, scrolling screens and loads of animated sequences. Let's just hope that Chris Tarrant doesn't get in on the act!

For those of you who own a CD-ROM drive and haven't yet played the original, get a copy of the talkie version to experience the best in British entertainment. ZZ

Minimum Memory: 1Mb
Minimum Processor: 386
Hard Disk Space Required: 215k
Graphics Modes Supported: VGA
Sound Cards Supported: AdLib, Sound Blaster, Lifesize, Gravis Ultrasound, Pro Audio
Controls Supported: Mouse
Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Adventure Soft **Tel:** 021 352 0847



Jack Nicklaus

Patrick McCarthy is growing his own miniature golf course on a mouldy tea-towel at home, so we thought we'd give him the chance to do it properly.

WE HAD A letter recently asking about "infinite" games: games that you never really finish, which provide you with that comparative rarity in a computer game – value for money. One genre that wasn't covered in our reply was sports games. They can usually provide a fair amount of infinity and you don't even have to play the sport in real life. In fact, it probably helps – that way you don't sit there saying, "Well, of course, you can't really do that in real life," until someone hits you over the bridge of the nose with a hammer. Golf games probably provide a bit more infinity than most, you can always come back to a golf game and have a quick few holes whenever you feel like it. You don't even have to have any gin in the house.

Jack Nicklaus goes even further than the average golf game as once you've played all the courses on it, you can make your own up. This would be of little interest if the game itself played like a complete dog, though.

(Below, top) God, the contours on this green are a nightmare. (Bottom) The enigmatic Player 1, biggest draw on the Tour, drives off to a packed gallery.

Playing a round

Fortunately, it's a good game and one that's always been quite underrated. It doesn't have the graphical detail of *Links 386*, but it doesn't take two days to re-draw a screen as a result, either. Unlike *PGA Tour Golf*, the fairways aren't all completely flat and the ball even bounces according to the contours of the land; the wind always comes from a consistent direction – again unlike *PGA*, where the wind is nonsensically random and often changes dramatically at the top of your swing. It has authentic green conditions (dry, normal or wet), which affect the pace of your putts. Add to this the original swing-meter and putting-grid overlay, copied by so many others, and you have a pretty good golf game.





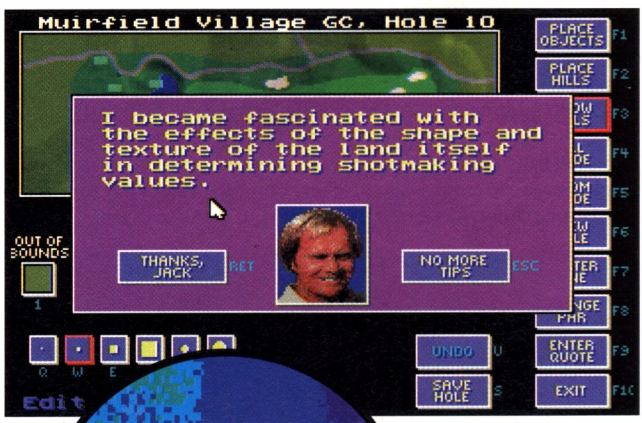
Courses for courses

But it's the course design facility that will have you coming back again and again. You start with a plot of land – either seaside links, mountain or parkland – which you can edit on a broad scale, modifying contours and bodies of water and deciding on the prevailing wind and green conditions. Then you further refine the process by editing each hole individually, again adding contours and hazards to your heart's content. There are plenty of background objects provided, or you can draw your own; the same simple paint program lets you add the required post-apocalyptic backgrounds to your "Course From Hell".

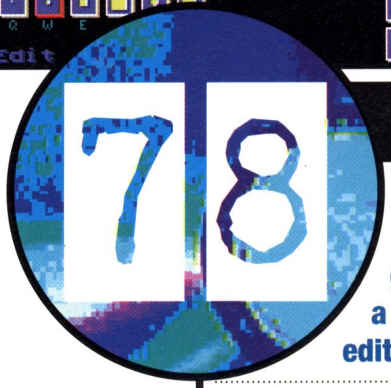


Basically, everyone's first course is always a Course From Hell, as they suddenly metamorphosise into a cross between Capability Brown and the Marquis de Sade. People try to out-do each other: one friend's favourite was 620-yards of different-sized islands; only he knew the required club for each shot. Another's favourite hole looked pretty normal until you saw the overhead view: the mass of bunkers down the left side of the fairway spelt "bollocks". One drew a huge house across the middle of the fairway and you had to hit your second shot through the kitchen window. Most common are holes with a tee, a green and a yawning abyss separating them.

The real challenge starts when you try to design a proper course. You can end up spending more time designing the courses than you do actually playing them. Either way, it's pretty good value. Z



(Above) So you say, Mister Smuggy. Who d'you think you are, Richard Long?



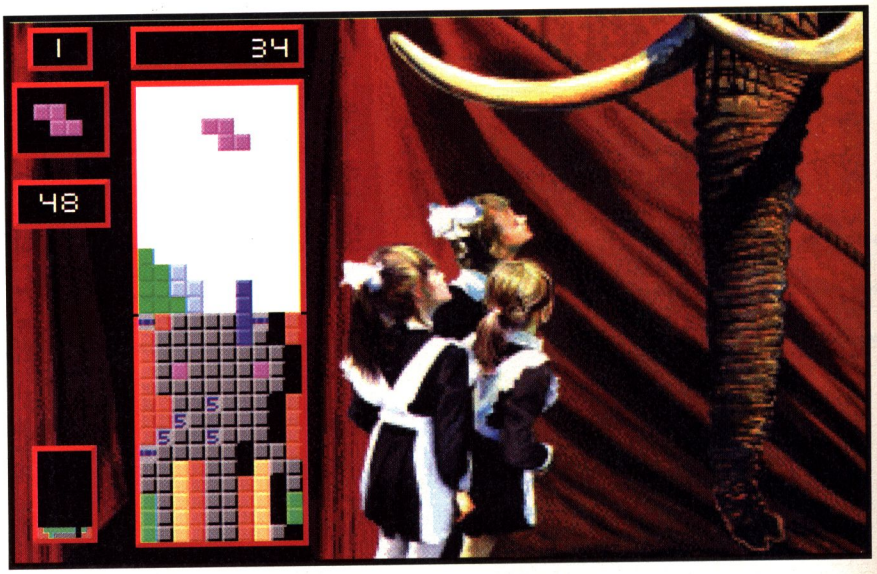
A perfectly serviceable golf game, with a good course editor tacked on.

Minimum Memory: 640k
Minimum Processor: 286
Hard Disk Space Required: Minimal
Graphics Modes Supported: EGA, VGA, CGA
Sound Cards Supported: AdLib, Roland
Controls: Keyboard, mouse
Price: £16.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Accolade/Digital Intrgration
Tel: 0276 684959



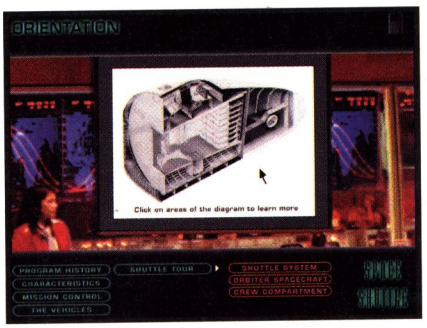
CD Budget Update

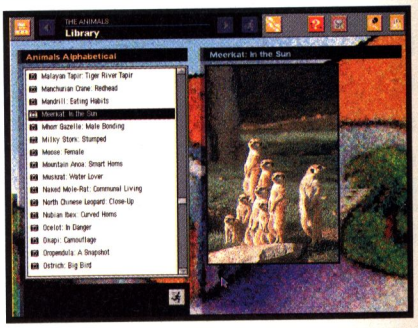
Owning a CD gives you access to some of the most sophisticated PC games around, but CD's are also a useful source of the hits of yesterday at bargain prices. Miserly Laurence Scotford surveys offerings from two publishers.





(Clockwise from top)
Super Tetris: "Look at the trunk on that!"
Silent Service II: It may be old but it's still playable.
The Animals: Take a guided tour around San Diego Zoo from your armchair.
Space Shuttle: Fly your very own space shuttle.
Railroad Tycoon: Relive the good old days of Steam.



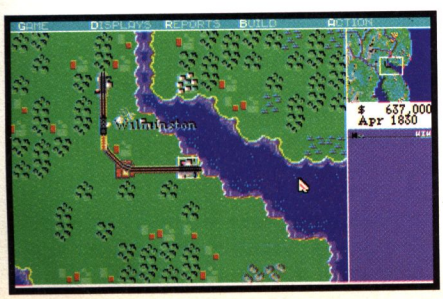


ACTION 16 is the well established budget label of Digital Integration, a publisher that is better known for its quality flight simulations. Fortunately "quality" is a word that can also be applied to the Action 16 range. It covers two types of product. Firstly, disk-based products that have been put onto CD for convenience, and secondly, re-releases of old full-price CD products.

The two products we looked at in the former range are both indiciative of the sort of quality you can expect from this label. *Silent Service II* and *Railroad Tycoon* are both simulations from MicroProse's impressive stable. *Silent Service II* simulates submarine warfare in the Pacific during the latter half of World War II. Despite being a good few years old, it's still the very best sub sim around. *Railroad Tycoon*. From the near legendary Sid Meier, is an excellent sim of the early days of steam in the USA and Europe.

The three CD specific titles are all from Software Toolworks' substantial back catalogue. *The Animals* was one of the first genuine multimedia products on general sale. It is essentially a multimedia version of San Diego Zoo, with the focus on the zoo's advanced biodome project. You can take guided tours of the zoo and stop to get extra information on things that are of particular interest. This is a fun product to browse through.

A product in a similar vein is *Ocean's Below*, which sets out to introduce the user to the world of scuba diving. Apart from a short section which explains scuba gear, this largely comprises of underwater scenes at popular dive sites around the world, like the Galapagos and the Red Sea. At each location, you get to investigate the wildlife and look for treasure. Some poor-quality video sequences don't do much to lift this title out of mediocrity.



On a completely different tack, *Space Shuttle* is a multimedia celebration of America's reusable orbiter. The user can access information on the construction of the shuttle itself, gear and tehniques used in space, training methods, videos and information on all the launches prior to 1993. It's an excellent buy for anybody who's interested in space exploration.

Hits for Six

With its *Hits for Six* series, Prism Leisure has taken an unashamedly shovelware approach to CD-ROM. Each volume is led with a re-released best seller, like *Super Tetris*, *Railroad Tycoon*, *Silent Service II* or *Special Forces*, and is accompanied by five other games which vary from the abysmal *Targhan* to the aging but playable *Stormlord* and *Nebulus*. The packs are worth having if you can find a volume with at least two or three titles that suit you.

Release Details

Action 16 range

Price: £16.99
Release Date: Out now
Publisher: Digital Integration
Telephone: 0276 684959

Hits for Six range

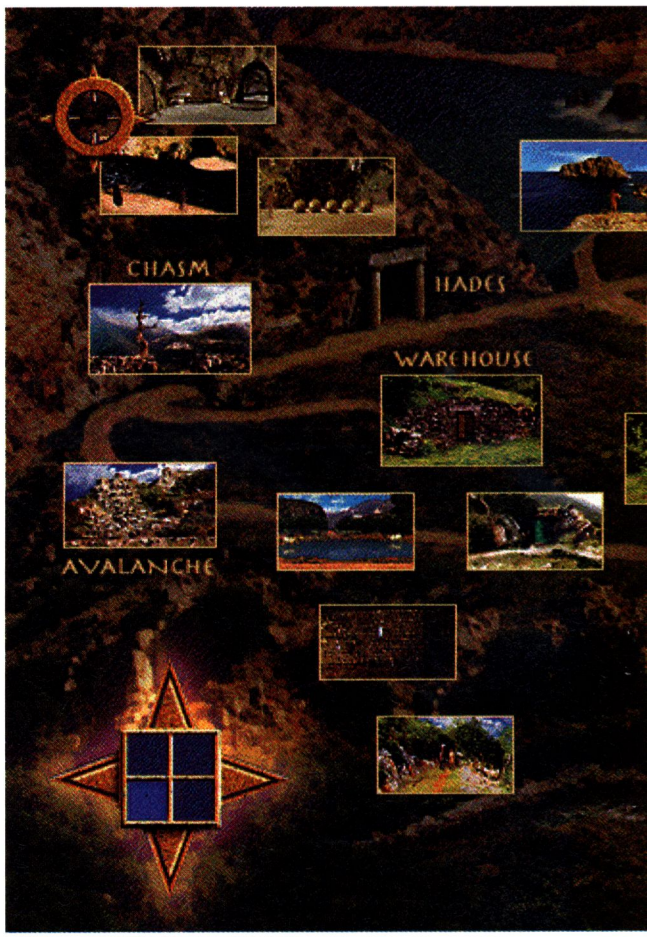
Price: £29.99 (there is a margin for retailers to sell at £19.99, so shop around)
Release Date: Out mow
Publisher: Prism Leisure
Telephone: 081 804 8100

Blueprint

Wrath of the Gods

PUBLISHER: Maxis	PRICE: Between £40 and £50
TELEPHONE: 071 490 2333	RELEASE DATE: August





Maxis, creator of the now legendary sim series of software toys, has teamed up with US-based developer, Luminaria, to create legends of a completely different nature. Laurence Scotford takes the next best thing to a holiday in Greece to investigate.

ANCIENT Greek myths have been the point of inspiration for more than a few computer games in the past. The trouble is, most of them seem to take their subject far too seriously. That's an accusation that certainly can't be levelled at this light-hearted graphic adventure from Maxis. It has its tongue firmly in its cheek from start to finish.

The game falls vaguely into the category of edutainment, in as much as it seeks to convey much of the background to the legends that are linked to form the plot. But that shouldn't put off prospective buyers who want to play the game purely for entertainment value.

Born to be wild

The hero of the piece is a young Grecian, abandoned at birth and brought up in the wild by... get this... a centaur. After enduring a nightmare few years bringing up his surrogate child and having to delicately answer questions like "Daddy, why haven't I got hooves and a tail like the other children?", the centaur finally calls it a day and sends the young man out into the big wide world to prove himself. And prove himself he does, because in the course of his travels he encounters situations from the myths of Heracles, Jason, Perseus and all the other Greek heroes rolled into one.

So, our hero finds himself fighting off the many-headed hydra, stealing the golden fleece, recreating the famous flight of Icarus, and meeting all sorts of creatures; from Pegasus the winged horse to the cyclops, the evil Medusa and the gods themselves. Strangely, all of these characters have American accents and none of them seem to be taking life as a living legend particularly seriously. In fact, the whole thing is played like a rather camp joke. Which is just as well really,

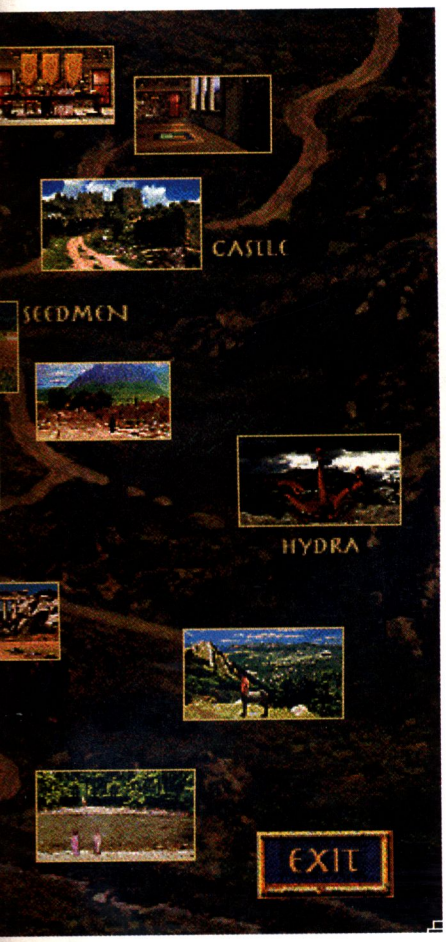


With the new Hades-plan diet, I lost 144lbs in just six weeks! Why don't you try it and see?

because it's not as if you can go around treating stories of flying horses with any degree of earnestness.

Wish you were here

It's not just the sense of fun that has been injected into *Wrath of the Gods* that makes it so attractive; each of the scenes has been digitised from photographs of genuine Greek locations. In places, it's almost like wandering through an interactive holiday brochure. Overlaid on these are 300 digitised films of the actors that play over 60 different characters. Unlike many products of this nature, the production

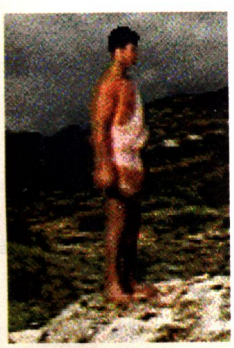


quality is quite high, and the different images blend more seamlessly than is normally the case.

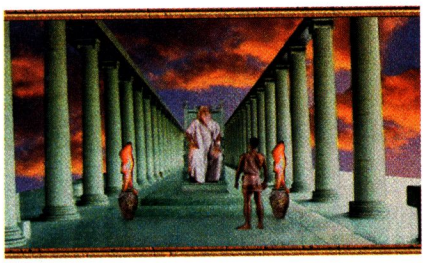
One of the nicest aspects of the game is that it has been purposely designed as a non-linear adventure. Puzzles do not have to be solved in a rigid sequence, although objects you obtain by solving one puzzle may be needed to solve another. You can always see where you are in relation to other locations in the game by calling up the map screen.

Cheating death

Luminaria seems determined to avoid the frustration factor that is so much a part of many other adventures. You cannot, for example, die. At least you can, but when you do, you'll end up in Hades. Here you find yourself in the midst of yet another puzzle: how to get Charon the boatman to ferry you back across the river Styx and into the land of the living. It is never possible to find yourself in a situation in which you are stuck, with no way to get back on track.



There is also a sophisticated help system in the form of an oracle, who will happily give you hints, provided you have the required points to exchange for them. If you need further aid, you can always get info on any of the quests you are engaged on. It as at this point that the product comes firmly in at the educational end of the spectrum. The information takes the form of an illustrated text which details the real heroes who undertook each quest and then fills in the background and context of each story.



(Above) Our hero poses for the tourists.
(Left) Go sight-seeing without leaving your chair.

More myths maybe?

