

PC

QUAKE

(pour hommes)

ZONE



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DISCWORLD 2
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Star Control III

The least known fab game ever!

Muppet CD-ROM

See the Swedish Chef in Doom!

Postcards from the Web

We rate the best and worst
games company web sites



WARNING!
THESE GAMES
DRIVE YOU CRAZY!
SEE PAGE 95!

AWESOME!

NEW GAME OFFER!

See page 92



SPEED KILLS

BUT IT'S YOUR ONLY HOPE OF ESCAPING

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PC CD
ROM



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C:\>Directory

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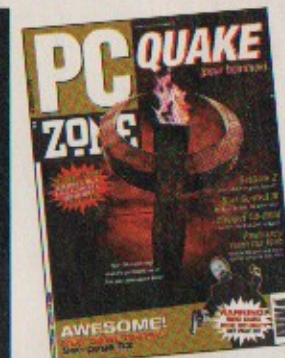
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This month's cover was produced by Heavy French and Xatrix. It's a combination of several photographs, with the Quake logo itself being a 35ft high 3D model of the logo produced by GT Interactive and id Software for the 1996 Spring ECTS.

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C:\>Cover Disk

HD DISK



If you're running Windows 95 shut down your machine and then re-start in DOS mode. Change to your floppy drive and run PCZONE.BAT. Once the game has unzipped to the chosen directory run SETSOUND.EXE to set up your sound card and run FD.BAT to play the game. For best results plug in your joystick and calibrate it before starting the demo mission.

101 Duke Nukem 3D levels

(Various third parties)
Plop the disk into your floppy drive and type <PCZONE>. This sexy little batch file will then unpack all the levels into your specified Duke directory.

To play the levels run the Duke Nukem set-up program and go to the 'Select User Maps' option. The new levels will be listed automatically. Simply hit <RETURN> on the level you want to play. From the main menu when the game has launched select 'Play User Map' and voilà, more shotgun action and shitting down alien necks - delightful fun for all the family.

Specifications: 486, 8MB, DOS
Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

3rd Reich

(Avalon Hill)
Install from the menu by typing <PCZONE> as above, and follow the on-screen instructions. This in-depth wargame runs from DOS and you may have a little trouble with the high resolutions if you have an old video card. Using UNIVBE, which comes free with most commercial games, should resolve these problems if you have any. From then on use the mouse to find out info about your units and how to position them on the map. If you get desperately stuck read the help file.

Specifications: 486, 4MB, DOS
Controls: Mouse



CD-ROM DISC



To access the veritable plethora of orgasmic playable demos on this PC Zone cover CD change to your CD-ROM drive letter and type <PCZONE>.

The menu is easy to use and simply clicking on the icon of the demo you want to run with the left mouse button will launch the installer for it automatically. Just follow the on-screen instructions.

PLAYABLE DEMOS

Virtua Fighter (Sega)

Virtua Fighter, the arcade and Saturn classic beat 'em up, finally makes it to the PC without the aid of a 3D accelerator card - it's hard to believe it can look this good without the aid of one of them there fancy thangs. Pretty high specification - but we think you'll find it's worth the extra horsepower. Runs under Windows 95 for plenty of fast punching smooth action combat. For best results use a joypad that you can set-up via your Windows 95 control panel under 'joystick'.

Specifications: Pentium, 8MB, Windows 95
Controls: Keyboard, joystick

Advanced Tactical Fighter (Electronic Arts)

EA's production professionalism shines through again. Most of the game's key features are incredibly self explanatory - but don't forget to calibrate your



(Above) Wahoy! It's Virtua Fighter (but where's Sarah? She's C-0-0-l).

joystick before you take to the skies, or you might come unstuck in your attempt to emulate the Red Arrows.

Specifications: Pentium/486, 8MB, DOS
Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

Kick Off 96 (Virgin)

Luro 96 has no doubt got you slap bang into the mood for some footie action - well here's a well-crafted football game to help prolong the moment, and it comes from the same geezers who brought us the original classic Amiga titles Kick Off and Kick Off 2.

Specifications: 486, 8MB, DOS
Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

Top Gun Mission 2 (MicroProse)

Another mission for all Tom Cruise wannabes who want to play more fantastic missions from the team at Hunt Valley

Specifications: 486, 8MB, DOS; copy of the original game required
Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

Duke 3D Levels (Various)

101 levels created using the excellent Build editor given free with the game. That's right - 101 levels for you to fight your way through - come get some! Check the HD instructions for installation options.

Specifications: 486, 8MB, DOS
Copy of the original game required
Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

Sub Space (Virgin)

If you have a Windows 95 dial-up account set up to access your Internet account then you can play this global multi-player game from VIE. It's similar to Asteroids in appearance, but has stacks more playability. Form squadrons with your mates and take on the world - literally. For more in-depth

information about this fantastic new devwwwelopment, point your www browser to <http://www.vie.com>.

Specifications: 486/Pentium, 8MB, Windows 95, Internet Dial-Up
Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

Shockwave Assault (Electronic Arts)

A huge hit on the 3DO, EA have made a fine job of converting this 3D mission-based shooting frenzy to the PC. Can't say fairer than that, can we? Now stop reading these pages and get it installed!

Specifications: 486, 8MB, Windows 95
Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

(Below) Don't forget where your ejector seat button is in Top Gun.



Help!
The CD not working? HD playing up? The PC's being a total bast? Don't worry - we're here to help. Just relax, chill out, have a cold shower and then phone the relevant help line:

HD DISK HELP
Phone Matthew on 0174 738990
Any week day between 9am and 4pm

CD-ROM HELP
Phone Miles Tudor on 0171-917 7693
Any week day between 11am and 6pm

If you are calling either help line, then please take note of the following points:

- If possible have your PC operating and near to the phone when you call.
- If this is not possible, note down as much relevant information as possible ie system type, sound card, RAM etc, plus the nature of the fault.
- Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you call to jot down the relevant info.

NetMech (Activision)
If you are the proud owner of MechWarrior 2, that fine game from Activision, then this 12MB patch means that you can now play it over the Internet, IPX network, modem or null modem cable. Awesome multi-player Herculean action.

Specifications: 486/Pentium, 8MB, DOS/Windows 95
Copy of the original game required
Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

No CD?

If you are unable to get your grubby paws on the CD issue, then fear not! Simply fill out this slip, enclose your HD from the cover plus a cheque for a whole £1 and send it to:

Miles Tudor, CD Exchange (41), PC Zone, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover St, London W1P 7HJ

Your details (please print clearly)

Name:

Address:

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Please make cheques payable to:
DENNIS PUBLISHING Ltd
CDs from previous issues are also available.
Phone Miles on 0171-917 7693





(Above) Check out that poor soul hanging around waiting for someone to rescue him. (Fat chance!)

Total Mania (Domark)
If *Syndicate* is right up your street you'll probably love this team action/strategy game from Domark. Your task is to guide a team of gunned-up psychos around this playable level. Check out our full review on page 68.
Specifications: 486, 8MB, DOS
Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

Scuba Screensaver (Sierra)
Yikes! As well as being an interactive screensaver this is an incredible *Magic Carpet*-esque undersea swimming simulator. Weird, but cool. Once installed just select 'Diving' from the Windows 95 screensaver selection screen. Moving the mouse from left to right moves the 'diver' (that's you, by the way); left button to swim faster, right button to slow down. Swim around chillin' out and watching

the fish - but keep your eyes out for that shark, he's got bloody big sharp pointy teeth.
Specifications: Pentium, 8MB, Windows 95
Controls: Keyboard, mouse

Shellshock (Core Design)
A new version of the *Shellshock* demo straight from the Web pages of Core Design. Tank warfare in its finest 3D glory.
Specifications: 486, 8MB, DOS
Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

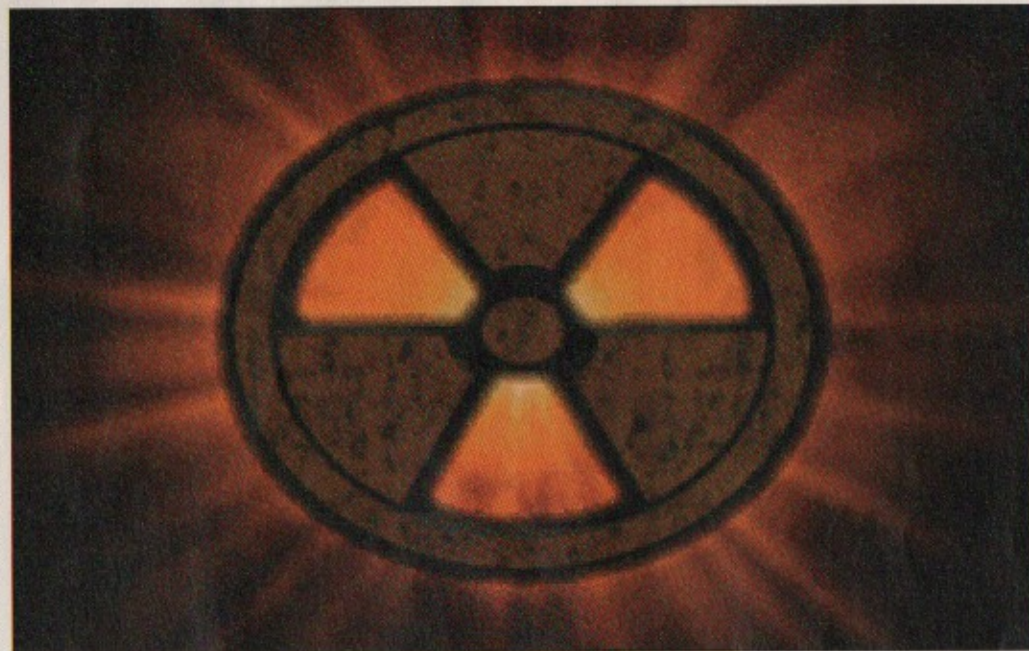
3rd Reich (Avalon Hill)
Wargame enthusiasts look no further! Here you get to re-enact some of the European battles that saw the Germans come so close to showing us Englanders a thing or two - see if you can do a better job. Check the HD descriptions for installation instructions
Specifications: 486, 8MB, DOS
Controls: Keyboard, mouse

Megarace 2 (Mindscape)
You saw the rolling demo on a previous *PC Zone* disc, well now we bring you the fully playable version of the same level. Lance Boyle is back with even more corny lines and irritating one liners. What a git.
Specifications: 486/Pentium, 8MB, DOS
Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

Toshinden (Playmates Interactive)
You may have already seen this one on the *Zone* CD recently, but this version now runs 30 per cent faster than the original. OOOhh!
Specifications: 486/Pentium, 8MB, DOS
Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick, gamepad

Witchaven 2 (US Gold)
Hack, slay and slice and dice your way through this playable level of the sequel to one of the better 3D RPG games. It uses the *Duke Nukem* engine, so it must be good!
Specifications: 486, 8MB, DOS
Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

Powerslave (Lobotomy)
More people get their hands on the *Duke Nukem* engine as the weeks pass by. Try this latest 3D offering from newcomers Lobotomy software. *Indiana Jones* meets *Duke Nukem* - uh?
Specifications: 486, 8MB, DOS
Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick



(Above) *Duke Nukem* screensaver alert!

Duke 3D Screensaver (3D Realms)
Can't get enough *Duke Nukem*? Neither can we! If you're not content with playing the game, why not infect your Windows 95 Desktop with *Duke fever*?
Specifications: 486, 8MB, Windows 95
Controls: Mouse

Blender (Dennis Interactive - Windows)
Another preview of the best Musical Multimedia Magazine money can buy. If you're a Metallica fan then get headbanging now!
Specifications: 486, 8MB, Windows
Controls: Keyboard, mouse

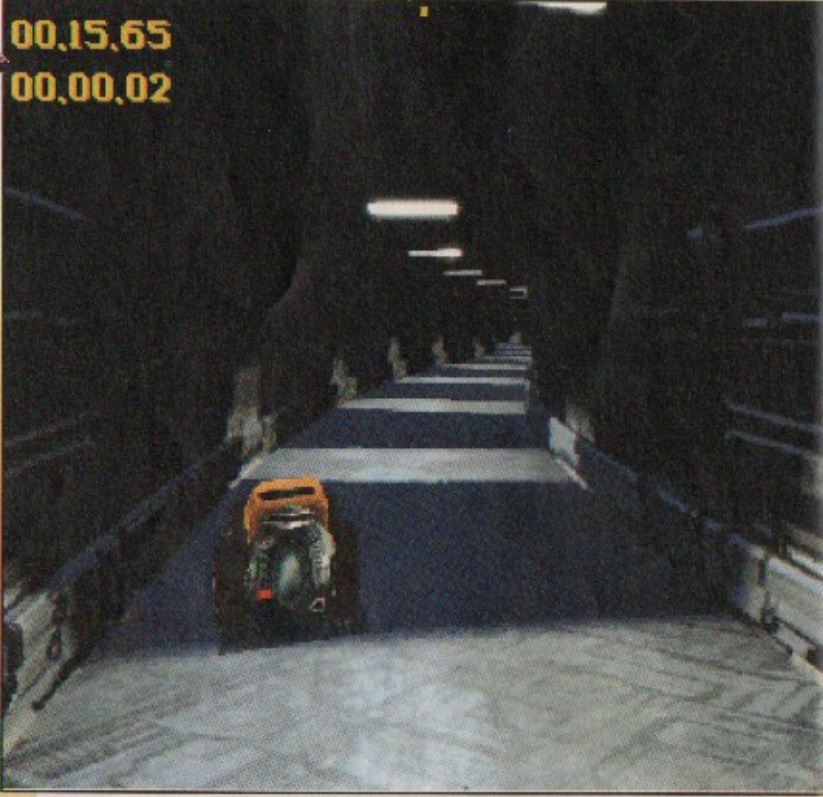
(Below) We'll resist the "Ere Tosh got a new..." gag seeing as how we've used it before...

ESSENTIALS

- WinCim 2.01**
Free access to CompuServe.
- AOL**
Free access to AOL.
- Voss Net**
Free internet access plus all the relevant software.
- Ameol**
CIX Windows software.
- Winzip 6.1**
The final Windows 95 version.



(Right) What do you reckon your chances are against this 'orrible bast?

**Tech specs**

Unless otherwise indicated the standard systems requirements for this month's software are as follows:
Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX2/66
Graphics: VGA, SVGA
Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles

BULLETIN

Discworld 2



WORK ON THE SEQUEL TO ONE OF THE biggest PC games ever, *Discworld* from Perfect Entertainment, is now well under way and early signs indicate that it will be every bit as good as the original best-seller. *Discworld 2* will again feature the incompetent wizard Rincewind as the main player character, as well as dozens of brand new and bizarre characters and scenarios. Once again, the



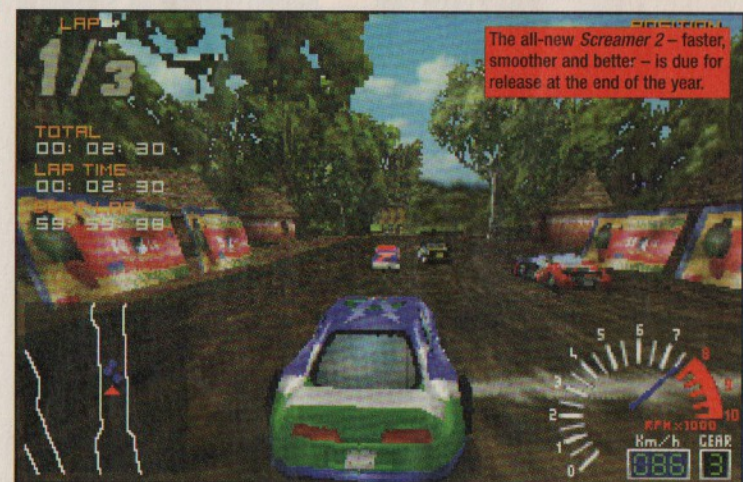
Death returns in *Discworld 2* in time for Christmas.

developers have worked closely with author Terry Pratchett to ensure that the humour and substance of the novels is not lost in the transition from print to PC. Although the game is not based on a particular novel, Pratchett himself has had a lot of input into the game's storyline, the main thrust of the plot being that Death has gone missing and Rincewind (again with Luggage in tow) has been forced

to take up the scythe as his impromptu stand-in. As a result, the quality of both the gags and characterisation should be well up to the very high standard of the original *Discworld* game, especially as Eric Idle will be providing both the main voice-over and singing the 'theme tune'. *Discworld 2* will also 'star' the voices of Nigel Planer, Kate Robbins and Rob Brydon and will feature all-new high resolution graphics put together from over 30,000 original hand-drawn animations incorporated with the latest 'Toonz' technology. Perfect Entertainment have also gone to great lengths to ensure that the sequel will be more cinematic than the original, by introducing fades, pans and close-ups and making the game full-screen. As well as that they've been working on an improved simple, but immensely flexible, window-driven interface to give the player a lot more control and at the same time allow them to develop some incredibly clever puzzles. *Discworld 2* is due for release just in time for Christmas from Psygnosis. **Z**

Screamer 2

IF YOU THOROUGHLY ENJOYED SCREAMER ON THE PC, THEN YOU'LL NO DOUBT be extremely pleased to hear that the guys at Graffiti have already got *Screamer 2* well and truly up to speed. Although the original arcade racer was the best game of its kind on the PC, it wasn't what *Ridge Racer* is to the PlayStation or *Sega Rally* is to the Saturn. Thanks to a completely new 3D engine that can throw around even more texture-mapped polygons than the original code, it looks as if the PC will have an arcade-style racing game that can compete on equal terms in terms of graphics and playability and leave the other platforms standing when it comes to multi-player races, thanks to a six-way network option. As well as running much faster and smoother, the sequel will feature six new tracks - all with more hills, bumps and jumps, four new cars, a rear-view mirror (handy for keeping ahead of the pack), increased difficulty settings and day and night versions of each track. Although the title isn't due for release until October/November time, *Screamer 2* already promises to be a marked improvement over the



The all-new *Screamer 2* - faster, smoother and better - is due for release at the end of the year.

original, and as long as Graffiti sort out the way the cars handle (at the moment they make the *Sega Rally* cars feel like they're on rails), we should be in for a bit of a corker come Christmas. **Z**

Win 3.1
Win 95

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Die By The Sword



YOU JUST WON'T BE ABLE TO MOVE FOR THIRD-PERSON perspective hack and slash 3D adventures on the PC this summer, and while the genre certainly isn't a new one (Infogrames' *Alone In The Dark* started it all way back in 1993), when it comes to hand-to-hand combat, all the efforts to date have been essentially flawed, despite creative key configurations and various (not particularly clever) combat modes that often leave the player more confused than competent.

Hopefully, this is all about to change thanks to a rather brilliant new mouse-controlled melee combat system from developers Treyarch Invention. Known as VSIM Motion Control, the system actually mimics the movement of the player's arm and allows for an unlimited number of combinations.

The first game to use this innovative new interface is the fantasy adventure *Die By The Sword*, which, if you believe the hype, will be the ultimate hand-to-hand combat game. By working out numerous mathematical equations very quickly, VSIM Motion Control can generate the full range of human

movement, enabling the player to fully control his motions on the fly, therefore allowing for an unlimited number of combinations and the closest thing to instinctive real-time melee combat on the PC. Although it may seem a little alien at first, Treyarch maintain that with practice players should be able to put together some pretty impressive attacking and defensive custom moves, four of which can be saved into memory and called up at any time, or edited and traded with other players.

As well as the new combat interface, *Die By The Sword* will feature over 25 different classed enemies - each with their own strengths and weaknesses, a variety of weapons that the player will have to learn how to use (including broadswords, spears and double-bladed axes) and an 'intelligent' camera system that will allow the player to view their character from multiple perspectives. The 3D



Don't lose your head over the new VSIM Motion Control used in *Die By The Sword*.

environment will also be fully interactive with real-time physics: consequently, players will really have to think twice about jumping across chasms, walking



along narrow ledges and exactly who they pick on. Unlike other games of this ilk, contact with an opponent results in realistic damage - which means that the weedy-looking elf with the dagger could easily pommel you to the ground and hack your arm off if you haven't spent a few minutes perfecting your thrusting action.

Die By The Sword will feature both single and multi-play variations and a useful training mode that allows the player to hone his fighting skills in quick-play single opponent combat. There will also be a tournament mode that provides the player with the opportunity to work his way up the tournament ladder by competing against each of the 25 computer opponents, and the option to battle it out in a winner-takes-all fight to the death with up to three other players via a network or modem.

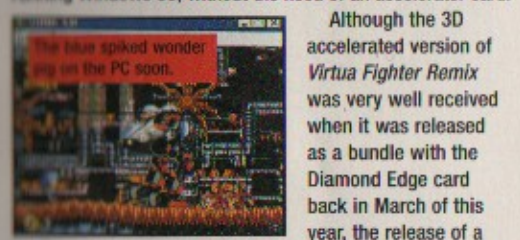
If Treyarch can keep their mouse-driven interface simple and intuitive and tone down the textures they've adopted at this early stage in development, *Die By The Sword* could well represent a landmark in computer gaming when it's released in time for the Christmas rush. That said, it's up against some tough competition with *Into The Shadows* from Scavenger, *Tomb Raider* from Core and *Deathtrap Dungeon* from Domark (to name just three), all vying for the third-person action adventure top spot. **Z**

Sega converted to PC



IT LOOKS LIKE SEGA ARE FINALLY GETTING THEIR ACT TOGETHER AS far as 'native' PC development is concerned, with five arcade conversions due for release over the next year, and numerous 'original' PC titles set to follow shortly from the newly-formed development wing known as Sega GameWorks (a collaboration between Sega, MCA and Dreamworks SKG).

Sega maintain that by fully utilising Microsoft's Direct X and Direct 3D development software, they've managed to get all of their forthcoming coin-op conversions to run quite happily on a modest(ish) Pentium (Sega recommend at least a P90) with 8-16Mb of RAM and a 16-bit sound card and running Windows 95, without the need of an accelerator card.



Although the 3D accelerated version of *Virtua Fighter Remix* was very well received when it was released as a bundle with the Diamond Edge card back in March of this year, the release of a PC 'native' version of the game that can top 30 frames per second and offer high resolution and original arcade modes of play will no doubt appeal to the die-hard beat 'em up fan looking for arcade quality on their Pentium. Of even greater interest however, are the forthcoming PC 'native' conversions of *Daytona USA*, *Sega Rally Championship*, *Manx TT Superbike* and *Virtua Cop*.

While *Daytona USA* might look a little dated when compared to the likes of *Screamer 2* (see page 10) or even *The Need For Speed*, Sega promise that a blistering frame rate coupled with proven gameplay will make the title a winner when it's released in the run-up to Christmas. However, the title that hardened PC speed demons are really waiting for is the awesome *Sega Rally*. With its stunning texture-mapped graphics, in-ye-face off-road action and fantastic handling it should really get the adrenaline pumping, though quite how the action will translate via a PC keyboard is anyone's guess. *Manx TT* (which like *Rally* is due for release at the beginning of the next year) could also suffer from the same keyboard control problems. If you've played the arcade version of either *Rally* or *Manx TT*, you'll be well aware how much they both rely on large (and expensive) player input devices to elevate the games to a



new level of realism. That said, *Manx TT* (and indeed *Rally*) is both visually stunning and very playable, and if Sega can keep the frame rate and graphical detail up, they could have a couple of speeding beauties for the PC come next spring.

Last up, and due for release in time for Christmas is the excellent *Virtua Cop*. Again, there's a chance that the gameplay could suffer without the pistol control that has proved such a draw in the arcades, but the PC version is already very playable with the mouse and looks quite awesome. One conversion that shouldn't suffer from lack of peripherals and special add-ons is *Sonic PC*. Billed as a 'perfect' conversion, the console favourite will feature over 60 levels, a blistering 30 frames per second frame rate and all the playability of the Mega Drive classic. **Z**

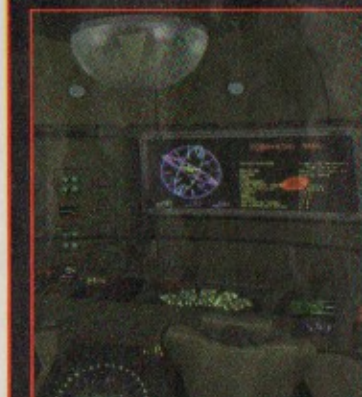
Dispatches

NEW PGA COURSES
The courses keep on comin' and now they feature 'Green Advice' to help you out on those tricky putts. The TPC at Sawgrass Championship Add-on disc (which is compatible with the



DOS version of *PGA Tour 96*) not only features advanced graphics effects, such as animated flags and rippling water, but the most famous hole in golf - the 17th at Sawgrass. For those who own the *PGA European Tour* version of the game, there's the *Oxfordshire Course Add-on* disc. As well as including all the graphical enhancements of the *Sawgrass Course* disc, it features updated course stats, more realistic putting and local rules. Both discs are expected to sell at around the £22.99 mark. For further details, call Electronic Arts on 01753 549442.

STAR TREK: STARFLEET ACADEMY
Phasers at the ready! Interplay are boldly going once more, with their new *Star Trek: Starfleet Academy*, a Trek-fest that will allow players to fly the USS Enterprise face-to-face with over 30 alien ships. Players must join other cadets at the Starfleet Academy in San Francisco where they must navigate successfully through 27 different missions in order to graduate as



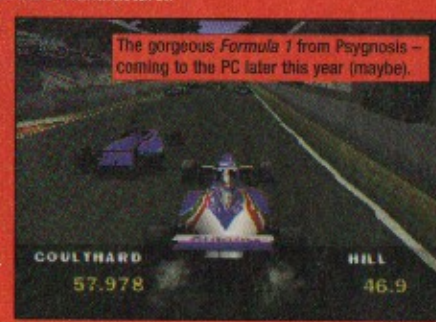
a Starfleet officer. Teachers at the Academy include Kirk, Chekov and Sulu, who will help guide and teach the player exactly what it takes to reach Starfleet officer status. The game will also feature SVGA graphics, FMV clips starring Shatner, Koenig and Takei, and an original music score by Dennis McCarthy. *Star Trek: Starfleet Academy* is due for release in December.

INTERPLAY DIG DEEPER
Forgotten Realms: Descent To Undermountain, currently in development at Parallax Software, is one of the first games to use Interplay's newly acquired TSR *Forgotten Worlds* licence. As well as boasting a detailed graphic environment, the fantasy-style adventure uses an enhanced *Descent* engine and will feature 30 polygon enemies, realistic light reflections and characters that will be instantly recognisable to avid AD&D-ers. *Descent To Undermountain* is due for release in the autumn.

F1 for PC?

ALTHOUGH IT HASN'T BEEN OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED, IT LOOKS LIKE THE awesome *Formula 1* from Psygnosis, which has just been released for the Sony PlayStation, is coming to the PC. A trade publication has recently been carrying a recruitment ad for a 3D PC programmer to work on an official F1 licenced product, based in Liverpool. Despite our probing questions Psygnosis are remaining tight-lipped as to whether a PC version of the game is planned, and have given no indication as to when the conversion would be released. However, rumours suggest that Psygnosis are planning to release a PC version of *F1*, with some kind of tie-in with a 3D accelerator card manufacturer.

Consequently, *F1* could be out on the PC before Christmas, and may even arrive before MicroProse's *F1GP2* finally hits the shelves. It may just happen. **Z**



The gorgeous *Formula 1* from Psygnosis - coming to the PC later this year (maybe).

Interstate '76



Activision bring C-0-0-L to the PC with *Interstate '76*, due for release in the autumn.

QUITE POSSIBLY THE COOLEST GAME EVER developed for the PC is due out soon from Activision.

Interstate '76 may not be totally original as far as gameplay as concerned, but it's most definitely not just another driving/shooting game set in the dismal future. The thing that really sets it apart from all the other games in this genre is that it's cool. And that's cool in a '70s kinda way.

And we're not talking *Brady Bunch* here. *Interstate '76* is one mean mutha of a game, full of beefy '70s muscle cars, cool dudes

with big hair and one funky-up soundtrack. Players team up with auto-vigilant Taurus and cruise the highways looking to face off against a fierce gang of auto terrorists with only their revolvers, eight tracks and attitudes to protect them.

The game features fully texture-mapped graphics and numerous different missions that must be completed to progress thro to the end. As the player completes each section he'll be able to equip his car with even cooler weapons and other unique power-ups, until he's strong enough to be crowned 'King of the Road'.

Interstate '76 isn't due for release until around the end of the year and, as we've already said, we think it's shaping up to be the coolest game to ever grace the PC. **Z**



Ecstatica 2

ALTHOUGH A NAME HAS YET TO BE DECIDED ON (ECSTATICA 2 IS THE working title), work is well under way on the sequel to one of the best looking games of last year from Andrew Spencer and Psygnosis.

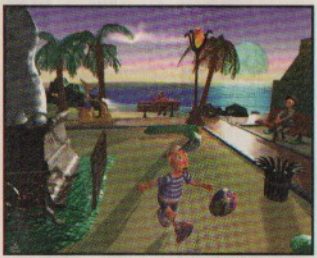
This time round it should look even better, thanks to highly detailed ellipsoid characters with even more animations and the introduction of a hires mode. *Ecstatica 2* will also be much bigger than the original (one of the few criticisms levelled at *Ecstatica* was that it was too short) and will feature a vast player landscape that includes a sprawling castle, dungeons, a village, a forest, gardens and a graveyard. As well as increasing the size of the whole thing, the developers have also attempted to give the sequel a more cinematic feel by introducing more varied camera angles (the game already boasts over 2000) and at the same time keep the attention focused on the main character so that the close-quarter combat is more realistic and fluid.

As well as numerous fairies, goblins, vampires and ghosts pursuing you, you'll have to deal with a demonic sorcerer, solve even more taxing puzzles and avoid traps if you're to successfully rescue your homeland from the forces of evil and save the day. Of all the third-person 3D action/adventure games due for release this year, *Ecstatica 2* has to be the best looking, and if Psygnosis can make the combat even more intuitive, they should have another massive hit on their hands. **Z**



Check out this in-game screen grab.

Twinsen tiptoes through the tulips in the eagerly awaited *Little Big Adventure 2*, scheduled for release in early 1997.



LBA 2

LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE MUST go down in gaming history as one of the best graphical adventures ever made. As a result, developers Adeline thought that it might be a good idea to make a sequel, and that's just what they've done.

Hence, *LBA 2* is now well on the way and is due for release early next year. It follows on from where the first game left off and features the same loveable hero Twinsen and his wife Zoe (who's now expecting a child) and the dastardly dictator FunFrock.

As well as looking utterly fantastic (just check out the screenshots), the developers have added a few new camera angles in an attempt to make *LBA 2* less restrictive, and have made the whole player environment much bigger. They've also retained the familiar (and easy to use) character control method and concentrated on making the puzzles a lot more involved.

Basically, *Little Big Adventure 2* is more of the same, with a couple of tweaks - but then again, if it ain't broke... **Z**



Links at last

FOR MANY ARMCHAIR GOLF ENTHUSIASTS LINKS IS STILL THE GAME OF CHOICE. It's been a hell of a long time coming, but the much needed update is finally upon us in the form of *Links LS*.

Many of the features people asked for in the first game have now been implemented, such as match play, best ball and skins. The graphics have had a bit of a facelift too, with high-end PC owners being able to play the game in hi-res with up to 16.7 million colours and at resolutions up to 1280x1024.

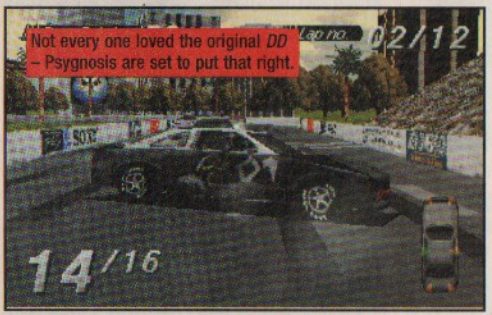
Eidos have signed up Arnold Palmer for the first game in the *LS* series, which gives them the perfect excuse to film him doing his thing and telling you how crap you are at golf. The game also features multimedia clips of Arnold's personal library and workshop, which we suppose somebody will find useful. Arnie's home course at Latrobe is included with the game, as are the Plantation Club and Village courses at Kapalua.