Luminaria was set up in 1991 by Joel Skidmore and Jeff Cretcher. *Wrath of the Gods* is the company's first project in a planned series of adventures based on significant cultural and historical events. It has taken a year and a half to develop, and has involved the work of almost 100 people. There will be other, similar games to follow, all of which will use the same high quality, film-like production techniques. Plans are vague at present, but games based on Mayan and Inca cultures are very strong possibilities. If the beta version of *Wrath of the Gods* is anything to go by, there should be plenty to look forward to from Luminaria in the future. ZZ

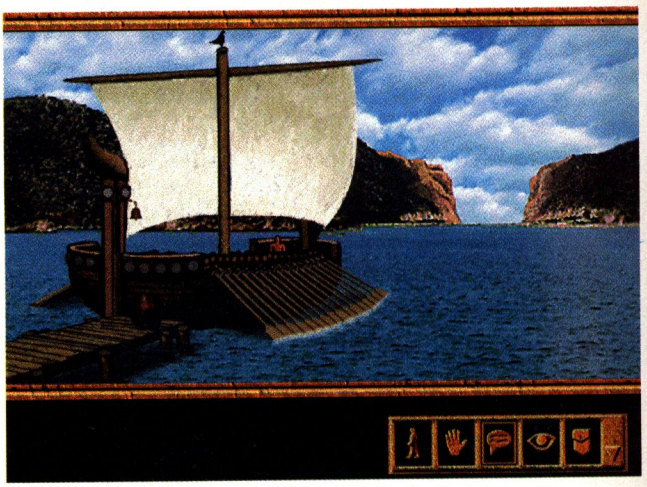
TECH SPECS

Minimum Memory: 4Mb
Minimum Processor: 386 25MHz
Hard Disk Space Required: 9Mb
Video Modes Supported: VGA, SVGA
Graphics Modes Supported: VGA
Sound Cards Supported: Sound Blaster, MS Sound System, Pro Audio Spectrum
Controls: Mouse

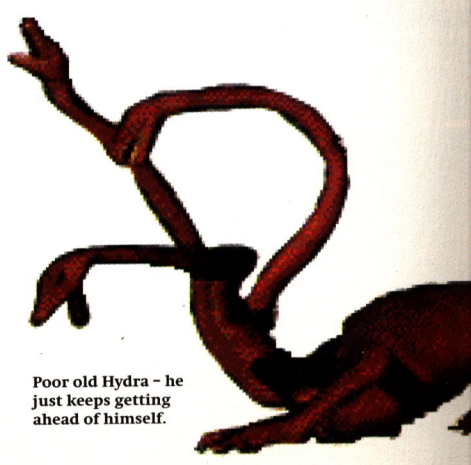


(Left) Look mister, I told you before, I haven't got any spare change!





(Top) Look, I can't go to bed with you – what if you turn out to be my mother?
(Bottom) Oar-inspiring, wouldn't you say?



Poor old Hydra – he just keeps getting ahead of himself.

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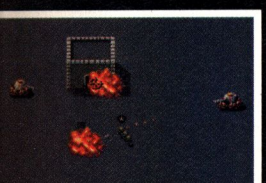

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APRIL SHAREWARES

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Dragon Shard version 2.1b is a mouse-controlled EGA role-playing adventure game in the *Ultima* style. It's designed to expand in a "modular" fashion so that when you have completed the quests in this introductory module you can continue your adventures in other modules. It features ten character races, 17 character classes, magic items and spells, interaction with monsters and non-player characters, hundreds of weapons, potions and herbs, shops, and much more. The shareware version restricts adventurers to the fifth level of experience.

● **Order ref: B3866**

Monster Bash is a VGA resolution platform-jumping arcade game from Apogee in the tradition of their best-selling *Commander Keen* and *Cosmo* games. Johnny Dash must use his catapult to repel undead monsters in his quest to free stolen pet dogs and cats held by the evil Count Chuck. Johnny can climb, crawl, shoot his catapult, fly a broom and much more.

● **Order ref: BH212**

Ken's Labyrith is a 3D 256-colour VGA arcade adventure game. You have been captured by the Zogarians and must escape their labyrinth in order to rescue your dog, Sparky, and save the known Universe. Supports Gravis Gamepad control, and a musical soundtrack with AdLib or Sound Blaster cards.

● **Order ref: BH218**

The Blade Runner Disk version 1.1 for film fans. It includes a *Blade Runner* quiz program with four levels of difficulty, a Wilbur Mercer simulator, random quotes program, 514 x 463 greyscale image of Rachael, 432 x 718 and 784 x 458 2-colour images of the film poster. Plus a text file of *Blade Runner* info, including cuts and continuity errors in the film. (Public Domain disk)

● **Order ref: B3747(1)**

NOTE: Shareware entitles you to try before you buy. Registration costs are usually a fraction of comparable commercial software and they also entitle you to documentation, user support and upgrades.



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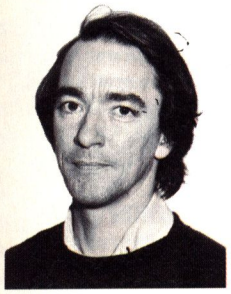


If your PC's looking decidedly dead, the Hard Drive's totally off its head and you don't think you can fix it on your own; fear not – things can only get better. You just sit yourself down and write a letter telling *Mark Burgess* – at Bits & PCs

Mystic Ad

WHERE CAN I get the shareware programs *Astro* and *Tarot for Windows* (issue 14, May 1994)?

Sue Carberry, Ealing, London W5

Both of these programs should be available from any shareware library. For the Astro program, try The Public Domain and Shareware Library, Winscombe House Beacon Rd., Crowborough, East Sussex, TN6 1UL (Tel: 0892 663 298). For Tarot for Windows, try Omicron Systems Limited, 45 Blenheim Crescent, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, SS9 3DT [Tel: 0702 710 391].

Trekker Memories

CAN YOU please help me?

I have just bought *Star Trek: The Judgement Rites* for £44.99.

The installation takes about three hours and this goes just fine, but when I try to play it, all I get is a memory error note on the screen.

I have tried several boot disks and one of them had only system files transferred, e.g. no AUTOEXEC.BAT or CONFIG.SYS files and I cannot get it to work.

My machine has all the minimum requirements, 386SX, 33MHZ, 2MB RAM, 40MB Hard drive and SVGA monitor.

I am running DOS 6.2 with DBLESPACE and MEMMAKER and still it does not work.

I phoned Interplay and they treated me as if I was totally thick.

I know about your backside covering rules but can you please help.

Please accept this letter as a disclaimer, so if I use your advice and my machine fucks up it is only my fault.

Please find enclosed copies of my AUTOEXE.BAT and CONFIG.SYS files.

AUTOEXEC.BAT

```
LH /L 0; 1, 45456 /S C:\DOS\SMARTDRV.EXE
@ECHO OFF
PROMPT $P$G
PATH C:\DOS
SET TEMP=C:\DOS
C:\DOS\MODE CON CODEPAGE PREPARE=((437)
C:\DOS\EGA.CPI
C:\DOS\MODE CON CODEPAGE SELECT=437
LH /L: 1, 16656 C:\DOS\KEYB
UK,,C:\DOS\KEYBOARD.SYS
```

CONFIG.SYS

```
DEVICE=C:\DOS\HIMEM.SYS
DEVICE=C:\DOS\EMM386.EXE RAM HIGHSCAN
BUFFERS=10,0
FILES=30
DOS=UMB
LASTDRIVE=H
FCBS=4,0
DEVICEHIGH /L: 1, 12048 = C:\DOS\SETVER.EXE
DOS = HIGH
COUNTRY = 044,, C:\DOS\COUNTRY.SYS
DEVICEHIGH /L: 1, 15792 = C:\DOS\DISPLAY.SYS
CON=(EGA,,1)
DEVICEHIGH /L: 1, 12704 =
C:\MOUSE\MOUSE.SYS
SHELL = C:\DOS\COMMAND.COM C:\DOS\ /P
FILES = 30
FILES = 30
```

Thank you so much if you can help.

Yours hopingly,

Wayne Gibbons, Prescot, Merseyside

Well, the tech specs are a 386 with 2Mb. But the program does insist on 1Mb being configured as EMS. Sort out your CONFIG.SYS so that the second line reads:

DEVICEHIGH=C:\DOS\EMM386.EXE 2048 RAM

While your about it ,delete all but one FILES= line and rem out the FCBS line. Join the two DOS lines so that they read:

DOS=HIGH, UMB

I hope this sorts out your problem.

If you need further help, take a look at the last issue for the definitive guide to setting up CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT.

King of the Wild Frontier

I am getting absolutely nowhere with *Frontier: Elite II*, as I am constantly being attacked and blown up. Imagine my delight when your last cover disk included a hack allowing me unlimited cash. However, I cannot get it to work. I even tried using the hack given in your article in the January issue, but I still get the same problem. It would appear that I have a considerable amount of cash but I cannot spend it. Can you help me as I have virtually given up on the game.

I have a 486SX 25MHz with 4Mb RAM.

Paul Whiteway, Warrington, Cheshire

Yes, the Hackmasters' much vaunted victory over David Braben was a bit of hubris. The scoreline should have read "David Braben – unassailable; Hackmasters – zilch". The hack only worked for very early versions of Frontier – none thereafter. Speaking as a Sergeant in the Federal Military with an Imperial Courier and 15 years under my belt, you really should spend your money. I mean, if you've got all this dosh and keep on being killed, buy a bigger ship with lots of shield units and a big laser. Then you can patrol the galaxy, take on assassination missions and generally enjoy the greatest computer game ever. But I'm biased.

16 into 8

AS AN AGEING gamester (48 this month), I've just received the first copy of *PC Zone* on my new subscription – which highlights how I feel about the mag and means I can dispense with the usual plaudits. On opening my June issue to my favourite page (*Bits & PCs*) from which I've had many a good tip (whoops – there I go with the praises and I swore I wouldn't). Anyway, the first letter jumped at me from the page about CD-ROM drives and sound cards ("ROM for your life") – my situation exactly. I've put off buying a CD-ROM drive because I though that my 8-bit Sound Blaster v2 card would need to be replaced with a 16-bit card. Oh! joy of joys, quickly I flicked through the mag and found an ad with a good deal on a CD drive, so, excitedly with plastic in hand and a trembling finger over the phone and visions of *Rebel Assault* in my head, I made my call.

The usual intellectual sales staff answered. Being a cautious man (after 48 years of being dropped in it by so-called experts) I decided to ask a few technical questions just to be sure. "Er, what?" was the reply to the question about 8-bit mono sound cards. So off he went to consult his guru and returned with the answer that it would not play through an 8-bit card. A 16-bit card was needed. Oh! heartbreak. Not since I never got that trainset for Christmas has such disappointment been known (and no, that was not last year). To return to our intellectual sales staff who had just dealt the fatal blow, he asked me (as if to add insult to injury) if I would still like to order the drive. Where do they get these people?

To cut a long story short, I spent a few pounds on phone calls to various places, all of which gave me very similar replies to this question - "Yes" ,"No", "Maybe", "Might do" and, of course, my favourite "Er, well". I'm now frantic, so please put this ageing gamester out of his misery and tell me please – if I fit a twin speed CD-drive with its own interface, will I be able to get sound and music from games like *Rebel Assault* to work through my 8-bit mono sound card? Thanks.

Keith Bennett, Houghton-Le-Spring, Tyne & Wear

You should be able to play 16-bit sound samples through an 8-bit card. BUT, they will probably sound odd and may even break up, so you will be very lucky to get the full benefit. I guess that puts me in the "maybe" category. What I mean is that it will work, but it won't work well.

Time machine

I OWN AN Amstrad 1512 HD20 PC. This PC is even older than the 286. I have recently wondered whether you could upgrade it at least to a 286. Could you send me some information.

William Harne, Caerphilly, Wales

The short answer is no. Amstrads are difficult to upgrade at the best of times and the 1512 is a real non-standard bit of kit with a weird motherboard and a midget hard disk. There is no point "upgrading" to a 286. Very few games will run on it. If you can't afford a 486, then there are a lot of cheap 386s about. And if all you want to do is to run WordStar, there are 286s around that cost less than the delivery charge.

Editing Zool

THERE IS ONE thing that really pisses me off, namely *Zool*. I have read the Hackmasters' hacks for it but am unsure. Apparently I need *PC Tools* or *XTree Gold* to find the file. Will I have either of those? If I don't, please could you tell me if I can use a file editor or something to hack the file. Unless you can help me I am Zooled! Yours,

Nick Fowler, Tollard Royal, Salisbury

Well, I'm afraid that unless you want me to break into your house and have a nosy, I'm unable to tell whether you've got PC Tools or XTree Gold ? What I can tell you is that both programs are used as file or sector editors and any program that fulfils those functions could be used. There are several good shareware sector editors, such as EDDY, and a nice shareware PC Tools clone called Professional Master Key. The Public Domain and Shareware Library (0862 663 298) or PC Independent User Group (0732 771 512) will have them. The real thing costs about £70 for PC Tools *and £60 for* XTree Gold.

Sound and Vision

I KNOW YOU must hate getting letters from beginners who haven't a clue about anything, but I really must ask a few questions:-

1. In your "specs" box you name "minimum processor" and "minimum speed". If, taking *Mortal Kombat* for example, the minimum processor is a 386 and the minimum speed is 33MHZ, will it run on a 486SX with only 25MHZ?

2. Can all sound cards be used as samplers? How? Can you sample sounds from a CD-ROM drive with an audio CD in it? Is a 16-bit sound card a lot better than an 8-bit sound card? What software will I need to sample sounds and sequence them?

3. What is the difference between CGA, EGA, VGA and SVGA?

4. I know this isn't a techie magazine, but please tell me what a "cache" is.

I owe you for life.

Chris Priestley, Canton, Cardiff

I like getting letters from beginners – they're easier to answer!

1. Yes, the 486 is a faster processor than the 386 so a 486SX /25MHz will be faster than a 386 /33MHz.

2. Depends on the sound card; most of them do, but check. Sound cards that can sample will have a microphone socket and a line in socket. To sample from an audio CD, run a cable from the line-out socket of the CD Drive to the line-in socket. Most sound cards come with sampling software. If you want something special, look at Wave for Windows. *Sequencing packages range from top-range programs, like* Cakewalk *and* Cadenza, *to more modest – but still powerful – offerings like* Super-JAM *and* Band-in-a-Box. *I've seen the last program bundled with sound cards.*

3. CGA stands for Colour Graphic Adapter and it will display four colours (out of a possible eight) on screen at a resolution of 320 x 200.

EGA stands for Extended Graphics Array and can display 16 colours at a resolution of up to 640 x 350.

VGA stands for Video Graphics Array and can display 256 colours at 320 x 200, or 16 colours at 640 x 480.

SVGA is Super Video Graphics Array which can also display 256 colours but can go up to a resolution of 1,280 x 1,024.

There is also XGA, or Extended Graphics Array which can display 256 colours at 1,024 x 678 and can display up to 65,000 colours.

4. A "cache" is a small section of fast memory chips which supplies the CPU with data and instructions, faster than the main memory can. The main use is for data that the program uses frequently. How useful it is depends on the machine and the application. 486DX chips have their own, internal, 8k cache and over 90 per cent of the processor's instructions are provided from this section of fast memory. 386 machines need a motherboard cache – usually 32k. There is a trend for disk controllers to have a cache memory. The principal is the same – frequently requested data is held in memory from where it can be retrieved faster than from the disk. You can configure part of your normal RAM as a disk cache with a program such as Smartdrive.

Swedish sound card poser

I read the letter "Premier Problem" (issue 14) about the sound in *Premier Manager*. I have experienced the same problem. The problem wasn't a driver problem (at least not in my case), but it was that both my Sound Blaster card and LPT1 used IRQ 5. Most games will work fine anyway, as long as you don't use LPT1 at the same time, but obviously *Premier Manager* won't. The IRQ conflict caused problems with *Wayne Gretzky Hockey 3* too; the picture could suddenly freeze in the middle of a game and the sound then went berserk. Because of this I have had to move the Sound Blaster from IRQ 5 or IRQ 7, but in issue 11, you stated in the answer to "Queue Jumping" that *Wolfenstein* works better with IRQ 5 than IRQ 7. Does that go for other games too?

By the way, thanks for the best PC games magazine in the world.

Martin Norén, Södrertälje, Sweden

Thanks for the information. Some old games default to IRQ 5 and are unhappy with anything else. Wolfenstein *was the last major game to be so inconsiderate and modern programs – including shareware - are far more flexible in IRQ settings.*

Steppes in PC buying

I HOPE I may impose upon you to answer a few queries from a fairly computer-illiterate graduate in Russia. I'm looking to purchase a computer system that meets my requirements.

I need a system on which to run *Word*. I assume that word processing software does not demand a particularly high performance machine, but who am I trying to kid – I also want a system on which I can run the latest in so-called non-serious software.

One machine that's caught my eye is the High-screen 486SX with 4MB RAM running at 25MHZ and retailing at £899 at Dixons round the corner. While this would appear to be sufficient to run the two games which kept me entertained through many a long, cold night in Russia, namely *Spear of Destiny* and *Dune II* – I am concerned that the machine may not be sufficient for other titles such as *Doom*, *Syndicate*, *Sim City 2000*, *Frontier: Elite II*, *CyberRace* and the like.

I would be grateful, therefore, if you would explain the relationship between the various processors (386SX/486SX/486DX) and clock speeds on the market and suggest the best configuration for the type of games I have mentioned, given a budget of around £1,000.

Jonathan Pyne, Bedford

The computer you suggest will run most of the games on your list. I think you might find TFX slow. Flight sims generally require the highest specification machines and if you are going to become a "propeller head" you will need a 486DX. Most forthcoming games will be geared to the 486DX chip, but a 486SX is easy to upgrade and you won't void your guarantee by opening the case. It's expected that PC owners will need to poke around inside – to fit a sound card, for instance – and to penalise them for so doing would be as ridiculous as voiding the guarantee on a car if you opened the bonnet. Question the staff at Dixons about the chips you can add to boost performance (OverDrive chips, clock doublers). Demand to see where they fit so you can see how easy it is. Ask how the RAM is configured and whether you can add to it or whether you will have to replace a lot of miserable 256k chips with 1Mb ones.