We haven't seen very much of the game apart from the screenshots on this page, but as the *PC Zone* gang are all confirmed *Links* addicts we're going to stupidly predict that *Links LS* will be the best golf game in the world, ever. Probably. *Links LS* will hopefully be out next month, so expect a full review in the next issue. **Z**



The all-new *Links LS* - looking good and due for release next month.

Not every one loved the original *DD* - Psynosis are set to put that right.



Destruction Derby 2

feature that will allow racers to repair damage and complete the race. Cars will roll, tumble and cartwheel before hitting the dirt and bits will fly off as they collide with each other. As well as the normal championship league and practice modes, *DD2* will house a new 'Stunt n' Smash' facility that will allow players to rig up flying stunts and cause maximum car carnage.

In the same vein and due to be released at around the same time is *Monster Trucks*, an off-road racing game from the same developers, Reflections. Players will be able to drive numerous different vehicles, all with accurate suspension, including buggies and monster trucks, over fully texture-mapped terrain

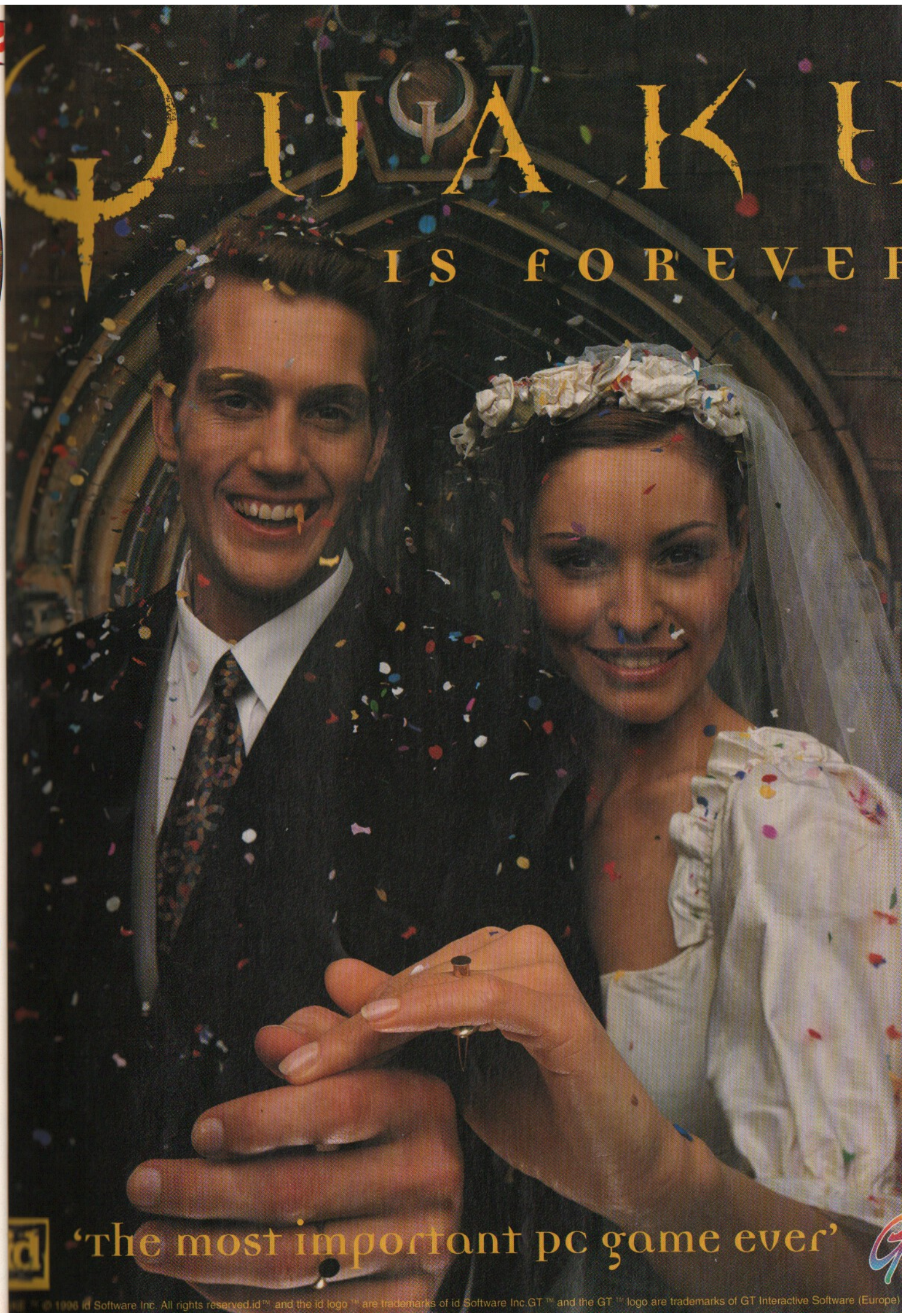
ranging from wide open deserts to vast misty forests. As well as the usual championship and practice options, players will have the option to take part in short training circuits, car crushing competitions, time trial challenges and the monster endurance rally itself.

All tracks and competitions will feature complete freedom of movement with changing weather patterns and terrain, and *Monster Trucks* will be one of the first games to incorporate some stunning new special effects, among which you'll encounter dust clouds, water spray, lens flare and fog.

Both *Destruction Derby 2* and *Monster Trucks* are due for release in December. **Z**

JUST AS EVERY DEVELOPER IN THE LAND SEEMS to be suffering from sequelitis, Psynosis have announced that they are currently working on *Destruction Derby 2*.

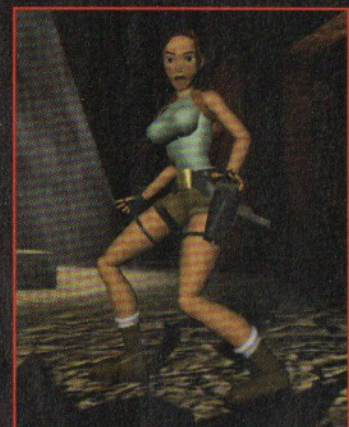
Promising even more bumper-to-bumper action, the sequel boasts completely new, longer, faster, wider tracks, with hills, jumps and high-speed banked corners, as well as a new Pits



'The most important pc game ever'

Dispatches

TOMB RAIDER DELAYED
Core Design have had to put back the release date of their 3D third-person perspective game *Tomb Raider* because Sony want it to go out



on the PSX first. This has affected the PC development schedule and knocked back the release date for the PC version (which, incidentally, looks much better than the PSX product) to around October/November time - although from what we've seen so far, it'll be worth the wait. With its super-smooth texture-mapped 3D accelerated graphics and cheeky girly heroine, we predict that *Tomb Raider* will be one of the biggest games of the year.

ORGANIC ART
If you're bored with your screensaver, then check out the new *Organic Art 3D Living Screensaver and Evolutionary Art Generator* designed by international computer artist William Latham. As well as featuring over 100 3D screensaver scenes, the software allows you to create your own organic art

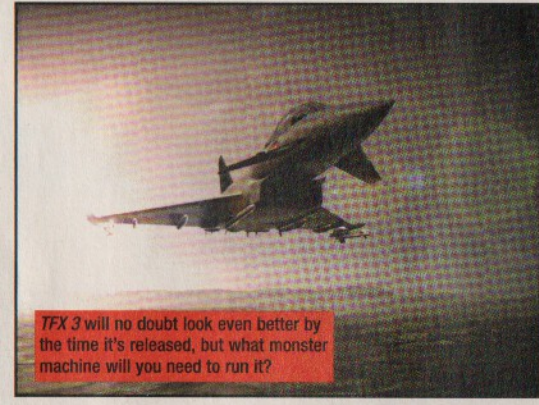


using the 'Evolutionary Generator' with over 400 million combinations to explore alongside the opportunity to seriously chill out to the ambient tunes. If you're still a little unsure of whether it's your thing or not, here's an explanation from Latham himself to set your mind at rest: "My work can be viewed as a metaphor for man's relationship with nature through modern technology. I am mutating the types of extraordinary artificial lifeforms that one day could be commonplace in genetic engineering." Better grab your £29.99 and go and buy it then, hadn't you?

LOVELY MARIS
Those nice people at Maris are continuing their quest to educate PC owners with the release of two new titles. *The Origins Of Mankind* gives you a chance to see how mankind evolved, whereas *Discover Astronomy* doesn't: it lets you mess about with stars and stuff. For more details call Maris on 0171-221 3754.

TFX 3

DID HAVE ANNOUNCED THAT THEY ARE CURRENTLY working on the sequel to *EF2000*, and they are telling anyone who will listen that it already blows their original technology out of the sky. Designed to fully exploit the benefits of Windows 95, it will offer players new ways of accessing and controlling the flow of battle as well as the chance to pilot the awesome F-22 or become a tactical commander aboard an E-3 Sentry AWACS aircraft. The follow-up will also benefit from an easy to set



TFX 3 will no doubt look even better by the time it's released, but what monster machine will you need to run it?

up, point-and-click GUI, sophisticated on-line help and an impressive new terrain and aircraft rendering system. As a result, landscapes will now be enhanced with dramatically different lighting to reflect the changes throughout the day in time and weather, and low-flying aircraft will be just as difficult to recognise as they are in real life. Other features include an improved AI-controlled campaign generator with full mission planning built in, refined multiple wingmen control with data linking, better enemy AI, multiple alliance possibilities (which will make it more difficult to predict who will be supporting who in any given scenario), interactive on-line graphical help, a new AWACS control screen which will allow employment of tactics in real-time, and network support for up to eight players - and that's just for starters. In the meantime, look out for *Super EF2000* for Windows 95, which is due for release very soon. It's essentially the same as the DOS version, but features a Tactical Mission Planner which allows players to



plot their own sorties within a campaign, simple to use point-and-click on-line interactive context-sensitive help, and network support for up to eight players via IPX. As well as running slightly faster, *Super EF2000* will run in 256-colour mode and above in either a window or full-screen mode.

Back down to Earth with a bump, and on to the battle tank simulation currently in development and tentatively known as *Tanks*. In fact, it can't really be classed as a game as yet, but DID are confident that the Ground Warfare Technology Demonstrator originally developed for real tank warfare training will make for an awesome game. As well as being the first project to use DID's new dynamic ground technology, *Tanks* (or whatever it will be called) will feature accurate ground-vehicle modelling, photo-realistic terrain mapping, SVGA graphics, accurately modelled ballistics, dead clever enemy AI, and network support for up to eight players.

DID have yet to reveal if and when players will be able to dial into a DID generated real-time battle arena full of other tanks, F-22s and EF2000s, although there's no doubt that their ultimate aim is to create a massive campaign environment that players will be able to enter and leave in their tank or aircraft at whim. If things continue to develop at such a fantastic rate, maybe it will indeed be a reality within a couple of years. Z



Origin's On-Line world



THE ROLE-PLAYER'S DREAM IS FINALLY BECOMING A REALITY NOW THAT *Ultima On-Line* is finally on track for a winter release. Over 1000 players have just completed extensive tests of a very early version and, although it's reported to be running a little slow, the general feedback has been very positive. As well as allowing you to socially interact with other players in real-time, you'll be able to engage in combat, purchase items and fully customise your on-screen character while 'living' within the *Ultima On-Line* player environment. In addition to an impressive 3D terrain and 16-bit colour SVGA graphics, *Ultima On-Line* also encompasses a whole world 'virtual ecology' system which includes limited resource checking; as a result, if a dragon's diet of choice is deer and the hunters go out and kill all the deer, the dragon may decide to turn his fiery attention to the nearest town in search of food. If this early version of *Ultima On-Line* (and it's only a very small fraction of the intended final game) is anything to go by, Origin could well have stolen a real march on their competitors. Ah, the anticipation! Z

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F-22 Lightning



AS WELL AS DEVELOPING THE NEW AND IMPROVED VOXEL SPACE 2 Technology, Novalogic have been busy grafting away to bring us a new fixed-wing flight sim which uses their new polygon-based engine called F-22 Lightning.

To say the game is graphically stunning would be something of an understatement. To say it's in the same league as *Flight Unlimited* wouldn't quite do it justice either, so let's just say that it's about as close to being photo-realistic as you can get on a home pc. What's more, it's pretty smooth and pacy when running on a Pentium (Novalogic have pledged total support for Intel's new MMX - Multi-Media-eXpansion - chip), the detail

doesn't disappear at low altitude and the landscape area is absolutely vast.

Novalogic have apparently concentrated a lot of time into making sure that as many of the features of the actual aircraft have been incorporated into the game as possible. As a result, *F-22 Lightning* should appeal to hardened propeller heads and general gamers alike, as the new technology means it's fun to fly, user-friendly and less tedious to control than many of the 20th century fighters.

"This game accurately represents the F-22 which is specifically designed by its manufacturers to be one of the easiest jet fighters in the world to fly," maintains Novalogic's John Garcia. "This will make the game more user-friendly to all gamers of all skill levels and they'll be able to use this product with little or no learning curve, yet it remains as faithful to the actual aircraft as any hardcore flight sim."

As well as a campaign mode and a Quick Mission editor which will allow players to get straight into the action, *F-22* will feature 'live action' mission briefings that use Novalogic's new video decompression technology plus the option to play two-player co-operative missions through a modem or by direct connect, or against up to seven others via a network. *F-22 Lightning* is due for release in September. Z

The awesome looking F-22 doesn't use Voxel Space technology, and looks quite fantastic.



Warcraft 2 expansion set

ZABLAB HAVE JUST ANNOUNCED THAT WARCRAFT 2: BEYOND THE DARK PORTAL is out now - and they're cunningly marketing as a sequel to *Warcraft 2* rather than just a bunch of new levels for the game.

As it happens, there's a lot of stuff in the expansion set to back up this claim, such as 24 new scenarios, two completely new storylines, 50 new maps of unexplored territory and an all-new tile set of the Orcish swamplands. As well as new and improved graphics, *Beyond The Dark Portal* also features new 3D cinematics, new legendary hero characters and new unit speech (let's hope they've got rid of that awful voice-over for the peasants).

Of course, in order to enjoy all these fabbo new features in the set, you'll need to own a copy of *Warcraft 2* to start with. You can rush to the shops now and buy *Beyond The Dark Portal* for around £19.99. Z



Underwater action a-plenty in TF-10.



That's Entertainment

PURE ENTERTAINMENT IS A NEW DEVELOPMENT COMPANY formed by Harry Holmwood, formerly of Sony Computer Entertainment. Harry, the company's MD, has worked on *Total NBA* for the PlayStation (among others), so he knows a thing or two about games. Also on the team are various people who have worked on top titles for developers Intelligent Games, such as *Azrael's Tear* released by Mindscape (which was very well received here at *Zone*) and the not so good *Sim Isle* published by Maxis.

Pure are a relatively small team of only five people, but they expect to double in size in the next couple of months. Their first title, *TF-10*, won't be with us until September next year, but as you can see from the screenshots it's looking pretty smart already. Pure won't tell us anything about the game other than it's an underwater strategy/adventure-type thing, but you can be sure that we'll be keeping tabs on the company's progress throughout the year. So watch this space. Z

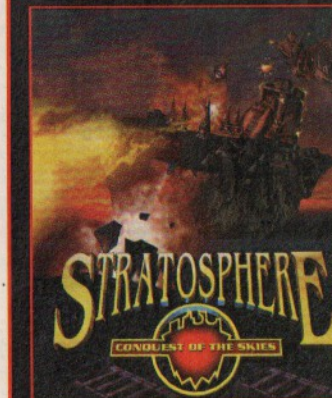
Dispatches

SNOOPING AT SNIPER
While snooping around the offices of VIE's newly named in-house development team Burst, we stumbled across a brilliant new Internet game currently in development and known as *Sniper*. Originally a pilot project written specifically to test the water as far as Internet gaming goes, it seems the chaps at Burst have got a red-hot game on their hands. Admittedly it's only a simple *Star Control* meets *Asteroids* style game, but the fact that you actually get to zap other on-line players gives you immense satisfaction, and therefore elevates the game to immediate classic status. VIE aren't sure whether *Sniper* will make it to release or not. However, now they've got the technology, the idea is to release an *X-Wing/TIE Fighter* style game over the Internet. We live in hope.

MOUSE IN DOOM MYSTERY
Logitech have announced their new mouse, the *MouseMan 96*. Apparently it has a three-button pointing device designed for use with Windows 95, programmable buttons and is allegedly very attractive - although whether it's any good for playing *Quake* and *Doom* is anyone's guess. *MouseMan 96* must be pretty good at something however, because Logitech have sold over one million of the things; they reckon they can manufacture an average of four mice every second. For more info contact Logitech on 01344 894300.

TOP TIP FROM MICROPROSE
MicroProse are setting up a Classified Line which will provide hints and tips on lots of different MicroProse games, such as *X-COM: Enemy Unknown* (top game), *Colonization*, *Costs Means War*, and loads of other fab titles. Costs will be 'more expensive' than a normal call and will terminate after six minutes, setting you back a maximum of £2.94, so (kids) you'd better get the permission of whoever pays the bill before you dial - the number is 0891 555111.

STRATOSPHERE
Acclaim are busy working on a 3D real-time network strategy game called *Stratosphere*. As a young Aerial Naval cadet, you must build and deploy a series of immense floating fortresses

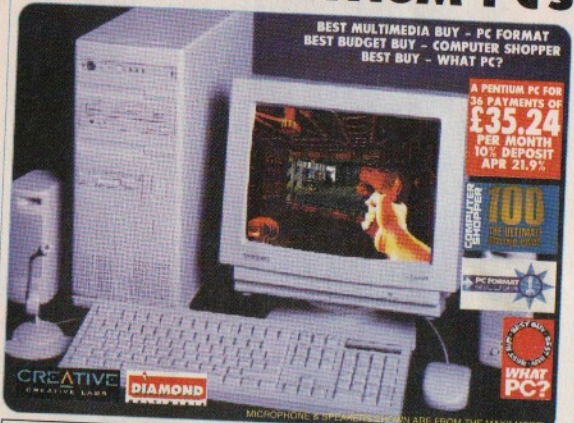


in your quest to destroy an evil Baron and his army bent on planetary conquest. Although it won't be ready for release until the end of the year, the final game will feature 360-degree fully rotational camera views, over 100 different weapons and energy resources, and four-player network or Internet play. If you enjoy playing resource management games like *SimCity* and strategy titles such as *C&C*, *Stratosphere* may well be worth a look.

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Microsoft wake up to games

Microsoft are finally getting well up to speed with their games development, with 11 brand new titles planned for release over the next 12 months.

ALTHOUGH MICROSOFT HAVEN'T REALLY been known as a games developer, they're actually the sixth largest PC game publisher in the world (*Flight Simulator* is the world's most popular PC entertainment title, selling an incredible total of more than 1.5 million copies worldwide) and they're now fixing their sights firmly on the more mainstream gamesplayer (!).

First up is *Deadly Tide*, a fast-action 3D shoot 'em up set underwater. Okay, it may be just another shoot 'em up, but at least it's got some kind of a pedigree. The game's graphics were designed by the very same Hollywood designers who created the 3D graphics for both *Sea Quest* and *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, and players will be able to fully explore the underwater environment thanks to a spherical 360-degree view and gawp at the seamless cinematic sequences so cleverly integrated by developers Rainbow Studios and TRG3.

Also due for release around the same time is *Hellbender* from developers Terminal Reality. Another 3D shoot 'em up, *Hellbender* is set in the sci-fi future and players must pilot their trusty Hellbender craft across three parallel playing fields: the planet's surface, vast caverns in the planet's interior and above the clouds. As well as a plot written by sci-fi screenwriter Geoff Miller (*DeepStar VI*), the game is narrated by top babe Gillian 'X-Files' Anderson and features multi-player network or modem support for up to eight players.

GEX isn't a 3D shoot 'em up, but a side-scrolling action game with a 'zany' storyline from developers Crystal Dynamics. 'Starring'



Gillian 'Thinking Man's Crumpet' Anderson, set to get pulses racing in the forthcoming *Hellbender*.



Flight Simulator For Windows 95 - still the most realistic aviation sim available.

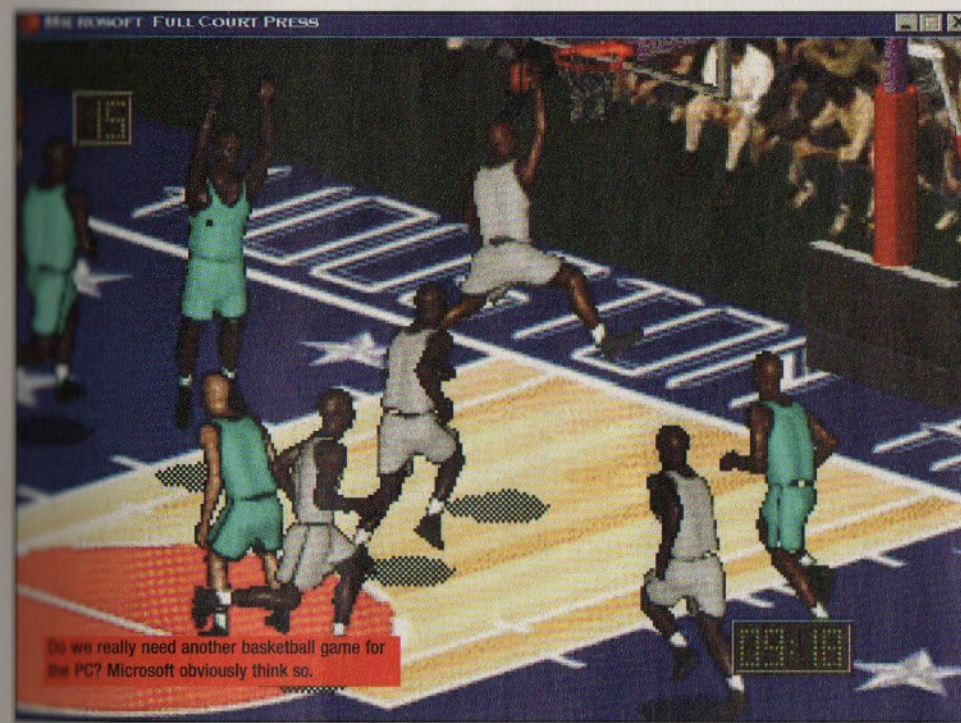
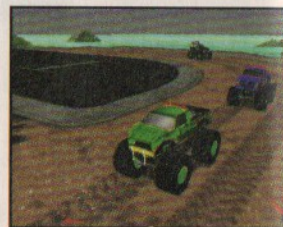
the voice of comedian Dana Gould (of HBO comedy specials) *GEX* is a PC conversion of the acclaimed console version of *GEX*, that takes the player through a world of classic TV shows and B-movies. As well as featuring over 300 wisecracks, the main character *GEX* was brought to life with more than 450 frames of animation and state of the art Silicon Graphics 3D models, so if it ain't funny, at least it should look nice. *GEX* is due for release in November.

Back on more familiar territory, *Microsoft Flight Simulator for Windows 95* still looks like being the most realistic civilian aviation sim available, thanks to enhanced photo-realistic graphics, two new aircraft (the Aerobatic Plane Extra 300 and a Boeing 737), more new cities and airports (including London, Tokyo, New York, Paris, Seattle and Hong Kong) and interactive flying lessons that teach the novice pilot everything from basic skills to advanced manoeuvres. As well as AutoInstall and AutoPlay, *Flight Simulator 95* will also feature multimedia elements, including demonstrations of complex flying manoeuvres (such as a Cuban Eight) by aerobatics champion Patty Wagstaff. *Flight Simulator 95* is due for release in November.



On a less serious note comes *Monster Truck Madness*, a big-wheeled monster-truck racing sim that will allow players to race their texture-mapped monster vehicles around numerous tracks (drag, circuit or rally) against computer-controlled monsters or up to eight other players over a network. Each vehicle is modelled on a 'real-life' truck and features four-wheel steering and accurate vehicle physics, so they jump, bounce and roll authentically. *Monster Truck Madness* is due for release in October.

As well as action games, Microsoft are busy working on a couple of strategy titles too. *Close Combat* isn't just another World War II strategy game however - in an attempt to do something a little different the developers have decided to focus on the human aspects of war. Combat psychologists have even been drafted in to work on the AI and personalities of the soldiers, and as a result - as well as developing a battle winning strategy - players will have to show true leadership qualities in order to motivate their troops. As you'd expect, the game is historically accurate, and will allow players to command the US 29th or German 352nd infantries during conflict from Normandy to Saint-Lo France. *Close Combat* is due at the end of July.

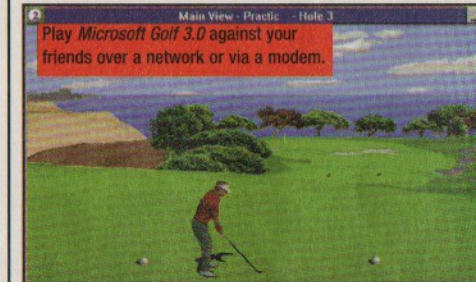
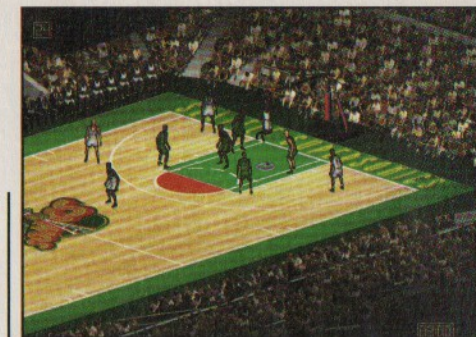


Do we really need another basketball game for the PC? Microsoft obviously think so.

Age of Empires is yet another variation on the Civilization-style theme that spans tens of thousands of years. Starting with virtually nothing, players must build their small Ice Age tribe to the verge of a great civilisation. Players can choose to co-operate or conquer their neighbours with existing tribes in a multi-player environment, do battle on land or sea, or attempt to establish peaceful relations and trade resources. As well as combat, the game focuses much of the player's attention on

resource management, and players must assign certain tribe members to hunt, explore, conquer or build as well as apply new technology if their tribe is to advance. *Age of Empires* is due for release in the spring next year.

To complete the portfolio, Microsoft also have three sports titles on the way, all of which are due for release at the end of the year.



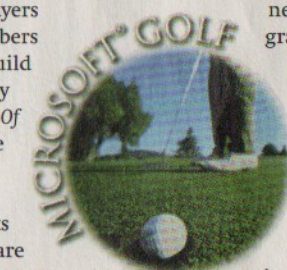
Play Microsoft Golf 3.0 against your friends over a network or via a modem.

NBA Full Court Press is a five-on-five basketball game that features motion-captured players and an AI that was developed with the help of actual NBA coaches and players. Like every other basketball game on the market, it's positively crammed full of player and team stats and will offer head-to-head play over a network or via a modem.

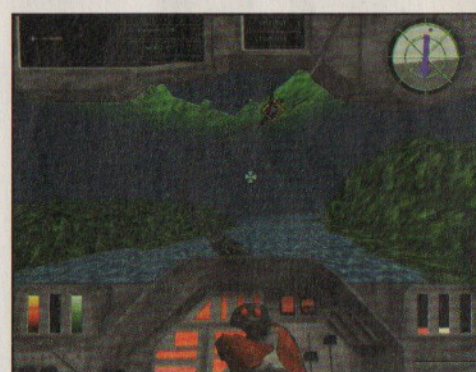
Microsoft Golf 3.0 should be familiar territory to anyone who's played the previous games. The

new version features new and improved graphics, a dozen add-on courses and the option to play against friends via a network or modem.

And last but not least, *Microsoft Soccer* is on its way. It will feature motion-captured players, numerous tactical and team options and the ability to play against other players via a modem or LAN. And all that's just for starters. Z



Microsoft Soccer - all the usual features and the option to play over a network or via a modem.



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Charlie Brooker arrived at the Cranberry Source headquarters in a fluster. He left in a car. Because he's an incredibly versatile guy, really.

NOW THERE'S A STUPID NAME FOR A COMPANY IF EVER I heard one. Cranberry Source – "we deliberately chose a silly name because we knew people would remember it" – are a fresh new software house situated in sunny North Finchley. And while the name of the company is new, the two men in the driving seat have been involved in the games industry for over a decade. And they're both called John. John Cook and John Ritman, actually. Cook is an experienced industry 'suit', who's represented companies such as Bullfrog, Maxis and Sensible Software. Furthermore, in a former life as Mr Development at Mirrorsoft, he was instrumental in securing the first commercial release of *Tetris* (the 'falling blocks' game that looked like shit, but proved eight times more addictive than crack cocaine). When it comes to games, he knows his onions (and, indeed, how to market them). John number two is Mr John Ritman. If that name rings a bell, then you're probably remembering some of the titles he's been responsible for in the past (fondly-recalled games such as *Head Over Heels* and *Match Day* on the ZX Spectrum). Ritman is something of a hardened gaming veteran, and is no doubt kept awake at night by ghoulish flashbacks involving rubber keyboards, RAM-packs, and tape-loading difficulties. The two decided to form their own company one afternoon following a conversation in a local pub, during which they bemoaned the current state of the games industry. Both of them believe that basic gameplay – the most important factor in any release – has been largely ignored as companies scabble to produce games which look and sound better than their rivals, even if they're hollow on the inside. The average gamer needed saving from this onslaught of vapid 'bimbo' titles, they reckoned. Which is why, in the time-honoured tradition of Superhero 'teams' such as the Fantastic Four, they rolled their sleeves up and founded Cranberry Source. And now, it's clobberin' time...

A quick word with the two Johns
Charlie Brooker: So... how long have you been going then?
John Ritman: We were formed just over a year ago, doing the deals that gave us the contracts to get going.
CB: Ducking and diving, wheeling and dealing?



(Right) Messrs Ritman and Cook break the ice by holding an impromptu farting contest. First to turn the air brown wins.

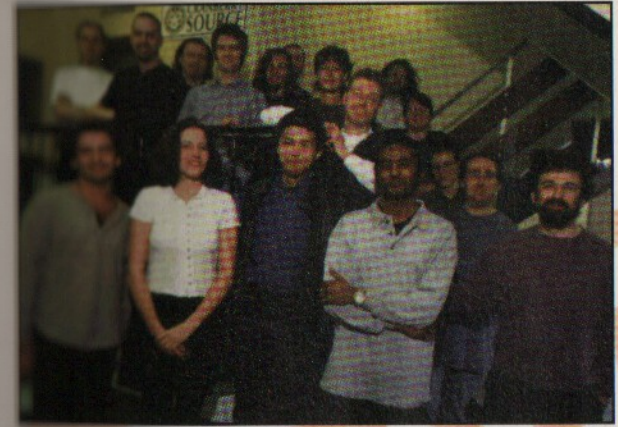


JR: That's the stuff.
John Cook: It involves putting a tie on. I put a tie on, and then we wheel John in, in a crate. And we say, 'It's him – he does the stuff.' And I do the lunches.
JR: He's the executive in charge of getting the shirt off your back.
JC: And doing lunches and signing cheques. And playing *Quake*.
...Thanks to their respective track records, John and John had a fairly easy time while seeking out a deal. They eventually signed with Philips Media...
JR: It was quite nice going around and doing the deals. I've got quite a good reputation out there, and we went round with just a few pages describing the products. And I know that most companies would like to receive a huge document with every pixel described, but I don't work that way.