A 386SX uses a 24-bit address mode and can use a maximum of 32Mb of memory. A 386DX uses a 32-bit address mode and can use a maximum of 4Gb of memory. A 486DX is basically a 386DX with the addition of an internal 8k cache and built in maths co-processor. The 486SX is a DX with the co-processor disabled and without the cache. You upgrade the 486SX with a 487SX – which is in fact a 486DX in disguise. Every processor fetches and processes instructions to a certain "beat". This beat is supplied by the clock and the faster the clock, the faster the computer will run, all other things being equal. However, sloppy software can nullify the performance of your processor. The best thing is to give a brief table, taking a 386SX /16 as one:

Relative Performance	*chip*
x1	*386SX 16MHz*
x2	*386DX 25MHz*
x3	*386SX 33MHz*
x5	*486SX 20MHz*
x6	*486DX 25MHz*
x8	*486DX 33MHz*
x12	*486DX 50MHz*

As you can see, there is no simple correlation with clock speed – a great deal depends on the architecture of the chip.

Doom *runs on 4Mb but 8Mb will be the next standard – already most games run better with 8Mb RAM. It's true what they say – you can never have too much memory.*

TROUBLESHOOT

FEATURING THE HACKMASTERS™ AND THE TRUEPLAYERS™

Great shifts are afoot in the world of TroubleShooter. The HackMasters™, surfers of the net, explorers of cyberspace, and within a hair's breadth of becoming poncey *Wired* readers, are going disk-based. *Debug* is being pushed aside for more modern trainers, which allow more space for solutions. The TruePlayers™ are the guardians of these solutions, traditional spoilers with notes, maps and cryptic clues. Troubleshooter mediates over this strange arrangement (and, he's as confused as you are).



FREE TIPS LINE

Phone: 071 917 7689

Ask for TruePlayer™ Tips from 2.00pm to 6.00pm on Wednesdays only.

Yes, we said free. Just ring this number and ask for all the latests tips, cheats, hacks, cracks, solutions and spoils for all the latest games. This is not an answering machine. This is not a premium line number. A real person on the other end of the line will be happy, nay over the moon, to oblige you.

The HackMasters™

Now, some of you regular readers and cheaters might well, after a cursory glance at this month's HackMaster slot, be thinking "Hello, hello. They're a bit thin on the old ground with hacks this month." And a logical follow-on thought might be: "Hey, maybe, the HackMasters are losing their touch." Nothing, dear faithful reader, could be further from the actuality. In order to conserve space and leave acres of room for those dreaded "complete solutions" the TruePlayers are so fond of, part of each month's HackMaster is being relocated to the cover disk. You may feel joyous, you may feel happy. A cover disk hack-o-rama means we can give crappy, old *Debug* the boot and concentrate on hi-tech, cyberspace-esque trainers.

TRAINERS

"Huh? What are trainers?" you could be wondering at this juncture. Well, "trainers" are basically custom-designed TSRs which run *behind* a given game (let's say *Jurassic Park*) and either a) constantly plump up your health and ammo; or b) give you a special hot-key to press when you want your health and ammo plumped up. Due to the extensive hacking skills of one of our archest of arch HackMasters, Jonathon Mell, we now have the opportunity to produce a regular batch of say, five trainers per month for you to experiment with.

The one big advantage with trainers is that they don't actually modify any bits of your game. There's no need to back up any files, no need to get any hex numbers exactly right. You just run the trainer and away you go.

BACK UP

Most, if not all, of the hacks on this page will require changing actual game files (mainly savegame files, peppered with the odd main .EXE file). It is then sensible to back up the file specified in the hack. To do this, simply enter the directory containing the file, say for example SAVEGAME.SAV, and back it up thus:

```
COPY SAVEGAME.SAV
SAVEGAME.BAK
```

If you make a bad mistake and start crying and all, then restore files by typing:

```
COPY SAVEGAME.BAK
SAVEGAME.SAV
```

HEX	DECIMAL
09H	09
0AH	10
0FH	15
10H	16
20H	32
28H	40
32H	50
40H	64
63H	99
64H	100
C8H	200
FAH	250
FFH	255

HEXADECIMAL

Your PC counts strangely. In hexdecimal (base 16). We count in decimal (base 10). For the HackMaster's experience you only really need to learn a few choice hex numbers.

WHAT YOU NEED

There are three things every HackMaster™ groupie must have (well, at least one of them).

1. **DEBUG** Free with DOS is a program called *Debug*. A very useful program it is too, since it allows you to edit files of all descriptions and subtly change the data therein. It is the program we use most in the Hackmaster Zone™, and since it is the most user-unfriendly program *on this planet*, a brief introduction/explanation is necessary. Here's a step by step guide to a *Debug* hack:

To run it just type DEBUG in the appropriate directory (i.e. the one mentioned in the hack blurb). It should run automatically and produce a little '>' prompt. If you get a "file not found" style error then your DOS path hasn't been set properly. Refer to the MS-DOS manual and remember the bottom line – don't ring us unless it's TruePlayer™ Tips day.

```
1 >NHGGAME.TMP <return>
```

Now, once you have a litte '>' prompt you should type in the commands listed in the program, starting with the line above the "N" command. This tells *Debug* which program is to be hacked. There should be no space between the "N" and the full filename.

```
2 >L <return>
```

This command actually loads the file you've just specified into memory and into the hands of the hacker.

```
3 >E 9CBE v <return>
```

This is the Edit function. Type is as it appears above, i.e. with a space between the "E" and the address (9CBE) and the "V". The "V" stands for a value you will enter yourself, ranging between 00 and FF (0 to 255 decimal).

```
4 E >A97F 90 90 90 90
```

If the edit command looks something like this (i.e. a long list of numbers), then press RETURN after the address (the first four digit code) and *Debug* will repeat your command (see below). Then simply type in the values which follow (90, 90 etc) pressing SPACE between each one, except the last when you should press RETURN. So basically, the command should be enacted thus (with what you must type in red):

```
>E A97F<return>
21FB:A97F FE.90 <space> 0E.90 <space> D1.90
<space> 9D.90 <return>
>
5 >W <return>
```

This command writes the hacked file back onto the disk. A message saying "writing xxxxx bytes" will appear, where xxxxx is the size of the file (it varies). Nothing has been changed on your hard disk until you type this comand. So if you've made a mistake earlier

just quit *Debug* and start the process again.

```
6 ›Q ‹return›
```

This quits you back to DOS.

❷ A DISK SECTOR EDITOR

Another useful bit of kit is a disk sector editor such as *XTree Gold* or *PC Tools*. If you own one, then you'll know how to use it – but it is important to note that the offset (or address) in a debug hack is for *Debug* which automatically adds 256 bytes (or 100 hex) to the address. So, if you prefer to use your editor, and a separate disk editor hack isn't included, then you just have to deduct 100 hex from the address. So if an address is 0141 on the page then your address will be 0041. It's a simple case of deducting one from the second figure on the left. If in doubt, use *Debug*.

THE BOTTOM LINE

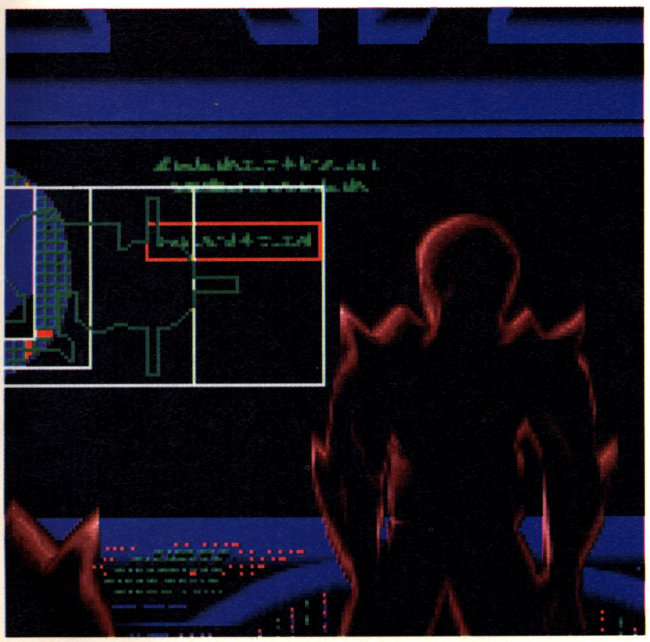
If you get into trouble or are a bit scared ring us on True-Player™ Tips day (Wednesday 2pm-6pm) for free tips support.

These hacks are copyright of Felden Productions 1994. If you try and pass them off as your own to another magazine, we'll get you, we will.

PC Zone and Dennis Publishing take no responsibility for alleged hardware or software damage caused by direct or indirect use of the HackMasters™ hacks and cracks. If the chances of damage were higher than 0.0000001% then we wouldn't be printing them. Make sure you follow the instructions and nothing can happen.

(Right) Futuristic shooting, looting excitement in Raptor.

(Below) Hey, it's worth playing Reunion just to see the shoulderpads.



RAPTOR (Apogee)

Continuing the new trend in Shareware games (i.e. they're no longer crap) is *Raptor*, a spiffy shoot 'em up which had the HackMasters engaged for ooh, two or three hours. Engaged that is, until Richard Blackmore, discovered that Scott Host, the programmer, celebrates his birthday on 16 May. So, before you run *Raptor*, try changing your system date to 16/05/1994. If you're completely naive, all you have to do is type:

```
DATE
```

at your C:> prompt and then enter the digits for this new important date. Play the game as per normal and you should notice several new sound effects and a few new enemies popping up here and there.

PATRICIAN (Daze Marketing)

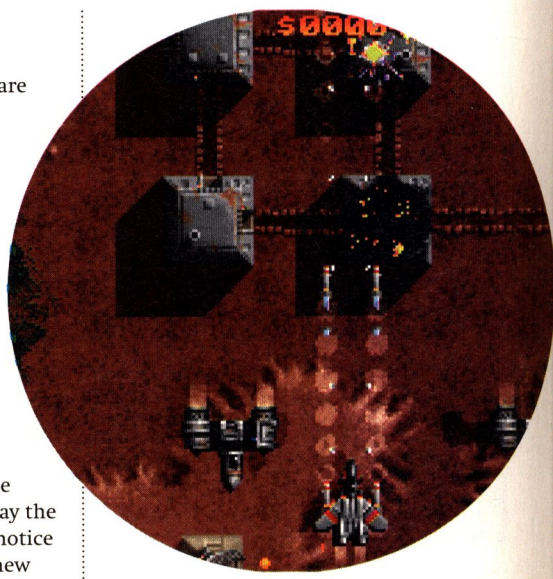
A rather vague and floaty hack comes this way from Holland. Martin Albers, a HackMaster Embroyolus, was digging around the savegame of the esoteric trade 'em up *Patrician*, when he discovered a hack for lots of money. Unfortunately, he neglected to include a full debug script, so the following result is mostly guesswork. The HackMasters recommend you snort around your *Patrician* directory, locate the savegame file's name, and replace the XXXXXXX.YYY in the script. Good luck.

```
›NXXXXXX.YYY
›L
›E 0313 FF FF FF
›W
›Q
```

REUNION (Grandslam)

This one's been lounging in space for a long while. The HackMasters attempted it to give it a good hacking a few months back, but were so put off by its read-the-manual-or-else complexity that we gave up. Lucky for us then that Kevin Cheung of Glasgow had an attention span wide enough to tackle this monolith. The method, as ever, is simple. Go into the *Reunion* SAVE directory and back up the file SPIDYSAV.1. Then debug:

```
›NSPIDYSAV.1
›L
›E 398C FF FF FF 0F Lots of money
›E 3990 FF FF FF      }
›E 3994 FF FF FF      }
›E 3998 FF FF FF      } Ores
```



```
›E 399C FF FF FF }
›E 39A0 FF FF FF }
›E 39A4 FF FF FF }
›W
›Q
```

HIRED GUNS (Psygnosis)

Interesting game this. A four-player 3D shoot 'em up which unfortunately came out after *Doom*. Oops. Nevertheless, some people will be playing it and therefore, by HackMaster logic, some people will want to cheat at it. If you fall into the latter category then slip unnoticed into the EXECUTE sub-directory and back up the file HGGAME.EXE, and then make an additional copy of the file called HGGAME.TMP. For the criminally naive, to copy the file type:

```
COPY HGGAME.EXE HGGAME.TMP
```

Right, now type DEBUG and enact the following script:

```
›NHGGAME.TMP
›L
›E 9CBE 90 90 90 90 Infinite Ammo
›E A97F 90 90 90 90
Invulnerability
›W
›Q
```

Now, just copy the .TMP file over the .EXE file thus:

```
COPY HGGAME.TMP HGGAME.EXE
```

and just play the game as per usual (well maybe not quite "as per usual" you'll freely understand).

The TruePlayers™

RAVENLOFT



Prepare to boldy go where orcs have gone before – into the vicious den of *Ravenloft*, SSI's latest RPG, gloriously spoiled by Aidan Reever.

YOU EITHER hate them or despise them – SSI, purveyors of all that is leather-garbed and troll-packed in RPG adventures. *Ravenloft* is their latest and, while not being their greatest, offers a tidy package of exploring, solving and fighting, all in glorious *Wolfenstein*-o-mation. Here's Aidan Reever's comprehensive solution, to aid and abet you in your quest.



It's the scary red underpant contest brought to you, once again, in glorious Wolfenstein-colour.

FORGOTTEN REALMS FOREST

Just chase after the assassin, kill him and pick up all his items. You will then be teleported to Ravenloft.

BAROVIAN WOODS

You can rescue the NPC fighter from the goblin hordes, but he will leave you in the village anyway. In the hut, if you push the button, a trap door will open. There are some items down there, such as bows and common swords. Exit the woods through any of the two entrances.

SAVLICH ROAD SOUTH

Head north towards Barovia. You will encounter a gypsy. Talk to him. He will tell you to meet him in a tavern in Barovia. Keep going north. You will be attacked by brigands. Kill them. One of them will beg for mercy. Spare his life and he will tell you the location of their lair. Go further north. By the big rock, pull the hidden lever on the wall to open a secret entrance to the lair. Kill all the darklings for more items. Head further north and enter the village.

BAROVIA

You can visit the Blood on the Vine tavern for some conversation, but there is nothing useful there – yet. Make your way to the burgonmeister's mansion. Be sure to loot his library for some useful scrolls. In the same room as the burgonmeister you can pick up the elven magic-user NPC. Then talk to the burgonmeister and you will be invited to Castle Ravenloft to speak with Count Strahd. Accept the invitation. When you meet Strahd, he will give you a handy Seal of Entry for the Ivlis Caves, west of Barovia. Now go to the wooded area, west of Barovia. By the entrance to the caves, you'll find the white-robed woman. Talk to her – she is a cleric and you can get her to join. Now enter the caves.

IVLIS CAVES

Use the Entry Seal by the first portal. A fighter will offer to join you at this point. You should ignore any misgivings and let him, despite the fact that he is actually Strahd in disguise (you'll find that he is still useful, since he is a pretty high level). You will now need to find four jade keys in succession and, using them, you must make your way to the portal by which lies the Church Vestibule Key. Make sure you pick it up since it is an important item. Take the portal. It will turn out to be a dupe. Vladislav (Strahd) will suddenly leave you. Go back to the village and the cleric will leave you as well. Take the easternmost exit on the northern wall of Barovia to get onto the church grounds. Enter the church.

OLD CHURCH LEVEL 1

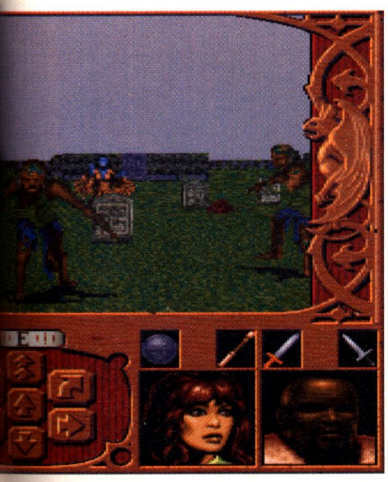
Use the Vestibule Key on the circular lock by the first door. Kill the hell hounds. You now have to pick up the Catalogue and you should also make sure you pick up the Special Scroll of Cure Disease, both of which are on the first level of the church. Head for the stairs down, but before you go down, remember to pick up the Tome of Cursed Items. Now go downstairs.

OLD CHURCH LEVEL 2

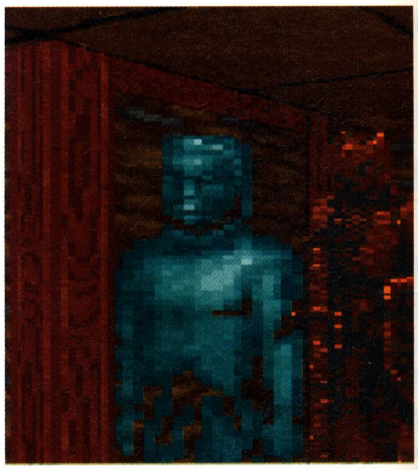
You must recover the Old Church Key which will open some doors on this level. Recover the four fragments of the Tome of Cursed Items and insert them into it. Also, recover the Special Scrolls of Remove Curse and Attonement. Go back up to the first level. Read the Tome (with all four fragments inserted) by the Mirror of Life Trapping to free the soul of the old cleric. Talk to him. Ask him for the key to the cemetary. Go out and go back to Barovia. Go to the house with the ghost. He will possess one of your characters, but it will not hinder you in any way unless you stray from the task which the ghost assigned you. Take the Bone Vault key off the ground and leave. Go back to the church grounds and open the cemetary doors in the northeast corner with the key from the old cleric. Enter the cemetary.

CEMETARY

Go to the tomb of the Ghoul Lord. Kill him immediately. Get the Rod of Rebirth off the ground. When you exit the tomb, the ghost will leave you and give you a key which will open the door in the ghost's house. You will be able to recover the gem later, so just keep going. Get the two pouches of Fine Golden Dust. Go to the mausoleum in the southeastern corner. Use a pouch of dust by one of the statues standing outside the door of the mausoleum. Talk to it gently and ask for its blessing. It will not be ready to give it to you yet, so go to the other statue on the other side of the door and use the other pouch of dust. Talk to the second spirit and ask for its blessing which it will bestow upon you. Talk again to the first spirit and receive its blessing which it will now give you. The banshee in the mausoleum will now be gone. Enter the Tomb of the Elven Lord.







(Above left) Who to use on the zombies from beyond the grave? Why Mr T, of course. (Above middle) A dificult choice this one – it's a close-run thing between Prince and Richard Chamberlain. (Above right) A mummy wearing a thong.