Sprout, sprout, let it all out...
CB: So what titles are you working on?
JR: We've got three titles. The first one's called *QAD*, which stands for *Quintessential Art of Destruction*. The second one's a football title, and then we have a game called *Redemption*. *QAD* is a two-player game, flying over a landscape. It's basically about rescuing hostages... which has been done before...
CB: Like, say, *Defender*.
JC: Which is the best game ever...
JR: Everyone keeps saying *Choplifter*. We've got some nice twists in it. It's a two-player game – two computers networked up – and basically you have to rescue 75 per cent of the living hostages. Notice the word 'living'. It's quite acceptable, if



(Left, right) A quick peek at *QAD*. As you can see, it doesn't take itself too seriously.



you deem it tactical, to kill a few. There's also some 'hostage pods' which you drop in order to rescue them. And you can suck pods off your opponents, blow them up... or raid your opponent's base and steal the hostages that he's already collected there.
CB: Poor bastards. They probably just want to get out of there.
JR: Exactly. Anyway, we've got some nice technology in there. Isometric landscapes, polar sprouts...
CB: Polar sprouts?
JR: Yeah. Yeah. Don't ask.
CB: Polar sprouts are really nice. You can draw a 3D object without any polygons. It means that, although the original models are created with polygons, we don't have to restrict the number of polygons that make it into the final game because there aren't any. In effect, every single pixel is a different 'face'. They look pretty damn smooth, and best of all, they're fast.
And indeed, he's right. Having seen some of the Cranberry team demonstrating a few 'Polar Sprout' objects, I can vouch for their speed, detail, and smoothness. How on earth they've achieved this effect is beyond me. Not that anyone would tell me, possibly because a) it's their little secret, or b) I looked too stupid to possibly understand the concept. 'Sprouted' objects have the appearance of fully-rendered, rounded 3D objects (albeit in a slightly lower resolution), which move, rotate, and morph with the fluidity you'd expect from a 2D sprite. Very smart indeed, and they're not the only trick up Cranberry's sleeve...
CB: For our soccer game – the working title is *The Net* – may we be using sprouts. But it's possible that we might use a new system we've just invented... called SCIMS.
CB: SCIMS?
JR: It stands for Surface Contoured Interpolated Models.
CB: What does that mean?
JR: It means that they look exactly like polar sprouts. But they're much faster and prettier.
Well, that's that cleared up, then.

And finally...
CB: What about *Redemption*?
JR: That's our epic...
John then goes on to explain the basic concept behind *Redemption*. In summary, it'll be a very large action-cum-puzzle-cum-exploration game, using several different viewpoints.



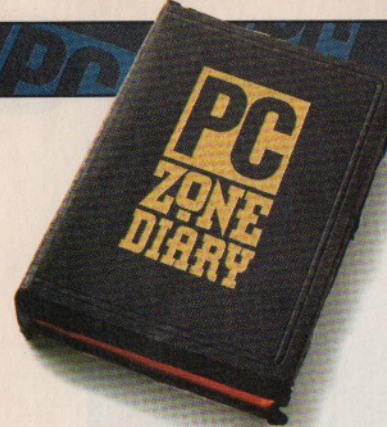
(Above left) The entire Cranberry Source team guarding the entrance to their office. They may be smiling, but they're all carrying knives.
(Above) More *QAD* action. See those objects? They may look like planes, but they're actually sprouts. Honest.

Parts of it are *Doom*-like, parts of it hark back to the classic isometric platform/puzzle games of yore (such as *Head Over Heels*, another of John's past glories), and parts of it take place outdoors. In vehicles. It's quite ambitious, in other words.
JC: To rationalise how we've got all this different stuff in one game, we've come up with quite a weird scenario which involves a mad, serial-killer surgeon who's grafting bits onto you. All this stuff takes place in your own head, and each level is a different operation. It's, er, a bit odd really.
JR: It is a bit odd, isn't it?
Odd it may be, but the concept seems sound enough. Indeed, if the two Johns and their programming team can deliver the kind of quality gameplay they're promising, Cranberry Source could turn out to be the flavour of the month for many months to come. The first helpings will be dolloped onto the giant 'software market' plate soon. Whether we'll send it back to the kitchen, or gobble up the lot with gusto and demand seconds, remains to be seen. Either way, it's still a stupid name for a company. **Z**

Surreal Spectrum Top Five

John Ritman first made his name with games such as *Match Day* and *Bear Bover* on the ZX Spectrum. Ahh, the Spectrum. Such fond memories. The squishy keyboard. The 'colour clash' graphics. And the *weird* games...
Yes, weird games. Because now, looking back at the titles that kept me up late at night during my formative years, I can only wonder what drugs some of these ancient programmers of yesteryear were on. Don't believe me? Read on, my friend, as I pick out five of the weirdest Spectrum games ever.

- 1) MOLAR MAUL**
An early 'Imagine' game in which you play the part of a toothbrush flying around inside a cavernous gob. Your mission – to seek out and destroy rampaging sweets and plaque before all the teeth around you rot away to nothing.
- 2) JET SET WILLY**
Guide a top-hatted miner-cum-millionaire through a sprawling mansion packed to the rafters with pirouetting rabbits, disembodied gurning faces and giant rolling eggs. Somehow, it didn't seem odd at the time.
- 3) THE SENTINEL**
Surreal, iconic paranoid fantasy in which a scary evil entity sits on top of a hill and tries to stare at you. If it stares at you too long, you die. You fight back by planting trees and then absorbing them. Honest. (It used to give me nightmares, and incidentally, a PC sequel is in the works.)
- 4) PI-MANIA**
Unbelievably odd adventure thing starring The Pi-man – a pink, nude bloke with a suspiciously phallic nose who was supposed to represent everyone's favourite endlessly decimal-pointed number. It later spawned a *Q-Bert* clone (also starring the Pi-Man) which had a reggae song on the B-side of the cassette. The song was called *RastafarPi* and was sung by the programmer.
- 5) ZOMBIE ZOMBIE**
Sadly overlooked sequel to *Ant Attack*. What made this so weird was that the only way to kill the zombies (which were everywhere) was to get them to follow you, then climb up a wall. You jumped off, they slavishly tagged behind – and splattered all over the ground. They don't make 'em like that anymore.



X-COM: Apocalypse

Diary Part 3

MicroProse continue to burn the midnight oil working on the third instalment in the totally brilliant X-COM series, while Chris Anderson plays the dedicated journo and continues to annoy them with 'interesting' questions.

(Below) Last month's picture of a big gun proved so popular with you all that I've got an even bigger one this month.

the chaps at MicroProse have given me their solemn word that come next month I will definitely be enjoying lengthy X-COM sessions. Nothing for it then I suppose but to shake the dust off my book of interesting questions, target one of the dudes working on the game and annoy them with posers of world-shattering importance such as, 'When will the bloody thing be finished?'

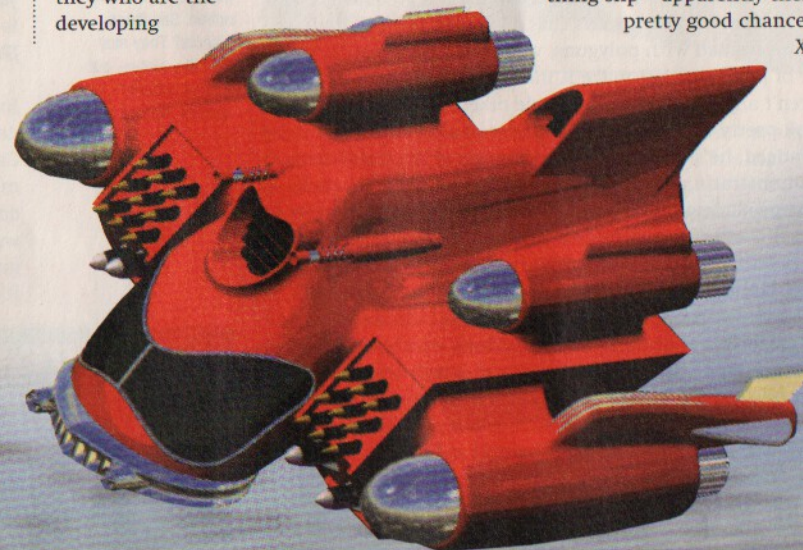
Last month, I phoned up Julian Gollop from Mythos Games (for it is they who are the developing

force) and completely wasted his time with silly questions. For this issue I've decided to turn my attention to his brother Nick instead, who goes under the impressive title of Programming Director. Nick reckons the game will be out late September, but as he asked me not to quote him on that, you can completely disregard this whole sentence.

In his enthusiasm to get across to me the general wonderfulness of the whole X-COM thing however, he did let something slip - apparently there's a pretty good chance that

X-COM 3

WE'RE NEARLY THERE... WE'RE nearly there. Well, sort of. Word has it round MicroProse way that the X-COM project is 'really coming together'. It's also rumoured to be 'absolutely fabulous' with allegedly 'eye-poppingly good' graphics. Unfortunately, I still haven't seen anything actually playable yet, but



will be the first game in the series to support network play. I have to admit that at this revelation I almost lost all my street cred and very nearly fell off my chair in excitement. X-COM over a network? Cool-ola.

As Nick puts it: "Network gaming is the biggest thing in PC games at the moment. No matter how much fun you have playing a game, it just doesn't compare with the kick you get from pitting your wits against a human opponent, so we've decided to look at putting in a multi-player option. I can't say for sure that the network code will be in the final version, but we've got the preliminary work on the network stuff out of the way, and it seems to be working well."

As you can surmise from Nick's comments, there's still a possibility that the multi-player code won't make it into the final game (damn and double damn), but I'll be able to give you a definite 'yes' or 'no' in the next part of my diary. Fingers crossed till then, eh?

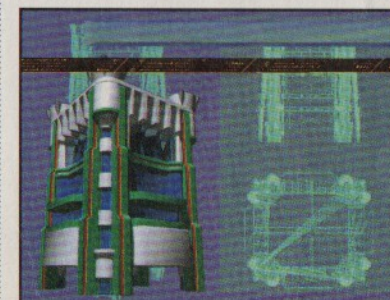
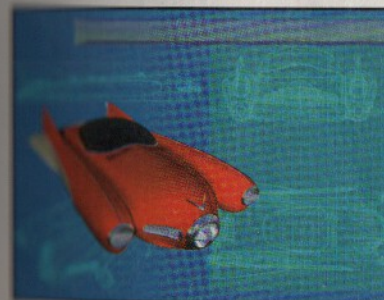
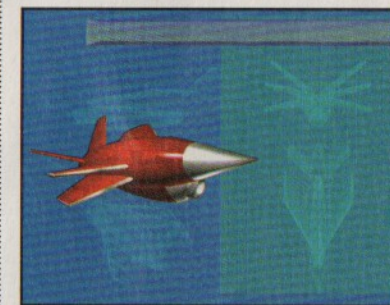
Let's speculate

In addition to the new network option, Mythos are looking at producing a Windows 95 specific version which (if they decide to go ahead with it) will support DirectDraw (for super-speedy graphics) and DirectPlay (for the network side of things), and hopefully this will result in a product far superior than the one for DOS. Although this particular version is still subject to confirmation, Nick went

to great lengths in stressing that there will definitely be a normal DOS version as well, so Windows 95 cynics need not worry unduly.

So how far away are Mythos from unleashing the final product? Over to Nick: "We've finished all the real-time tactical stuff, and we're now about to start work on the turn-based side of the game. X-COM veterans will be very familiar with this aspect, so we want to make sure we get it right. We've also got most of the basic artificial intelligence in, and we're taking a look at the final graphics which we've just got from the MicroProse art team. Generally, we're pretty close to having something that's not too far away from what the finished game will look like."

Well, that's just about it for this gripping entry, but don't miss next month's thrilling instalment in which I, the fearless Chris-ola, will be coming face to face with X-COM 3: Apocalypse, possibly the single most important title in gaming history. Z



(Left) It's a bike. I'm not sure exactly who gets to sit in it yet. Good though, innit?

Product details

Developer: Mythos Games
 Publisher: MicroProse
 Telephone: 01454 893893
 Format: CD-ROM
 Release date: Late September (maybe)

Meet the cast

Well, some of them anyway. X-COM 3, as you may well have gathered by now, is somewhat different to its two predecessors. Perhaps the most noticeable difference is in the way you interact with other factions in the game: although you don't actually speak to any of the other characters, you can follow them about to see what they're up to. You can get very detailed information on them too, and this will come in very handy when you're deciding whose side to take in a politically sensitive situation. It also tells you who your friends are and, more importantly, exactly who has decided to join forces with the alien rotters. As a taster, let me introduce you to some of the folk you'll be meeting in the game.

THE MAYOR

The mayor is a very important bod indeed. He controls the senate. He also controls your funding, so if you piss him off he'll promptly cut you off from all the loot, and you'll have to dream up alternative ways of funding X-COM. Top tip: don't piss off the mayor.



THE POLICE

The fuzz start out as X-COM allies, so they'll be pretty friendly towards you. However, upset them and they will prove formidable foes, but if you get on the wrong side of them it's even more annoying because they're all over the bloody place. Top tip: don't piss off the police. (I haven't got a picture of the police, so here's a cop car instead.)



CORPORATE BOSS

As you can imagine, these guys are very influential. If the aliens get to them before you do, you're gonna be in trouble. Use your powers of surveillance (and down-right underhandedness) to keep up to date with what this lot are up to.



CIVILIANS

Your average civilian is, er, pretty average, but the civilians in the slum areas can amass into gangs, and these can be useful alliances. Needless to say, if you rub them up the wrong way they can be quite the opposite. Rich civilians are useful people to get to know for obvious reasons.



X-COM SOLDIERS

Guess what these are? That's right, these are your loyal soldiers - you know, the ones you send in at the drop of a hat to die at the hands of alien scumbags. In the unlikely event that your soldiers emerge triumphant from battle, their statistics improve, which no doubt cheers them up no end.

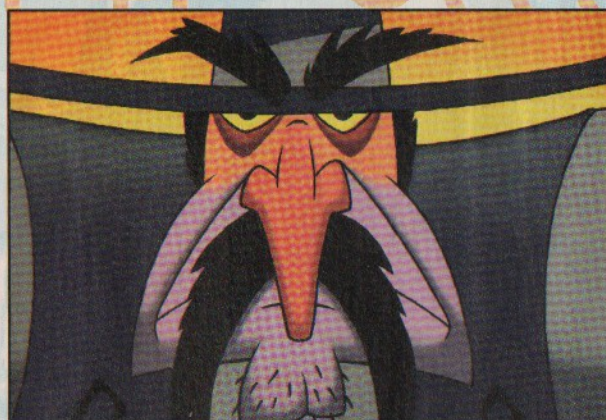


Toonstruck

Toonstruck has fluffy bunnies and cartoon characters galore, but developers Burst claim that underneath the cutesy gloss lies cutting edge technology and originality oozing from every hand-crafted pore. Perennial juve **Jeremy Wells** bunks off and discovers that this ain't just for the kids either.

TOONSTRUCK SEEMS TO BE ONE of those games that people have been talking about for simply ages. Even without seeing it, you can't fail to be impressed by its credentials: it 'stars' Christopher Lloyd (*Back To The Future*), and features the voice talents of Dan Castellana (Homer Simpson), Tim Curry (*Rocky Horror Picture Show*), David Ogden Stiers (*M*A*S*H*) and Dom DeLuise (*An American Tale*).

It's the first game of its kind to use a special eight-camera digital betacam green-screen set-up which ensures that the live-action character (Lloyd) is



(Above) 'Ere! This cowboy's got a chin just like a scrotum!

(Right) C'mon pardner, let's ride the Wild West.

(Below left) The richly animated settings boast over 100 lush hand-painted backgrounds.

(Below right) Watch it kids - any misbehaving and it's the dungeon and no tea for you.

the Saturday morning 'Fluffy Fluffy Bun Bun Show'. When his producer tells him that he must create a new show called 'Fluffy And Friends', Blanc experiences a sudden attack of creative block. Through a freak accident he's transported into a world populated by his own cartoon creations, including Flux Wildly, a loony sarcastic "hyper-kinetic" cartoon character (played by Dan Castellana).

In true and typical adventure style, the player must guide Drew through a trio of twisted kingdoms, solving puzzles, setting booby traps and taking part in a series of silly shenanigans to outwit a very odd cast of foes.

Cutopia, the first of the kingdoms, is governed by the benevolent king Hugh and populated with the cute and cuddly characters from the Fluffy show. The second kingdom, Malevolands, is ruled by the sinister Count Nefarious (played by Tim Curry) and is inhabited by weird and sadistic characters which Drew recognises, but is unable to place. Zanydu, the third kingdom, is inhabited by Drew's own personal creations who include Fingers the octopus, a tutu-clad bartender and Warp and Woof who run an abuse tool speciality store.

In contrast to other games that have

Product details

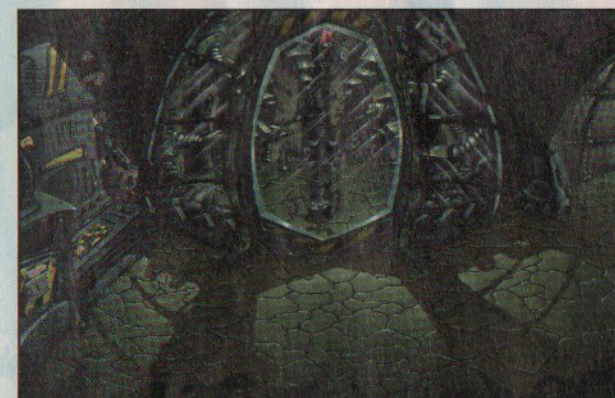
Developer: Burst
 Publisher: VIE
 Telephone: 0171-368 2255
 Format: CD-ROM
 Release date: September



used FMV characters (*Phantasmagoria* from Sierra, for example), *Toonstruck* will offer true live-action player control and environment interactivity (thanks to the sophisticated camera wizardry), so players will actually be able to pick up and manipulate objects on-screen and fully explore the richly animated settings.

For a 'happy ever after' ending (c'mon, we are in toon territory here after all) the player has to complete each kingdom, survive the numerous exploding cigars, squirting flowers and brain-bashing boxing gloves, solve the progressively taxing puzzles and help Drew return to the real world.

If the technology stands up to the rigours of adventure-style gameplay, *Toonstruck* could represent the dawn of a new era in computer games by being the first truly interactive movie (with the emphasis firmly on 'interactive'). Developers Burst are already thinking about a sequel that uses even more sophisticated technology, but for the moment don't overlook *Toonstruck* - it's ground-breaking stuff. **Z**



perfectly scaleable when viewed from any (and every) angle. It boasts over 100 hand-painted background settings, and uses a combination of traditional character animation and digital animation as well as motion-tracking and special morphing techniques to create characters that move and look as good as modern technology will allow. It's also supposed to be bloody funny, so forget any stupid idea you might have that *Toonstruck* is just for kids. This is one of the most technically progressive games ever developed.

So what's it all about? Well, it kind of borrows the fantasy toons vs humans scenario so well depicted in the movie *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* Christopher Lloyd plays Drew Blanc, an animator on

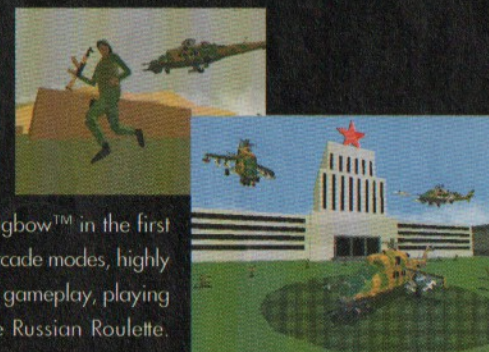


HIND

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FULLY NETWORKABLE WITH APACHE LONGBOW

Cyberstorm



"Here, preview this," said the Zone bods, "You'll love it." "Thanks," said the ever polite and gullible Duncan MacDonald, taking the brown paper bag. "What is it?" Ten seconds later he knew... It was a turn-based hex strategy game with the word 'cyber' in the title. Bastards!

HEX GAMES. PAH! NOW I'VE SAID IT before and I don't mind saying it again: people who play these things are the same as those who wear army camouflage jackets and hang around in public toilets waiting for stray kiddies to wander in. Or in the lesser stages of hex addiction, they're the annoying sods who stand oblivious on the left of tube escalators in rush hour and delight in squeezing up too close to women in crammed carriages.

But what about Civilization?

Hmmm. Yes, I suppose I will have to grudgingly concede that Civilization is a hex game, and I do actually happen to



like it. But there's always an exception to every rule, and in this particular case the exceptions to the pervert/annoying bastard one are Civilization, Civilization 2 and Colonization. I still stand firmly by my rule, so I'll be on very dodgy ground indeed if at any point during this preview it appears that I'm actually getting into the idea of Cyberstorm. To this end I've rigged myself up to a pulse monitor: any stirrings within and a ninja-Decibel klaxon will go off, enabling me to give myself a bloody good shake and regain immediate self-control.

Okay, Cyberstorm is set like dead in the future, and it's full of robots. DING-DING-DING-DING-DING!! Shit! Look, that was an accident, okay? I accidentally knocked the klaxon with my shoulder. I'll start again...

Right. Cyberstorm's set in the future, but it's basically about, erm, mining (phew). There are all these different planets and moons and things see, and they contain ores and stuff. Some contain more than others, others more than the rest, and on and on. And guess what? Yup, it appears that it's your duty to collect as much of this ore as

possible. The problem is, however, that your's isn't the only mining corporation on the scene. (But let's face it, if it was the only mining corporation you'd never get to kill anything, would you?) DING-DING-DING-DING!! (Damn.)

Hercs and Derms...

Now here we get onto the subject of plot, which isn't going to be an easy task because this is a preview, you understand, and with previews the writer always has less than the full amount to go on. In general there's the merest scrap of a game, yet reams upon reams of 'printed material', and on occasion it's not much more than a screenshot and a promise. In the case of Cyberstorm, however, I've got a massive and seemingly unbugged lump of game (hooray), but no written information whatsoever (boo). Please bear this in mind as I guess my way through the next couple of paragraphs...

Derms and Hercs...

Remember Aliens? And how at the end a semi-naked sweaty Ripley clamped herself into the giant exo-skeleton hydraulic robot thingy?

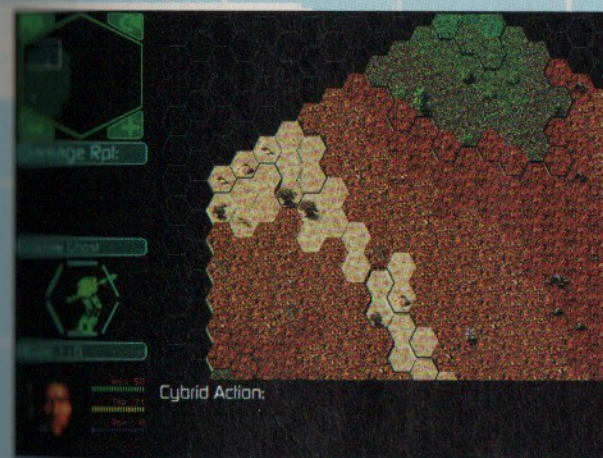
DING-DING-DING-DING-DING!! (Bugger!)

Sorry, I'll just get my breath back. These hydraulic exo-skeleton doofers are the hardware of choice for the futuristic mining corporations of Cyberstorm. Indeed, they construct many different models, from small fast ones to large slow ones and beyond - and these are the Hercs. Some make good scouts while others are more suited to the role of simple workhorses with large capacity ore-carrying abilities. Others - budget permitting, of course - can be armed to the hilt with devastating weaponry.

Hercs are only exo-skeletons too, so they need drivers - which is where the Derms come in. Bioderms are genetically-engineered people, and you make them yourself in a vat. As you can probably guess, the quality of your creations depends on how much dosh you can afford to pour in. You can make loads of shit Derms, for instance, or go for the all eggs in one basket routine of forking out heavily for just a single very, very skilled one. You know the drill. However, it's worth mentioning that there's still room for improvement with even the really shite Derms - you can school them (for cash) in varying subjects such as piloting, technology, missile aiming and so forth.



(Above) Model 110's not looking happy. The reason? Simple - this is the death screen.



Who drives what?

Obviously, now as with all resource management-style games...

DING-DING-DING-DING-DING!! Whaaaaat? I couldn't have set the klaxon off - all I said was 'resource management-style games'...

DING-DING-DING-DING-DING!! Hmmm, there must be a fault.

Anyway, as I said, with all resource management-style games you begin with a minimum amount of units. In the case of Cyberstorm you get two piss-poor Hercs and two useless Bioderms, so deciding which Bioderm will drive which Herc is easy: it, it, doesn't really matter. Later on in the game however, since you've built up a fully customised fleet and have lost track of who's

(Above) Some terrain, with just a hint of hexes.

(Above right) Closer in, again with just a hint of hexes.

(Below) A bloody gigantic robot thing.



who and what's what, deciding just who gets to drive which of your spanky (or indeed, unspanky) Hercs can get a tad confusing. Anoraks love

this stuff, but for those who don't there appears to be a handy option called 'autolink' where the PC looks at each individual Derm and assigns him/her/it to the most suitable craft.

What about the battles?

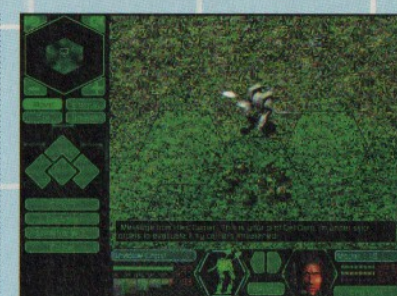
DING-DING-DING-DING-DING!! (Piss!) Okay, here's a sample mission. You've got two Hercs to play with; the planet you land on is rich in ore; and your objective is to mine at least 500 ore units. Oh, and the planet is rocky and hilly to boot (terrain affects the distance Hercs can travel per turn). You switch the inset global map (initially blacked out à la Civilization) to highlight the ore locations and send out the fastest Herc - it averages say, 30 hexes per go. Two turns later it discovers an ore field. You engage its Extractor, give it a route, and press 'continue' in its movement menu. Meanwhile, you instruct your slower Herc (which is more heavily armed) to head for the ore field as well. Three turns later it gets there, just as the scout Herc has almost reached its full capacity. A further three turns and both Hercs are chocka. You've got 800 ore units, and no means of extracting more because you didn't bother to buy extra storage facilities for either last time you were at base.

So what happens next? Do you head back to your drop-off ship and return to HQ with your objectives exceeded? No, because your scout Herc's grade 3 scanners, crap as they are, have picked up an enemy mining vehicle - and you can pick up a nice bounty for the destruction of said vehicles.

Your weapons might be on the dodgy side, and your Bioderms perhaps a few sandwiches short of a picnic, but it's two versus one. Fight!!!

DING-DING-DING-DING-DING!! You move both Hercs into position, using your final turn to instruct them to crouch as this will make them harder to hit. The computer takes its turn, and all you can do now is watch helplessly as five hitherto undetected enemy units move forward into the fray, letting rip an array of weapons you hadn't even dreamed of.

DING-DING-DING-DING-DING!! Your turn again. Stay and fight? Or leg it back to the Drop Zone? You leg it, and your scout Herc puts



on a good show. Your slower-moving escort Herc, however, fares a trifle worse. Yes, it gets in a few shots before it's destroyed, but it's still destroyed - along with its 400 ore units. You swear that vengeance will be yours... DING-DING-DING-DING-DING!!

Back at HQ the remaining 400 ore units are welcomed and paid for, but who's going to give a monkeys when thanks to your greed you've failed the mission. So much for promotion then, never mind access to new hardware. Furthermore, your surviving Bioderm has been injured and you've got to foot the hospital bill. Poo! With cashflow problems like this, it's time for some seriously considered resource management decisions.

Ring my bell (N-o-o-ooo!!)

It has been a very rare occasion indeed that I've found myself addicted to a preview copy of a game, especially a hex one. If I mention the words Command & Conquer though, you might possibly understand how Cyberstorm snuck up and got me in its grip, because it has a very similar vibe. The terrain graphics are about as un-hexy as you can get, the animation and sound on the Hercs is seriously 'clunky', the strategy looks as if it's going to be superbly fraught, and the fact that the whole thing is turn-based... Paff! Who cares anymore?!

DING-DING-DING-DING-DING!! True confessions: I finally understand

how turn-based games can prove just as exciting as real-time ones, and I definitely suggest that you check out the final review of Cyberstorm, even if it does contain the word 'cyber'.

DING-DING-DING-DING-DING!! But now I must leave you and head for Millets where I intend to buy a camouflaged anorak and a headband, via the busiest tube I can find, naturally. And my final destination? The bushes by the toilet in St James's Park (you get a smashing view of Buckingham Palace, and a choice of either the Circle or Central Line! Oh happy day!). Z

Product details

Developer: Dynamix
 Publisher: Sierra
 Telephone: 01734 303322
 Format: CD-ROM
 Release date: August

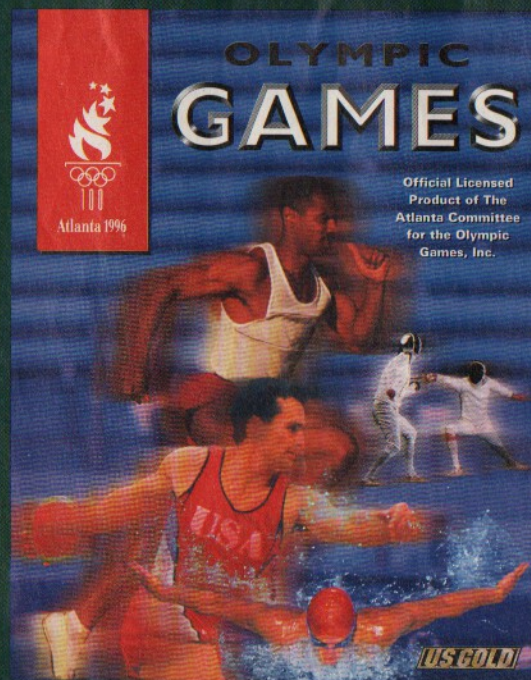
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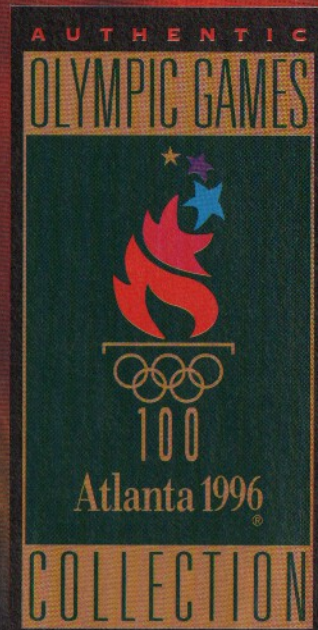
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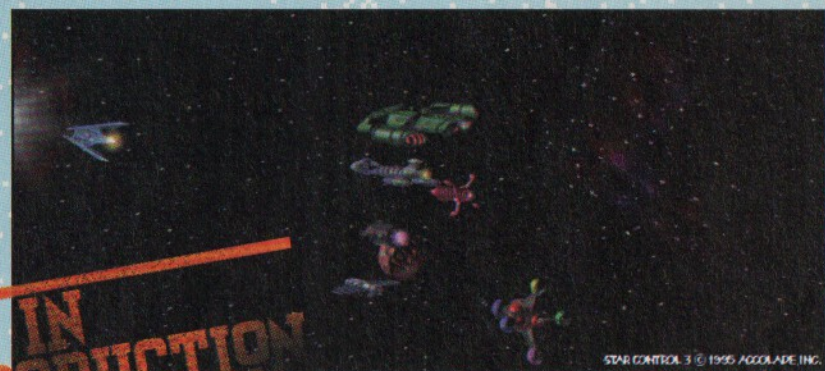
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IN PRODUCTION

Star Control III



WAY, WAY BACK IN THE MISTY dawn of PC gaming, IBM-compatibles were owned by people with slippers, yellow fingernails, badminton racquets married to small doughy women. This is the era when an 486SX25 could cost £5000 and games were golf sims or games you could play golf with. At that time the all-singing, all-dancing Sega Mega Drive was the PlayStation of the day, able to 'do' moving sprites, in colour, as well as music and scrolling.