TOMB OF THE ELVEN LORD LEVEL 1

Talk to the ghost of the Elven Lord. He will inform you that he needs his signet in order to be free of the curse. Take the teleportal which is accessible to you right now. In the area to which it takes you, push the button to open the next teleportal. Take that one and push the button for the next teleportal. Take that one and get the Vault Key. Use it to open the door west of the three teleportals. Go down the stairs.

TOMB OF THE ELVEN LORD LEVEL 2

Get the Green Vault Key which will eventually open the door to the signet ring. Push *all* the buttons on this level. Then go to the string of doors which will be open when all the buttons are pushed. Go through them and get the signet ring for the Elven Lord. Go back up to the top level. Talk to the Elven Lord again. Give him the signet, and he will suddenly disappear, leaving a crown, sword, and suit of armour. The crown is one of the five items you need to get back to the Forgotten Realms. The sword is, believe it or not, the best weapon in the game. (The items in this game pretty well suck.) The armour is pretty good too. Leave and go back to the church. Go down to the second level and find Misha's Bones. Use the Rod of Rebirth you got from the cemetary on the bones to resurrect Misha. Not only will he join you, but he will also give you a handy key to get into Castle Ravenloft.

Go back to Barovia and enter the ghost's house again. Use the key you got from the ghost after you killed the Ghoul Lord on the locked door. Get the red gem. It, too, is one of the five important items you need. Leave Barovia through the exit in the middle of the northern wall.

OPTIONAL WEREWOLF QUEST

By now you should have the three special scrolls. Go to the wooded area west of Barovia (where Ivilis cave was). A little north of the cave entrance is a cave with a werewolf. You can save him from the curse by killing the progenitor, a white albino, which appears at night in the same woods, and by using the three special scrolls in succession: Atonement, Cure Diesease and Remove Curse. The werewolf will then give you a key to his treasure trove in the village. It has a Regeneration Ring therein.

SVALICH ROAD NORTH

Just continue on to Castle Ravenloft. Use Misha's Key on the lock and enter.

CASTLE RAVENLOFT

Don't bother going to the cellars. They are totally useless. However, the levels up are important. Get two (2) keys in total. Go up the secondary tower and use the tower key to open it. Go up to the top and kill the Inquisitor. Rescue the Wereraven chained to the wall. He will give you a Wereraven feather (another one of the five items) and will tell you the ritual you need to go back to Barovia. Go to the Blood On The Vine tavern again. Talk to the barkeeper and speak to him about the "lair" just as the Wereraven told you to do. He will tell you to go the the Merchant's Pride warehouse and talk to another contact. Make your way there and talk to the brigands. Allow them to blindfold you and take you to the catacombs below Barovia.

CATACOMBS BELOW BAROVIA

Talk to the Raven Lord. He will inform you that the only item capable of banishing the evil Strahd is the Symbol of Ravenkind. He will then give you a key which opens a door in the Old Church. He will also tell you that the symbol is hidden by Sasha and, surprisingly enough, he only left a handful of clues as to its location. However, he will give you a magic glass which will allow you to decode these clues once you get hold of them. You need to get the chest from the ground in order to lay your hands on the first of four catacomb keys. The problem with this place is that you have to search practically everywhere. You will need to get all four keys. There are also Barovia Coins in these catacombs. Of course, there are exactly 15 and you need *every single one of them* in order to purchase the potion from the gypsy. Since you can't do without the potion, you also have to get all the coins. Once you have gathered all 15 coins, leave using the ladder in the north eastern corner of the catacombs. Make sure you press all the buttons, as some will open up hidden doorways.

THE BLOOD ON THE VINE INN

Go back to the Blood On The Vine inn. Talk to the gypsy, and purchase the potion. Use the potion, and now you are able to walk through the poison mist. Step into the mist anywhere you want.

THE UNDEAD FOREST

Here you must find two Seeds of Morninglord. They are tough to get due to the annoying Treeants. Once you pick up the seeds, go to the eastern most teleportal, and enter it. You will be transported to a second part of the forest. Once again, find two seeds. Now go to a large circle of stones with four small circles within it. It also should have a tree in the middle. Place all four seeds in the small circles (one per circle), Lathander will present you with the Holy Symbol of Ravenkind. This is the only weapon capable of harming Strahd. When you use it, it will shoot a beam of fire.

RETURN TO RAVENLOFT

Open the staircase that will take you to the dungeons. It's in a library behind a secret door, on the level "Halls of weeping". You must push the appropriate button to open it. There you will find a door which will open with the Blood Bat key, and beyond that door (aside from the stairs) is the Tarot Card, the second last item needed to finish the game. Go down the stairs, make your way to the large room with lightning bolts.

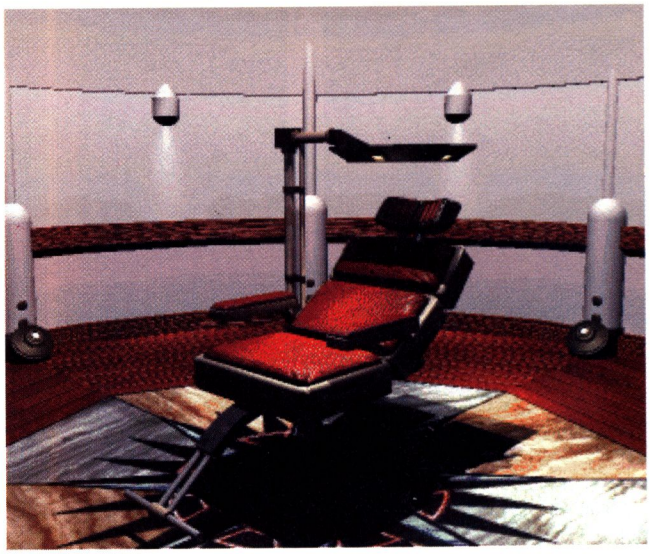
RAVENLOFT DUNGEONS

Go to the north stairs, and push the button in the room you find yourself in. Go to the eastern stairs, and do the same. You'll be able to enter one of the centre rooms, which has a teleportal that will take you past the southern stairs. Go south, and you will meet Count Strahd. He will attack, so zap him a few times with the Holy Symbol of Ravenkind. Pick up the amulet of Helm, and use the Catalogue to end the game.

ULTIMA VIII

For those of you who missed last month's rather scatty *Ultima* VIII: *Pagan* solution, the eponymous Mr C. Lee has come up with a set of maps for the stuck traveller. Those still in want of written hints should phone our tips line on 071 917 7689 (Wednesdays 2 to 6pm) for full personal advice. ☞

MYST



The great debate hotly continues. Is *Myst* a great game, a TruePlayer's wet dream of adventuring, exploring, puzzle-solving and generally wandering around in a fully-rendered daze? Or, is *Myst* just another in the long cycle of "interactive CD games", characterised by beautiful graphics and sound, and the phrase "nought gameplay"? Who, frankly, gives a damn? It's a game. It's hard. It's got to be solved somewhere along the line. It's Dennis Kwek who sent the first solution. Say no more.

THE PROBLEM with *Myst* is that you start off totally clueless. You have to walk around Myst Island gathering clues and piecing together the complex story of Atrus and his sons, Sirrus and Achenar. Once you've sussed the ins and outs of the story you have to decide who is telling the truth and who is fibbing, and free the truthful one.

MYST ISLAND, IMAGER FORE-CHAMBER

Explore the island for a while to get to grips with the layout and control system. You'll see, as you progress, various wooden switches. These are Marker Switches and should be flipped whenever you encounter one. From the dock at the start, touch the door to the left of the sunken ship and enter the tunnel. You'll find yourself in the Imager Fore-Chamber. Turn around and notice a panel with a note recessed in the wall. It reads:

Topographical Extrusion Test	40
Water-Turbulent Pool	67
Marker Switch Diagram	47

Open the panel and play around with the controls. The arrow keys will allow you to choose certain numbers; the red button will bring them up into view. Give the Marker Switch Diagram a good long look – they're important in this game. When you bore of this toy, head back to the dock and move along the path towards the gears on the hill (clicking your first Marker Switch en route). Go up the stairs and turn right.

GEARS HILL, MARKER SWITCHES, ATRUS

There's a Marker Switch at the base of the sunken gear. Switch it up. Go back down the stairs to the T-junction and go straight ahead this time. Turn right to face another flight of stairs. On the path, you'll notice a piece of paper. Grab and read it. The message says to enter the number of Marker Switches around the island onto the Imager panel (eight, in case you wondered). You will also be introduced to the first character in this game, Atrus. Take this opportunity to explore the limits of Myst island, flipping all the market switches you find. Visit all these places:

❶ Image Fore-Chamber, near start of game.
❷ Dock and Sunken Ship (with switch), at start.
❸ Gears Hills (with switch), upstairs from dock.
❹ Planetarium (with switch), upstairs from dock, first building on the right.
❺ Library, upstairs from dock, second building on the right.
❻ Breaker Switch Towers, one to the left of the ramps, the other near the Generator Cave. The switches are on top, accessible by climbing a ladder.
❼ Pillars Garden (with switch), opposite library.
❽ Log Cabin (with switch), not far from Generator Cave, hidden among trees on left side of path from control panel for Clock Tower.
❾ Giant Tall Tree, to the right, behind Log Cabin.
❿ Generator Cave (with switch), brick structure further down path, past the Pillars Garden. Downstairs is the generator room.
⓫ Clock Tower (with inaccessible switch), at the end of the Pillars Garden path.
⓬ Observation Tower, inaccessible except via Library.

Once you've done all this, head back to the imager Forechamber and enter 08 into the panel. This will bring up a message from Atrus to his wife, Catherine, about someone destroying his books. Atrus suspects one of his sons, perhaps Achenar, but he's not too sure. He's hidden the rest of the books for protection.

LIBRARY, MAP, TOWER

Now head for the Library to find a red and blue book resting on pedastals. Put the pages next to the red/blue tomes on the books themselves to see your first glimpse of the brothers. Click on the book to view the message and then go to the map.

The map depicts the various structures around the Myst Island in icon form. Concentric flashing circles mark the position of the tower. Clicking and holding on the tower activates a white beam which roves in an arc around the map. When the beam aligns with a structure it turns red. Align the beam with the Gears Hill icon and then click on the painting left of the bookshelves to open a secret passageway. Go down the passage and into the lift. Click the button labelled "Library" and you'll be taken to the tower.

(Above) The really scary part of the game where you encounter Magnus Magnusson.

Climb the "book plaque" ladder up and see through the viewing slot on top that the tower is now aligned with Gears Hill. Nip down again and ascend the other ladder to find a plaque enscribed with a clue relevant to the currently aligned location. For each location which can be selected on the map, there is a corresponding clue or "access key" to be find on this plaque. You need to discover what each clue is about and where it can be used. Each clue, if used correctly, will lead you to a new Age.

AGE	LOCATION ICON	BOOK
Channelwood	Log Cabin	Top Shelf, far left, green and red cover.
Mechanical	Gears Hill	Bottom Shelf, left, black cover.
Stoneship	Sunken Ship	Top Shelf, far right, blue and red cover.
Sound Age	Spaceship	Middle Shelf, Blue cover.

LOG CABIN, SAFE, FURNACE, TREE

Go to the bookshelves. Take the Channelwood book and copy the diagram on the last page of the book, depicting a village and its connections. Go to the Map. Align the beam with the log cabin. Go to the tower (via the secret passage) and look out to see a giant tree. Climb the other ladder and write down the clue ("7,2,4" in this case).

Now, go to the log cabin and enter 7,2,4 as the combination of the safe. Take the matchbox, light the match, and then click the lit match on the furnace. Turn the right side of the wheel until the furnace fire becomes huge and the wheel will not turn any further. Go outside and look at the tree. The tree is making noisy upward movements. Nip back into the cabin, and turn the left side of the wheel until the furnace is gone. Rush outside to see the tree moving downwards, bringing a platform within reach. When the platform reaches ground level, climb aboard and into an underground room containing the Channelwood book. Click on the book and enter the Channelwood Age.

CHANNELWOOD AGE, FIRST & SECOND LEVEL

On arrival, immediately start drawing a map of your whereabouts. First, move towards the windmill on top of the hill. Note that all pipes and paths lead towards it and at most Y-junctions on this age, there are switches on the floor. Flipping these left or right diverts water to various areas and activates various mechanisms. Once inside the windmill, turn the tap at the base of the watertank. The sound of water should become louder. Exit the mill, and redirect water to the left of the first Y-Junction and then repeat at the next few junctions: right, right, right.

Take the elevator to the next level. The sketched map from the book should come in handy here. Examine the map to see that one hut is connected to the winding stairs by dotted lines. From the lift, go straight to the first hut, then right, right, right, and then straight towards the "connected hut". Inside is a red switch. Pull the handle to open a gate at the top of the winding stairs.

Go down the stairs, click on the gate, and then follow the path towards the first junction. At this junction, redirect the water right towards the windey stairs. Make your way back to the winding stairs, get in the lift, and you'll be brought down to the third level.

THIRD LEVEL, ACHENAR'S ROOM, SIRRUS' ROOM

Exit the lift and follow the walkway to the second room, Achenar's room. Take the blue page on the floor next to the machine. Browse through the messages and then head back to the lift. Follow the walkway beyond the lift to Sirrus' room, where the red page can be found in the drawer of the desk in front of the window. Look at the right drawer under the bed to find half a torn journal page amongst some bottles. *Write it down, word for word. This is very important.* Collect the red page.

Take the lift down to the second level and then the stairs down to ground level. Return to the first junction. Switch the junctions in the following order (starting with the first): left, left, right. This path will lead you to a dead end with lots of pipes. Pull the handle to make the hidden bridge appear. Continue along the walkway to another elevator (the Myst Book elevator) and then turn right, following the second walkway until you reach a dead end. Turn the crank to extend the pipe across the gap. Go all the way back to the first junction and redirect the water in this combination: left, right, right, left. Go back to the Myst Book elevator and ride it to the next level. Click on the book in order to be teleported back to the Myst Library. Put the blue page on the blue book and now watch the message. Then make your way back to the Channelwood Age and retrieve the red page. Put this on the corresponding book and watch Sirrus' message.

CLOCK TOWER, LEVERS

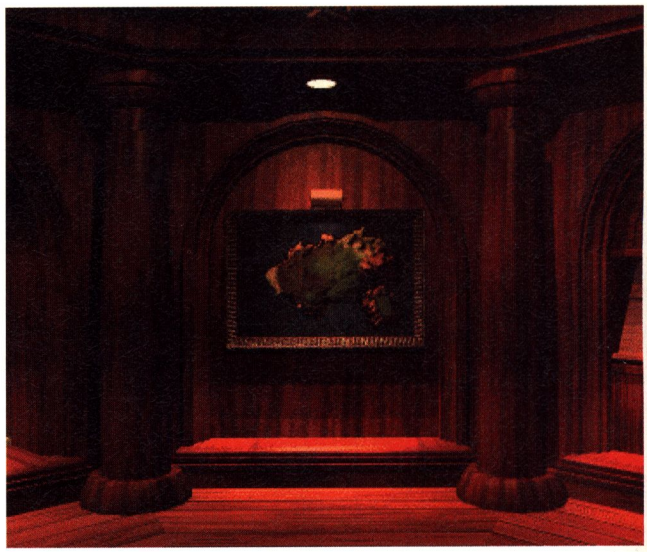
Bring up the map and align the beam with Gears Hill. Check the alignment by taking a peek from the Observation Tower and if everything's okay, read the clue off the plaque. It should read:

2:40
2,2,1

Now go to the clock tower's control panel. The large wheel moves the minute hand in five minute increments; the small wheel moves the hour hand in one hour intervals. Set the clock to 2:40 and push the red button. A gear bridge will rise from the water. Cross the bridge to the clock tower and activate the Marker Switch. Go inside the clock tower and examine the mechanism within. The levers and weights are just one big complex puzzle. Change the settings from 3,3,3 to 2,2,1 thus: pull and release the right lever twice to get "2" as the top number. Hold the left lever down. When "1" appears at the bottom number, wait until until "2" appears at the middle number and then release the lever immediately. Return to Gears Hill to find the main gear open and the Mechanical Age book inside. Teleport.

MECHANICAL AGE, FORTRESS, HIDDEN ROOMS

There are three main islands in this age: North, East and South (where you start), as well as a fortress structure in the centre linking all three. The fortress can be roatated to link the bridge to the East and North islands. The task in this Age is to obtain a two-symbol code from the North and East islands which, when combined,



(Above) If a picture paints a thousand words, there must be an Ozzie mini-series in there.

can be used in the control panel next to the giant gear.

Enter the fortress and explore Sirrus and Achenar's rooms. Each room has a hidden section, containing red and blue pages. In Sirrus' room, click on the metal panel which is almost hidden by the tapestry to the right of the chair, near the floor. The red page is found near the back left corner of the hidden room. A note from Achenar can also be found in the wine rack.

In Achenar's room, there is a Fortress Rotation Simulator. You must practise with this machine. Pushing the left lever activates the rotation mechanism, while the right lever rotates the fortress and bridge. Move the fortress so that the bridge is within the northern quarter of the simulator and then push down the right lever. The fortress will rest into a position with the bridge linked to the north island. IMPORTANT: Try out every quadrant and *note the sound each quadrant generates* (North has a clinking sound, East a springy sound etc). Once you're confident you know what you're doing, click the metal panel marked by a yellow line near the seat. This will bring you to the hidden room where you'll find a blue page on one of the shelves.

ELEVATOR, ROTATION CONTROL, CODES

Move along the back corridor linking the two rooms until you find a red switch and a perpendicular corridor leading to an elevator unit. Press the switch to reveal a hidden staircase leading to the elevator's control room. Press the control panel lever until the two openings in the circles on the left of the lever are lined up. The image will turn red and you can go back up the stairs and press the red button to raise it. Enter the lift.

Press the up button to travel to the top of the shaft. Before exiting, press the bar button. You will hear six beeps, warning you to leave before the sixth beep. The elevator then goes half-way down revealing the actual fortress rotation control panel. It's all the same as the simulator, except you have to rely on sound this time. Rotate the island to the East, exit, trek to the East island, and note the two symbols. Repeat ☞





(Above right) By jove, it's remarkable – a walking, pointing hand! (Above left) Lumberjacks ahoy! Log cabin in sight.

the process for the Northern island. Once you have all four symbols, rotate the fortress to the South Island and return to the control panel. Type in 2,8,5,1 as the combination and you'll have access to a Myst-linking book. Return to Myst and replace the red or blue pages.