While everyone played the piss-poor *Sonic The Hedgehog* and *R-Type*, a little known game called *Star Control I* appeared (penned by the equally little known Paul Reich III). As well as abysmal tiny blocky graphics, it made a terrible attempt at a Star Trekian galactic empire type simulator. It was



(Above) *Star Control III* looks like it will take off from where we were previously – drunkenly celebrating Earth's victory over galactic evil, but with a strange, bitter aftertaste on our tongues (which could be down to either the beer or a hint of sequel). Still at an early stage when we saw it, *Star Control III* nevertheless seems to be in the process of updating the graphics '90s-style, and bringing in a more of a planetary, *Command & Conquer* feel to the gameplay.

In the days before *Doom*, before Pentiums, before women even, there was but one pursuit for a grown man – *Star Control II* head-to-head melee, followed by long leisurely single-player seshes. **David McCandless**, naturally, was the best, the UberMeleeMeister if you like...

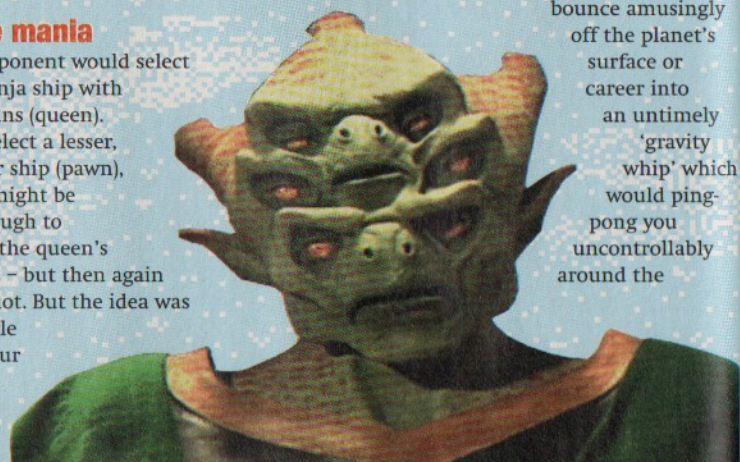
pretty crap, all things considered. But, as a sideline, it had a sub-game called *Melee*, in which you grabbed two little ships (from a 'fleet' of 12 or so) and pitched them against each other. Each one had different handling characteristics and speed, a normal weapon, and a 'special' weapon, so it all became a bit like chess. Well, sort of...

Melee mania

Your opponent would select a big ninja ship with huge guns (queen). You'd select a lesser, crappier ship (pawn), which might be fast enough to outrun the queen's missiles – but then again might not. But the idea was to whittle away your enemy.

or force it into making a hilarious mistake (ie crashing into an asteroid or, better still, its own missiles) before your puny pawn was destroyed. To make things more complicated, a planet in the centre of the playing arena created a massive amount of gravity, lading your ships with inertia, and – if you were unlucky – forcing you to

bounce amusingly off the planet's surface or career into an untimely 'gravity whip' which would ping-pong you uncontrollably around the



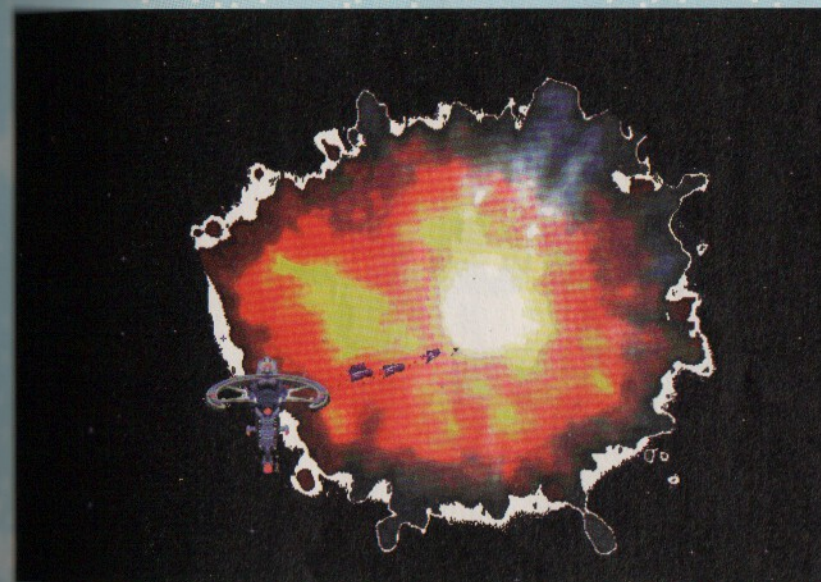
Star Control II... single-player

While the melee section of *Star Control II* was great, fab and top, it was the single-player game which grabbed people. Well, more bear-hugged them actually, crushing their social life as you would the abdomens of flies between your thumb and forefinger. It had a semi-clichéd plot, a mixture of awesome and awesomely crude graphics – but was so well paced and so well-written that anyone who touched it was gripped instantly. That included almost everyone in the office at the time, which caused a problem as we only had one 486, and *Star Control II* had only six savegame slots. And there were seven of us – and seven into six doesn't go.

So how do you play it? Well, basically you and a bunch of colonists return from a deep space mission to find Earth space not as you remember it. Your homeworld has been encased by an impenetrable barrier, guarded

by a single space station. The terrifying and powerful Urqan have taken over the solar system – and many other solar systems beyond – and enslaved the human race. Luckily, the space station is still manned by humans who vow to help you to kick the Urqan's butt.

So, off you go round the galaxy, searching for weapons, raw materials and other alien races to aid you – a dangerous task, as most races are as eager to go up against the deadly Urqan as most of those silly wrestlers were against Big Daddy on Saturday mornings. Some races need convincing, verbally (cue lots of hilarious conversations with weird aliens). Others require certain objects recovered or tasks performed. As you explore the galaxy, you begin to discover hidden truths and strange goings-on. Where exactly are the Urqan? And who exactly is a 'goodie' and who exactly is a 'baddie'?



Product details

Developer: Accolade
Publisher: Accolade/Time Warner
Telephone: 0171-391 4300
Format: CD-ROM
Release date: Late 1996

well. The *Melee* seemed very similar to its predecessor, bar the funky rendered ships and the svga graphics. The original 20-plus armada had swollen to an impressive 30-plus with all manner of new and exotic looking ships in evidence.

The format is basically the same – one on one – but with a few added bits. The playing area now zooms in smoothly when the ships approach, rather than jerkily cutting to close-ups. Each ship has about a zillion new frames of animation so they look pretty stylish when they flip around. Network and serial/modem play is possible, and the computer opponent is still as tough as it ever was. Whether it will rise up from the past and claim joint 'Multi-player Game Of The Century' award from *Doom* and *Quake* remains to be seen, as does whether or not the single-player game will play on the exhaustive fun of *Command & Conquer*, *SimCity*, or *Settlers 2*. We don't care. *Star Control* and all that it stands for will always have a special place in our hearts. We love *Star Control* and *Star Control* loves us. **Z**

Star Control III

To be more accurate, it's probably less around the corner and more 'quite a way up the street'. The preview copy we rushed to shove in our CD-ROM drive contained most of the *Melee* and very little of the single-player game. Oh



(Left) A key element of the first game was resource management, collecting minerals, and building the right equipment and weapons.

Old and gold

Most of the ships have yet to be given names, so we've created our own 'amusing' ones.

CHMMR

Once considered the most awesome of all ships, the Chmmr not only featured rotating 'mickey mouse' laser defence turrets and a throbbing short-range directional laser, but also a tractor beam which would gladly suck slower ships into its deadly embrace.

MYCON

Deadly if you handle it right, hilarious if you don't. The Mycon is slow moving but launches huge homing plasma globules – often at itself. Can also recharge its crew.

ORZ

Probably the best all-round ship. Fast moving and slick, the Orz can avoid most missiles and attacks, while its rotating cannon can blast heavy shells in all directions. Best of all is its ability to launch heat-seeking commandos who will infiltrate the enemy ships and murder the crew from the inside.

URQAN

Easily everybody's favourite green battle cruiser, the Urqan fires huge plasma bolts as its main weapon but – hurrah – sends out pairs of drone ships to chase down the enemy.

NINJA-URQAN

A little more of a handful than the standard Urqan, the Ninja is black (natch) and mainly fires nasty missile mines. Close-up it has a deadly fire-shield which should not be messed with.

SPATHI

The good-natured exterior hides a heart of pure death. Paltry cannons are made up for by deadly 'fart bombs' which come out of the Spathi's bottom.

New and poo*

RED SLUG

Fires a depth-charge mine which you can teleport to in emergencies, and crappy side guns. Not good.

MOTHERSHIP

Yep, in *Star Control III* you get to fly an (empty) mothership (*Star Control II* aficionados will know what we're talking about). It has a rather crap front gun but a rather cool close-range fireball defence system.

MINER

This new ship is totally top of the pops. Aside from firing excellent proximity mines, you can also morph into a kind of 'clutchy hypothermic needle' (© PC Zone) and then grab the opposing crew and suck them out. Excellente.

SQUID

This green mollusc-esque craft is pretty awesome. Its primary weapon is an excellent homing

fragmentation missile, which explodes into deadly particles in close proximity to the enemy. And then it fires a cool freeze ray from its bottom, disabling the enemy completely for 30 seconds.

THERMO FLASK

Its normal weapons are a bunch of auto-aiming cannons, while its special weapon is crew regeneration. Not bad.

MEGA-DAGGER

Hmm... not exactly new, but unfortunately it's been changed. It used to have a totally ninja long-range cannon on-board which could devastate most enemies with one shot. The only problem was it had gigantic recoil, so every time you fired it you careered off in the opposite direction at warp speed. It was hilarious but demanded skill. Now it's got no recoil and can turn invisible if you want. Oh great.

* Maybe (we just liked the way it rhymed)

Australian Rugby League

IN PRODUCTION



Summer's here at long last. A time for long, cool drinks, strawberries and cream, the sound of leather on willow, and... er, rugby league. Poor Patrick McCarthy, he's so easily confused.

ONE SUMMER ON A VISIT TO SYDNEY, I went to an Australian Rugby League game with some friends. It didn't seem right watching rugby being played in warm, sunny conditions. Where was the driving sleet? Where was the thigh-deep pool of mud masquerading as a pitch? The torch beams to give a rough guide to where the lines were supposed to be? And the lack of warm beer that tastes of pig fat and the inside of other people's flat caps was distinctly disorientating.

Back

Apparently the game was fast and fluent, but we didn't see much of it, thanks mainly to the fact that we were sitting behind four extremely large Greek brothers who were wearing cut-down body-builders vests which, given their size and shape, was a bit like trying to fit a rubber band round a watermelon. Their collective bulk wasn't in itself a problem, but the game was obscured by their incredibly dense covering of back

(Above) Graphics aren't exactly a strong point, but they could well change before the UK version is released.



hair: they looked like they were wearing black angora sweaters. The game was thus viewed as if through a muslin gauze, like the sort of thing they used to use during saucy scenes in old silent movies - which lent an added surreal quality to some of the tackling.

Packers

Anyway, to the matter at hand, which is EA's new rugby league game. Although it's currently called *Australian Rugby League*, this is only because they can't

think of anything snappier just at the moment, and it may well change in the near future. Let's face it, it's a bit like calling a football game *A Football Game*. Wait a minute... nah.

Go

There are all the usual options: play your way through a league or cup campaign, play one-off exhibition matches, play against the computer, a fellow human or one of the more advanced primates (or, indeed, any fellow creature on God's green earth with opposable thumbs)... all that stuff. All of the club sides involved, and every individual player, have been accurately rated using EA's usual extensive range of statistics - which of course means that everything is taken into account, from tackling ability and speed, to career total of limbs broken in crash tackles, proclivity towards becoming involved in kangaroo shooting sprees, and expertise as bar staff (so that English pub sides can draft them in when they get a bit older).

Home

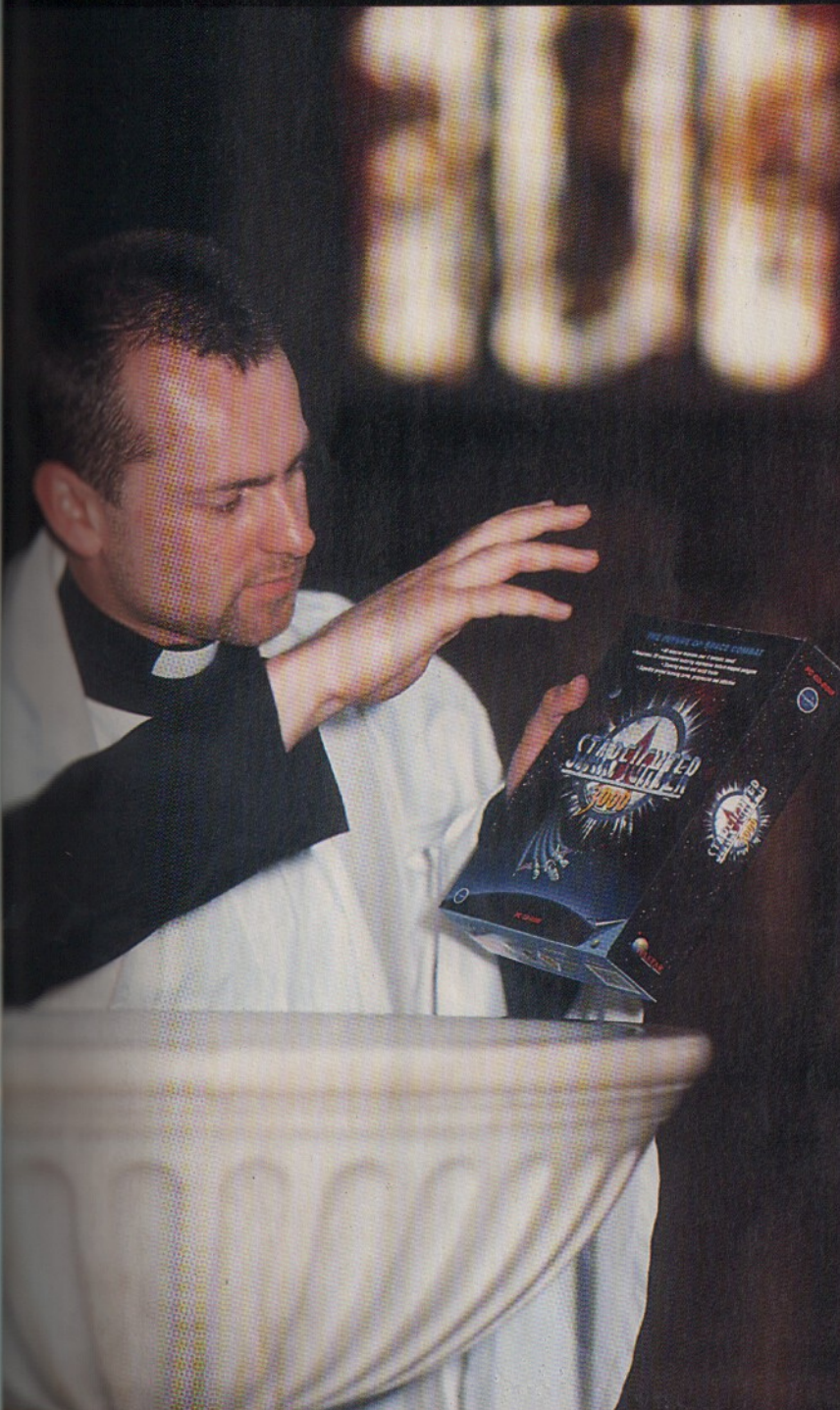
All we've seen so far is an early version, and problems with the graphics cards in our office machines has meant we've had to limit our playing time (or risk spending the rest of our lives doing an extended impression of the one with the sunglasses in Peters and Lee). But let's face it, the known universe is just crying out for a decent rugby league game (put your ear to your telescope one night and listen if you don't believe me), and EA usually come up with something worth looking at. And since rugby league is inherently more playable and entertaining than the Union version, this could well be a minor treat. As always, we'll let you know as soon as we get a finished version and the requisite viewing aids. Z



Product details

Developer: EA Sports
 Publisher: Electronic Arts
 Telephone: 01753 549442
 Format: CD-ROM
 Release date: August

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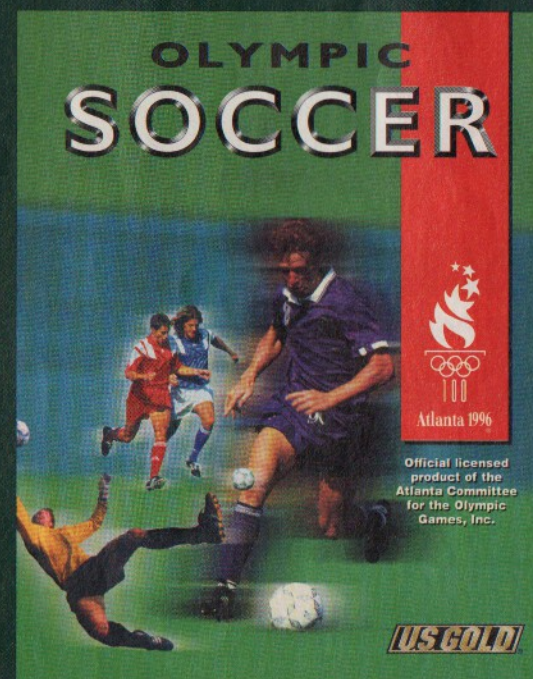
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live the spirit

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USGOLD

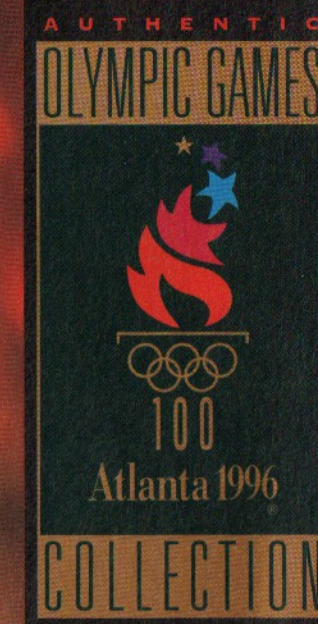
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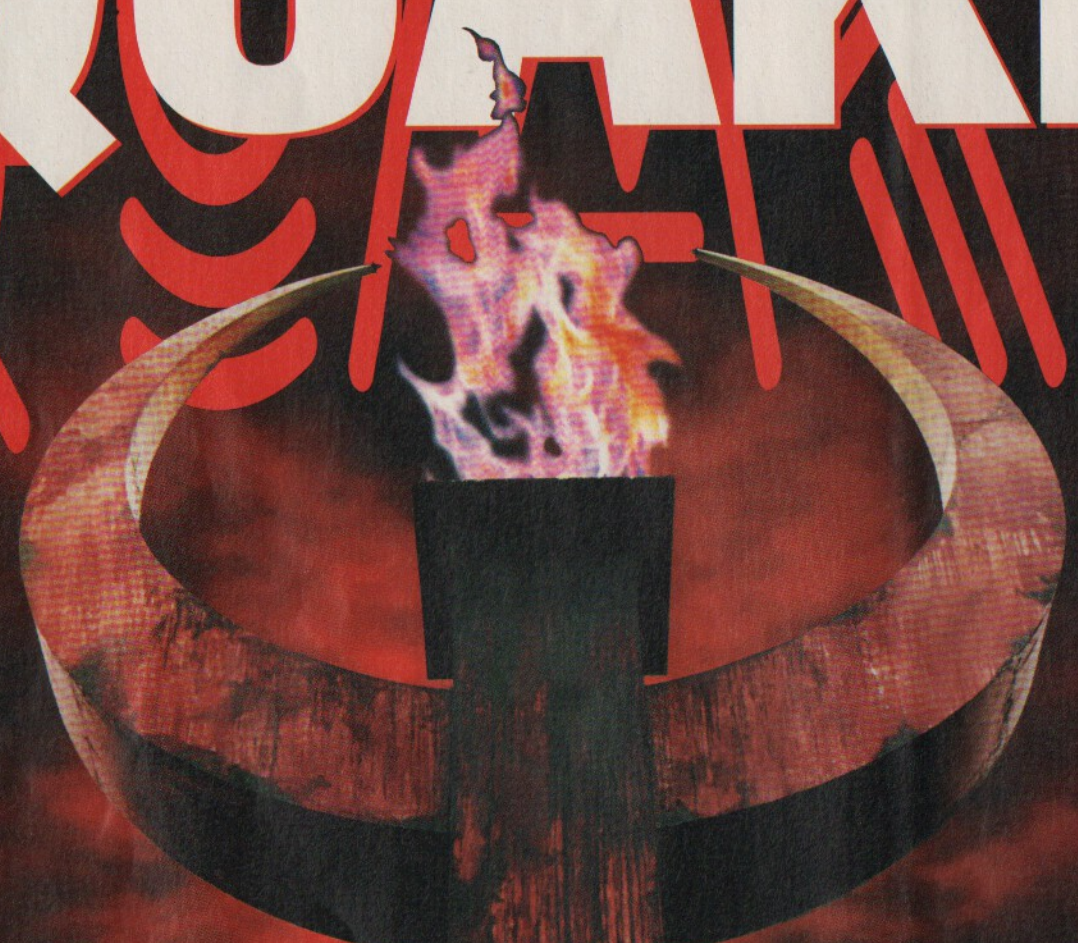
USGOLD

the fusion of speed, strength & skill



Statistics	
Full Time	0 - 0
Goals	0
Shots	1
On Target	0
Corners	0
Fouls	0
Possession	57% - 43%
Bookings	0
Red Cards	0

QUAKE



Spooge?? It's like somebody let off a fire extinguisher in here! After an eternity of false alarms, teasers and the overuse of Tantric breathing exercises, it's finally here. **Quake** has cometh. **David McCandless** and **Charlie Brooker** – the once proud bearers of fulsome and masculine pleasure-polyps which have since been reduced to shrivelled raisins as a result of over-spooging – talk you through the experience...

JUNE 1996 WILL BE WRITTEN DOWN in history as the beginning of the end for civilisation. The alpha and the omega. The end of the world and the ushering in of a new golden age. The great prophets of humanity – Isaiah, Ezekiel, Nostradamus, and Russell Grant – have long foreseen this tumultuous event, the point where the very key foundations of society – working, sleeping, eating, watching football, going out with the girlfriend – cease to have any kind of relevant meaning as what's left of the glorious twentieth century descends into one big *Quake* Deathmatch.

For those who were lucky enough to see and play the earlier manifestation of *Quake* – *Qtest* – the finished shareware version is light years ahead of anything you've seen before. For those of you who missed *Qtest* (due to death or some other acceptable excuse), *Quake* is far beyond anything your paltry, shrivelled, cling-film imagination could possibly conceive. Read on and spooge.

Interview with Mike Wilson
Far beyond the capacity of our primitive reproductive organs and too large to discharge in one go, *Quake* is altogether too much for even two people to explain at once, so we asked iD Software's Mike Wilson to help us out.



**"In thrice thirty, thrice three, and six
When the Son is seen hung to a wall
With blood and fighting and death
Below, shown on many glowing windows
Where many will fight and groan
But not move – this will be the end.
A great tremor shall shake west."**

**Nostradamus (Century II Quantrain 57)
predicts the coming of Quake and the
subsequent decimation of known civilisation.**

(Authors' note: apologies for the sprawling tangential nature of the interview, but you must understand how it is.)

[Interview begins with much genuflecting, omming, burning of incense, washing of feet, blessing of holy bits, oral sex etc]

First of all, can we just say how honoured – nay, pathetically ingratiated – we are to you for speaking to us, the lowly clogged pores and mysteriously sporadic pimples on the otherwise blemishless bottom of civilisation. We bow profoundly in your direction and offer up our genitals to be razed by white-hot firebrands (should you so desire).

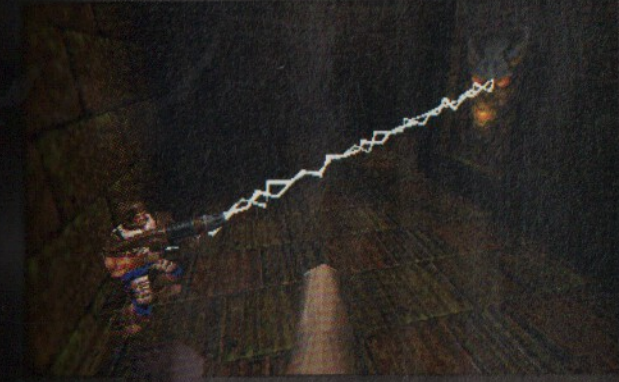
MIKE: Pleasure.

What advancements does the finished Quake engine offer over Qtest? We've heard tell of lightsourcing and real-time shadows – is this true? What other stuff should we know about?

MIKE: Dynamic lightsourcing is in and really adds to the atmospheric feel of the game, but there's no dynamic shadowing, if that's what you mean. The toll on speed with dynamic shadows is too great – you can see this with some other comparable game engines which will remain anonymous.

(Below) The lightning gun is the fab new weapon that we'll only see in the full version.

(Bottom) The Hell Knights are some of the most impressive characters in the genre.



Quake monsters

Take a good look at the following list of *Quake* monsters – a long hard look. They are the enemy. They don't like you – they don't like you at all. Over the next few months, you're going to get to know them all, first-hand. It's not going to be pleasant. It's not going to be easy. But it's got to be done. One thing they all share in common (apart from a universal, determined belief that YOU must DIE) is that they're all far cleverer than the *Doom* beasts. These lowlifes are continually on the prowl, and like celebrity stalkers, they'll shadow your every footstep in an attempt to get close to you. You might have noticed, however, that none of them is carrying an autograph book. This is an OMINOUS SIGN. Hope you like your new friends.

REGULAR SOLDIERS

Or 'Cannon Fodder' to you and me. These shotgun-toting goodfellas are the first enemies you'll come across (figuratively speaking) once you start playing. It takes a couple of shots before they're effectively silenced, and they have an irritating habit of feigning injury only to start shooting again once you drop your guard. The swines. Give 'em a good 'gibbing', I say.

DOGS

Man's best friend? Er, not exactly. Even Barbara Woodhouse would have difficulty taming these four-legged bastards. Mind you, as she's no longer with us, you're really on your own with this one. Likes: leaping from above onto your head, darting unannounced from shady corners, and biting. Dislikes: flea collars, cats, anything and everything that lives.

OGRES

Pity the poor ogre. Imagine his adolescence, when he gazed into the mirror harbouring self-doubts about his ugliness and being 100 per cent right in his suspicions. The subsequent lack of interest from the opposite sex has left him a big, burly, pissed-off individual who you're likely to see binging grenades in your direction, or worse still, revving up his chainsaw in preparation for a little 'organic sculpting' at your expense.

FIENDS

Very scary. Fiends have a tendency to spring across the room right into your face, and since they're almost twice as ugly as Ogres, this isn't what you want to see. I defy you to stay calm with one of these in the room. Oh, and by the way: they're not very easy to kill either. Have fun, y'all.

KNIGHTS

One of the brainier opponents you'll meet, these Knights eschew such concepts as chivalry, gallantry and noble conduct in favour of slicing great big sheets of flesh off your back. Just like the Knights of yore, they tend to attack en masse, and are adept at relentlessly trailing you from room to room.

SHAMBLERS

Again, a very clever opponent. Shamblers are big, scary and as unsettling as a dinner party round at Jeff Dahmer's place. They think nothing of leaping from ledges and platforms if you're walking underneath, and their energy bolt firepower means

you'd better have your wits about you the moment they show up. Proof if proof were needed that the female of the species is far, far more deadly than the male.

WIZARDS

Just like David Copperfield, these guys can float above the ground and shoot magical stuff from their fingertips. Unlike David Copperfield however, they aren't married to Claudia Schiffer, a painful emotional thorn in their collective sides which causes them much consternation. And surprise, surprise – they're going to take all that angst out on you. Still, could be worse. Given half a chance they'd probably throw you in a box and start sawing it in half.

HELL KNIGHTS

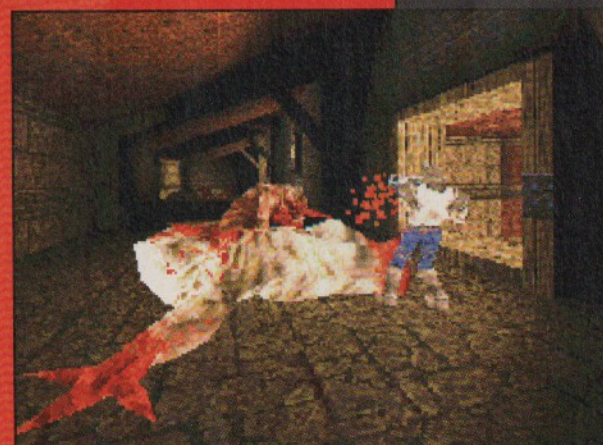
Literally the 'Knights from Hell', these are stronger and deadlier than their 'normal' counterparts. Their arse-clenchingly effective energy bolt attack is incredibly hard to dodge. Try to wipe 'em out as soon as you possibly can, but it won't be easy.

PIRANHAS

The beasts that put the 'ow' into 'drown'. They shimmy about underwater looking pretty – until you get close, when they start nibbling and nashing at you like schoolkids in a Pepperami factory. Delightful.

ZOMBIES

In true *Night Of The Living Dead* tradition, these provide mucho gory comic relief while remaining a very real threat. Bizarrely, they attack by ripping bits off their own decaying bodies to chuck at you. Like in the movies, they're pretty stupid, quite slow... but a nightmare when roaming around in a group. Blowing them away is very, very satisfying, not to mention rather messy.



(Above) Everything now has a far greater sense of depth than anything you have seen before. *Quake* kicks Duke Nukem's ass.

Have CompuServe been begging you for a warning in advance? Are AOL cacking their pants? Are ISPs all over the globe buying new phone lines and barricading their servers?

MIKE: If they know what's good for them!

Is *Quake* better than *Duke 3D*?

MIKE: Technology marches on. Play *Quake* and you'll have your answer.

Will *Quake* have the same impact as *Doom* on the computer games market?

MIKE: Hard to say – when *Doom* came out there was nothing else remotely like it. I don't know if *Quake* will be as obvious to the untrained eye of Joe 386-pack, but it will revolutionise gaming for true gamers. A new benchmark will be set.

Will iD always follow the shareware ethos they originated? Is this the way all computer games must go?

MIKE: You know we don't like to preach, or predict. It works very well for us as we consider ourselves to be perfectionists, and we won't release a title until it's the best thing out there. If your title is shit, shareware will kill it before you even get a chance to fool retailers into carrying it; too often bad product is hidden in a fabulous package for this very reason. We consider shareware to be the most direct and honest approach to marketing our products to the world – if the world doesn't like the shareware, it doesn't need to be on the shelf. If it does however, people will ask their local software supplier to carry the product, or just buy it from us. Like I said, it works out very well for those with a strong product.

Will a Windows 95 native *Quake* be released this year?

MIKE: I'm not sure; Windows 95 doesn't do much for *Quake* at the moment. When Direct3D has value – ie everyone has a graphics accelerator that we need a driver for – we certainly want to be

(Below) What the hell is that?

Quake weapons

You know, a fella can get awful lonesome wandering through all those gloomy corridors and cavernous halls on his tod. Nobody's your friend. Everyone wants to kill you. What you need is a special someone who'll keep you company and give you support. And what better friend could you ask for than one of these awesome implements of destruction? Get to know your artillery allies because you'll need them, so shake hands, engage in a little light, blokey conversation, 'bond', and you're off. Happy trails to the both of you. Please note: Unlike the test version of *Quake*, the weapons in the finished game won't automatically aim at your opponents. Try to make sure you're pointing them in exactly the right direction before you let rip (unless you want to look like a complete arse, that is).