CONSTELLATIONS, PILLARS, STONESHIP

On the map, you have to align the beam with the dock and read the clues for the sunken ship:

October 11,1984: 10:04 AM
January 17, 1207: 5:46 AM
November 23, 9791: 6.57 PM

Head for the Planetarium and find the switch near the entrance. Flick the switch to turn off the lights. Sit on the dentist's chair and pull down the mechanism above you. Enter the first date and time into the machine and press the lefthand button. The machine will return a constellation. Take down the details and repeat the process for two remaining dates.

Return to the library, take the blue and red book from the top far-right bookshelf. Turn to the page with the constellation drawings and match them with your sketches. You should discover leaf, snake and insect images. Go to the Pillars Garden and examine each pillar carefully. Click the panels on the pillars depicting the Leaf, Snake and Insect. Go to the dick, onto the boat, and into the cabin to find the StoneShip Age book.

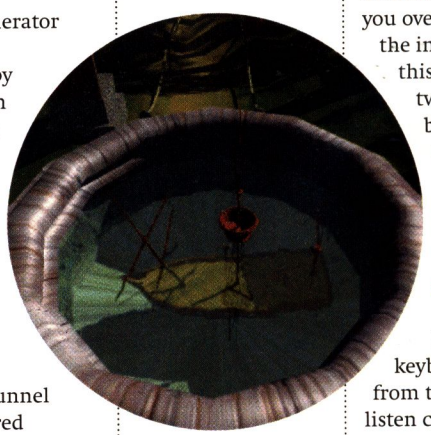
STONESHIP AGE, LIGHTHOUSE, TUNNELS

Explore this new age, making sure you find the telescope, the umbrella crow's nest, the light house, the ship with a flooded cabin, and two flooded tunnels built into the stone walls. In the umbrella nest, find a mechanism with three switches. Only one switch can be activated at once. Each switch will pump water from the following places:

Left – Ship's Cabin
Middle – Stone Tunnels
Right – Lighthouse

Clear water from the lighthouse first. You'll find a key on the wooden walkway and a lock at the top of the ladder, but the key cannot reach the lock. Go downstairs to find a trunk with a tap on the bottom left. Release the water from the trunk and then close the tap to make the trunk air-tight. Go back to the umbrella nest and reflood the lighthouse. Go back and open the trunk with the key to find another key. Now use this second key on the lock above the ladder.

Enter the opening to find a generator with a crank and a rechargable battery. Fully charge the battery by clicking on the cranking and then go to the telescope. Look through the telescope and rotate it until you can see the top of the lighthouse, which is now working. Note down the compass direction (135 degrees). Return to the nest and drain water from the stone tunnels. Enter either of the tunnels and then walk all the way down.



Just before the bottom of the tunnel is a hidden passage marked by a red square. Click on the square, enter the passageway and find yourself in the compass room. Click on the button at 135 degrees. This will activate a submerged light for later on. Return back to the passageway and explore the rooms at the ends of the tunnels. Sirrus' room is elaborately decorated. The red page is in the bottom drawer of his dresser. Achenar's room is more downbeat. Find the blue page under the bed, and look inside the chest of map drawers, especially the second one from the bottom. There you'll find half of a torn journal page. *Write down the message from the page*. You now have the combined pages of the journal describing the Marker Switch Vault Access.

If the tunnels become suddenly dark, it's because the battery has run out. Just fumble your way out and recharge it. Now, go back to the nest and drain the water from the ship cabin. Enter the cabin and go all the way downstairs to find a table. Click on the table to release the Myst book.

VOLTAGE, SPACESHIP

On the map align the beam with the spaceship icon. The clue is 59 volts. Click on the blue book tilted on the middle shelf. Copy the page with the keyboard sequence. Head for the generator cave and examine the poster near the door which gives instructions on the control panel layout. There are 10 switches in all, each with a different voltage. You need to press a combination of switches to total 59 volts. If you overshoot, the generators will trip and the indicators will flip back to zero. If this happens, nip out and check the two Breaker Towers to see which one's been tripped and flip it back up. The correct combination is:

Left Row: Button 1 (10v), Button 3 (18v)
Right Row: Button 3 (22v), Button 4 (19v)

Enter the Spaceship and go to the keyboard. Play the sequence as copied from the book on to the keyboard and listen carefully to the sequence of notes. Go to the panel and move the sliding bars until you have the same tune. When all five have been entered correctly, push the lever down. The book will appear so waste no time and teleport to the Sound Age.

SOUND AGE, TRANSMITTERS

Exit the spaceship and walk along the path until you reach a door with a control panel. Your task in this Age is to enter the 5-sound sequence into the panel to open the door. There are five important locations in this Age which correspond to the sound sequence:

❷.WATER POOL

Take one step past the door, turn left and follow the brick path to the end. You'll find a pool of water and a blue page on a platform. Switch on the transmitter here and note the sound.



❷. CHASM

Step past the door and follow the brick path until you reach a platform situated over a fire chasm. Switch on the transmitter and note the sound.

❸. CLOCK TOWER

Step past the door, and go straight on until you reach a beach. Turn right to see the clock tower. Activate the transmitter and note the sound.

❹. STONE STRUCTURES

Go past the clock tower and you will reach a Y-junction. Take the right path to a "bridge" bringing you to a platform. The red page is on top of the podium. Switch on transmitter and note the sound. Grab the red page.

❺. WIND WELL

Take the left path of the junction until you reach a well with the sound of air coming out. The podium is behind. Note the ladder going down the well and turn on that transmitter to note the sound.

MAIN RECEIVER STATION, MAZE

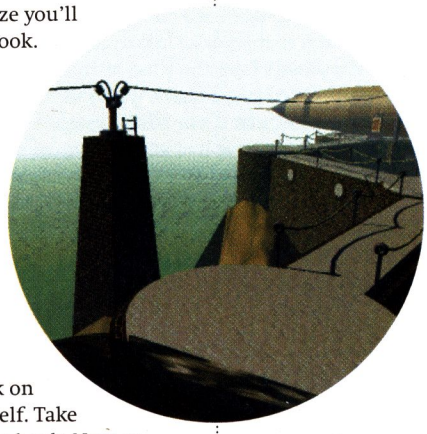
Click on the red button on each location's podium to activate the transmitter and note the image icon for each locale as well as the sound. Once you've done each location, climb down the wind well's ladder. Switch on the lights at the bottom and follow the tunnel until you reach another ladder. Climb the ladder to reach the main receiver station. Click on the steel doors to reveal the control panel. The panel has an image viewer, left and right buttons, a LED display showing degree of turn, and the five symbols from the five locations. You have to move the central receivers until you tune into the five locale's sound waves. The correct sequence and degrees for the locations are:

1. STONE STRUCURES	15.0
2. WATER POOL	153.4
3. WIND WELL	212.2
4. CHASM	130.3
5. CLOCK TOWER	55.6

Once the sounds are locked in, press the Sigma button. A sound sequence will be played. Take note of the order the sounds are played.

Go back to the door and enter the correct sound sequence. Then click on the button to open the door. Follow the passage until you reach a submarine-like car. Get inside and go forward into the maze. Four sounds represent the four cardinal directions (N is glassy clink, E fizz sound, S muted clank, and W "trwee"). Now try the following sequence to get out: N, W, N, E, E, S, S, W, SW, W, NW, NE, N, SE.

At the end of the maze you'll find the Myst-linking book. Transport back to Myst and go back for the second page if you wish. But I wouldn't – because we're at the...



(Above) The wishing well from hell, and the ladder means, you're going down it.

CONCLUSION

The last page collected from the final Age will reveal a message from either brother to look at: pattern 158 of the book on the far right middle shelf. Take down the pattern in the book. Now go to the dock and flip off the dock Marker Switch. If all eight of your switches were intially turned on, turning off this switch will reveal a hidden compartment containing a white page. Bring the white page back to the library and enter the fireplace. Press the red switch and enter the pattern 158 onto the door, and then click the button again. The fireplace is actually a lift which will take you to a hidden chamber. There you will find a red page, a blue page and a green book. Now save the game.

Should you believe Sirrus' words, you will take the red page back to the library. If Achenar is more your type of man, then take the blue page. If neither chap strikes you as particularly convincing, open the green book and click on Atrus' picture. Listen to the message. Now follow the rest to the end. Amen.

TIPS

1)Your five main tasks are:
a) Explore Myst Island, extrapolating clues from the Observation Tower to allow access to other "Ages".
b) Bring blue and red pages back from each Age back to the Library, place them in their respective books, and read the imprinted messages.
c) Find and examine two halves of a torn journal page to access the Marker Switch Vault on Myst Island.
d) Discover the access code to a secret compartment in the Library where you make the final choices.
e) Choose whether to listen to the brothers and free one, listen to Atrus and save him, or leave them to be damned in their own forsaken hells. A tricky decision to make.

2) Make sure you examine every single book in the Library and jot down important notes, especially diagrams and drawings.

3) Before trekking into an alternative Age, save the game. The only way to return to Myst island is to find a way back, using notes from the Myst Library books. It's prudent then to have a savegame at the library so you can return at any point to consult the books

4) Myst is non-linear. You can do the Ages in any order.

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HELP FILE

MEMORY MANAGEMENT

Welcome to Help File – a new series that sets out to tackle some of the more technical aspects of playing games on your PC, and identifying software that may help. This month Laurence Scotford investigates the thorny problem of memory and looks at the leading memory management software.

UNDOUBTEDLY, the biggest headache for PC game players is memory. It can be extremely frustrating for new PC owners to spend a good deal of money on a machine with upwards of 8MB of memory, only to get it home, load up a game and have it come to a grinding halt with an "out of memory" error message. The sad fact is, it doesn't matter how much memory you add to your machine, it won't stop you getting memory errors.

Oh those memory blues

Why, you may be wondering, is a sophisticated device like the PC so difficult to get working? Surely you should be able to add memory as you need it and access it immediately when you next switch the machine on. The answer has to do with the fact that the PC is actually quite an ancient machine – 12 years old, going on 13, in fact.

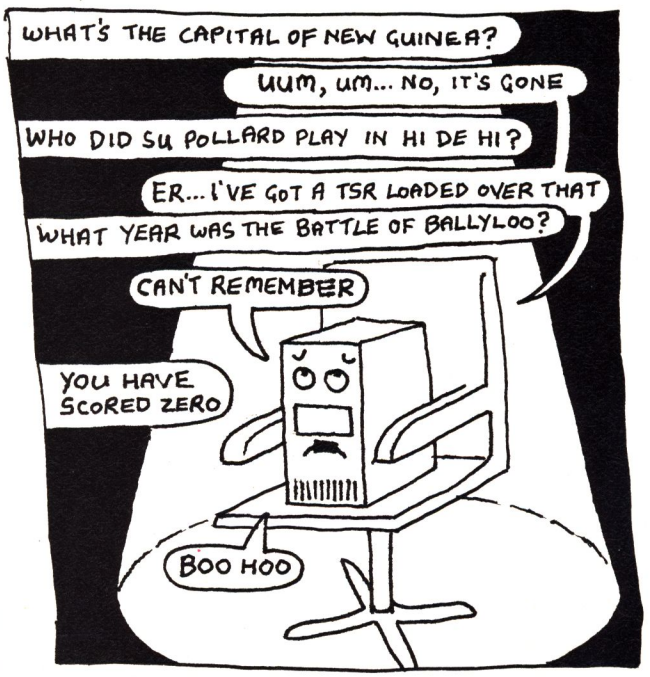
In its original incarnation, the PC came equipped with a measly 256KB of memory and, at that time, it was never envisaged that anyone would require more than 1MB of memory, so that was fixed as the upper limit. Even then, the programs that were run on the machine could not access more than 640KB of that memory because the remainder was needed to store video images and other system data.

Eventually it became apparent that 640KB was inadequate for some of the more sophisticated applications that were appearing, but fortunately, Lotus, Intel and Microsoft – three of the major players in the PC world – came up with a trick by which extra memory could be added to the machine. This was known as the Expanded Memory Specification and not only did it require a specialised bit of hardware, it was also a very complex and slow way of going about things.

Another twist entered the tale with the advent of Intel's 80286 processor. This gave rise to a new breed of PCs that had the capacity to directly access that extra memory. Memory used in this fashion is known as Expanded Memory. PCs can now run in one of two modes: Real Mode, in which the normal memory constraints apply, and Protected Mode in which all the available memory can be directly addressed.

Managing your memory

With time and effort it is possible to learn how the different memory formats work, and set up your PC to provide the maximum amount of free memory. Unfortunately, most of us don't have the time or the inclination to do this. Fortunately, we don't have to. If you've got DOS 6.0 or a later version, you may already have had some exposure to memory management software in the form of HIMEM.SYS and EMM386.EXE, which are the drivers that actually allocate and manage the memory, and MEMMAKER, a utility that tries to arrange things so that you get as much free memory as possible below the magic 640KB barrier. But it is possible to go even further than this. To do so, you need some specialised memory management utilities like Quarterdeck's QEMM.



Memory problems can be very upsetting, but not if you use memory management software.

CARTOON: Duncan MacDonald

What does QEMM do?

QEMM's main element is a special memory driver that replaces both HIMEM.SYS and EMM386.EXE. This program allocates memory to the other programs you run as they require it. You do not have to specify in advance whether that memory is to be set up as Expanded or Extended, because QEMM waits to see which sort of memory programs require and then allocates it dynamically. So, you never have to change the contents of your CONFIG.SYS file and reboot your machine between games.

When QEMM is installed it automatically scans your system and tries hundreds of millions of combinations to find the best fit for all the different device drivers and TSRs that you use. These are things like your mouse driver, CD-ROM driver and so on. QEMM performs some clever tricks to squeeze these programs into unused space between the 640KB barrier and the 1MB limit. This frees up more space where your programs really need it.

QEMM goes a lot further than most memory management packages because it uses special stealth techniques that can free up memory that is normally used by ROMs and disk-compression drivers like DoubleSpace. A large area of memory is normally reserved for use by your video card. But not all of this memory may be needed when you are using certain graphic modes. A utility called VIDRAM takes advantage of this.

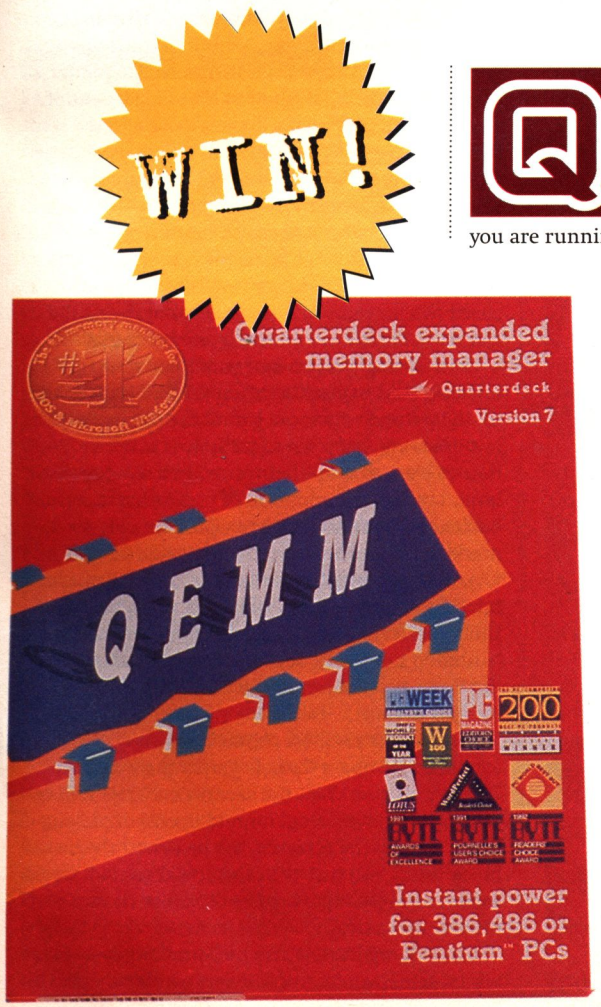
Will QEMM innnt...er...ferr...re?

Normally, the only effect that QEMM will have on your games is to make them run more efficiently. However, with such a sophisticated piece of software, problems can sometimes occur. Fortunately, QEMM has utilities that can help you overcome any problems you encounter. A set-up program lets you configure QEMM exactly as you like, turning off individual features in the unlikely event that they prove problematic. In addition, a separate utility called Manifest analyses your memory needs and gives you detailed reports on the exact state of your system.

WIN!

A FREE COPY OF QEMM GAME PACK

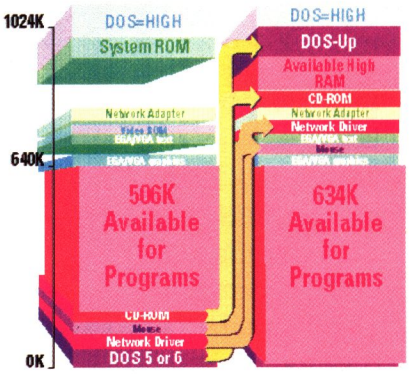
Now you know how much easier memory management software can make the sometimes fraught task of installing and running games, perhaps you'd like to try some? Fortunate it is for you then that we're giving away five copies of the QEMM game pack, with five copies of QEMM version 7 for the runners-up.



QEMM is the leading memory management software and is ideal for squeezing every last byte of available memory out of your machine when you are running those power-hungry games. QEMM is perfect for game players because it doesn't require any technical knowledge. When you install QEMM it will automatically configure itself in the most appropriate way for your machine, all by itself.

Power users, however, will find that they can control every last detail of the way their memory is used, if they so wish.

To win yourself a copy of Quarterdeck's QEMM, just answer the three simple questions that follow. Then all you have to do is fill in and return the coupon. The first five correct entries will win a copy of the QEMM games bundle comprising a copy of QEMM version 7, *Shadowcaster* and *Privateer*. The next five correct entries will win a copy of QEMM version 7.



Before and after. How Qemm maximises memory use on your machine.

1. What does QEMM stand for?
(a) Quarterdeck Expensive Memory Manager.
(b) Quarterdeck Expanded Memory Manager.
(c) Quality Extensive Memory Manager.

2. QEMM will help me manage memory if:
(a) I have only 1MB or less.
(b) I have spare memory sockets in my machine.
(c) However much memory I have.

3. Which of these is not a type of PC memory?
(a) Virtual memory.
(b) Extended memory.
(c) Jumbo memory.

RULES

1. This competition is not open to employees of Dennis Publishing, Quarterdeck, or associated companies.
2. The closing date for this competition is August 5 1994.
3. The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.
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To buy or not to buy? Value for money or a load of crap. Games with other names and a nightmare on PC street. Anyone who ever thought game players had it easy has obviously never delved into the bulging *PC Zone* postbag.

Drive Talkin'

I RECENTLY bought *SimCity 2000* and after minimal alterations to my config.sys and autoexec.bat I was up and running and ready to build my dream city. The disk whirred in the drive and I was duly impressed with the snappy intro and the gripping soundtrack (although it does get on your nerves after a while).

Then suddenly, as I chose the "New City" option, it happened. A clear, female American voice said, "Reticulating Spline".

Eh?

Now, tell me if I'm wrong, but any of you's out there know what it meant the first time you started it up?

"Who cares what it means?" I hear you cry. Well, I didn't, until I came home from my first Standard Grade exam and decided to look it up.

After flicking through my trusty *Oxford Companion* I came up with the following: "The division or dividing of lines into squares – creating square boxes from x and y lines."

Okay, *SimCity 2000* is made from a planometric view of tiny wee squares – but what's the point? Why does some bugging voice have to slowly and casually say (yawn) "Reticulating Spline"?

Why can't she just say something like "Hang on while we load into memory"? Even a simple "Please wait" would suffice.

Oh, and before I forget, *Mr Cursor*, in your article on *Robocop* and all the freaking mother blasting swear words...you forgot one: Mother-Crusher!

Thanks for a brilliant mag.

Neil Henderson, Edinburgh

Well, you live and learn don't you? Not every game can claim to help you extend your vocabulary and be groundbreakingly original and playable at the same time, now can it?

With more and more games now being written and enhanced for CD-ROM, the use of speech is becoming an almost compulsory requisite to the extent that people now expect speech on a CD-ROM version of a game or feel incredibly cheated, especially with RPGs. Admittedly, it's not always used to great effect, and the voices are sometimes a little tedious (and some can be down right annoying), but it goes with the territory doesn't it – remember all the fuss about the Maestro? **Ed.**

Long live the 486 & CD-Rom!

I WAS JUST reading through my old issues of *PC Zone* the other day (it's amazing what boredom can do isn't it?) and I noticed that many people seem to be very against upgrading their PCs.

I mean – if you want all the latest technology in software you should expect to have to fork out for sound cards, CD-ROM drives, etc., especially if you're a fan of Origin and the like.

When I see things like "Long live the 386!" and people getting upset that some software companies will only be releasing stuff on CD in the future, requiring a minimum SVGA, it makes me wonder why PC owners are so reluctant to accept that things change. Is it really such a crime to produce better games as the years go by that make full use of the latest technology? Compare the original *Ultima* game with the latest *Ultima VIII* for example. Now that's what I call progress!

And yes, I know that all this lovely hardware costs hard-earned dosh, but do people really expect software companies to just stop developing games for new hardware and produce the same old thing time and time again? Let's face it, some companies just don't get any better, look at *Deamonsgate* for example! If they did stop, we'd all get bored and stop buying them and that would be that!

It's important to remember that Software houses do have a business to run, and as technology continues to develop at such a terrific rate, it's important to keep in touch with the way the industry is going. People expect more and more from games now, and software houses can't afford to sit back in the eighties – it's 1994 for Chrisake!

Oh, I almost forgot. Your mag's brilliant and I love it (licky, licky).

Mina Krishnan, Warlingham, Surrey

The issue of bigger and better games that require bigger and better machines is a subject that most PC owners have an opinion on and we get loads of letters on the subject every week. The fact that PC hardware technology is moving so fast is a good indication of the state of the industry and means that PC owners are usually the first to benefit from the latest innovations in software development. This may seem like poor consolation to all those 286 owners out there, but unlike many other machines (including consoles), the PC was designed with the facility to be upgraded and updated, making it to a certain extent, "future proof".

Increasing your RAM, changing your processor or buying a CD-ROM drive is never going to cost you peanuts, but at least it is a feasible option. With this in mind, many hardware manufacturers are now keen to promote their machines as "future proof" and "Pentium upgradeable" in an attempt to persuade potential buyers (many of whom are now resorting to upgrading to a better machine altogether) that they won't be left behind.

There are still some very good 386 games out there, although these are becoming scarcer by the minute. At the end of the day, it all boils down to a matter of taste: if you like to play the latest games, you have to have the latest hardware to run it. **Ed.**

Dreaming Of Me

I'M WRITING to open up a few topics that I feel need to be discussed by the readers of *PC Zone*.

1. I don't agree with paying £40 to £50 for a piece of software that I might only play for a couple of hours and I would like to ask software houses to take the lead of Maxis and commercially release a demo disk of their software for people to try. I bought the *SimCity 2000* demonstration disk, and after seeing what the game was like, I paid out the full £35 price tag.

I didn't mind paying that much as the amount of work that had gone into the software justified the price to me, but when software companies are spending six-figure sums to get hold of a film license, then spend only a fraction of this on the development of the game, I think that it's wrong.

2. Now that CD-ROM drives are becoming more popular (a recent poll showed that 30 per cent of PC owners already own a CD-ROM drive and a further 40 per cent are expected to buy one by the end of the year), will the price of software fall due to the demise of software piracy of the disks? For over a decade now the software industry has blamed the high price of software on piracy, but now that software is becoming increasingly CD based (where there is little or no piracy), can the companies continue to use the same excuse?

Considering that CD-ROM games are now very difficult (and expensive) to copy, I find it difficult to understand why some games are put out with a jaw-breaking £70 price tag. Surely if software houses were to drop their prices to a more realistic level, say £20, the adoption of CD-ROM drives would become more intense, there would be a bigger market and more CD-ROM games would be sold.

3. I've been reading *Mr Cursor*'s amusing tales of how the excellent *Doom* (please ID, don't convert this wonderful game across to any other platform; Nintendo has *Mario*, Sega has *Sonic* and now the PC has *Doom* as its killer product) has been creeping into his dreams.

I would like to relate to you how several years ago, after getting a Gameboy with the excellent *Tetris* game free, I had the same effect after falling asleep or daydreaming. I would dream of playing *Tetris*, picture the screen in my head and then a block would fall just as in the actual game. I would even find myself moving the blocks to fit into each other automatically.

Many of my friends also had similar experiences, whilst some would even convert similar shapes in

their dreams (such as houses) into blocks!

Have any other readers had similar experiences? I'd love to know if there are any bed-time Larry Laffers, James Ponds or Lemmings out there!

Finally, any plans to release a CD version of *PC Zone*? I'm afraid I've resorted to buying inferior rival mags for their free CD cover disks. Am I normal?

Richard Ruane, Pandy, Gwent

You've covered a number of hot topics in your letter and I'm sure that others share your views. First, demo versions are an excellent way of telling whether a game is up your street or not, and this is why we try and get as many as we can for our own cover disks. However, not all games can be condensed in a way that makes them playable (i.e. games which rely on strong graphics, especially some RPG's) what is more, due to the increase in popularity of CD-ROM only games, full working demos are not always viable due to the vast amount of info needed just to set the scene, move around etc. As a result, some companies feel that in releasing a demo that doesn't feature all or most of the game's features, they are selling themselves short.

With regards to CD-ROMs, piracy and prices – it would be nice if it does happen. And dreams? Are you getting enough sleep? Try laying off the coffee and cheese before bedtime? And to answer you're final question, keep taking the tablets and keep buying PC Zone *– Our first CD-ROM issue was out last month, check out this month's CD cover disk for more great games.* **Ed.**

Shareware Surprise

I AM WRITING in reply to Paul Wick's letter about shareware being of poor quality. Where has he been the past few years? If he tried out some of the latest shareware he would find that the standard is very high. Admittedly, some rubbish gets through, but the other 95 per cent is very good. Just to give a few examples, look at *Doom* and *Epic Pinball* – both are of exceptional quality. Whilst *Wolfenstein*, which was originally shareware, is now being distributed by Mindscape for £29.99.

I believe that if shareware can become distributed by a leading software company, many game players will be in for a few pleasant surprises. It would be very interesting to see what appears on the shareware market during the next year or so if this does happens.

In the mean time, I suggest that Mr Wicks takes a look at the specifications for some of the new shareware games: 256 colour VGA/SVGA graphics, AdLib/Sound Blaster (Pro), 386/486 processor – clearly an indication that shareware is not stuck in a primitive rut.

I hope that shareware keeps going from strength to strength: it can only get better!

Thomas Saul, Farnborough, Hampshire

So do we! The quality of shareware has certainly improved over the years, and it's great to see so much around. Even a brief glance at the stuff in our Off The Boards *section every month should be enough to convince anyone that the shareware market is very much alive. There is some excellent software on offer out there, much of which can be played on very modest machines, though as you point out, hardware specifications are rising all the time, even for shareware.* **Ed.**

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Buy Now (And Pay Dearly Later?)

I know that this might seem like an unanswerable $64,000 question, but I'm desperate for some advice. Basically, should I buy a PC now or should I wait? I went into my local high street electrical store and was fobbed off by some smooth talking salesman who left me more confused than ever! I know things are changing in the PC world quickly at the moment and there is a lot of talk about the 386 being almost redundant, but how long before the now prescribed "entry level" 486SX-25 goes the same way?

Should I blow the whole lot on a CD-ROM multimedia package or go for a flashier 486DX and wait a while 'til I can afford a CD-ROM drive and sound card? I'm now completely confused after talking to this salesman, who I fear was not being entirely objective. Could you therefore possibly look into your crystal ball and tell me what you think I should do?

Mark Randall, Norwich

Choosing a PC is a nerve wracking experience. Basically, it depends on how much you've got to spend and what you expect your PC to do.

There is going to be a shift in the market very soon and this is largely due to Intel (the main manufacturer of 486 processors) acting against what they see as a new range of competitors. On one level, they are up against an increasing number of viable 486 processors from many companies, whilst on another, their flagship Pentium processor is being challenged by the Power PC. This is based on a completely different processor that will run MS DOS and Windows software at approximately the same speed as a fast 486.

Although the Power PC threat is unlikely to be a serious threat until later next year, Intel are acting now before it arrives. Consequently, they have dropped the price of their 486DX2-66 processor by about 20 per cent and as a result the entry level machine (currently a 486SX) will soon jump up to a 486DX-33 or better as prices continue to drop.

Come the near future, it would not be unfeasible to suggest that the 486DX2-66 (currently the top-end 486) will move down to the "entry level" slot, itself being replaced by the new DX-4, whilst the Pentium will remain at the top of the PC ladder, selling at the "around £1500" mark. This means that what is now termed as the "entry level" PC , the 486SX, will soon fall off the bottom rung, closely followed by the 486DX-33.

As for CD-ROM drives, the current "standard" is double speed and you can now pick up a basic drive for around £120 if you shop around. This should cope with just about anything on the games market at the moment, though if you can afford it go for something higher. The same really applies to buying a sound card – go for the best you can afford and check for compatibility.

The 486SX-25 is not dead by a long shot and will cope with much of what is on offer in the games market at the moment, although this is changing. You can currently buy an adequate 486SX-25 motherboard for under £100, so if you're intending to upgrade your existing machine, now is the time to do it. If you're looking to buy first time it might be best to wait. If you must buy now, shop around for the best deal and go for the best machine you can afford, otherwise you could be waiting forever. **Ed.**

God Bless Uncle Sam

I HAVE so far only read two copies of your magazine and am very impressed by it. Your reviews are excellent and it's the first magazine I've come across with so many reviews. I do though, have a few things to point out and ask.

1. In your CD-ROM review you featured a game called *Sports Stars* from Revell. I have the exact game except that it's called *Revell Power Modeller European Racers*. What gives?

2. This guy *Mr Cursor* – what is his role in the magazine? His articles are on food, friends, etc., and nothing to do with computers and nothing really meaningful on games at all.

3. No offence by this, but some articles and letters you publish are very pro English and anti the rest of the world (a bit like Nigel Mansell). It doesn't really bother me at all as I am from South Africa and there are no programmers here who are world renown for their work. However, you must surely admit that even though you have a few good game developers, the best are from the USA. Since you are gamers and not politicians, I think that you should not put the Americans down so much, as without them we would certainly be lacking much of the best software around today.

4. Finally, there are a few games I would like to get (based on your reviews), but you only supply telephone numbers and no addresses with your reviews. This makes it a little impractical (and costly) when phoning from abroad, so I would appreciate it if you could include addresses with your reviews so that I can write for ordering information. The game I really want (and yes, I know it's from English developers) is *Body Blows* from Team 17 – this game is great. Could you supply me with their address?

Thanks again for a top of the tops magazine.

Peter Savva, Naboomspruit, South Africa

It's good to see that the world's favourite PC games magazine is reaching the four corners of the globe! To answer your question regarding Sports Stars *from Revell, many software publishers release software under different names according to where it is released. For example, what we will know in the UK as* Real World Football *from Infogrames (featured last month) will be known as* Planet Soccer *in France where the game was originally developed, and probably something else altogether in the USA – it all depends on how the game is marketed in different countries.*

As for PC Zone *being anti-USA, you couldn't be more wrong as our recent features on American programmers and computer trade shows demonstrate. It would be foolish to ignore what goes on in the States; they continue to take the lead on many of the innovations in the software and hardware market, it's just that, well, being British, we have to have a bit of a niggle every now and then. I blame World Cup '94!*

Information on Team 17 *can be obtained from Team 17 Software Development, 6 St Johns Square, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF1 2QX, England. Fax: 0924 385904.*

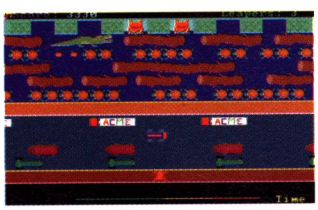
Oh, and leave Mr Cursor *alone! His great grandfather's sister-in-law was half American and you shouldn't pick on Americans.* **Ed.**

OFF THE BOARDS

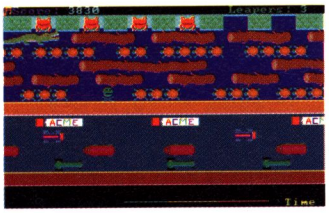
Add stormtroopers to *Doom*, see how far your mouse travels in a day, play *Asteroids*, blow up nuclear power stations and get busy with *Meccano*. Mark Burgess looks at the best, latest and weirdest shareware.

LEAPER

AT LAST, a proper version of *Frogger*, the old arcade game where you guided a frog across a highway and from log to log. Hazards include trucks, snakes and straight forward drowning, however, you can collect a bonus by jumping on the lady frog. There was a version of *Frogger* for XTs ages ago, but it runs too fast on modern machines. This one by Lee Chapel will run on 386s, 486s and so on. You can change the colour of the frog and opt for either joystick or keyboard control. A nice implementation with a high score table and everything you need to recapture those good old days in the SU bar. There is a separate version available for SCGA.



Do something useful with your computer: see a frog across the road.



Freeware from: Lee Chapel.
Registration: None ($15 donation appreciated).
Needs: 286 or better, 16MHZ or faster, VGA.
Supports: Joystick.

BLAST

A SIMPLE horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up. The controls are either keyboard (which you can only re-configure in the full version) or joystick. Collecting power ups will give you better weaponry and shields. An undemanding arcade game which plays loosely like *Galaxians*.
Shareware from: Cyberware.
Registration: £15.

Hurtle through the unregistered universe in Blast.



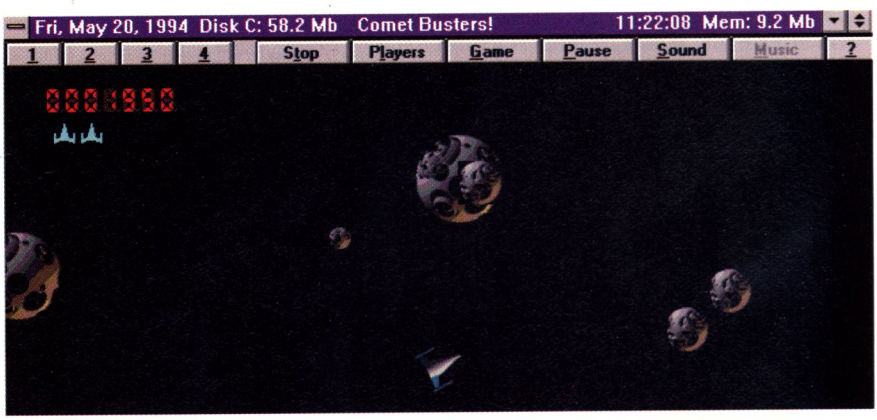
COMET BUSTERS



ANOTHER *Asteroids* clone for *Windows*. This is one of the best, with smooth raytraced graphics. There are three levels of difficulty and you can alter the attributes of the ship. The asteroids range from simple rocks to pool balls, sea urchins and eyeballs, and things can get very tough indeed. It still isn't as smooth as any of the DOS versions or Microsoft's own licensed version. But it is very pretty.
Shareware from: Steven E Hugg for Hamco Software.
Registration: $9.
Needs: Anything that runs *Windows 3.1*.

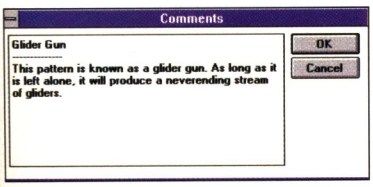


Out of this world graphics in the latest Asteroids clone.

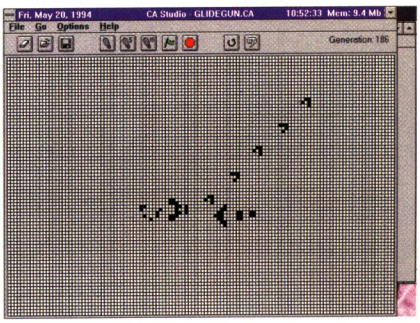


C.A. STUDIO

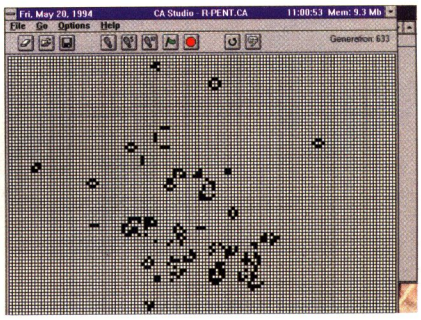
THERE are many versions of Conway's life – I reviewed six in issue seven alone. You'll have come across the thing I mean. Blobs on your computer screen reproduce and evolve according to a set of rules formulated in 1970 by the Cambridge mathematician, John Conway. A new version has just been released by Toggle Booleans, famous for their *Elvis Detector*. *CA Studio* is a *Windows* program and the best implementation of the game of *Life* until the next one comes along. Lots of classic forms to load and the ability to add on-line comments to those you design yourself. Registration brings the latest version and a screen saver.