AXE

No messing here. Should you find yourself running dry of ammo, you can always rely on the axe. Nothing puts the wind up your enemies quite like the sight of you bursting unexpectedly from the shadows with your axe raised high and a look of displaced rage glowing through your retinas. It's not all mindless flailing (although there's nothing wrong with that) – there are different methods of use, from shuddering body blows to skull-cleaving swings at the face.

SHOTGUN

Familiar territory? Who cares? The shotgun is one of the most satisfying weapons in *Doom*, and *Quake* maintains the tradition – big time. Like all the weaponry on display here, it's been tweaked since the release of the first *Quake* deathmatch test, and is now even more fun to use. Recommended for close-up face shots.

DOUBLE-BARRELLED SHOTGUN

Double the barrels, double the fun. Knocks great big holes in the hairiest of chests from way across the room. It also features a nifty 'recoil' action and *Doom* 2-style reloading animation. Not quite as fast as the regular shotgun, but who gives a flying frag? This one kills more, and that can only be a good thing.

(Below) The wizards are pretty mean bastards to deal with.

ready and will encourage it. We currently plan to port *Quake* to Windows 95 to the extent that it incorporates DirectX technology, but no windowy menus and such. Those sort of bells and whistles are the reason *Doom* 95 didn't make it out until mid '96.

Have you been smoozed by graphic cards manufacturers hoping to sign up *Quake* as the flagship game for their 3D accelerator card? Will iD recompile *Quake* to directly support any cards? How do you plan to approach this issue?

MIKE: Yes, we have had visits. The current plan (and this could change with the wind) is to release the shareware with no external support,



NAILGUN

As seen in *Lethal Weapon 2*. The nailgun (firing 'Nine Inch Nails', no less) is the big brother of *Doom*'s cheeky chaingun. It fires endless rounds of spikes into the bodies of all and sundry, juddering to good effect in the process. The perfect weapon for strafing side-to-side down a corridor. It's rather good for putting up pictures, too.

PERFORATOR

If you prefer your high-speed multiple-impalation to have a little more 'oomph' behind it, you could do worse than to find one of these beefy devils. Unleashes an awesome stream of spiny, spiky death each time you pull the trigger. And it recoils a LOT. Being on the receiving end is akin to encountering a bizarre horizontal hailstorm, albeit a lot more dangerous. Capable of cleansing densely populated areas quicker than a burst of mustard gas.

GRENADE LAUNCHER

As anyone who's seen the *Quake* test will tell you, these are a bundle of fun. The best thing about the grenade launcher is the way the explosives ricochet off the walls before detonating, leading to plenty of 'bouncing the shot round the corner' hi-jinks.

Of course, it's also possible to accidentally rebound one off the wall and back into your own face, but that just adds to the fun.

ROCKET LAUNCHER

The weapon that doesn't fuck around. Launch one of these at the enemy and then sit back and watch as its sparkly trail beats a path right into their ribcage. The resulting blast reduces most opponents to a veritable maelstrom of squishy red clumps. This is known as 'gibbing' an enemy (the 'gib' referring to 'giblets', natch) – and the good news is that there's far more 'gibbing' action in *Quake* than you could ever wish for. Messy stuff.

LIGHTNING GUN

You'll need to register to get your mitts on this. Looking a little like something a deranged Physics teacher might've knocked up in his garden shed, this is one of the deadliest weapons in the game. It fires forks of lightning which, as anyone who's ever gone outside in a tin hat during a thunderstorm can tell you, aren't conducive to good health. Very fast, very powerful, and very, very difficult to avoid. Not recommended for underwater use, obviously.

kings, the emperors, the rulers of the universe and all that. We will now depart and offer up our very lives so that we can be embalmed and this moment preserved for ever. Our heads will be severed and cryogenically frozen to ensure that our ecstatic memories of this event remain intact for future civilisations.

MIKE:
Er,
okay.
Bye. Z

and then make it work with the Rendition Verite chip – we like this one on a cost/performance standard. As far as a general approach, whether it be joysticks, sound cards, graphics boards, whatever, we usually write for one (either the best or the one that everyone has) and let that driver serve as an open invitation for other hardware guys to write to support us. As long as we continue to put out products that are highly popular, the hardware guys have no choice but to fit their stuff with ours. If they wait for us to do it for them, they generally miss the boat altogether.

If you weren't playing *Quake*, what would you be playing (bar *Doom*)?

MIKE: Football.

Sum up *Quake* in one sentence.

MIKE: Hard work, patience, and the desire to do something nothing short of incredible, have paid off for the team at iD Software.

Will *Quake* go down in history?

MIKE: Yes – unless the world ends before we upload.

Thank you, thank you, thank you. Please accept our most humble gratitude for you are, forsooth, the lords, the

Isn't It Time You Start To Take Life Seriously?



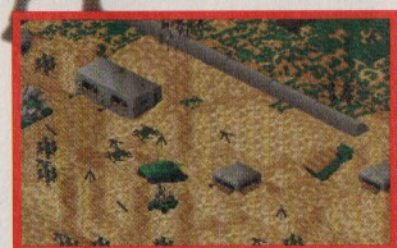
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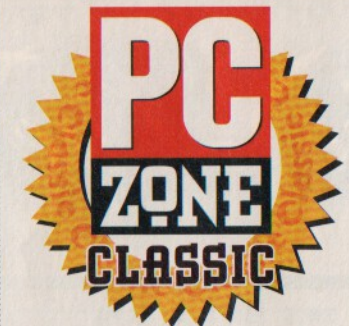


REVIEW ZONE



Although traditionally a quiet patch for PC games, this summer sees the release of a number of excellent titles. This month we check out the incredible *Settlers 2*, as well as the totally hilarious *Muppet CD-ROM* and *Vic Tokai's The Gene Machine*.

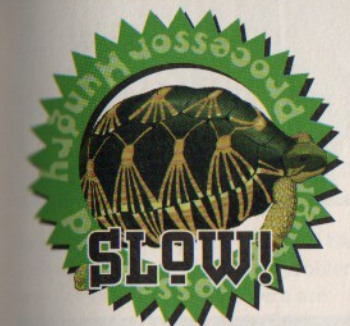
THE ZONE SCORING SYSTEM



90+ CLASSIC
The highest accolade a game can attain. A wonderful example of gaming excellence that deserves to be recognised and indeed cherished, or something.



20 and below PANTS
Absolutely bloody awful. Crap with a capital C. Naff with a capital N. You get the picture.



PROCESSOR HUNGRY
Some games run slowly, even on high-spec machines with ninjascope graphics cards. Just run something like *Magic Carpet* in hi-res on virtually any PC and you end with something running in Jerko-vision.



80-89 RECOMMENDED
An excellent game that simply lacks that certain something that makes it one of the true greats. Well worth checking out though.



486 FRIENDLY
The dx2 is still one of the most popular spec machines, but how do you know what games will run on the thing? This icon shows you which games you can still enjoy even if you don't have a ninja Pentium.



WINDOWS 95
Speaks for itself really - if it's got this icon slapped on it, it's been designed to take advantage of all that Windows 95 offers.

90+	CLASSIC
80-89	RECOMMENDED
70-79	GOOD
50-69	AVERAGE
40-49	BELOW AVERAGE
20-39	POOR
20 and below	PANTS

In perspective

This is designed to be a pure visual guide as to how games of a similar style compare to one another. The bars do not relate to previous review scores... they are simply an indication of how the reviewer feels about the products on a sliding scale.



PC Zone use Gateway 2000 PCs exclusively 'cause they're absolutely fab. If you want any more info about Gateway 2000 machines, you can call them on: **0800 742000**

"You've got a friend in the business."

Thanks to
• Paul Bufton and Marc Swallow (GT Interactive)
• iD Software
• England for not being crap during Euro 96

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A round-up of the month's other full price and budget releases, among them *Star Trek: Klingon*.



Looking back

Zork Nemesis

When Chris looked at *Zork Nemesis* a few months ago, it was one of those occasions in the PC Zone office where the black hole that engulfs his desk was emanating certain negative vibes. Needless to say, the Milk Tray man was not a happy bunny, and the general level of anticipation generated by the prospect of a new *Zork* game was thoroughly quashed by a product that turned out to be something of a *Myst* wannabe.

Bucking what seemed to be a trend among pretty much everybody, we stuck our necks out and concluded that *Zork Nemesis* was basically a bit dull. In short, it's very much a game intended for adults, and despite its quality of

structure, we can't help but feel that American adults are still going to get a lot more out of it than English ones.

However, having lived with the game for some considerable time now, we've since discovered that after prolonged exposure (and we really do mean prolonged - this isn't something that's going to grab you straight away), you do warm to it slightly. Although it suffers from a serious accessibility problem (it has a somewhat limited control system), once you've managed to battle through and actually 'get into it', it presents some pleasant dividends.

Aside from the gorgeous visuals (which were never under dispute), it does open up and offer some rewarding and cerebrally challenging puzzles which are far beyond those found in the likes of *Return To Zork*. They all require a lot of thought, and the structure of the game leads to an effective denouement (cool... I've always wanted to use that word). It has to be said that as far as this type of game goes, it's one of the best, and while it's not one I'm particularly keen on I can appreciate that it's certain to become the benchmark for this mini-genre. Maybe in future people will say, "*Zork Nemesis* style games" as opposed to "*Myst* style games".

John Davison



Warcraft 2 vs C&C

The great debate is still raging over which game reigns supreme in the strategy stakes: *Warcraft 2* or *Command & Conquer*. I can tell you now that as far as most of the games journalists I've spoken to are concerned, *Command & Conquer* has no equal. The punters, however, seem to disagree: to date *Warcraft 2* has sold 500,000 copies worldwide, compared to the 739,000 that *Command & Conquer* has notched up. These figures are about two months old now, but they still give you a pretty good idea of how things are going to go. Bearing in mind the fact that *C&C* had an eight month lead over *Warcraft 2* in terms of when both games came out, you can reasonably expect *Warcraft 2* to catch up with, or even surpass, *C&C* in sales. I awarded

Warcraft 2 a fairly good score of 82 per cent when I reviewed it, whereas Duncan gave *C&C 95*. Having played *C&C* to death I must say I agree with his score completely. Put it this way, I'm playing the extra levels for *C&C* as we speak, but I can't see myself going back to *Warcraft 2*. Which makes me wonder: what exactly are you all on? If you'd like to have your say on this subject, write or e-mail us at the address on page 118 saying which game you prefer and why.

Chris Anderson

NBA Live 96

You couldn't move for basketball games a few months back. It seemed as though every software developer in the whole world had a licenced basketball game in the pipeline or in the shops - and even Microsoft were getting in on the act.

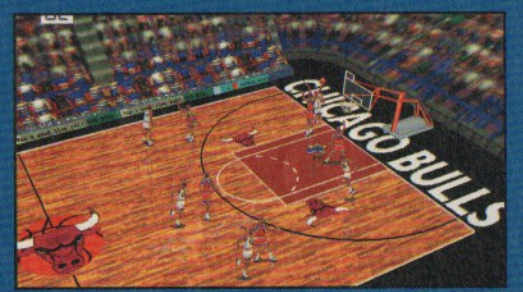
The best thing about this however, was that most of them were pretty good in their own right. This means that either a) basketball games are easy to program, or b) the developers obviously care a great deal about the sport and want to make their game the best.

When we reviewed *NBA Live 96* from EA Sports, we awarded it at 86 per cent. The reason it didn't hit the 90 or above mark was essentially due to the fact that the graphics weren't quite as good as they could have been (which is in itself ironic when you consider all

the fuss surrounding the fantastic new 'Virtua Stadium' technology). However, *NBA Live* was very (very) playable, simply because the AI was spot on. When you play it, you just can't help feeling that (for once) the players in your team really are on your side and want to help you win.

Which brings me neatly onto football games (of course). There hasn't really been much improvement in footie AI since *Sensi*, but whether this is because programmers have trouble developing an AI that can cope with 22 individual players (as opposed to basketball's eight or ten), or whether it's because they feel there's no real competition, remains unclear. Either way, maybe developers working on the 'next gen' of football games should take a look at *NBA Live* and see what they can learn.

Jeremy Wells



Cool games

We see hundreds of games over the months but there are a few that we hang on to and continue to play at lunchtime/when we're supposed to be doing more important stuff...

- Quake
- Quake
- Quake
- Quake
- Mr Frosty Ice Pops

Crap games

There are some games that you can leave in the middle of the room with a big sign next to them saying "please steal me" and you still can't get rid of the bloody things...

- Total Mania
- Deadline
- Deep Space 9
- Shakil The Wolf
- Stuff that isn't Quake

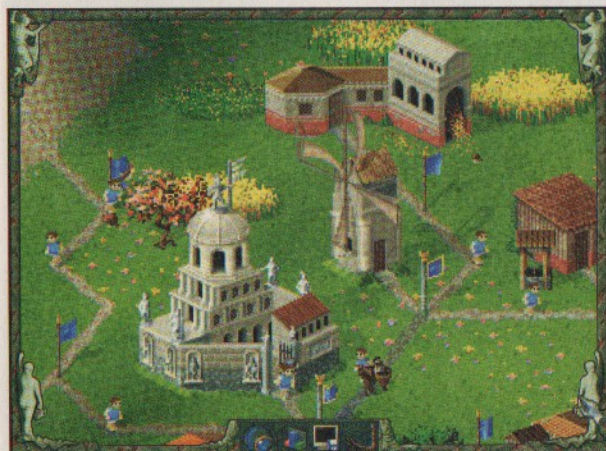
If ever there was someone who thought of himself as a 'God' of some description, it's not Chris Anderson. How completely inappropriate then, that he should review *Settlers 2*.

Settlers 2

(Right) *Settlers 2*, twice as pretty as its predecessor, and a million times more addictive.



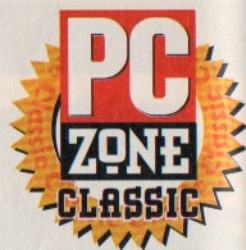
(Below) New packhorses make your roads more efficient, so you can concentrate on more important stuff, like fighting or something.



I HAVE AN UNDYING FONDNESS FOR 'GOD sims', so I guess I should thank my lucky stars that there have been so many of them on the PC: *Realms*, *Powermonger*, *Populous 1 and 2*, *Ultimate Domain*... the list is almost endless. There's something about ordering lots of little people around that's immensely satisfying. "Build me a castle," you say, and off they pop to carry out your command. "Go and beat up those blokes over there!" you tell them, and sure enough an enormous fight ensues, with your little people scrapping away to conquer new lands for you to control. Of all the God sims, the one that is most fondly remembered by the PC

games community is the original *Settlers*. What a game. It arrived unannounced, unaccompanied by tedious PR hype, and the games press loved it. To be honest, *Settlers* was the last thing anyone expected to see from Blue Byte, whose biggest title at the time was *Battle Isle*, a strategy game from the old school, complete with boring hexes and tons of statistics. In total contrast, *Settlers* was immediately accessible, very pretty, and most importantly, enormous fun. So what's the scene with *Settlers 2* then? Well, let me first say that I went to see Blue Byte in Germany to have a look at their sequel of sequels and I was... unimpressed.

Hey, come back you lot
Hang on a minute, let me finish. I was fairly unimpressed with *Settlers 2* when I first saw it because (surprise surprise) it looked suspiciously like *Settlers 1*. What I'm saying here is that from what I could see on the screen, it looked like the original game, but (and it's a big but) I hadn't actually played it. Well, I have now, and I'm happy to report that *Settlers* fans are in for an absolute treat. This is mainly down to the fact that Blue Byte have ironed out some pretty serious problems that were apparent in the original. For example, if you've played it you'll probably remember thinking it was pretty fab up to a point,



In perspective

Ultimate Domain is criminally underrated (and for my money better than the first *Settlers* game). *Settlers 2* is simply fab.

Settlers 1

Ultimate Domain

Settlers 2

but after a while the levels became somewhat repetitive. This was down to the way the game was designed: your objective in each level was to capture a set amount of territory, or blast your opponent to bits, and hey presto, you'd won. This was fine while you were getting used to the way everything worked, but after that boredom set in. *Settlers 2* has a new campaign option with an on-going storyline which I guarantee will keep you interested right to the very end. Also, because each level has various mission objectives which you need to complete before you can 'win' the level outright, the game is much more varied than its predecessor.

Another problem with the original *Settlers* was that the interface could be confusing. The sequel has a new and improved interface which is easy to get to grips with and lets you access all the game's features in an instant, as well as pop-up windows to help you monitor different aspects of the game. The upshot of all this is that *Settlers 2* is much more playable, and has greater long-term appeal. I became impatient with *Settlers 1* after a day or two, but this hasn't proved the case with the sequel.

Settlers 2 has many useful new features, although they're not necessarily groundbreaking. The roads, for instance, get

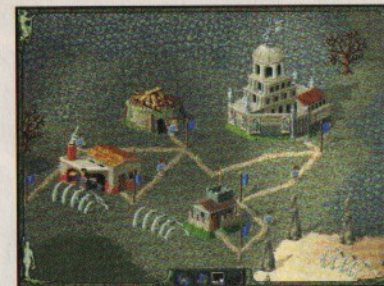


bigger the more people walk on them, eliminating the congestion problem seen in the first game. There are packhorses that move stuff around faster too. As well as that, there's an observation window which you can keep on screen displaying a part of the game area you want to keep track of - your fort at the frontline, for instance - so if you're attacked you'll know straight away. Having said all that though, the game is not without its problems.

Road to success

Simple stuff like building roads is still a pain in the arse. Before you can start making one you need to make sure you've got a flag at the points where you want it to begin and end. Assuming there's no problem with the surface in-between, the computer will build the road for you - but if there is a problem with the surface, you'll see a line from the first flag showing which directions you can begin construction. Bit by bit you start to build your road, following the lines, hoping you will make it to your destination flag. Sometimes you get there, and sometimes you don't. Frankly, this is complete bollocks. Why can't the computer just build the damn thing without you having to mess about with little pointy arrows for bloody ages?

Another criticism is that you can't directly control your soldiers. Admittedly, you can tell the game how



strong you want your frontline to be, and whether or not to use your best soldiers as defence and so on, but if you want to do something simple like move your prime troops to where the action is, you're out of luck. Let me give you an example: my nearest enemy was getting a bit too big for his boots (he started having a pop at the guards protecting my borders), so I thought I'd give him what for. Unfortunately, I couldn't move the soldiers in the centre of my territory to the frontline. But then I had a brainwave - I'd demolish the guardhouses, which would free up the soldiers inside, who would no doubt rush up to the front to help their mates.

I went ahead with my plan and, sure enough, out popped the soldiers. Imagine my utter astonishment when the little bastards walked *not* to the frontline, but all the way back to a bloody storehouse I had miles away from the action. I nearly lost it completely at this point. My best men were getting clonked left, right and centre by those bastards in the red (er, the enemy), and there was nothing I could do about it. Okay, you can get round this to a certain extent with extremely careful planning, but the fact that you can't control your soldiers directly remains a fundamental fault in the game's design. To be honest though, none of these niggles are a major issue. Actually, they don't really matter at all. Why? Because the bottom line is this...



(Above) Use boats to move cargo to and from your various colonies, and to go on expeditions.

Help!

I can't stop playing this game. I've been totally engrossed for days and days. It's ruining my life. I'm losing all my friends etc. I hate to admit it, but I even took the bloody thing home last weekend. Except I didn't. I *thought* I'd taken it home, but when Saturday morning came around I opened the CD case only to discover that my shiny platter of joy was missing - yup, I'd left the actual disc in the office. I was pissed off big-time and was left with no choice but to go out and have a real life instead.

However clichéd it may sound, if you liked *Settlers 1*, you'll love the sequel. It's bigger (the levels are huge), it's prettier (it's even more hi-res than it already was) and it's more addictive than ever. Hurrah for good old-fashioned playability and yah boo and sucks to interactive crap things. Or something. Z

Tech specs

- Memory: 8Mb
- Processor: 486DX2
- Graphics: SVGA
- Sound: All major sound cards
- Controls: Mouse
- Note: 30Mb hard disk space required

Score

92

More addictive than Coke. Probably.

Price: £39.99 Release date: Out now
 Publisher: Blue Byte
 Tel: 01604 232200



(Left) Windows, windows, lovely windows. Er, *Settlers 2* has lots of windows.

Pray For Death

Paul Ditta (new bloke alert! New bloke alert!) managed to curb his first-time reviewing nerves, only to find that he'd been landed with a decidedly uninspired beat 'em up. Better luck next time Paul...



(Above) Nice ...er, wings.



(Right) Here we have another fine example of MegaViolence™.

THE GRIM REAPER, LONG ON SCYTHE, short on skin, has decided to hold a tournament wherein a selection of unsavoury individuals will fight for the right to overcome death itself. The contestants, a downright motley assortment of stiffs, banished gods and disreputable deities also have their own agendas, ranging from destruction of the universe to simple redemption.

There's a wide range of characters, among them Painbringer, a US martial arts robot who looks like he's slumming it from *Rise Of The Robots*, and Cthulhu, a dark god inhabiting an outer dimension just waiting to sink his tentacles in to our world. Then there's Uriel, a fallen angel who looks like she's stepped out of *Celestial Baywatch*, and Jan Fun, a

thirtysomething oriental master of martial arts who died in the early '70s under mysterious circumstances after enraging traditional Grand Masters with his unorthodox ways.

There are nine characters to choose from and you fight the others one by one before you meet yourself in combat and move up to Pain, a nasty individual (I'll leave it to you to discover why he's been given this rather imaginative moniker). Should you survive, you'll find yourself face to face with the big guy himself for the final battle.

But it's tough luck for any joystick jockeys out there - control is via either the keyboard or a gamepad, although they can be configured and are fairly straightforward (four keys for movement, two for kick and two for punch). However, on the graphics front *Pray For Death* fares quite well, with some impressive scenery and well-implemented water effects, although I did notice that the backgrounds tended to shift slightly in time with the movement of the characters. For what it's worth (and it's not much), the intro is beautiful.

Déjà vu

Now I don't know about you, but I think I've seen something similar somewhere before, but I can't quite put my finger on it... ahhh okay, you've got me, I can - *Pray For Death* is basically *Mortal Kombat* with corpses and demons. The game structure is the same, even allowing for a couple of frills (such as a tag team mode, among other things).

The main problem is that there's nothing in *Pray For Death* that we haven't seen before; you can do combos and unique attacks but there aren't any particularly vicious moves to perform

on the other characters. It's all been done very competently, but it doesn't really have you dribbling from orifices in the same way as, say, *MK III*.

I didn't hate *Pray For Death* by any stretch of the imagination, but at the end of the day most of us have limited funds, and if you want a cracking beat 'em up there are better titles on offer. If, however, the mere mention of 'beat 'em up' has you thrashing around in a pool of your own juice then give it a go - but don't say we didn't warn you. **Z**

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486DX/33

Graphics: VGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Keyboard, joypad

Score

70

Pray for originality.

Price: £TBC Release date: Out now

Publisher: Virgin Interactive

Tel: 0171-368 2255

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

(Below) So that's what happened to Adolf.

(Below right) ...and stretch and twist... and... rest.



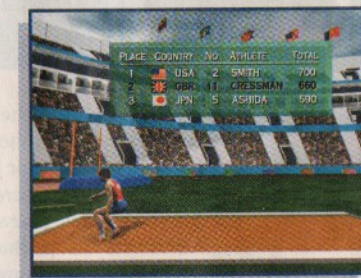
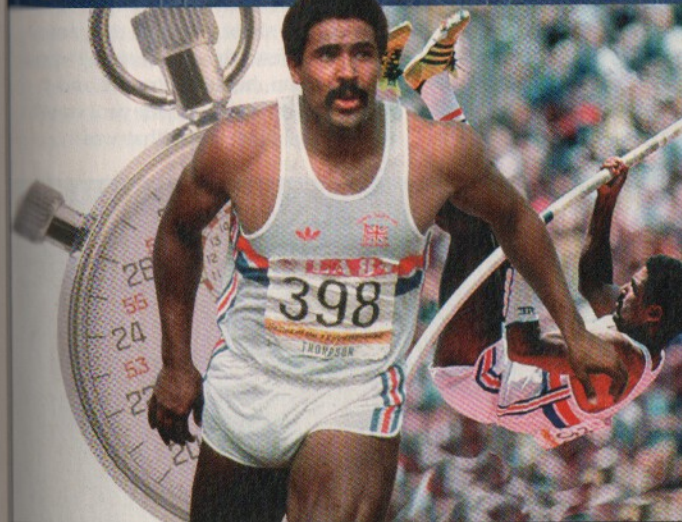
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Cyberia's back. So too is **Chris Anderson**. Except he never went anywhere (Eh? - Ed).

Cyberia 2



I SUPPOSE NOW WOULD BE A GOOD TIME to warn off anyone who might be wasting their time reading this review. Did you like *Cyberia*? No? Fair enough. How about *Rebel Assault 1* or *2*? Oh dear, you didn't like those either, did you? Alright, I'll be seeing you all later then, because *Cyberia 2* is an action-based adventure game which features all the gameplay elements (or lack of them, some might say) which made its predecessor and the *Rebel Assault* series so successful.

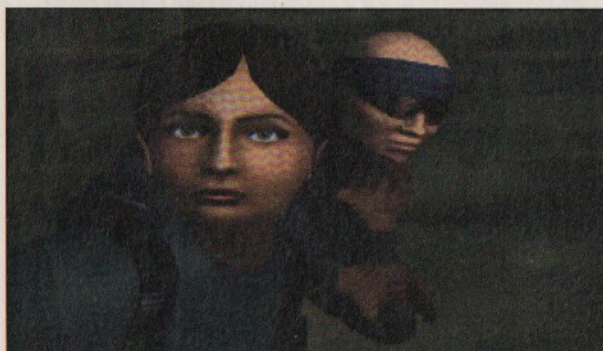
(Below) The action sequences are chock-a-block with lots of top explodey bits like this one.



I'm sure you know the sort of thing. Just in case you don't, here's the gist of it: clutch your mouse or joystick, move the cursor round the screen 'clicking' on enemy thingies, marvel at wonderful, wonderful backdrops that impress all your friends and reassure you that you did the right thing buying that costly Pentium machine, solve a few easy puzzles (*Cyberia* only), and generally delude yourself that you're a dab-hand at computer games because you've completed the thing in a day or two.

Cyberia 2 is basically an amalgam of

(Below) Novelle is the obligatory wise-cracking, hard-to-impress chick that always shows up in these things.



all the above things, with a truckload of smart-looking rendered cut-scenes chucked in for good measure. At this stage the cynics among you will probably be likely to opine that *Cyberia 2* is an utter waste of CD space. Not so, I say. There are a couple of things about it that save its beautifully rendered hide. More on that later. In the meantime, I'm sure you'll no doubt be wanting to know about the plot...

Bald bloke in world-saving shenanigans

Having spent a pile of dosh buying *Cyberia 2*, you are rewarded with the opportunity to save the world, a feat you'll probably have accomplished in countless other PC games before, so you should be pretty good at this sort of thing by now.

At the start of the game Zak (your alter-ego) reawakens from a cryogenic freeze. He quickly discovers that he's been captured by the FWA (the manual doesn't explain who this FWA lot are, presumably Virgin couldn't think up a suitably world-dominating-type name to go with the acronym). This is pretty bad news for Zak: he's lost his freedom, his cool-looking spaceship, his self-respect and, worse still, his hair. Your objective then, with the aid of your female sidekick Novelle, is to help Zak get away from the evil FWA. Anyway, enough of this world-saving bollocks already, let's get back to the matter in hand here (aka the game).



In perspective

Rebel Assault 2 looks amazing and has no crap bits. *Cyberia 2* looks even better but has got crap bits. Oh well.

Cyberia

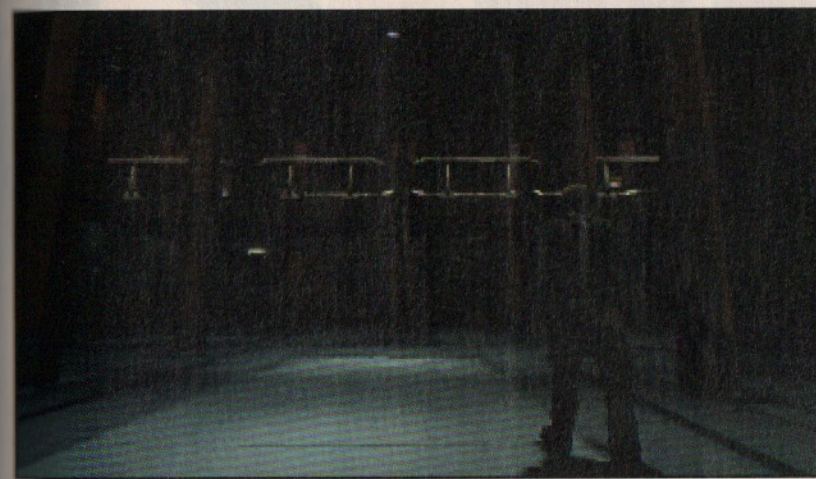
Cyberia 2 *

Rebel Assault 2

Die. Die a lot. Die often etc

I have to admit that I wasn't exactly kicking people out of the way to get at this game - I saw it at beta stage in LA and was less than impressed. Okay, the graphics are absolutely amazing, but the fundamental gameplay shows no great improvement over the original.

Firstly, the biggest single problem with the first game is still there: during the walkabout sections you can expect to die approximately every 30 seconds. Is this fun? Methinks not. I'll give you an example of the sort of profoundly frustrating (and pointless) problems you'll come up against... I was walking down a corridor with my gun at the ready. I spotted an enemy guard, who didn't see me. I thought it might be a good idea to shoot him, but the game thought differently - every time I went to fire at him, he turned round and yelled something like, "Hey you, stop!" and then... I died. What was I



doing wrong? I could see this bloke who couldn't see me, yet he managed to shoot me every time. I eventually discovered (after spending ages arsing about with the same scene) that the way round it was to walk down the part of the corridor that the guard couldn't see, timing my movements so that they corresponded exactly with his. What's the bloody point in that? Why couldn't I just blast the bastard?

Generally speaking, the walkabout bits involve wandering around, taking a wrong turn, and dying. There are a few puzzles thrown in to break the monotony of dying all the time through no fault of your own, but ultimately it's a fatal flaw in the game's design that you're constantly punished for no reason.

To make matters even worse, I seem to remember that the adventure sections in the first game were bad for the same reason, but not *this* bad. Fortunately though, there's another side to *Cyberia 2*, a much more friendly side, a side that doesn't wish to frustrate and upset you, a side that you could safely put your hand on your heart and call... fun.

My kingdom for a mouse

The arcade sections in *Cyberia 2* look a lot better graphically, and they're much longer too. Apparently a lot of people preferred the arcade sections in *Cyberia 1* to the adventure sections (funny that, people preferring fun over instant death) so the game's designers

decided to lengthen the arcade bits. So what you get now is not the quick blast you had last time, but a long and very pleasurable ride through beautiful scenery, and lots and lots of enemy nasties to put an end to.

It all sounds pretty fab and groovy, but if you played the original you'll remember it was sometimes a bit of a nightmare to control the crosshairs on your weapons. Not this time though, because you can now aim and shoot your weapons with a mouse. This makes the arcade sections an absolute joy to play. It's a bit like *Operation Wolf* (a top game on the Amiga about two thousand years ago) except that the graphics are gorgeous. There are new ground-based sections too, which are very similar to those in *Rebel Assault 2* (and for my money, they're better too).

So why am I scoring this game lower than *Rebel Assault 2*? Well, I'm afraid that the shite adventure bits take a lot of the fun out of an essentially sound game. Fortunately though, the arcade bits still make it worth recommending. **Z**



(Top left) The adventure sections perfectly demonstrate the pointlessness of trial and error gameplay.