Shareware from: Toggle Booleans.
Registration: $20.
Needs: Anything that runs *Windows 3.1*.

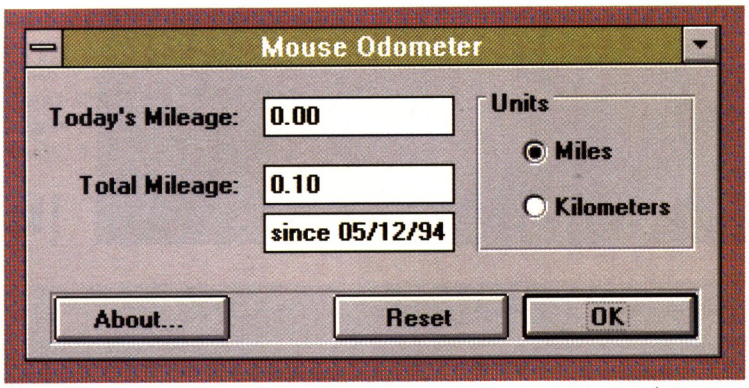


(Above) The glider gun going about its business. (Below) The r-pentimino after 633 generations.



MOUSE ODOMETERS

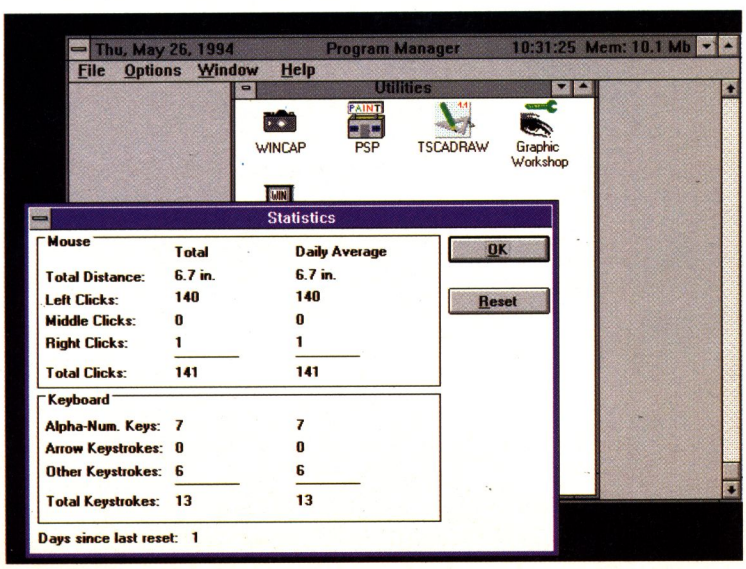
How far does your mouse travel each day? Not a burning question, I admit. Two programs will help you bore your friends. Both are called *Mouse Odometer*.



Find out what your right hand does all day.

THE FIRST is shareware from Calvin Wong, and it measures how far the mouse has travelled since a certain date, in either miles or kilometres. The unregistered version only counts up to one (mile or kilometre) and is of limited use.
Shareware from: Calvin Wong.
Registration: $10.
Needs: Anything that runs *Windows 3.1*.

THE SECOND is freeware from Toggle Booleans. It gives a running total in inches of distance travelled and a readout of miles/kilometres travelled plus the number of left/right clicks and key presses. How useful! And it's free.
Freeware from: Toggle Booleans.
Needs: Anything that runs *Windows 3.1*.



Ever wondered how far your mouse travels and how many clicks you make in a day? No? Well, some sad programmer did, hence the Mouse Odometers.

WHAT IS PUBLIC DOMAIN AND SHAREWARE?

PUBLIC DOMAIN

This is software that's free. You can copy and distribute it as you like. The only conditions are: that you do not pass the work off as your own; do not incorporate it in another program without due credit; and, of course, that you do not charge money for something you have got for nothing.

SHAREWARE

This is software that asks for a registration fee, either after a specific time or "if found useful". The fee varies enormously and you are morally obliged to pay it or stop using the program. Although it is true that many programs ask you to send $5.00 to an address in Wichita, a leading shareware author recently estimated that about 90 per cent of users don't register. Registration brings the latest version of the program, a place on the mailing list for updates and, often, a properly-printed manual – not to mention a warm glow of moral satisfaction.

OTHERS

Bannerware/Adware. This is a program where the author does not ask for any payment but reserves copyright. This means that you have a free license to use and copy the game.

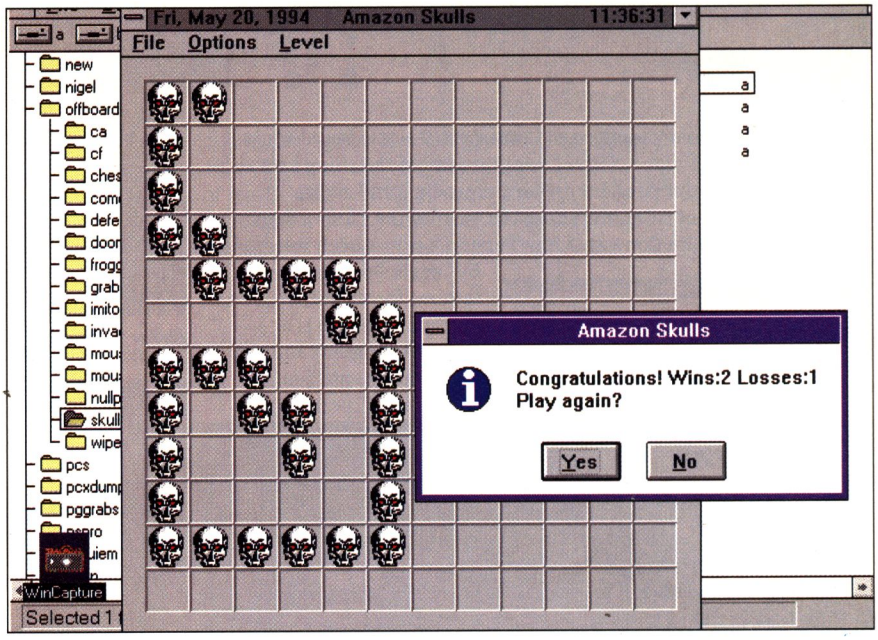
DEMONSTRATIONS

Many commercial software houses will release a playable demo of their latest games so that you have some idea of what to expect for your £50.00. Not often found in libraries, they tend to live on the cover of magazines or on bulletin boards.

WHAT DO YOU GET?

The disk should contain a file called READ.ME or README.1ST. Read it by typing TYPE README.1ST| MORE. There will also be some sort of batch (.BAT) file. Typing in the name of it should load the program. Most programs will come in archived form. This is because the library is trying to fit as much information as possible on a 760K disk. The files will have extensions like .ARC, .ARJ, .LHA, .PAK, .ZIP or occasionally, .ZOO, but the disk will come with a program which will decompress the files, together with instructions on how to use it.

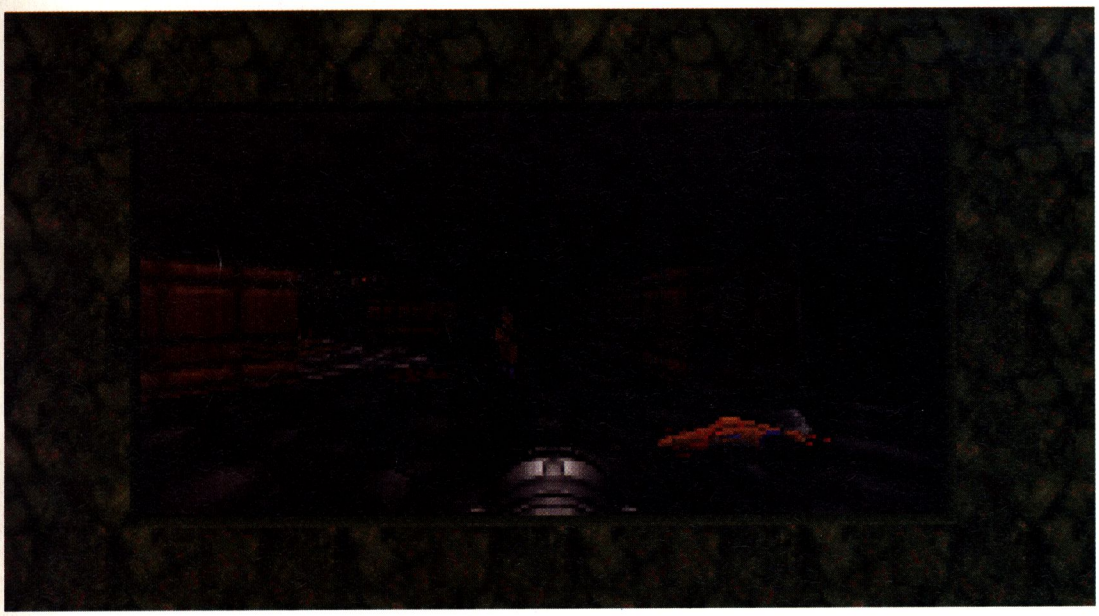
AMAZON SKULLS



When Amazonian tribes aren't posing for photo opportunities with Sting or Anita Roddick, they play this great game with human skulls. Each player takes turns to place a skull on a playing board. The skull must be placed so that it touches the last skull played and no other. The winner is the person who makes the last valid move. The loser – in the old days, anyway – gets his head added to the playing pieces. This is a good computer version of the game by those wacky Canadians at Toggle Booleans. It's based on a description by fractal wizard, Clifford Pickover, in his book *Computers and the Imagination*. A bit of strategy, a lot of luck and a welcome change from *Minesweeper*.

Freeware from: Toggle Booleans.

Needs: Anything that runs *Windows 3.1*.



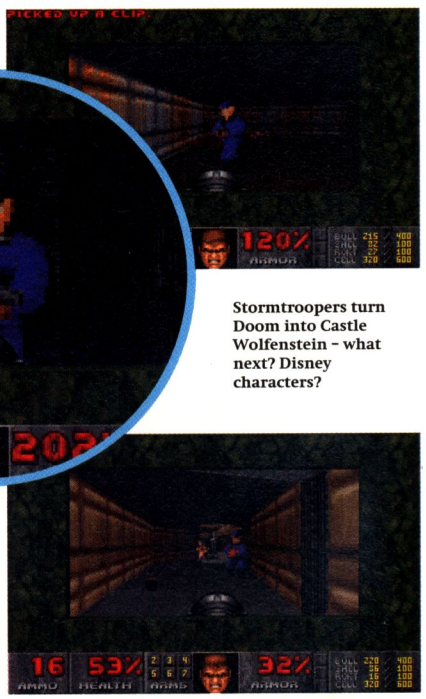
WOLFDOOM

Last month's combination of *Doom* and *PacMan* was heady stuff, but now there is a program that replaces all the *Doom* soldiers with the Nazis from *Wolfenstein*. Just type in **load** and all the original *Doom* graphics are backed up and then the game starts as usual. Type **unload** and the whole game is restored to the status quo ante. Of course, you can replace all the demons with PacMan and all the guards with Nazis at the same time. Minimal documentation and no credits.

Freeware

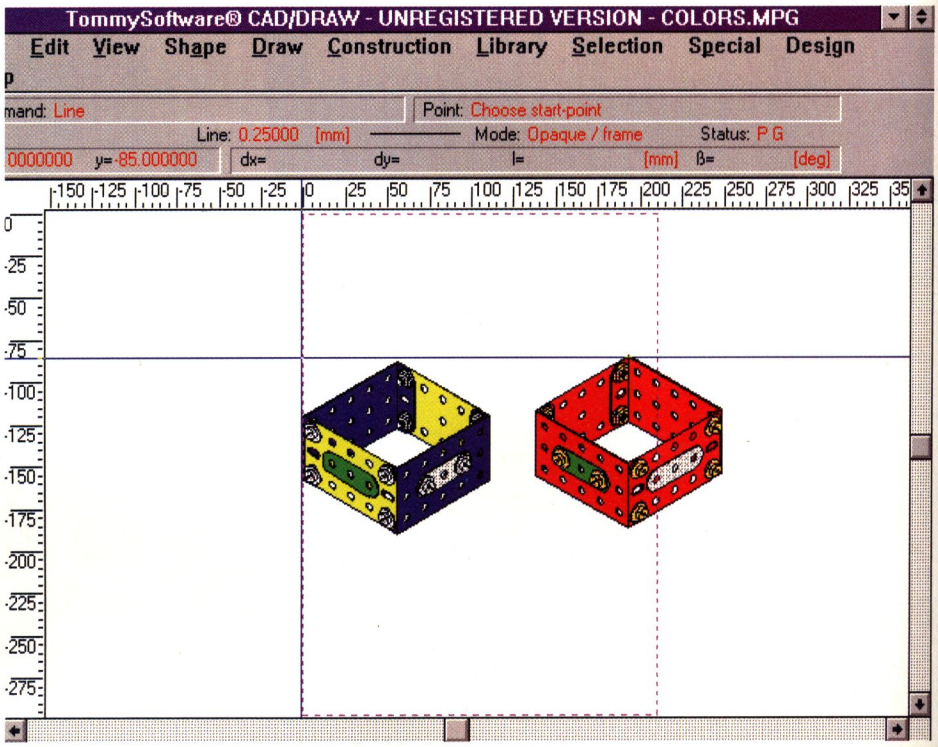
Needs: *Doom* (registered or shareware).





Stormtroopers turn Doom into Castle Wolfenstein – what next? Disney characters?

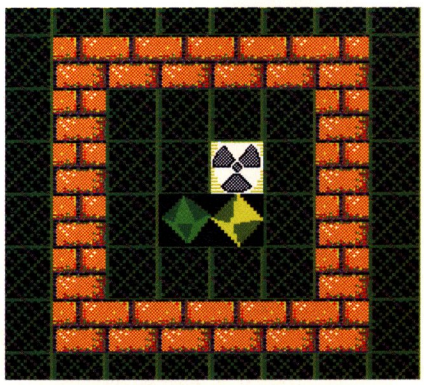
TOMMYCAD/ MECCAID

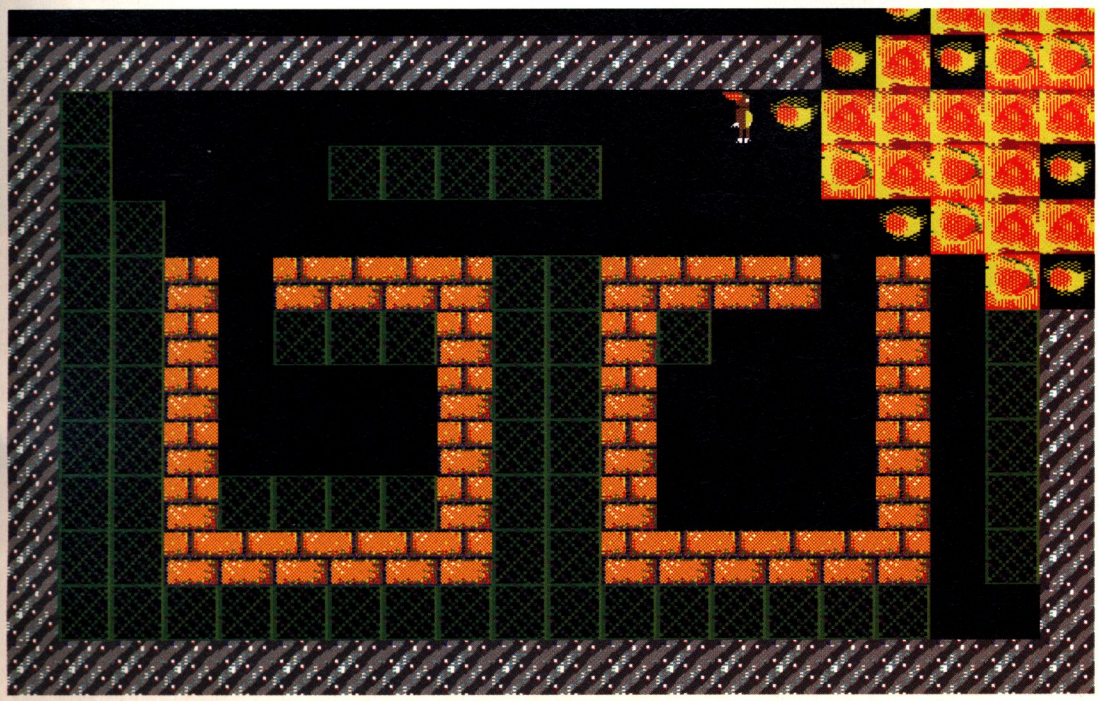


SOFTWARE's *TommyCAD/DRAW* has held its position as the best shareware CAD package for over two years now. First released in 1992, it's now on version 1.11B. It has every feature you would need for medium level CAD and a massive symbol library. But someone has decided that something is missing: you can't design Meccano models with it. So here, with Meccaid, is a complete library of Meccano pieces in *TommyCAD* format. If you've lost the crucial part to build a model of a mobile crane (kits 1 & 3; see *The Meccano Magazine* vol. VI part 6 1937) at least you can now see what it should look like. If you are even remotely interest in CAD then give *TommyCAD* a try. It's shareware and registration gets you a 170-page bound manual. Library disks are £4 each and registration for the full program is £45, all from Omicron Systems (0702 710391).
Shareware from: Tommy Software.
Registration: £45.

NUCLEAR GREMLIN

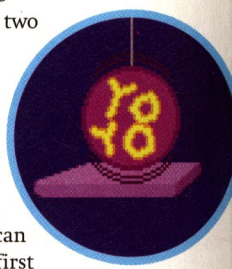
LAST month I looked at a puzzle game which involved burning down buildings. Here is one in which you blow up nuclear power stations. You control a gremlin that has to collect gems and then bring the power station to critical. It's a bit like *Boulderdash* and there is a lot of strategic thinking involved. The levels get harder as you progress and there are trollies, sacks, drums, walls and vats of acid. The graphics are good, the puzzles are testing and the full, registered version is remarkably cheap.
Shareware from: Millstream Software (0527 597707).
Registration: £4 (£8 gets the full version in a 3-game compilation).
Needs: Will run on most compatibles; needs VGA.