(Top and above) Top shoot 'em up action in the arcade sections. We love it. Honest.

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX/50
Graphics: VGA
Sound: SoundBlaster and compatibles
Controls: Joystick, mouse

Score

80

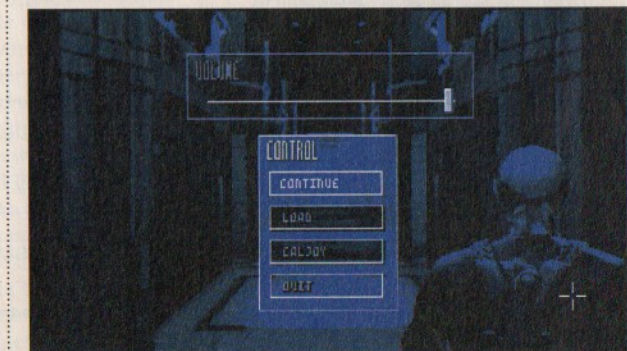
Exhilarating and frustrating in equal amounts.

Price: £44.99 Release date: Out now
Publisher: Virgin
Tel: 0171-368 2255

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."

(Left) Kill them, kill them all, I say.

(Below) This is the options screen. From here you can do all sorts of exciting things like, er, change the volume of the music.



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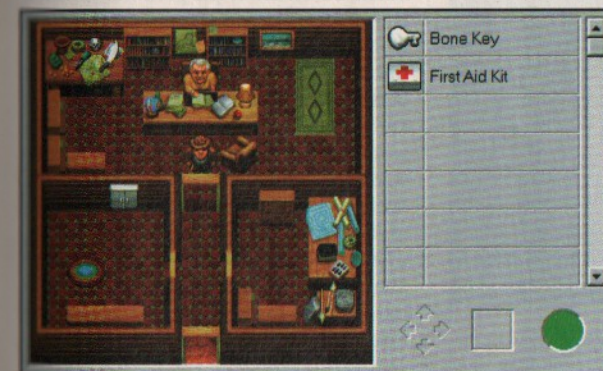
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Indiana Jones And His Desktop Adventures



Rob Tribe wanted to be an archaeologist. He even went so far as to get an archaeology degree. For now though, he has to make do with playing Indiana Jones in computer games – and the only old thing he gets to see is his gran, once in a while.



(Above) Each new game reveals a new objective – here you find out what it is.

(Above right) If all else fails, steal a plane.



(Below) First things first, go get that map!



from starvation, she sat down, took one look and said "Why don't you move that rock?" "Oh yeah, the rock that I have tried to move 1000 times with absolutely no success, you mean that rock?" "Yes," she said, as she dragged the rock halfway across the screen to prove the point.

Whippy-dee-doo-dah
 It was at about this time I thought I should re-analyse my thoughts about *Indy's Desktop Adventures*. For a start, it is not an adventure game in same sense as *Indiana Jones And The Fate Of Atlantis*. You are presented with a small world, an objective and a few hints. Then it's up to you to explore, find useful objects, do battle with spear-chuckers, Nazis and snakes and generally solve puzzles. The puzzles usually take the form of finding special objects, trading them for more useful objects and finally using these to complete your task. When complete, the world resets with more devious puzzles – so bang goes any idea of just playing for a little while, 'cause once you're in, it's very, very addictive.

At least there are many hints available so you don't have to pull your hair out for hours on end while trying to figure out Indy's latest poser. Of most use is the map (which you should find as soon as possible); this shows you the whole world – where you have been, where you need to go, where the puzzles are (these only show up when you have visited the place in question), which ones you have solved and which ones you haven't (when you click on these squares you also get a handy hint on how to solve the puzzle) – plus where all the useful teleport sites are located. One other factor that makes *Indy's Desktop Adventures* very playable is that it's almost impossible to die. If you hate fighting, then you just turn down the skill level and everything dies far more easily. If you do wander down the fighting path, whip in hand, and come off slightly the worse for wear, then you just have to go back to the starting point and see your friendly neighbourhood pharmacist, who deals in strange and exotic herbs that make you feel a hell of a lot better. The one gripe I have about fighting is this. Although you can move in any



direction, you can only fight horizontally and vertically – trying to shoot something diagonally is not allowed – so where is the most popular place for people to attack you? Diagonally! It's hardly fair, is it?
 After you grasp the format, the games are simpler to understand, so in time it may well become just a diversion. For now though, I dare not switch on my computer for fear of seeing yet another evening (and my wildly exaggerated social life) slip into a timeless blackhole of archaeological related adventures. Thanks LucasArts, this is what I needed to ensure I never do any work again. **Z**

Tech specs

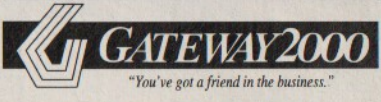
Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486/33 or higher
Graphics: SVGA
Sound: All major soundcards
Controls: Keyboard, mouse
Note: Requires Windows 3.1 or higher

Score

80

Whips at the ready.

Price: £TBC **Release date:** Out now
Publisher: LucasArts (VIE)
Tel: 0171-368 2255



The Gene Machine



Long, long ago **Duncan MacDonald** had a Saturday job in a tacky clothes shop called **American Graffiti**. **Opposite American Graffiti** there was a **Boots Chemist**. **Before the Boots Chemist** was installed, there had existed a **jean shop** called **Jean Machine**. **This made Dunc the ideal (etc).**

EVER SINCE I CAN REMEMBER, LucasArts have led the field in point-and-click adventures. They invented them, after all. (Or was it Sierra? Damn! Suddenly I'm not so sure!) Okay, so let's put it like this then: LucasArts invented the excellent point-and-click adventure... and everybody, from that day on, has been copying the basic format (while trying to improve on it at the same time, admittedly).

Along the way there have been some laughable failures, but, also, some pretty near misses. For instance the French had a good slant on the genre going for a while, way back in the days of *Monkey Island 1*, but, as is the Gallic wont, they kind



(Above) It's a ship, innit?

(Below) A typically Jules Verne-ian steam rocket. Cool.

of ended up drifting off into a limbo of weirdness. We (the Brits) never even had a slant on the genre, and just produced cack basically: carbon copies so weak in concept, scope and presentation that I suddenly want to stop talking about them. (You notice that I mentioned no names? Well, I'm nice like that.)

Get up to speed, dude...

Sorry to bog down the beginning of this review in this wanky retrospective manner, but there's a point to it all if you'll bear with me a moment longer. Erm... so where was I? Oh yes, I'd just mentioned *Monkey Island 1*. A class act. Indeed, at the time, the magazines all said, "LucasArts can't better this". But they did. The sequel was fantastic. (Meanwhile the only other

software contender, Sierra, was beaver-ing away with their own set of love 'em or hate 'em titles.) Anyway, at the end of the day (and I think we must be talking about something like five years ago) LucasArts struck triple gold with *Indiana Jones And The Fate Of Atlantis*, a point-and-clicker which, to my mind - and believe me, I'm no nostalgia freak - hasn't been bettered to this day. And not even by LucasArts themselves. *Day Of The Tentacle* was too 'problem heavy' (and American studenty); *Sam And Max* was a hoot, but lacked general coherence; *Full Throttle* was too short. And on and on. (I didn't mention *The Dig* because of the involvement of Steven Spielberg, and to my mind he should be strung up from the nearest electricity pylon for crimes against the cinema - and for his beard.)

But this isn't a LucasArts game...

Yes, *The Gene Machine* isn't a LucasArts game. But you know something? More so than any British point-and-click adventure game I've ever seen, *The Gene Machine* has come the closest to emulating the un-eclipsed brilliance of the aforementioned *Indiana Jones*. (However, I'm not saying it's as good, you understand, I'm just saying that it's pointing in the right direction.)

So what's pointing correctly then? That's a hard one. First I suppose you've got to deconstruct *Indiana Jones And The Fate Of Atlantis*. Then you've got to compare its components to those of *The Gene Machine*, and see where they meld.

I suppose the ideal starting point is the storyline, and with *Indiana Jones*, as you'll know, it was your quintessential *Boys Own* stuff: the 1940s; Indy, a chick sidekick, a missing artefact; a totally mad scientist and some Nazis. All the interaction and set-pieces were right across the board, and the locations were abundant in the extreme.

The Gene Machine, on the other hand, is far more insular. Far more British. The unlikely hero is a 19th century minor toff called Piers Featherstonehaugh (pronounced 'Fanshaw'), whose sidekick is Mossop, an ineffective manservant. The front end of the game sees Fanshaw and Mossop being visited by a talking cat - the result of a gene splicing experiment conducted by (yes) a mad scientist. The mad scientist (who lives on an un-chartered island) is intending to create an army of gene-spliced creatures with the aim of taking over the world.

There's the quest. Find the island. But first you've got to somehow get hold of a ship (à la *Monkey Island*). Cue visits to your social-climbing fiancée's house; to a seedy London pub; a museum; Queen Victoria at Buckingham Palace; an HG Wells style inventor; your 'Gentleman's Club'. And a couple of other places, all placed firmly within the boundaries of London. Apart from when you visit the moon, that is. Or when you find yourself in... but I don't really want to give too much away.

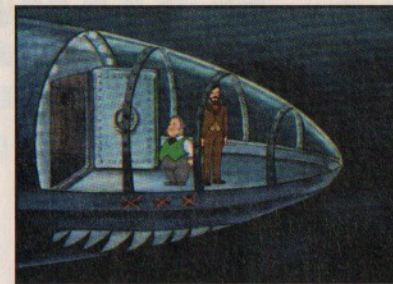
So now for the storyline comparison: *Indiana Jones And The Fate Of Atlantis* was a non-stop roller-coaster ride. *The Gene Machine* is more like a roundabout, with the odd rollercoaster moment.

To call *Indiana Jones And the Fate Of Atlantis* filmic would not be telling a lie. Using cut-scenes to full effect (without over-using them on any occasion), and placing 'camera positions' in just the right places, it struck the perfect balance between game and movie.

The Gene Machine doesn't fare too badly either. It's not half as polished, admittedly (or when you get right down to it, not even a quarter as polished), but with its large, clear characters and beautifully rendered 'guachey' backdrops, the atmosphere just positively oozes.

And *The Gene Machine* is a talky too. *Indy* came out before the advent of CD-ROM, and was text-based.

(I think a talky version was eventually released, but unfortunately I never saw it.) *The Gene Machine*, however, is obviously a talky through and through, and it tends to talk for the most part with the voice of John Pertwee. This is because Fanshaw is played by Sean Pertwee (who speaks in EXACTLY the same tones as his dad). It's like a posh *Worzel Gummidge*, bordering on the John Hurt; and the delivery is great.



As I said, it's John Pertwee! (Except that it's Sean, you nonce - Ed)

Ah, the puzzles. That means we've finally arrived at the most subjective question in the universe. Is a puzzle hard? Or: how long is a piece of string? To my mind, *The Gene Machine* is on the easy side - but then again I prefer that - the early locations open up quickly due to the fact that a spade tends to be a spade rather than a radio. Know what I mean? It's like a quick crossword as opposed to a cryptic crossword. But it all comes down to your own preference, doesn't it. To be honest with you, I'm a bit thick, which is why I like adventure games to sort of spell themselves out. Still, I suppose that if I were forced to make a generalised statement covering the requirements of everybody, I'd have to come down again on the side of "The Gene Machine is quite easy". It suits me, as I've stressed, but maybe I won't be



(Left) All the locations are beautifully produced using a combination of artwork and renderings.



It's Fanshaw (top) and Mossop (bottom).

saying quite that once I've finished it. (It took me eight solid hours of studious gameplay to complete a third of it.)

But I haven't mentioned the interface yet... *Indiana Jones* had an extremely visible one. *The Gene Machine's* interface, on the other hand, is mostly invisible, but it does have an annoying flaw, which I'll come on to in the final paragraph.

But I only read final paragraphs...

Hello final paragraph readers, you were expected - join the party for a précis. Ready? Here goes. *The Gene Machine's* got a great HG Wells/Jules Verne style storyline, some lovely graphics, very British humour (which will make you smile rather than laugh, though), and an interface with a problem: your inventory box appears whenever you touch the bottom line of the screen with the cursor, meaning, in practice, that it appears about every five picoseconds. (Unless you're extremely careful with the mouse.) The right mouse button, however, is virtually unused by the game engine, which will make you wonder why it wasn't assigned to inventory trigger duty in the first place. Strange.

Nevertheless, I can't accuse *The Gene Machine* of not being fun. Or is the word I'm looking for 'absorbing'? Hmm. It's a bit of both, actually. (As I said at the very beginning of this review, it's like a LucasArts game.) **Z**

Tech specs

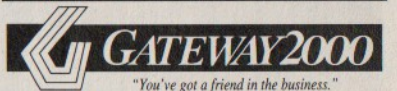
- Memory: 8Mb
- Processor: 486DX/66
- Graphics: SVGA
- Sound: All major sound cards
- Controls: Keyboard, mouse

Score

87

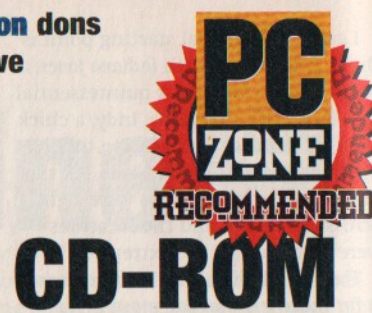
An inventive, attractive, amusing and atmospheric point-and-click adventure, but a tad easy for the hardened anorak.

Price: £TBC Release date: Out now
 Publisher: Vic Tokai
 Tel: 01604 671415



The Muppets are without doubt a classic product of modern culture. John Davison dons his Kermit costume and immerses himself in all things Muppet to see if they have successfully made the break into games.

The Muppet CD-ROM



I CAN'T ACTUALLY REMEMBER IF THERE'S ever been a Muppets game before. I think there must have been at some point - an educational doofer or something. Anyway, regardless of this, the Muppets have arrived on the PC. A potential non-starter if ever there was one, this is the sort of licence that needs its producers to be very careful...



after all, arse around with duff-looking sprites and crap sampled sounds from the TV series and you'd almost certainly end up with a load of tripe. Thankfully Starwave have done an admirable job. They've teamed up with Jim Henson Productions to integrate into the game, along with video and audio clips taken from the series. The result is a very slick multimedia-style product that manages to deliver all the characters, all the sets... and all the humour.

So what makes it a game?

Okay, so there's loads of video - eek! Does that mean it's going to be a bit knob then? Well I've been in two minds ever since I started playing around with it. Basically, underneath a highly polished presentation lie seven fairly simple games. There's a bunch of quiz things, a game that's very similar to *Missile Command*, a 'shuffle the picture'



affair, a 'guess the power and angle of the gun to hit the target' thingy and finally, a very simplistic *Doom* rip-off.

Okay, so none of the games stand out as being fantastic, but once 'Muppetised' they become completely and utterly hilarious. The *Doom* rip-off 'stars' the Swedish Chef and the action itself is pretty cack - put simply you're just trying to kill different vegetables, but the fact that he's muttering "hurdy-shmurdy-burdy" in the background makes it one of the funniest titles in computer game history.

This is why *The Muppet CD-ROM* is so compelling... if you love Muppet humour you'll adore this. It doesn't matter that the games aren't what you'd call brilliant - it's the fact that the whole thing is so full of quips and witticisms that you just keep playing.

Unlike many similar multimedia affairs, it rarely repeats itself either. Even the installation system is entertaining... as it starts it suddenly hangs, and you become convinced the whole thing's crashed but, just as you're about to hit the reset button, Fozzie and Kermit appear and proceed to take you through the most hilarious options system ever.

In short, it has to be said that this is a game that Muppet fans can't afford to miss. It can be tailored to be either an amusing (if simplistic) game for 'grown ups', or into something eminently capable of holding the attention of your average pre-teen. **Z**

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
 Processor: 486DX
 Graphics: SVGA
 Sound: All major sound cards
 Controls: Mouse
 Note: Windows 95 only

(Far left) The game sets the premise that all of the characters have been sucked into the computer because of the Muppet Labs' latest experiment. Once inside, they have to work around the system to try and get back out to the real world.

(Left) Lew Zealand plays out his legendary renditions of another popular classic with the aid of his gurgling boomerang fish.

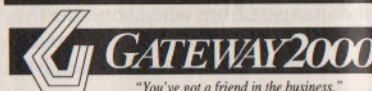
(Bottom left) The Swedish Chef's Kitchens of *Doom* have to be seen to be believed. The graphics may be a bit cack but it's one of the funniest, games ever.

Score

87

Hurdy schmurdy burdy brilliance bursts forth from seven average-ish games.

Price: £TBC Release Date: Out now
 Publisher: Starwave/Ocean
 Tel: 0161-832 6633



The games in brief

BEAKER'S BRAIN!
 A 'get the video clips in order' game featuring the Muppet Labs boys, Dr Bunsen Honeydew and 'The King' Beaker.

FOZZIE BEAR 'WOCKA ON THE WILD SIDE'
 A *Missile Command* affair in which you protect Fozzie from the fruit and missiles being hurled at him by the audience.

THE GREAT GONZO'S DEATH-DEFYING ACTS OF CULTURE
 Fire Gonzo out of a cannon, at a target compensating for various obstacles... and all this while Gonzo is playing cultural classics on the harmonica.

CLIFFORD: SCOPE THAT SONG
 A 'name that tune' type thing where you have to guess the tune from snippets played by Lew Zealand and his gurgling boomerang fish.

STATLER AND WALDORF: TWO THUMBS DOWN
 Twist the block around to build a picture and then watch the clip, punch-line and all, in its full glory.

THE SWEDISH CHEF'S KITCHENS OF DOOM
 It's *Doom*, Swedish Chef-style, except the graphics are rubbish and it has a more advanced sense of humour.

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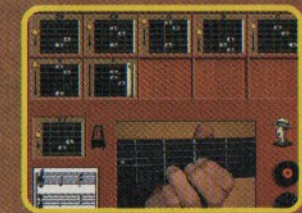
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When Duncan MacDonald is stuck for an intro he dials a phone number at random for inspiration. This time it was 0898 400500. "I'm Saucy Sue. I'm hot, my nipples are like bullets, I'm holding a banana, and I'm about to..." (Snip - Ed)

Fire Fight

NORMALLY WHEN I'M REVIEWING a game I make notes on a scrap of paper. "So what?" you may say. Well, what generally happens is that I lose the bit of paper, and have to rely solely on memory (not my strongest point). On this occasion, however, I'm able to quote directly. My scrap of paper survived intact, for more than 24 hours!

This is my first scribble... Asteroids, Desert Strike, R-Type, C&C. I think what I meant is that Fire Fight isn't that far removed from ye olde pub fave Asteroids - you've got a rotatery ship which packs a fair bit of momentum once thrustred, and you shoot things. I wrote down Desert Strike because it's isometric, R-Type because... er, actually I can't remember, and Command & Conquer because Fire Fight (in lo-res) looks similar-ish (at times).

My next scribble says this... 'Flargs versus Zoogs'. In other words there's some silly plot in which one bunch of people (or aliens) are fighting another bunch of people (or aliens). And then... 'Basic cannon, small homing missiles, plasma gun, big homing missiles, powerful cannon that makes your ship recoil, explodey grenade thingy'. That, obviously, was a list of the weapons, which you 'own' from the start. Ammo is gained by flying over the relevant icons which are released (again obviously) by whatever you blow up.

Next? '16 levels? Pool Link-up could be a crack though!' Again, fairly self-explanatory. It took me five hours to get as far as level eight (at which point the game was reaching bastardo status), but there are also eight specialised levels for multi-player skirmishes; this is all very well for Americans (seeing as they're all networked/wired/both), but not so brill for us average British scum, non?

Onwards, onwards...

'Smart pyros and boomies.' Um, cool explosion graphics and so forth. 'Radio chatter nice at first, but not later. Why not

Tech specs

- Memory: 8Mb
- Processor: 486DX/66
- Graphics: SVGA
- Sound: All major sound cards
- Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick
- Note: Windows 95 required

random?' Ah! Right! The barrage of radio chatter from your base gets annoying when you're restarting (say) level six for the umpteenth time. For example, there's an explosion and the person who triggered it (your mission was to drop him off) says, "I enjoyed that." You think to yourself, "Oh no, that really crap actor who's supposed to be me will now say 'someone had to' in that ultra annoying monotone mogadon voice." One pico-second passes. "Someone had to!" says valium man. Blaaaargh!

'Nice radar system.' Yup, and so simple, too. Your ship is surrounded by a circle (see screenshots). Off-screen enemies are represented by white blips which each get brighter as the individual enemies approach. Bearing and distance. Hoorary! Moving on, here are a couple of notes in succession... 'A slight jerk to the scrolling', 'Slowdown on bigger levels'. The maximum 200MB install would probably sort these two out, but I decided to go for the more realistic 20MB (on a P90 with 8MB RAM and a quad-speed drive).

Well, you know what's next. Yes! More notes... 'Samey', 'Confusing', 'Samey' is a reference to both the graphics and the gameplay: by level three you've pretty much got the gist of things, and by level five you'll be having the odd déjà vu



(Above) "Smart pyros and boomies." Erm... that's cool explosion graphics to you and me.

(Fire Fight is like Terminal Velocity in this respect). 'Confusing' is down to the not-too-superb pseudo 3D - some things can be flown under, some over, and others you bump into, but which is which? That's the question!

That's all folks!

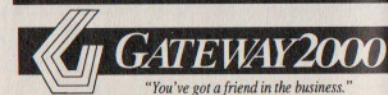
Anyway, here's the final entry on my scrap of paper... 'Car boot sale'. I think what that means is that if you picked Fire Fight up in a bargain basement for a tanner, you'd be laughing. But in the harsh light of day, and talking mainly about the one-player game, Fire Fight lacks 'oomph', 'intrigue', and, ultimately, 'length'. It's a multi-player game at heart, I suspect, with a single-player mode tacked over the top - something we'll be seeing more and more of as we move into 1997 and beyond. Z

Score

65

Asteroids meets Desert Strike, in 1996.

Price: £TBC Release date: August
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Tel: 01753 549442



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PCY(8)

Total Mania

(Right) Nothing like a brisk walk in the fresh country air. With a gun in your hand.



Bereft of inspiration for this introductory preamble, **Charlie Brooker** hit every letter on his keyboard in sequence... Qwertyuiopasdfg hjklzxcvbnm. And yes, he does get paid for this.

THERE ARE CERTAIN THINGS IN LIFE that are guaranteed to have you tearing your hair out by the handful and praying to any god you care to mention, regardless of your religious affiliations. Here, in no particular order, are the three most frustrating things on Earth:

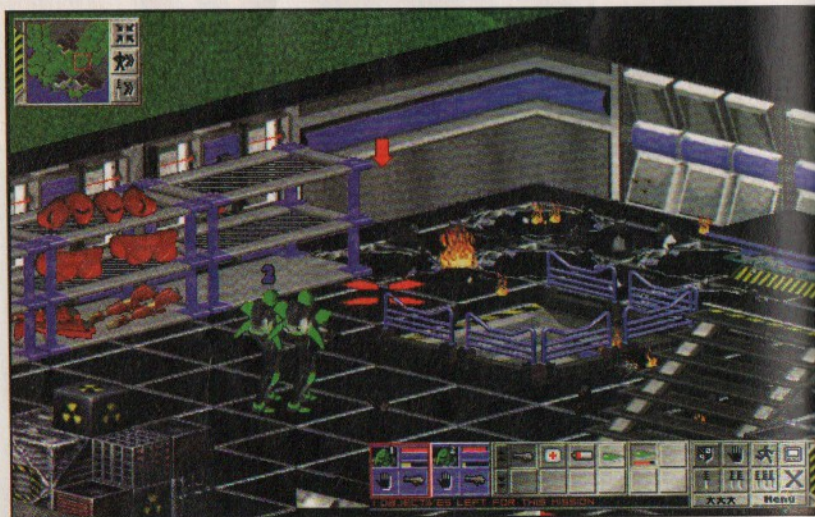
- 1) Affairs of the heart
This encompasses everything to do with love: from the slow painful descent into bitter recrimination that marks the end of a long relationship, to the consternation generated when trying to work out whether you're unrolling the condom the right way round in a dark room.
- 2) Hot Saturday afternoons
There's nothing on the telly, the sun is

shining and nature is doing its utmost to lure you outside, but for some inexplicable reason you can't be arsed to do anything, even though you're slowly being driven insane by boredom.

3) Things that don't fulfil their potential
This applies to loads of things, from million-dollar football players who unexpectedly lose their form, through

to movies that are utterly fantastic and then have a really shitty end. And guess what? It also applies to *Total Mania*, the new combat-cum-strategy game from Domark.

Bit of a curate's egg, then?
Exactly. As you can see from the screenshots, *Total Mania* looks like it's going to



(Right) The *Total Mania* crew get locked in until they've finished tidying their bedroom.

Better dead than red

Total Mania has more than one thing in common with Origin's *Crusader*. For a start, they're both isometric, real-time combat games. They both feature heavily-armoured, gun-slinging futuristic warriors. And in both games the main protagonists are clad from head to toe in bright red clothing.

Now this 'red' business is quite baffling, if you ask me. Bright red armour is not the sort of thing you want to find yourself wearing during an undercover sabotage mission. Everybody can see you coming a mile off. So why wear it?

The only explanation I can think of is that the programmers think it looks cool. In which case - why end there? Since the use of red armour already jeopardises the safety of the combat team, you might as well go the whole hog. Give 'em sunglasses, perhaps - really dark ones which you can barely see through. Or why not make them wear rollerblades, so they can 'in-line skate' their way into trouble? Better yet, give one of them a hulking great 'boombox' blaring out a selection of thrash punk classics.

Okay, okay - so what if the enemy can hear and see you from ten miles away, and you can't see properly and keep falling over - at least you'd look cool. And that, after all, is what really counts.

be a great deal of fun. Indeed, it's rather like a sort of cross between the *X-COM* series (which deserves a place in any self-respecting games collection), and Origin's real-time isometric kill 'em up, *Crusader*. It's got smart cyborgs, loads of different weapons to choose from, and bloody huge explosions which knock holes in the walls. Nothing wrong there.

The graphics are pretty good, too - plenty of crisp SVGA action, and a highly impressive 'zoom' function which lets you get an even better look at the on-screen shenanigans. Every character is represented by a detailed rendered model, and there's smooth animation to accompany each move you make. Nothing wrong there, either.

So *Total Mania* really ought to be a winner - only somehow it isn't. And the culprits? Well, the AI leaves more than a little to be desired; your cyborg team tends to exhibit the route-finding



(Above) "Oi, you on the bridge. Want some, do ya?"

capabilities of a small child accidentally separated from its parents in a large department store, seemingly content to wander aimlessly this way and that before heading vaguely in the right direction.

Worse, the action itself, when it does occur, is curiously uninvolved; this is down to the fact that you have to use the mouse to control your movements, with the result that the whole thing degenerates into a fairly aimless shooting session. And finally, there's the level design, which falls into the trap of too much tedious orienteering and too little strategic manoeuvring.

It's a great shame - it seems fairly obvious to me that *Total Mania* really

could have been something fantastic. By improving the control system, adding more movement options for the player and introducing a hell of a lot more strategy to the proceedings, this could be a rock-solid classic. As it stands, it's only an 'also-ran'. **Z**

Score

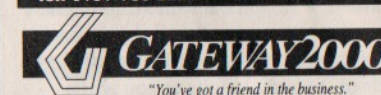
68

It coulda been a contender.

Tech specs

- Memory: 8Mb
- Processor: 486DX/66
- Graphics: SVGA
- Sound: All major sound cards
- Controls: Keyboard, mouse, joystick

Price: £39.99 Release date: Out now
Publisher: Eidos Interactive/Domark
Tel: 0181-780 2222



(Left) As you can see, there's plenty of detail to the visuals.

Patrick McCarthy once came home to find his whole family wearing shell-suits. The resultant psychological trauma means he has to spend a fortune on psychotherapy. Apparently there's a recognised medical term for his condition.

Shellshock



(Above) Ah, Bosnia. The rolling hills, the babbling brooks, the chatter of small arms fire...



(Right) Is this (a) A very big bush; (b) A very big pixelly mess; or (c) An exploding tank?

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR A COMPUTER GAME to be deliberately hip and trendy. A game that tries to be hip and trendy always ends up getting laughed at, whereas a game that arrives at hip and trendiness will do so by accident rather than design. *Shellshock* tries extremely hard to be hip and trendy. And everyone who walks past the machine when you're playing it laughs at it – and by association, at you too. Being laughed at is something most people try to avoid, apart from those so desperate for attention of any sort that they'll take whatever they can get – politicians, and minor TV 'personalities' and the like. Playing *Shellshock* isn't much fun. You have to keep saying stuff like, "Shut up. I know it's shite dialogue. I didn't write the bloody stuff." And everyone laughs again. (*The Muppets*, on the other hand, doesn't really try to do anything very much, but is extremely hip and trendy indeed. Nobody laughs at you when you play it. And it's fun. Can you guess which game more people in the building are playing at the moment?)

Everybody's doing it

Shellshock is from the people who made *Firestorm: Thunderhawk 2*. Everyone who makes a helicopter game makes a tank game, too:

(Right) And around the corner there's... another tank.

(Left) Some homeys. Jus' hangin'. (Er, apparently.)

they've gone to all the trouble of making a low-flying, slow-moving background and they don't want to waste it, so they make it a bit lower and slower and before you can say "two games for the price of one software routine", it's a tank game. It's based on a thoroughly sound premise: the world is in a terrible state, and a small team of five black Americans with a tank have decided to become uncompromisingly committed to combating terrorism, fighting oppression and wearing sunglasses so that the artists don't have to bother doing eyes. They've obviously realised what all white Americans already know – that Americans are the world's policemen, or masked avengers, or whatever. They're called Da Wardenz (hey!), and are run by

a geezer called The Man, who's had his voice slowed down electronically so it sounds like James Earl Jones. They're very cool indeed and to prove it they use funny words to talk. They're all "characters" – for example, the one in the spare parts shop is supposed to be slightly scary, and the one with the hankie on his head sounds like Huggy Bear after two cylinders of nitrogen.

As part of your role as the world's milk monitor, you'll travel to trouble spots in your tank and shoot the shit out of anything that moves. Among the countries you'll be visiting are the Rwanda-like 'Muwanda' and distinctly Bosnia-ish 'Mostvia Somethingstupidsta' – presumably because the developers couldn't get the official licenses.



Snore doggy doggy

The game environment is one of those pseudo three-dimensional affairs, where instead of just clicking on an option, you 'visit' different rooms to do different things. Game controls are accessed by climbing into your tank, saved games are kept in lockers in the anteroom to the briefing area, extra weapons and stuff are in the workshop area, and so on. Unfortunately, each of these areas are also inhabited by members of your team of gangsta-rap muthas who are extremely keen to talk with you and may well, on occasion, even... er, diss you (apparently) – but not until they've bored the arse off you first. For a bunch of hip and happening dudes, these people are among the most boring on earth. They make day-time TV presenters seem punchy and straight-talking.

Typical

A typical mission goes something like this:

- 1) Avoid talking to bloke with silly name next to your tank who wants to lampoon your record collection.
- 2) Go to spare parts room.
- 3) Buy stuff for tank (more armour; A-Z road map of Vietnam; sweets for glove compartment).
- 4) Ignore attempts at tedious rap-talk

from spare parts man with silly name who wants to tell you the hood on your parka's on back to front.

5) Avoid talking with man in basketball court with silly name who wants to talk about what an arsehole you look in your new hi-tops.

6) Go to briefing anteroom.

7) Listen to two of your 'homeys' talking about something which illustrates what fully rounded personalities they have.

8) Wake up.

9) Go into the inappropriately-named Briefing Room.

10) Listen to anything-but-brief discourse on the history of the country whose landscape you are about to devastate.

11) Listen to an even more lengthy and eye-wateringly dull talk from The Man, which manages to combine bland platitudes with tedious pseudo-military speak.

12) Lose consciousness, falling face-first onto the keyboard.

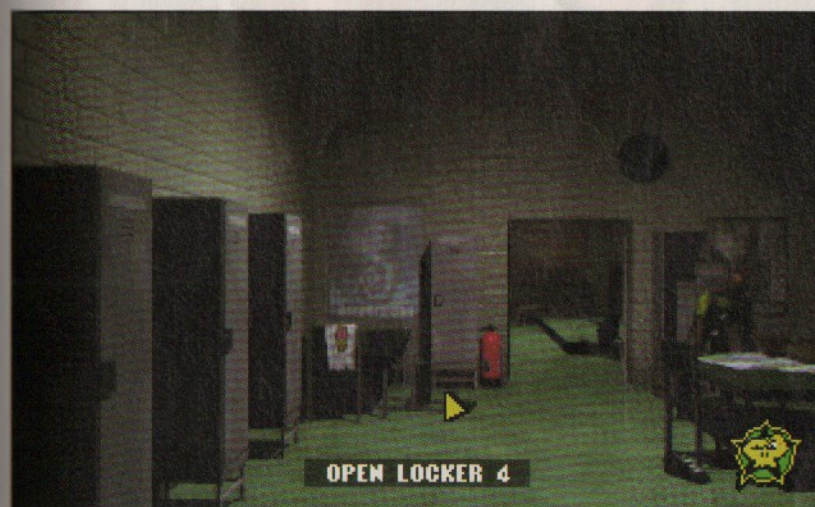
13) Wake up in your tank in Muwanda with RTYUIFGHCVBNM imprinted backwards on your face.

14) See something in the distance.

15) Shoot it.

16) Shoot everything else until 'mission' ends or you get blown up.

17) Go to stage 1.



(Above) Kampong. That toddling town.

(Left) A pop-up gunboat! Can I have one?

No matter what situation or country you're supposed to be in, the mission is just a lengthy bout of blasting at stuff with your limitless ammo (except when you'll occasionally be asked to pick up hostages, or deliver some pizza, or something). Like Core's helicopter game, some piffing little object like a ship or a battle tank has a tendency to suddenly appear in front of you like it's popped out of a cake, and disappear if you reverse an inch or two.

I know it's only supposed to be a bit of light relief, and not a major tank simulation, but even as an arcade blaster it's just boring. You end up trudging about, shooting at stuff as soon as it registers on the sights, picking up power-ups (which you then have to pay for in the spares shop even though you found them) and looking at the scenery which, no matter where you are, looks remarkably similar – pixelly. Then doing it all over again, nominally, somewhere else. It's got a network option – but frankly, who gives a shit? z

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
 Processor: 486DX/66
 Graphics: VGA
 Sound: All major sound cards
 Controls: Keyboard, joystick

Score

60
 Firestorm on the ground.

Price: £39.99 Release Date: Out now
 Publisher: Eidos Interactive/Core Design
 Tel: 01332 297797

GATEWAY2000
 "You've got a friend in the business."

(Left) The briefing area, scene of some of the most boring conversations in the history of mankind.



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Euro 96

Since our premature review of the *Euro 96* beta in the June issue of *Zone*, Gremlin have been busily beavering away to resolve many of our criticisms. However, despite their best efforts, Patrick McCarthy finds that many of the gameplay problems still invoke the red card.

EURO 96 IS, IN ESSENCE, THE SAME game as *Actua Soccer* except that some of the gameplay faults that plagued the first version have since received some attention – while others have been ignored. Two new teams are available in the shape of Croatia and Turkey and the total number has been reduced from 40-odd to the 16 that are all playing the Championship. In terms of ways to play, you can play through the proper Euro Championships, with matches taking place in the



proper grounds, on the proper dates (which is when you get the intro spiels mentioned later). If you get bored with that, you can re-draw the groups or amuse yourself with friendlies. And there's the Wireplay option too, BT's new facility for playing over a phone

line (this is something we're going to play and test in a later issue – keep an eye on our *On-Line* pages for this and other Wireplay-related issues).

New stuff

Thankfully the goalkeepers are now more likely to save a low shot, whereas before they were too busy being beautifully animated, with the ball hitting the net while they took a stylish dive. But they still occasionally let soft goals in, casually watching long lobbed passes fall into the net, presumably on the grounds that the shoot button hasn't been pressed and so therefore the ball constitutes no danger; they also seem to experience problems when running out of their goal (see *Best foot forward* on page 76).

The game runs faster, although like pretty much anything these days you will still need a fast Pentium to run it satisfactorily in hi-res mode. It incorporates the speed-burst button from the PSX version, but unfortunately this doesn't work in conjunction with a slide tackle: it interprets this as pressing both buttons at once, and as a result changes control to another player. You can still use a normal tackle but we find this too slow, the opponent having disappeared downfield by the time your motion-captured leg moves to get the ball – you're often more reliant on pushing players off the ball than tackling. In our opinion this is far too dependent on the relative abilities of the players to be satisfactory, particularly if you have the weaker side and you leave yourself open to getting a card.

The formations bear more of a resemblance to real life. You'd think though, that having produced some good football management games in the past (ie *Premier Manager 3*), someone could sort out the default numbering into proper positions – fullbacks at 2 and 3, and so on. We've found that when players are played out of position, it doesn't have as big an impact as you'd expect. You'll notice it if you stick a defender up front, but swapping players around at the back makes only a negligible difference. Having said this, we've also found that players with the greatest pace can be played to good effect in virtually any position.

There's a new feature (similar to *Striker*) for dead-ball kicks which offers more control over the ball's trajectory, but the camera angle doesn't alter to frame the action as it should, so you still find yourself lobbing the ball hopefully upfield. You can change it manually, but it's a lot of fuss. Once you've sorted out your trajectory you are offered no opportunities to alter it, and this also hits a high score on the annoyance scale.

Sound-wise there's a lot more sampled commentary, with some specially-recorded introductory spiels for games played in the real-life Championship. And as you'd expect, this only enhances

the atmosphere further, and it's this element that makes *Euro 96* stand out as a proper game of a specific championship and elevates it from being just any old ordinary footie title.

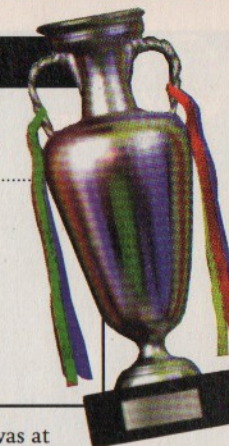
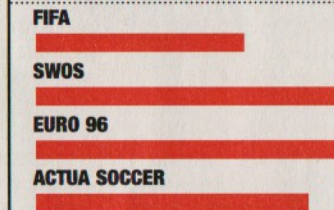
Style over content?

It seems that more attention has been paid to superficial graphical elements than to basic gameplay. Yes, the *Euro 96* stadia look fab, but as far as gameplay is concerned, what's crucially missing is a way of controlling the goalkeeper's distribution once he's made a save, such as at a dead-ball situation; instead you have a choice of either a short pass or a long kick out into midfield with no actual control over the direction. What you do get are extra bits of (admittedly very nice) animation instead: players stretching their hamstrings and bending from side to side in the pre-match line-ups, for example. While you didn't get such treats in *Sensi* (obviously, as the crappy little sprites were only about four pixels high, or



In perspective

Sensi is still the perfect arcade game, but it's not a sim like *Euro 96*, which in that sense is the best of a bad bunch.



something), it was at least pure gameplay all the way, and as a result it fast became (and probably still remains) the footie game benchmark. *Euro 96* had the chance to grab the best of everything – great graphics and sound, a good atmosphere and gameplay, but ultimately it's failed to hit its target.

Problems

There are many problems which still need to be worked on, and some of them have been inherited from the original

The official Euro 96 licence means that we get all of the official imagery.

Looking (and sounding) good

Euro 96 undoubtedly looks better than *Actua Soccer*. For starters, Gremlin have accurately researched and recreated the dimensions of each of the stadia used in the tournament, and they've thrown in a preview option too that shows you a swirly pic of the venue so you know what it will look like. There's also a facility that lets you scrutinise each team's (and individual player's) record and stats in some detail so that you can compare different members of the squad. The menu system is now much easier to use, although it's still got one or two very annoying little quirks (for example, before every match the team selection reverts to the default, so if you don't want Pallister at right back and Rednapp on the left wing, you'll have to change it every time you play a friendly).

The commentary by Barry Davies is even better than it was in *Actua*. As well as there being more off the cuff comments, there are quite a few specific *Euro 96* introductions, all of which helps add to the sense of occasion.

The player select facility is a nice addition, as is the pace button, but they still don't work as well as they might. Set pieces have also been revised, so now instead of just banging it up the pitch as in *Actua*, you get a dotted line to help you aim your shot. This is a fine idea, but once you've set your trajectory you can't reduce it.

VENUE SELECT
VENUE SELECT
London, Birmingham, Leeds, Newcastle, Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield, Nottingham
PREVIEW VENUE, DONE

PLAYER STATS
fernando Ruiz HIERRO
AGE: 28
POSITION: Right Midfield
DEFENDING: 80%
ATTACKING: 80%
SPEED: 78
TACKLING: 65
PASSING: 71
SHOOTING: 87
SKILL: 78
FITNESS: 99
DONE

TEAM SELECT
PLAYER 1 CHOOSE TEAM
BULGARIA
CONTROL SETUP, 1 PLAYER, DONE

9. MCCALL

REPLAY
GOAL-LINE

The final score

CHRIS
I'm not going to harp on about the good and bad points of *Euro 96* because Patrick's already covered just about everything in his review. However, having looked at the game in some considerable depth, I'd just like to say that I am suffering from a severe case of *déjà vu*. Why? Well, it's rather simple: the more you play this game, the more problems you encounter. I seem to recall having the same dilemma with another product. Hmm, what was it? I vaguely remember that it was called something like... *Actua Soccer*. Yep, that's the one all right.

To you, our readers, I say this: buy this game only if you're prepared for the frustration of finding problems with it weeks, even months down the line.

Chris Anderson

JOHN
To say that this game has caused a fracas in the *PC Zone* office would be something of an understatement. Having sickened of playing the mediator in increasingly agitated exchanges between virtually everyone around me (full time writers, freelancers, artists, me, the publisher, and people from other

mags as well), it would be safe to say that *Euro 96* is one of the most disputed games we have come across. The problem, I think, is that it *should* have been absolutely unbelievable – just look at it – superb graphics and the licence for the biggest sporting event in the last 30 years. So why wasn't it fantastic? Why did it fall down at the last minute? Why are we all rowing about problems and gameplay quirks? You can play this for a while and everything seems fine, but then all of a sudden it hits you with something ludicrous, like offering you the ability to make a man stand behind your opponent as he's taking a throw in or... Oh I dunno, it's just plain ridiculous.

We wouldn't actually give any footie game a wholehearted recommendation, but if it had to be a choice between *Actua* and *Euro 96* – for the fiver or so difference that you'll find at retail, the new game is the better of the two. Probably.

John Davison

JEREMY
Gremlin have created a monster. They've managed to put together potentially the best-looking and playable football game for the PC ever (gasp!), but when it

comes to the crunch they've failed dismally. And as all gamers will shout in unison, the crunch of any game is the AI (artificial intelligence).

I could almost gloss over some of the 'problems' reported elsewhere in this review (the 1000 minute games, the dubious off-side decisions, the fact that players play out of position etc etc) if the AI was a significant improvement over *Actua*. Unfortunately though, *Euro 96* is still as antagonistic as ever. Player selection is still very confusing and the one-touch facility is just bizarre: players leaping for a header will often power the ball towards their own goal rather than go forward; a striker will get to a goal, kick ahead of a defender and then hoof it deep into his own half; a throw to the keeper will often result in him kicking it out for a corner or conceding a dangerous opposition throw. The list is endless. Essentially, the more you play *Euro 96*, the more you find wrong with it. And we've played it a lot.

Once you start wising up to its shortcomings, it is playable. But essentially it's let down by its AI which we find hampers the gameplay – and it's that aspect which makes footie games. Such a shame.

Jeremy Wells

Actua Soccer. The substitution facility is best described as unusual: you have to wait for play to start before you can ask to substitute someone, after which you have to wait for it to stop, even if half-

(Below right) "It's behind you! No... No... over there."

time occurs in between. Sadly, once you've brought another player on you can't move him within a formation once he's on the pitch. The "intelligent" passing system hoofs the ball miles downfield when you want to tap it to someone next to you, and gives it to an opponent when you're aiming straight at one of your own players. We feel that the one-touch system fails almost as often as it works, button presses often carrying over to the next player and being implemented in unexpected ways. Also, unless you manually control the direction in which the ball is played, you'll often find that you 'one-touch hoof it' off on the wrong bearing. This often proves difficult during play, and nor is it explained fully in the manual. The ball bounces off the back of your player's legs, shoulders and arse when he makes no attempt to control the ball. It's not a very pretty sight.

Camera angles in wire view change so that you have to constantly adjust your

direction when shooting, rather than assuming – like every other football game in the world – that you'd be clever enough to want to do it at the goal, and letting any joystick movements choose



Best foot forward

The goalies aren't terribly smart when the ball's 'officially' going past the post (the computer, of course, knows where it's going as soon as the ball's kicked and calculates the goalkeeper's movements – along with whether it's going to be a save or goal if it's on target – at the same time). They run out of their goal to whichever side the ball's supposed to end up, even when an opposing forward is clearly going to intercept and whack it into the (now vacant) net. Even worse, if the ball is ostensibly played past the far post in close proximity to the by-line, you're rewarded with the sight of the goalkeeper *running away from the ball* (to collect it outside the post). Meanwhile another gleeful forward taps it into the empty net. It's also very easy to tempt keepers out of their goal so that they chase you into your own half; this then leaves the net wide open and you're free to do pretty much whatever you want. Obviously they're not so crap that you end up with basketball-style score lines (11-0, 25-15, 114-86), but it's still deeply frustrating. In some instances, the AI of the game is essentially very poor and you get the impression that many eventualities simply weren't considered. It goes without saying that the AI in a football game is an exceptionally complex business, but there have been other titles – albeit less pretty ones – that have managed to carry it off.



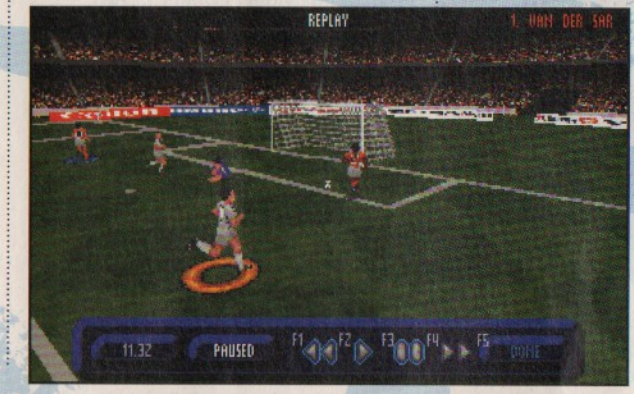
Problems

Like the previous versions of *Actua Soccer* (PC and PlayStation), *Euro 96* suffers from all manner of problems, some of which are irritating and others which are amusing – but all are utterly ridiculous. Here are three of our favourites:

- 1) A game went to sudden-death extra time; someone scored but the teams played on. Eh?
- 2) Someone was called offside direct from a corner.
- 3) There was a penalty shoot-out after a drawn game and after extra time had been played. A penalty went in off the post. The commentary said something to that effect, but then suddenly changed its mind, uttering something along the lines of, "Ooh, and it's hit the post and gone for a corner." Astonishingly, the players then moved up for a corner, the computer took it, and the players played on afterwards, completely ignoring the penalty shoot-out. We played on... and on... and on (in shifts, in the end), and after 1050 minutes we were still playing. It was 22-8, and most of the players appeared to be dead, in spite of the fact that many were still at 99 per cent fitness. And this didn't just happen the once but twice, in different games, under different circumstances. Oh dear.

which part of the goal. (Except for those occasions where you're given a free kick when you always have to pull backwards regardless of the direction you're facing. Logical? No.) Player selection hardly ever seems to give you the player you want. And so on and so on.

Essentially, this is *Actua Take Three* (if you include the slightly tweaked PlayStation version), and in terms of gameplay they're still no nearer to getting it right. If Gremlin had leapt ahead and fixed most or even all of the *Actua* gameplay problems, it could almost have been forgiven for being a standalone product. But, where it's basically only the scenario that's seen any significant changes, it may have fared better if it had been released as a data disk instead. Z



(Below) The ball trickles towards the goal. Hooray.

Tech specs

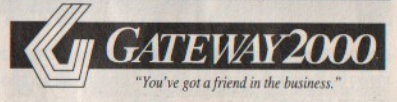
- Memory: 8Mb
- Processor: 486DX/66
- Graphics: VGA, SVGA
- Sound: All major sound cards
- Controls: Keyboard, joystick

Score

70

A potentially good game plagued by unfortunate problems.

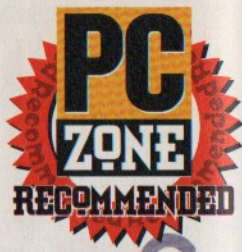
Price: £29.99
Release Date: Out now
Publisher: Gremlin Interactive
Tel: 01142 753423



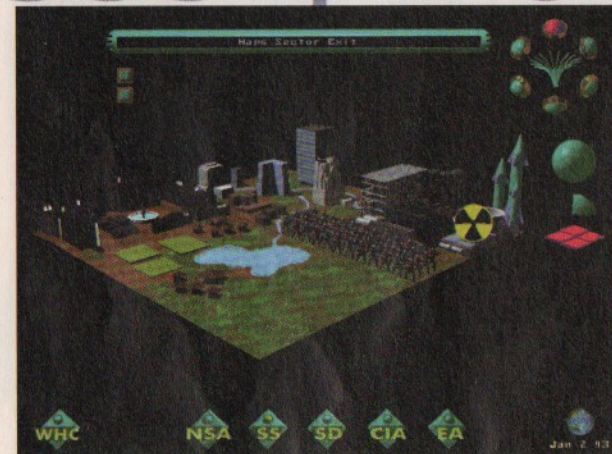
A GOOD DAY at the OFFICE



There's nothing Paul Presley loves better than a good conspiracy. Well, maybe a large plate of blancmange, but nothing else.



CyberJudas



(Above) The close-up views of the world's nations are used to assess the impact of your policies, your decisions and your missiles.

(Right) The cyberseat of power. Somehow I can't imagine Reagan having used one, can you?

(Below) Once the CyberJudas has made his move, you have to start looking for clues to his identity. You do this by snooping around your advisors' offices, prying into their secret drawers and reading their diaries.

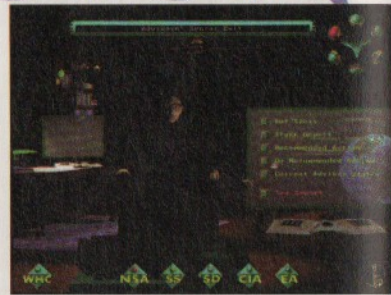
gameplay of *Breach 2* whenever the appropriate situation would arise within a mission. And naturally, both games could work independently of each other.

The concept was staggering but unfortunately only evident in two much-overlooked games. I gather that Maxis are experimenting with something similar for their next-generation *Sim* titles, but as of now, the IGS is the only time such a concept has seen the light of day.

Why am I telling you this? Has *CyberJudas* reinvented the concept? Are Empire on the verge of unleashing a torrent of interlocking games to an expectant public (ie me)? No, but I couldn't help thinking that *CyberJudas* would make an excellent 'central hub' for a whole raft of other games to work around. Before I explain myself though, I'd better describe *CyberJudas* to you - otherwise you won't have the faintest idea what I'm talking about (*What's new? - Ed*).

Policing the world

About six or seven years ago, the Commodore Amiga and the Atari ST were blessed by a strange little game called *The Armageddon Man*. One of the unique aspects to the game was that it came with a free magnetic



wall chart depicting a map of the world and a large sackful of magnetic stickers to allow you to chart the progress of the world's trouble spots. Your job was to ensure that the world continued to thrive and prosper and that the various governments of our planet didn't get out of hand. All very strategic, all very complex, and all very similar to what we have here.

You're in charge of the world. That is to say, you're the President of the United States, but that never stopped them interfering with everyone else before. Sitting in a weird cybery control seat, you're apparently hooked up to something called the Shadow Network, an interface that allows you to access any country in the world and deal with them on any level from social to economic to espionage to military. Form trade agreements, increase diplomatic tension, negotiate peace settlements, lob a few nukes. All the fun of real-world politics in the comfort of your own home. And it's all frighteningly realistic too. If it can



(Left) The Event Vortex is another curio. You can use it to jump back and forth in time, and examine the various actions that different countries take against each other. If you have the right manpower you can even influence them.

(Far left) Your advisors are on hand to alert you to potential trouble spots and point you in the right direction. The only trouble is, they're all out for themselves and so you can't afford to show favouritism. If one gets a bit jumpy, you can assassinate him. Cool.

(Below left) This is the screen where most of the action takes place. From here you can check on a country's military spending, examine their political allies and lob a nuke into the team that beats you in the Olympics.

pondering on all the potentials for ways the game could be even better. For example, when you commit espionage on a country, you could load up *Spycraft* and do it for real (well, you know what I mean). Or if you decide to invade Mozambique, you could load up *Command & Conquer* and run the battle. That kind of thing. *CyberJudas* practically screams 'central hub' to me. It's that kind of game. Or rather it should be, but due to the inability of the world's software houses to see beyond their own front doors, it never will be.

But that's bad journalism

I shouldn't criticise *CyberJudas* for being something it isn't. What it is, is a very playable political sim. It isn't perfect. The pacing of the game jumps between being numbingly slow and utterly swamping you with information. It's also not for everyone. It puts me in mind of an old Chris Crawford classic called *Balance Of Power*. Global strategy set in the real world. If the word 'politics' sends you into a coma, then forget it. Go and play *Duke Nukem* or something. Those of you who have a general interest in the world at large might just find something here of interest, though. **Z**

Tech specs

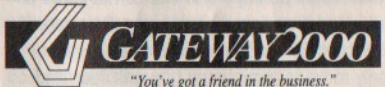
Memory: 8Mb
 Processor: 486DX2/66
 Graphics: SVGA
 Sound: All major sound cards
 Controls: Mouse

Score

80

Good, but not for everyone.

Price: £39.99 Release Date: Out now
 Publisher: Empire
 Tel: 0181-343 7337



SIT
 BACK
 and enjoy
 YOUR
 FLIGHT



PICK 'N' MIX

All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. Oh dear, this month's selection has obviously proved just too much for **Charlie Brooker** to cope with...

OFFENSIVE

Publisher: Ocean
Tel: 0161-832 6633
Price: £TBC

SCORE 48

Oh, how my heart leapt when I spotted this title. A platform game starring a paraplegic, perchance? Or maybe a *Doom*-clone in which you endlessly beat up children and OAPs? No such luck. It's referring to a military 'offensive' – specifically a whole load of 'offensives' undertaken during World War II. The game is a kind of limp, isometric take on *Command & Conquer*. For some reason your troops can only move in a minimum group of four, and they mince around the battlefield in such an effete manner that the whole thing looks a bit like 'The Rockettes Invade Poland'. There are several neat touches – the option to play as the bad guys for one, and the way you're practically encouraged to kill horses, sheep and harmless civilians for another – but since all the action drags along at a pace more commonly associated with the average sea cow, it ain't much fun.



(Above) *Offensive*: The horrors of war, diddyman style.

(Above) *Offensive*: The horrors of war, diddyman style.

Soccer anyway. Still, this hastily-prepared Euro 96 cash-in is basically identical to the last edition of *SWOS* – right down to the packaging (only differentiated by a little sticker slapped onto the box) – the difference being the inclusion of the European national squads and a fresh load of statistics. The game itself is sound – *Sensi* was and is a classic – but compared to *Actua Soccer* it looks decidedly prehistoric. Still, the management options aren't too bad, so hey, at least it's got scope.

STAR TREK: KLINGON

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Interactive
Contact: <http://www.viacomnewmedia.com>
Price: £TBC
Note: Windows/Windows 95 required

SCORE 65

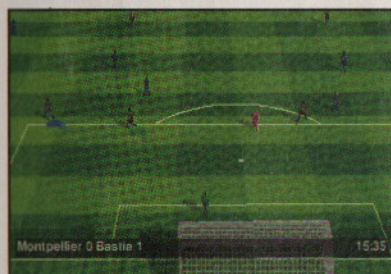
Casting off unto a rippling, sparkling sea of drool accumulated from the lips of Trekkies everywhere is *Star Trek: Klingon*, the latest computerised spin-off derived from everybody's favourite TV sci-fi soap. Billed as an 'interactive episode', and directed by none other than Jonathan 'Riker' Frakes, it's really more of a 'viewing experience' than a game.

ONSIDE SOCCER

Publisher: Telstar
Tel: 01932 222232
Price: £TBC

SCORE 28

Onside Soccer is a woeful footie chancer with lacklustre management bits bunged in for good measure. The graphics are blocky, flickery and poorly animated. It's nigh-on impossible to maintain control of any of your players for more than about two seconds on the trot. The gameplay... well, let's just forget it, shall we? In fact, the most interesting thing about *Onside Soccer* is the rendered intro –

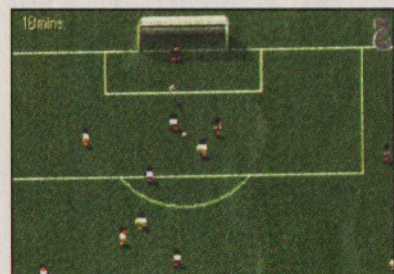


SENSIBLE WORLD OF SOCCER EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP EDITION

Publisher: Sensible Software/Time Warner
Tel: 0171-391 4300
Price: £29.99

SCORE 64

That's a very long name, isn't it? I always thought it should have been called *Diddyman*



(Left) *SWOSECE*: Crazy title, ageing game.

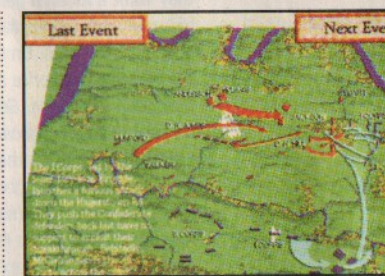
(Far left) *Onside Soccer*: Only just falls short of a 'Pants' rating.



Basically, you sit there watching a specially-filmed episode of *Star Trek*, occasionally waking from your zombie-like trance in order to click the mouse, thereby affecting the outcome of events. 'You' are cast as a Klingon, and the path to success depends on how 'Klingonesque' your decisions are. It's an after-dinner indulgence for the tragically committed (not to mention wealthy) Trek-head. As for me, I found it as interesting as

(Above) *Star Trek Klingon*: Is that a lump on your forehead or are you just pleased to see me?

(Right) *The War College*: It'll teach you the meaning of boredom.



a black-and-white documentary charting the history of drawing pins, with a voice-over in Greek, playing in a cinema in Norwich on a rainy Wednesday afternoon. (Add 10 to the score if you're a really sad *Trek* fan.)

THE WAR COLLEGE: UNIVERSAL MILITARY SIMULATOR 3

Publisher: Gametek
Tel: 01753 553445
Price: £TBC

SCORE 40

Or *Spod Wars*, to give it a more realistic title. This is an exhaustive (in every sense of the word) compilation of hardcore porn for chin-stroking armchair generals of any age. It gives you the opportunity to command the forces of Caesar, Napoleon, Robert E Lee or Hindenberg in a series of anally-accurate military campaigns. Dullness writ large, in other words (and I mean LARGE, like 700000 point Helvetica carved into a towering cliff face). Call me a clueless flailing buffoon if you like, but I simply couldn't make head nor tail of any of it. Some might say that I'm merely showing my ignorance of the joys of intricate wargaming, but really, this is sad. Which means that if you're 48 years old, and you have bad teeth, and you still live with your dear old mum, then it may well be your kind of 'thang'. You hairy-palmed, soap-dodging outcast, you.

A relaxing
sunday
DRIVE



Budget Games

(cut here for free badge!)



And the Lord cometh down from the mountain retreat where he hadst been working on his snowboarding technique, and verily he sayeth unto the masses gathered at the Media Centre bar, "Loaves and fishes? Don't talk to me about loaves and fishes... I tried all that, and did the buggers listen? Did they heck as like. It's budget games they want now - budget games, I tell you. It's enough to make you want to give up..."

allowed to stay out till 7am and take loads of Class A drugs intravenously, try one of those big rubber gags you can get in S&M shops. If, on the other hand, they keep on about how they want a football game, try this compilation of largely out-dated, but still occasionally playable, numbers. On the arcade front it has the original, big-sprite *FIFA Soccer*, *Kick Off 3 European Challenge*, *Goal*, *Striker* and the original *Sensible Soccer* with those endearing little sprites that tug the heart-strings every time they fall down. On the management front it has the still useful (especially on a low-spec laptop) *Championship Manager 93/94*, the slightly irritating and extremely inaccurately titled *Premier Manager 3*, and the corruption-filled *On The Ball* (with Premier League and First Division data). This is what you do: buy the compilation and give them one of the games, making sure that they realise how expensive it was. Three months later, when they start moaning on and on about how they've 'finished' it, give them another. And so on, until you've used all eight and they think you're the best parent/uncle/aunt in the universe, or they've died of RSI.

ADDICTIVE COMPILATIONS
Publisher: Prism
Tel: 0181-804 8100
Price: £19.99

Prism have been around a while, but are a new kid in budget label town, and are possibly leaving themselves slightly open in opting for the name Addictive. Unfortunately they haven't thought to give names to each compilation, so we'll have to call them Compilation A, B and C. Each has an okay game along with a couple of ropery ones. And as for what strange hybrid human personality each is supposed to appeal to, that's anyone's guess.

COMPILATION A
SCORE 50

Features the extremely naff *International Sports Challenge*. Now's your chance to beat your trusty joystick to a pulp by diving, showjumping, cycling and swimming, then lapse into catatonia running the marathon -

what bloody cretin thought of that one? - and finally enter the shooting. Preferably with the inventor of athletics sims as the target. *Campaign II* slows things down like a litre of Benylin. It's a wargame, and as wargames go, a good one. (Insert jumper/elbow-pads/ pointy helmet joke of your choice here.) *Shadowlands* is a little bit like an underground, RPG-based version of *Syndicate* (but not as good). Make up a party of four people, shove them about in the isometric depths, grow long fingernails and slay stuff, even having your scarily-named characters wander off separately if you want. It's officially Not Bad.

COMPILATION B
SCORE 60

This one has *Pacific Islands*, which was once considered the cat's slumberwear in tank simulations, but now looks about as visually advanced as the Bayeux Tapestry. It also has *Empire Soccer 94*, which is one of the 6000-odd unimpressive football games currently out there. But it also has the original and engrossing *Robinson's Requiem*, a weird, first-person viewed survive 'em up in which you've crashed on an alien world and have to stay alive and healthy by utilising your wits, your comprehensive range of prescription drugs, and your hand-to-hand combat skills. The only game ever to give you the option to amputate your own limbs, it's quite interesting, but not without its faults.

COMPILATION C
SCORE 56

Includes one mediocre effort, *Ishar 3* (travel through the portals of time in pursuit of Ye Dragon of Sith, make DIY spells with Twerp Root and Spittle of Lobster, etc) one corker - *Silent Service II* (atmospheric sub-aqua shenanigans in submarines) and one blatant filler, known somewhat optimistically I reckon as the *Colossus Collection*, which includes backgammon, bridge, chess and draughts games for those of you who long for the good old days where families made their own entertainment and there were songs you could sing along to.