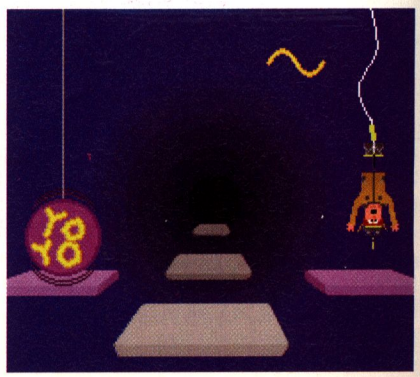




PONG KOMBAT

VERY strange. This is a mixture of the oldest arcade game, *Pong*, and the newest, *Mortal Kombat*. *Pong* was the game where you had to bounce a ball between two bats. Here you can choose from six different paddles, each with "special moves". Although it looks like *Pong* with a bad VGA background, this time the paddles can shoot each other. The first player to score more than ten points gets to finish the other one off. The sound effects are good and the speed is adjustable to suit most processors and reflexes.
Freeware from: Gagne Software.
Needs: 386 16MHZ or better with VGA.



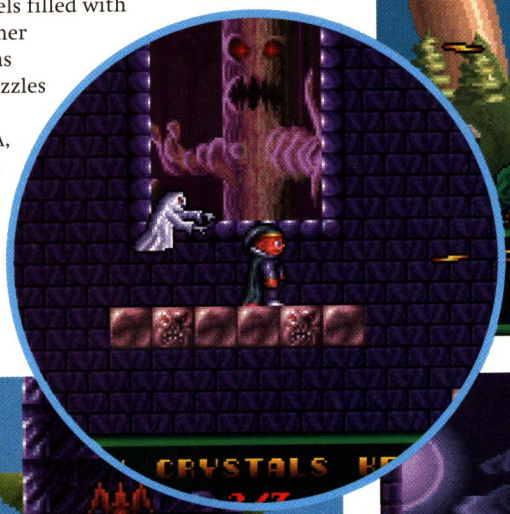


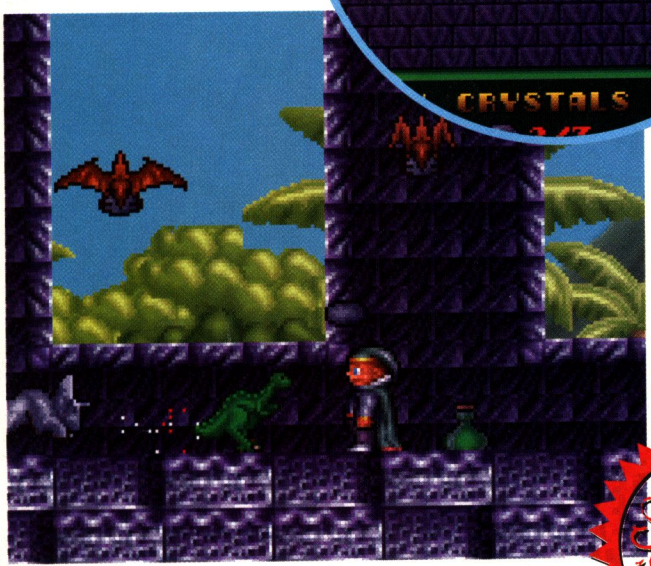
HOCUS POCUS

APOGEE produce the best platform games for the PC. The latest is *Hocus Pocus*, which features an apprentice magician. To become a fully-fledged wizard, he must survive the testing ground. There are 36 levels filled with imps, ghosts, dragons and 30 other different sorts of nasty. As well as combat there are a variety of puzzles for you to solve.

Hocus Pocus has 256 colour VGA, parallax scrolling, and Apogee's new sound engine. This has multi-channel sound and effects. Graphics alone take up 6MB and the game needs a 386 or better. The game should be out late June.







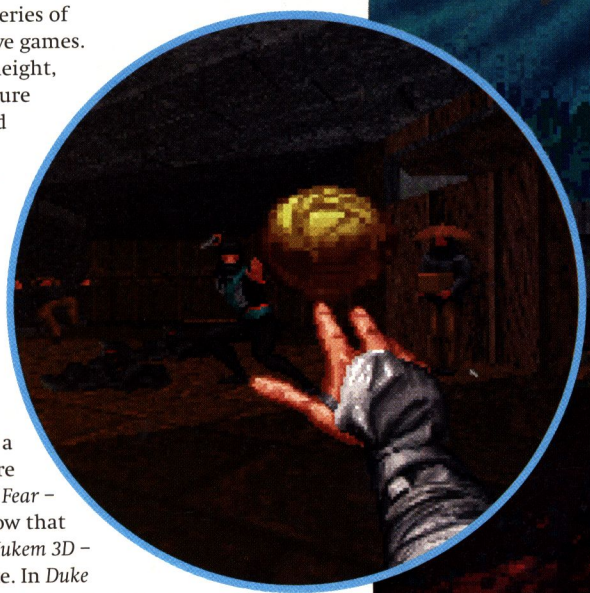


SCOOP PREVIEW

APOGEE IN 3D

APOGEE are working on a series of 3D first-person perspective games. These have walls of any height, thickness or angle, with full texture mapping, parallax backdrops and light effects which include diminishing and point sourcing. Sounds familiar? Maybe, but unlike *Doom*, the environment will not be static – walls and what have you will be fully animated and have morphing to boot. Graphics update will be over 20 frames per second without a local bus.

Titles under development are *Shadow Warrior* – where you play a Ninja; *Ruins* – an action adventure based around ancient pyramids; *Fear* – described as "intense horror" (now that does sound familiar), and *Duke Nukem 3D* – the return of everyone's favourite. In *Duke Nukem 3D* you will be able to fly just like Clark Kent. None of the titles have a firm release date yet, but here are a few screenshots to wet your appetite.





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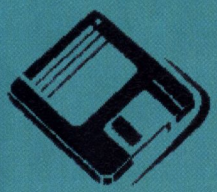

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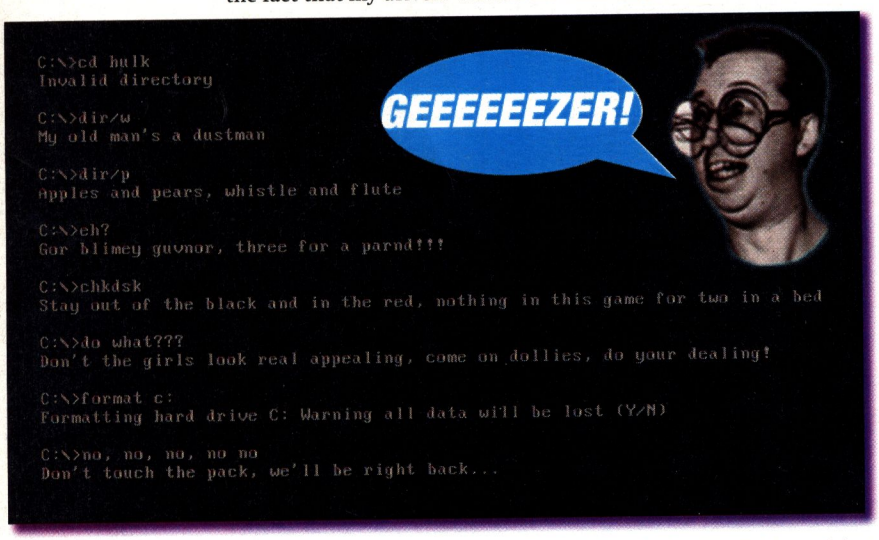
Mr Cursor

HE'S AFRAID OF MICROPROSE GRAND PRIX

THE FIRST bit of this month's column is about Ayrton Senna... and before you start, I'd better pre-empt you by adding that as a caring, sharing human being *and* a mega Formula One nut, I was as appalled by Ayrton's death (and everyone else's, and Wendlinger's coma, and Pedro Lamy's broken legs etc.) as the next person. But time goes on, and there is a slightly bizarre story to tell as a result of the Senna tragedy....

Okay, I reckon there'll have been a lot of trepidation going on in the minds of regular "users" of *Microprose Grand Prix* over the past couple of months. Their dilemma will have been thus: "Do I remove Ayrton from the drivers' names file, or do I leave him there as some sort of tribute?" Personally speaking, I've still got him, partly due to the fact that my drivers' names are a mixture of fact and fiction



anyway: Bungle the Bear, Su Pollard, Kriss Akabusi and others drive happily alongside Graham Hill (dead), James Hunt (dead) and Agiri Suzuki (just crap). The point is, though, that most people stick to real life, and painstakingly input all the correct names, engine makes, teams, and so on. Such is the case for a friend of mine, Wee Bogle. (It's his nickname – nobody knows his real name, apart from his mum, but she lives in Sumatra or somewhere, so is unavailable for comment.) Where was I? Oh yes, Wee Bogle. After the announcement that Senna was clinically dead had been broadcast, Wee Bogle faced the dilemma I've just outlined above... and after a couple of days cogitation he decided he would leave Senna's name intact. "Until the end of the season" was what he said in the pub. Fair enough, you might think. But wait. There's more. Wee Bogle (never the sanest of folk in the first place) has now become convinced that car number one on the copy of *MicroProse Grand Prix* installed on his 386 DX 50's hard drive has been taken over by the ghost of Ayrton Senna. For instance, he does things like stage reconstructions of the ill-fated Imola race and, when the computer-controlled Senna comes in first or second or whatever, Wee Bogle says: "He's showing us what would have happened if he hadn't crashed." He's run through the whole season, in fact (in which Senna's "ghost" beats Schumacher by 40 clear points). And can I stress that he really believes all this gunk.

"...car number one has been taken over by the ghost of Ayrton Senna."

There's just no talking him round, because his elevator no longer reaches the top floor (as they say). We've tried though – me and others – to talk him round...

"So how come you didn't feel guilty about deleting Roland Ratzenburger then?" we asked in an attempt to trigger some sort of rational thought process. "I didn't know Roland Ratzenburger," he replied. We pointed out that he didn't know Ayrton Senna either, but he came back with: "No, but there was a spiritual thing" and "our paths may have crossed in previous lives." And on and on. His most recent statement goes something like this: "I'll continue to race with Ayrton until I, too, die a gladiator's death." We've mentioned, of course, that there's not the greatest chance in the world of a bloke getting killed while playing *Microprose Grand Prix* in his bedroom, but he shrugs this off. "We'll see," he says, "We'll see." Sad bastard, eh? Everyone's blown him out, needless to say.

Spook PC from hell

Anyway, onto something entirely unconnected. SPOOK DOS, I call it. It's a program that can easily be written in QBasic and then hidden as a startup file in some unsuspecting bugger's AUTOEXEC.BAT. In other words, they turn on their PC as usual, it goes through all the normal opening stuff, pops into DOS, pops for a pico-second into QBasic and then runs SPOOK DOS (which looks totally like REAL DOS – there's a C:/> prompt and everything). What then happens is down to what you've programmed your own particular SPOOK DOS to do.

For instance, we had this bloke working here a while ago (Andy) who was addicted to *Space Hulk*. He left post-it notes on the PC all the time. "Don't delete *Space Hulk* directory," said one. "Don't piss about with my saved *Space Hulk* games," said another. That sort of thing. So cue specially prepared SPOOK DOS. One evening, at the usual time, Andy sat behind the *Space Hulk* PC and switched it on. At the "C" prompt, he typed CD HULK. He was now in the HULK directory: all very realistic, but in fact completely "pretend". Then he typed the expected command line. "File not found" came the SPOOK DOS reply. "Whaaat???" yelped Andy. He tried again. Same response. He looked around accusingly and was met with a wall of innocent faces. He typed DIR/W and up popped a perfect facsimile of what you get when attempting a directory list in an empty directory. "Bastards!" he cried (and he's quite a big bloke, so everyone took a couple of steps back). Then he kicked a chair over and stomped out. He returned with the boxed copy of *Space Hulk*. "Yeah," he said, giving us the evil eye, "and now I've got to bloody install it again. Really funny joke, guys, really funny joke!" What he didn't know was that he still hadn't reached the punchline, which was as follows. After inserting disk one and typing "A:", SPOOK DOS countered with a buzzy noise and the words "Drive not responding, the disk may be damaged, fail, retry, abort?" And with this, Andy went spare. And I mean completely and totally bonkers. It was the perfect joke. He'd been waiting all day for a *Space Hulk* session. Now, not only (as far as he could see) were his saved positions lost, but he'd have to wait for EA to send a new game. We let him rant and rave until things looked a tad dicey, whereupon somebody tapped CTRL and Scroll Lock... and we were on the QBasic listing screen.

Andy was still confused, so an explanation quickly followed (before he had time to hit anyone), and then it was back to "real" DOS and the "real" *Space Hulk* directory. Oh, and if you think this whole scam a wee bit cruel, it's worth mentioning that Andy got off lightly. (He didn't type CHKDSK.) Z

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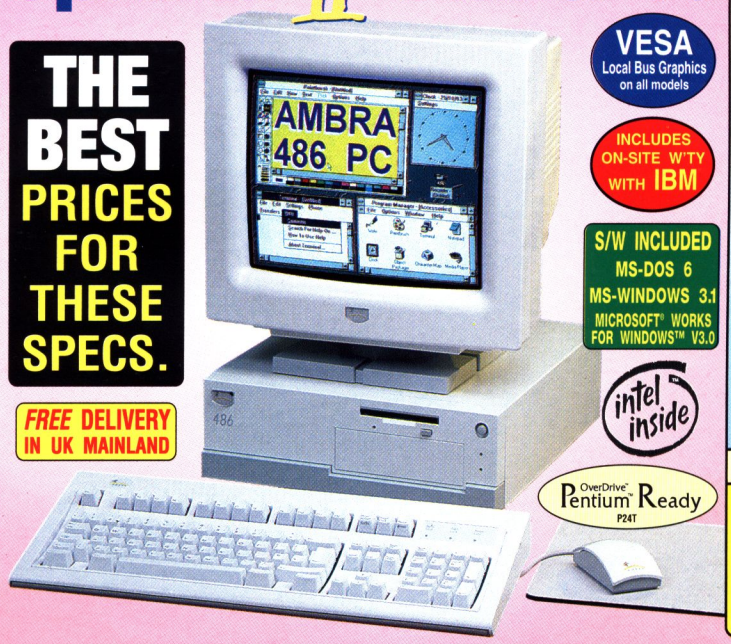

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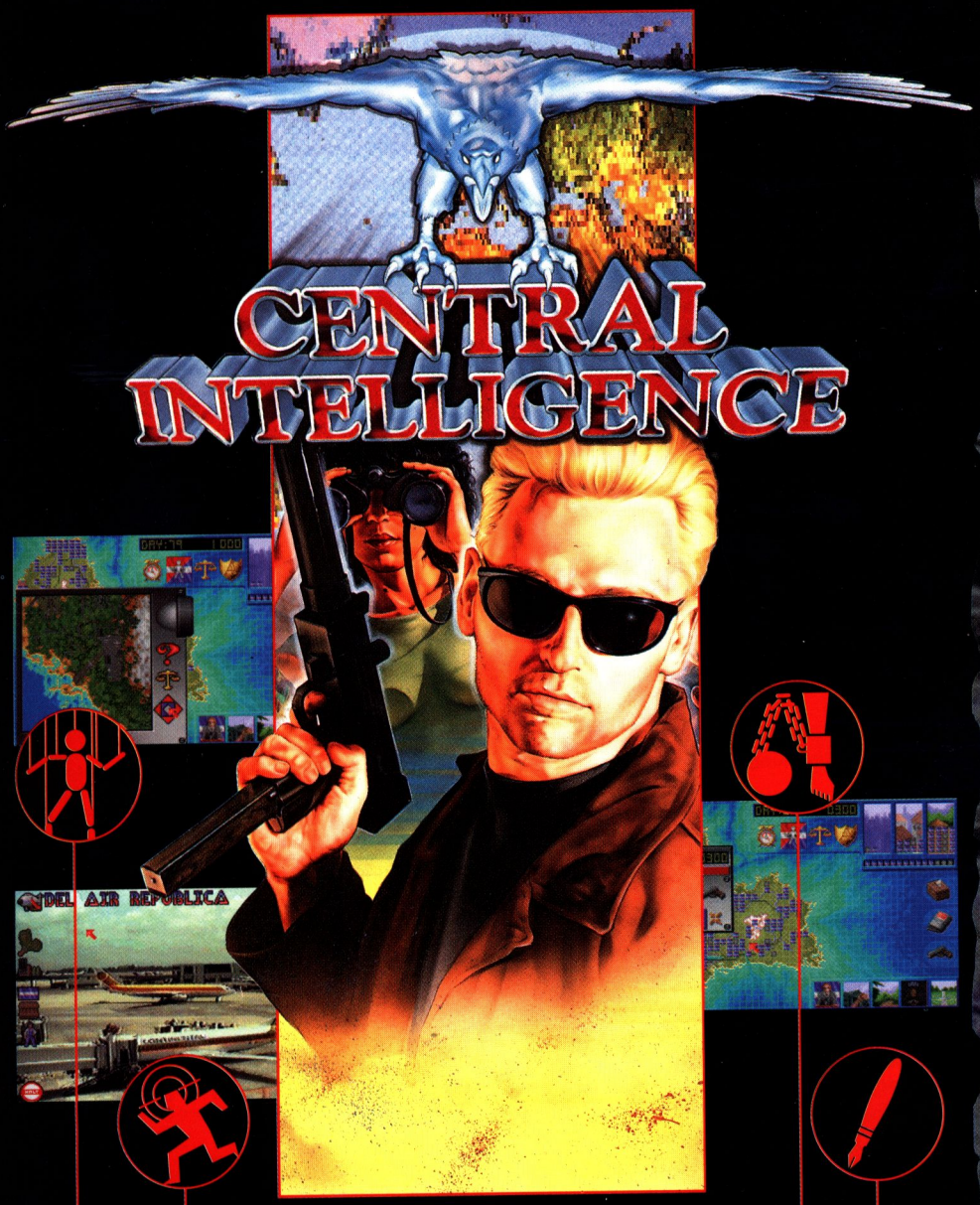

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