MAXIS SIM TITLES

Publisher: Maxis
Tel: 0171-505 1500
Price: £9.99 each (TBC)

Moving on from budget compilations... In advance of their plans to take over the planet with a fully interlaced series of new *Sim* titles, Maxis have decided to release all the old ones at bargain prices.

Sim Earth sees you struggling to control the planet, striving to balance ecosystems and pursue ecological programmes - and you aren't allowed to mention it without including the word Gaia. *Sim Farm* is basically *Sim City*, although here you're well and truly getting your hands dirty (theoretically speaking) ploughing, sowing, reaping, and fiddling about in cow sheds. *Sim Life* is fun with microbes. (Will they evolve beyond the single-cell organism stage? Or will they continue to find ITV's Euro 96 football coverage enlightening?) *Sim City* is the original game that spawned a monster, looks really ropery and everyone already has a copy of somewhere, so who they think will buy it now is anyone's guess. And *Sim Ant* - well, it's stretching a point somewhat, but was interesting in that it was almost responsible for a whole new creepy-crawly/viral infection sub-genre (apparently *Sim Tse-Tse Fly*, *Sim Pubic Lice* and *Sim Ebola Virus* were put on the back burner). Of the whole bunch, *Sim Earth* is probably the only one with anything still going for it. Z

Barg-o-rama

System Shock £11.99
Ultima Underworld in space: big, first-person perspective viewed adventure, with total freedom of movement, loads of weapons and hours of fun/fear.

Alone In The Dark Collection £34.99
 All three games for less than the price of the new release, which is virtually the same apart from the graphics. Bloody hard though.

Essential Collections: Flight £34.99
1942 Pacific Air War, *Fleet Defender F14* and *Wings Of Glory*: three decent flight sims for the price of a pint.

Essential Collections: Business £34.99
Transport Tycoon is *Sim City 2000* for the transport industry, and *Theme Park* lets you make children sick. Excellent!

Essential Collections: Sport £34.99
PGA Tour 486 is a superb golf game. *F1 Grand Prix* is the original version of the outstanding racing game. *FIFA Soccer* is okay, too.

Space Hulk £11.99
 Gripping strategic gameplay requiring a great tactical mind and a cool head.

Strike Commander £11.99
 Refreshingly straightforward arcade-style flight sim with decent graphics and loads of longevity, thanks to the inclusion of the extra missions.

Formula 1 Grand Prix £14.99
 Ideal if you want the classic racing game, but don't want the other stuff in the Sport Collection edition.

Indiana Jones And The Fate Of Atlantis £12.99
 Talkie version of the thoroughbred point-and-click Indy adventure, with three ways to play.

IndyCar Racing £9.99
 Definitive, great-looking oval track racing sim, with almost everything the follow-up has, only it's cheaper.

Power, Corruption and Lies £34.99
 Worth buying for *UFO* and *Dune 2* alone, it also includes *Fleet Defender F14* and *Beneath A Steel Sky*.

Wing Commander II £11.99
 Not as good as *WCIII* and *WCIV*, but then it runs on normal PCs and doesn't need 5GB RAM. Includes the extra missions and speech packs.

Syndicate Plus £11.99
 All of the original missions, plus the add-ons, on one CD. Extremely addictive strategic shoot 'em up that gets bloody hard later on.

Privateer £11.99
Wing Commander type space-based dogfighting, with *Elite*-style trading sections. Comes with extras and speech packs.

Sam and Max Hit The Road £12.99
 Full talkie version of the benchmark point-and-click adventure, entertaining and puzzling in equal measures. A must-buy.

World Of Combat £29.99
 Outstanding compilation: top chopper-sim *Comanche: Armored Fist*, its tank-game equivalent; and gripping sub sim *Wolfpack*.

SIMON THE SORCERER I AND II
Publisher: AdventureSoft
Tel: 0121-352 0847
Price: £29.99

PC ZONE
SCORE 85 **RECOMMENDED**

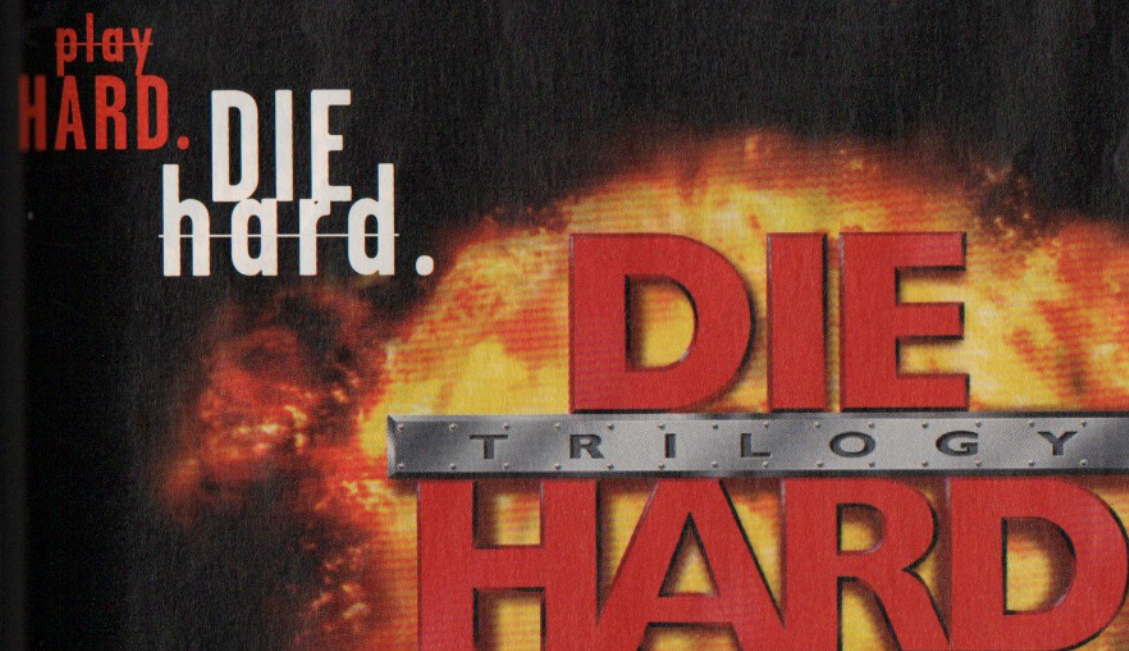
(Above right) *Robinson's Requiem*: Your character may look ropery but this game's not bad at all.

It's a laugh, this Alzheimer's Disease. Time just whizzes by - we can remember things that happened 20 years ago as if it were yesterday, but we can't remember whether we wiped our bottoms earlier today. For example, it seems like only this morning that we were giving a guarded good review to the jolly *Simon the Sorcerer II*, while criticising its depiction of various minorities. And now here it is in Windows 95 form, complete with the added bonus of its precursor. The only downside is the inclusion of a free T-shirt featuring possibly the ugliest design ever seen on cotton outside the craftsy section of Camden Lock market. Put it this way: it's black and it's free, but our Chris won't go anywhere near it, preferring to beat it with a cudgel and disclaim its aesthetic content in strident tones.

ULTIMATE FOOTBALL GAMES
Publisher: UbiSoft
Tel: 0181-941 4004
Price: £24.99

SCORE 70

If you have offspring, or irritating nephews and/or nieces who are always moaning on about why it's always they who have to clean the chimneys, and how all their friends are



COMING IN SEPTEMBER on PlayStation, Sega Saturn and Windows 95
 DIE HARD TRILOGY © 1996 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. All Rights Reserved.



Aztech Waverider Pro 32 3D Typhoon AW32 PnP

(Right) Try out two new cards? Oh, okay then any excuse for a sesh of Duke Nukem 3D.

To really get the most out of your games atmospheric sound effects and thumping music are essential. **Dave Mathleson** takes a look at two budget wavetable cards that promise to rid gamedom of weedy bleeps.



and basic music chip were still unable to provide 'cinematic' sound. Sound cards have moved on since then: today's products now boast 16-bit digital audio, while on the music front things are quickly turning wavetable.

Wavetable chips generate music in games by using sounds based on samples of real instruments, with the obvious result that they sound loads better than their predecessor, the FM chip. Up until recently wavetable

with the result that anyone using them purely for playing games could find that they're paying for features that they're not going to use.

But sound card manufacturers seem to be wising up to this fact, with the release of more basic models that are still kitted out with wavetable chips, but come without extras such as on-board sample RAM. Both Creative Labs and Gravis have stripped-down versions of their cards, and there are quite a few other manufacturers following suit.

The price is right

Weighing in at under £100, the two cards on test here are obviously aimed at games players - but they're also endowed with extra 3D surround wave effects processors to help tart things up. The rather snappily-named Aztech Waverider Pro 32 3D has all the usual bits that you'd expect from a card:

Bundled with the card is an additional utility that brings the built-in 3D surround effects into play; to my ears it didn't really make that much of a '3D' difference, although it did add clarity (which

I suppose adds to the 3D effect).

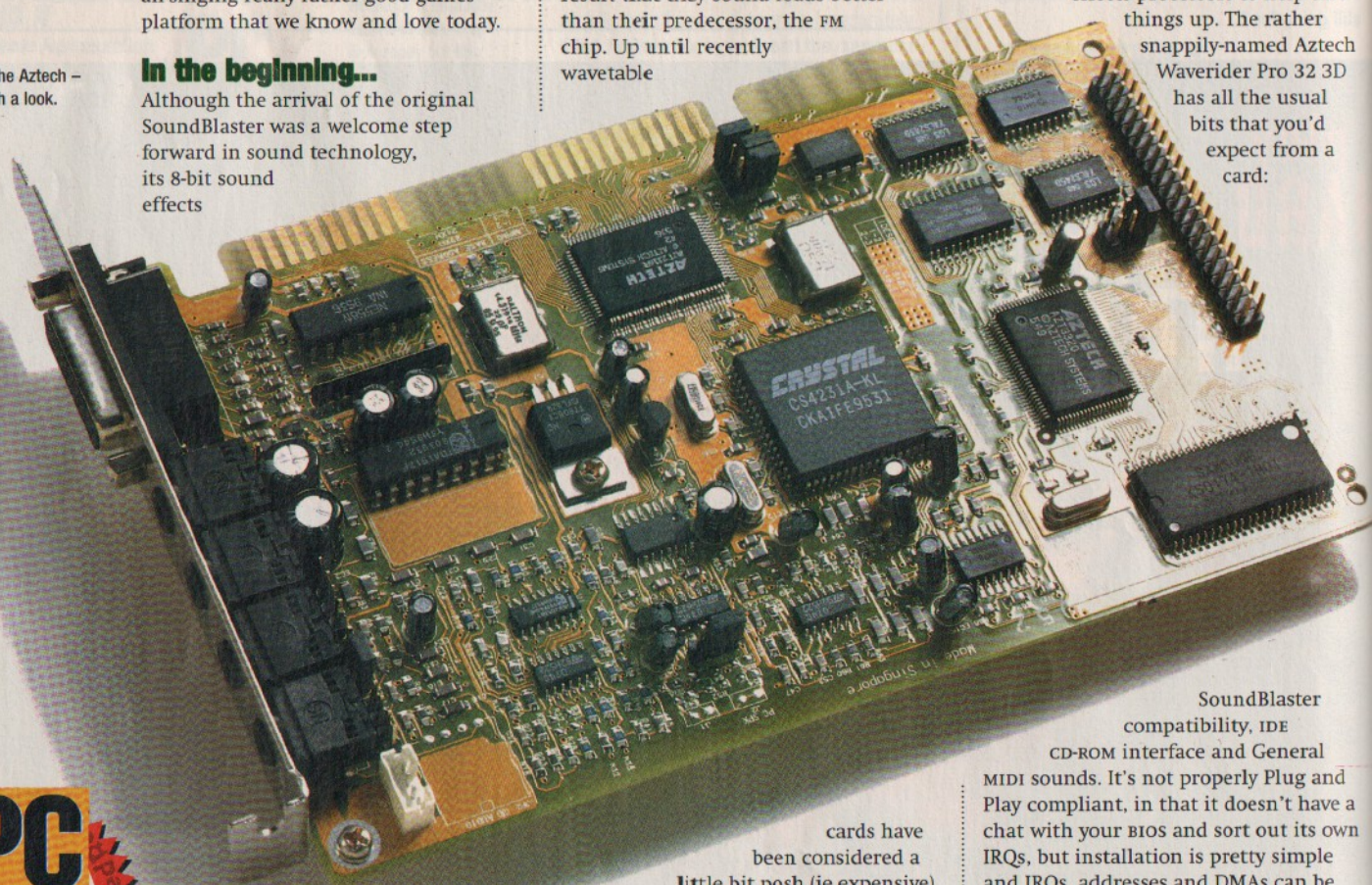
If you're a musician the Aztech has less to offer. The sounds are standard General MIDI, but you're stuffed if you need anything else as there's no WaveBlaster connector or RAM slots for your own samples. However, it does come with full duplex drivers for the digital audio, which gives you the facility to playback and record at the same time.

The Typhoon AW32 PnP (hmm... I wonder how they thought up that name?) costs the same as the Aztech, but differs mainly in that it's Plug and Play compliant. This can be a pain if your system has devices attached that aren't PnP (known as legacy devices to techies), but you can get round this problem by changing the settings in software. The

SoundBlaster compatibility, IDE CD-ROM interface and General MIDI sounds. It's not properly Plug and Play compliant, in that it doesn't have a chat with your BIOS and sort out its own IRQs, but installation is pretty simple and IRQs, addresses and DMAs can be changed through software, so there's no horrible jumper fiddling.

The Aztech performed very well, with the wavetable chip providing commendable oomph to Duke Nukem's soundtrack.

cards have been considered a little bit posh (ie expensive), and to fully appreciate the benefits you've needed a high-end card such as an AWE32 or Gravis UltraSound to go with it. As well as that, they've been designed with the musician in mind,



wavetable sound quality of the Typhoon is on a par with the Aztech, and to be honest it's largely a matter of taste which of the two you prefer. Having said that though, the Typhoon provides a slightly better digital sound quality in Windows than the Aztech, and is equipped with a WaveBlaster connector.

Musicians among you will probably find the Typhoon the more appealing of the two, although really anyone considering a card for this aspect alone would no doubt opt for a more expensive model anyway.

All in all it's extremely hard to differentiate between the Aztech and the Typhoon - they're both good value for money, and offer sound quality that'll make any decent game kick. So if you're sick of having crap sound or no sound at all, why not treat yourself? After all, there's no disputing that the price is definitely right. **Z**

Score

85

A nice sounding card at a great price.

Aztech Waverider Pro 32 3D
Price: £79.95 Release date: Out now
Manufacturer: Aztech UK
Tel: 01734 814121

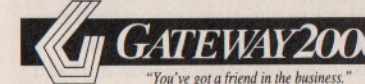


Score

89

A better sounding card at a great price.

Typhoon AW32 PnP
Price: £79.00 Release Date: Out now
Manufacturer: Eagle Marketing
Tel: 01732 369000



(Above and below left) If you're a musician as well as a gamer, take a look at what the Typhoon can do for you.



Diamond Stealth 3D 2000

3D graphics may be the best thing since sliced bread, but they mean hard work for the poor old PC. The flat, lifeless Dave Mathleson has a look at Diamond's new Stealth 3D card to see if it really can take you into the third dimension...

WHILE PCS HAVE COME a long way in establishing themselves as the best all-round platform for games requiring a bit more than a well-oiled trigger finger, your good old designed-for-blokes-in-suits PC can't compete graphically with a decent console. Although a Pentium has plenty of power for most tasks, the 3D graphics featured in all our fave games prove particularly taxing for a chip which is more suited to adding up endless columns of financial data.

There are three main elements of a typical 3D blast-fest's graphics that the PC finds especially hard work. The first is the model itself; for example, those massive canyons in *Duke Nukem* aren't real at all, they're just a clever piece of hi-tech wizardry. Okay, I know I'm being patronising here, but it's not simply a question of the PC scrolling the game's levels around in tandem with the movements of the joystick, as it does with 2D graphics. This is down to the fact that the game map is stored as 3D data, and has to be transformed into 2D before being displayed on-screen.

Exactly how this is done varies from game to game, but suffice to say, it's dead hard. Some games have better engines than others, which means that the programmers have sussed out a way of doing the transformations in less steps, but even the best game engine will eat up all the power you can throw at it.

The other two elements concern the process of making the graphics more realistic. As flat polygons look dull and

'computery', developers use texture-mapping and various types of shading to tart up their models. Texture-mapping involves wrapping a 2D bitmap around a 3D object (such as the walls in *Doom*), and the more detailed (and therefore less blocky) these are, the slower the game. Shading attempts to 'illuminate' objects so that they look more realistic; most games use the Gouraud technique which delivers good results for the cost involved.

Take It away...

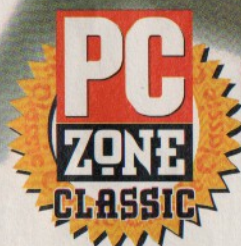
Installing the Stealth 3D is simple: plug it in, insert the CD, and bingo! There's obviously sod all point in having one of these beauties if you have nothing to play, but demo versions of *Descent 2* and *Destruction Derby* are supplied with the card. *Destruction Derby* seemed to have a Windows DLL missing or something, but *Descent* worked a treat, and on an old P90 the graphics were very impressive. Not only did it run perfectly smoothly in 640x480 mode, but the textures passed the 'blocky close-up' test with flying colours.

Where the Stealth 3D 2000 really scores is in its abilities as a normal graphics card. The Edge 3D, Diamond's earlier attempt in this market, was flawed in that while its 3D abilities were great, it was pretty poor as a conventional graphics card. Fortunately this has been rectified with this latest model, and at this price anyone considering buying a standard graphics card would be well advised to spend a bit extra and plump for the Stealth 3D. As long as developers can be persuaded to write for it, I reckon Diamond have a real winner on their hands. **Z**

The purpose of this brief lecture in computer graphics is to illustrate why VGA games usually look crap on anything less than a P120 - and even then, the quality isn't exactly on a par with *Ridge Racer*. Fortunately, several companies have been developing cards with chips specially designed to speed up the 'hard things' I've mentioned, among them Diamond, who have now released a 3D version of their well-known Stealth graphics card.

The Stealth 3D 2000 is designed to completely replace your existing graphics card, and comes complete with all the usual Windows accelerator functions and DOS compatibility that you'll need to do 'proper' work and play your old games. But it's the 3D chipset which is of the most interest, as it's capable of processing 3D data at a much faster rate than your CPU. The only drawback is that it's designed to work with games that have been specifically developed for it, so don't expect any miracles with your existing titles.

(Above) Give your poor hardworking PC a break with Diamond's Stealth 3D 2000.



Score

90

A decent graphics card and 3D for this price is a real barg.

Diamond Stealth 3D 2000
Price: £149.00 **Release date:** Out now
Manufacturer: Diamond Multimedia
Tel: 01189 444400



Vivid 3D Plus

The Vivid 3D Plus promises convincing 3D surround sound from just two speakers, but does it work? Well, it had Duncan Swain looking over his shoulder as he delved into the depths of *Doom*...

NOW THAT MULTIMEDIA HAS become commonplace, the powers that be have decided that a sound

Box of tricks

The Vivid 3D Plus promises 3D surround sound from only two speakers by using SRS (Sound Recovery System) technology, which is a sort of pseudo surround sound. According to the manual SRS works by "retrieving important ambient information lost by traditional stereo processing" and doesn't require pre-encoded material to do so - in other words, the Vivid 3D Plus fiddles around with sounds and frequencies to play various acoustical tricks on your ears and will work with any ordinary mono or stereo signal. As well as beefing up the sound

fancy tricks and filtering added. There are also dials for volume, centre level and spatial effect which will vary the amount of effects the signal generates.

We tested the Vivid 3D with *Duke Nukem 3D*, *Doom* and *Raptor*, and there's no denying that it did actually enhance the sound effects and music. It's hard to describe exactly what it does, but everything seemed louder than it did using the bypass option, and the sound effects were more spread - grunts, growls, drips and ricochets appeared to be coming from either side rather than just straight ahead; *Doom*, in particular, definitely proved more atmospheric. You may not be fooled into thinking that one of those walking wart hogs in *Duke Nukem* is standing behind you scything your legs off with a chaingun (much!), but you may feel a bit more nervous taking on a fearsome horde of cacodemons on your own in a dark bedroom with the windows open and the curtains flapping.

One minor gripe is the fact that the Vivid 3D Plus supplied to us came with an American two-pin plug attached to the power supply, which meant that we had to go out and buy the necessary adaptor before being able to use it.

But apart from this, and bearing in mind that fifty quid is a fair amount to spend on a gadget that's not strictly necessary, the Vivid 3D Plus certainly manages to bump up the scare factor of your average shoot 'em up. **Z**



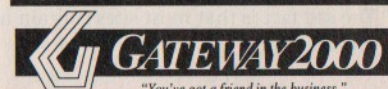
(Right) It's true that good things do come in small packages.

Score

85

Worth buying if you've got a spare fifty quid.

Vivid 3D Plus
Price: £49.95 **Release date:** Out now
Manufacturer: Bull and Bear
Tel: 0171-795 6977



of your PC, it can also be used with most Sega and Nintendo consoles, personal stereos and even hi-fi systems.

Surround sound made easy

Installation is very straightforward: all you have to do is connect the Vivid 3D Plus between your speaker output jack and PC using the stereo mini to dual RCA connector provided, flick the 'on' switch, crank up *Duke Nukem* and away you go. There's a switch which allows you to choose between SRS for a stereo source or 3D sound from a mono signal; alternatively you can select bypass, which returns you to what you'd normally get from your sound card with none of the

card and a pair of stereo speakers are no longer sufficient to get the very best from your PC. Dolby have recently agreed a new surround sound standard for the PC, so naturally it's only a matter of time before we see games encoded with this marvel of modern times.

But don't despair if you're the proud owner of classic titles written before this technology came into being - improved sound effects and music are now possible with the Vivid 3D Plus from NuReality.

ZONE ON-LINE

POSTCARDS FROM THE WEB

THE CRITERIA

Being such a caring sharing bunch, we put consideration for our readers before our telephone bill and dialled the Web sites of some of the biggest games companies. We then had a quick debate and awarded them a score based on the following...

LOOKS

Yeah, yeah, a page may well be Netscape 2.0 enhanced or have an entire Java 3D virtual world tucked away at the back somewhere, but if it looks completely plop, or like it's been put together by a first year student, what's the bloody point?

POPULARITY

A hits counter on-site is important, as it tells you how many other people have visited it before you. Are you being sadly unique by going there, or are you just sheep number 401235? A lot of commercial sites don't have counters because their maintainers (often paid huge sums of money by clueless execs) don't want to tell their be-suited ubermeisters the real truth - that their site is getting somewhere in the region of 'nada' hits. Some sites sport a logo to say they've been picked as one of the 'Top 5%' Web sites.

LAST UPDATED

Again, another key feature often absent from commercial sites. Some companies treat Web sites like white elephants (if you'll excuse the metaphor). The initial tidal wave of 3D-rendered enthusiasms and content and ideas and all that stuff dries to an incontinent trickle within three weeks. The site then remains the same, unchanged for all eternity until it's found by a primitive post-apocalyptic civilisation who bases their religion on it.

WHO ARE THEY?

Rather self-explanatory really, but sometimes it's not so obvious.

WHAT'S THERE?

Easily the most important element of a Web site is content, a fact which oddly enough seems to elude most companies. A lot of them are guilty of abject cyber-twattery, or worse, pathological pedestrianism. A couple have obviously come across a formula whereby you jam in the following sections:

- ☛ Main menu
- ☛ Press releases
- ☛ Latest games
- ☛ Tips and FAQs
- ☛ Staff roll call
- ☛ Very little else

Plus maybe - oh the innovation!

- ☛ A 'live' video camera trained on a corner of the programmer's office (why? why? and thrice, why?)
- ☛ An on-line shopping area (for US Webbers only)
- ☛ Something which sounds unbelievable but is permanently 'under construction'

The sad fact is that most sites contain nothing you couldn't glean from an advert or a two-page magazine article - and probably less.

Every games company and their monkey seems to be going for a no-holds barred, oh-boy oh-boy cor blimey Web site o-rama to make their presence felt on the mighty Internet. Sometimes spending vast amounts of money... sometimes not. Sometimes well thought-out and packed with innovative, interesting content. Usually, not. So if you're in the mood to check out the latest info from your fave company's Web site, here's a swift little guide to what's a hit and what's... you know...

3D REALMS

<http://www.3drealms.com/>

LOOKS

Netscape 3.0 compatible but with the general appearance of an early '80s bulletin board. What's the point of being Netscape 3.0 compatible if your site looks like it was designed by one of Clive Sinclair's early 3D artists?

POPULARITY

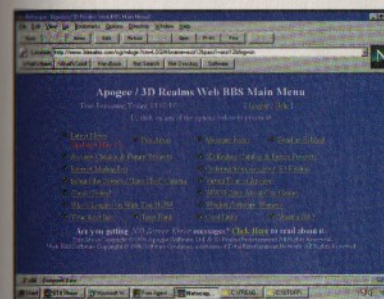
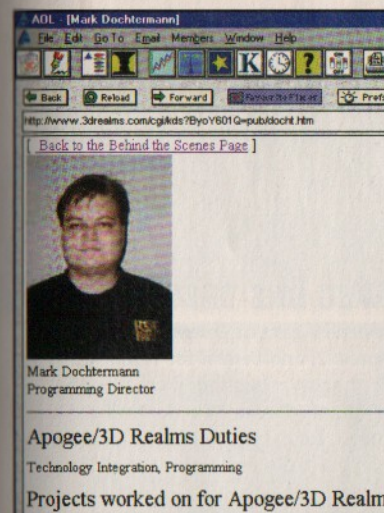
We were visitor number 2051880.

LAST UPDATED

18 May
(three days before we looked at it).

WHO ARE THEY?

3D Realms is a division of Apogee software, the company that brought us the original versions of *Duke Nukem* etc (top tip: they were crap). 3D Realms now apparently specialise in 3D games only (although we did see a screenshot of a future release called *Stargunner*, which looks remarkably like a 2D scrolling shoot 'em up with knobs on) using their revolutionary 'Build' game engine. It's been employed in 3D Realms' biggest success to date - *Duke Nukem 3D* - and a flurry of other releases cashing in on this technology are on the cards, including *Shadow Warriors*, *Blood* and *Prey*. They reckon it's "a lot like *Quake*". We don't.



WHAT'S THERE?

- ☛ DevCam: a handily placed camera in the 3D Realms research and development department - updated every two or five minutes depending on which page you read - that's supposed to show a buzzing hive of activity. For more than an hour all we could see was an empty corridor, after which we fell asleep. Maybe all the staff are transparent?
- ☛ A clickable list of staff members and programmers: click on a name and you're taken to an exceptionally boring career resumé and an unattractive photo.
- ☛ The chance to play games across the



Internet as a tester for a new partnership between 3D Realms and Total Entertainment Network.

- ☛ A hugely annoying log-on procedure to be completed before you can even get into the pages.
- ☛ Downloadable demos of loads of thrilling EGA, CGA and VGA games such as *Halloween Harry*, *BioMenace* and *Duke Nukem I and II*, as well as the latest versions of *Duke Nukem 3D Demo 1.3d*, a handful of slideshows, previews, FAQs, as well as add-ons and extra levels for *Rise Of The Triads*, plus cheat codes.

VERDICT: 50%
Nice game, shame about the site.

ELECTRONIC ARTS

<http://www.ea.com/>

LOOKS

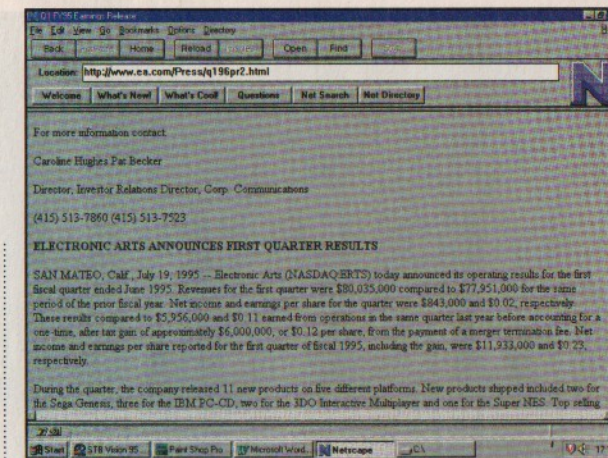
Netscape 2 enhanced, so the graphics are splendid. Unfortunately EA are guilty of sporting the sad 'Top 5%' logo.

POPULARITY

Again, this site must be visited by everyone in the entire universe who owns a modem - and they were all before us in the queue when we wanted to get there. Enormously slow.

LAST UPDATED

EA reckon their site is updated every day, which means top marks for being ultra-conscientious.



(Above) Financial results? Thanks EA.

(Right) Crap baseball cap, anyone?



WHO ARE THEY?

Everyone but everyone knows EA. EA Sports have given us some of the best ever sports games (*John Madden*, *NHL Hockey*, *FIFA*) plus the thrilly bits of *Road Rash*, *The Need For Speed*, *Fade To Black* and *Shockwave* from EA Studios. You'll also find Bullfrog, Origin, Jane's Combat Simulations and various affiliates such as Novalogic's stuff here too.

WHAT'S THERE?

- ☛ The usual opportunities for getting hold of demos, video clips, information on new games and support for gaming related problems.
- ☛ The EA Store sells every product under the EA sun - but looking at it using AOL's own Web browser was nothing short of a nightmare - it may just as well have been written in Latin. There are special offers on some games but no immediately apparent way of paying for them over the Internet. Best of all you can order your very own EA baseball caps and T-shirts. (What do you mean you don't want one?)
- ☛ Suit n Tie Stuff. EA may think that anyone logging on will find all this rubbish both interesting and funny in some obscure way, but of course it's not. Come off it - annual financial reports, job openings? Sod off.

(Top left) Unfortunately one of the prerequisites of a job at 3D Realms is that you have to look like this.

(Above left) Back to the '70s with the 3D Realms homepage.

(Left) It's not all work, work, work at 3D Realms - in fact it seems to be no work at all most of the time.

VERDICT: 40%
Huge, slow and corporate.



LUCASARTS

<http://www.lucasarts.com/>

LOOKS

You'd expect more from George Lucas, seeing as how he brought us *Star Wars* and has his own special effects studio (Industrial Light and Magic, responsible for among others *Jurassic Park*, *Jumanji* and *Terminator 2*), but this is one of the worst Web sites we've seen. Alright, the intro screen has a *Star Wars* montage but there are no Netscape enhancements; this may mean the pages download quickly, but you'll find yourself leaving just as hastily.

POPULARITY

A visitor counter was obviously beyond the programming capabilities of the LucasArts boys.

LAST UPDATED

There are some new releases but in terms of style update, we'd hazard a guess at around 1972.

WHO ARE THEY?

They have produced some of the most successful PC games: *TIE Fighter*, *X-Wing*, *Dark Forces*, *Rebel Assault* and *The Dig*.



(Left) LucasArts' *Outlaws* screenshots look a lot better than their Web site.

(Above) LucasArts' homepage must make poor old George cringe

(Right) Interplay employ a *Conquest Of The New World* map metaphor for navigating their Web site.

WHAT'S THERE?

It's all a bit of a mess really.
 ⚡ The Adventurer: a bland 'e-zine' about LucasArts and what's in store. The latest issue covers the Sergio Leone inspired multiplayer Western adventure *Outlaws* and some 'exciting' employee profiles.
 ⚡ Usual blend of demos, info, tech support and screenshots, but it's worth checking out details of *Jedi Knight: Dark Forces II*, a new multiplayer game that's promised to be everything the original should have been.
 ⚡ The Company Store lists everything LucasArts make (gems include *Star Wars* Dangler Vehicle Sets, Collector Plates and a handful of games) and gives you the chance to buy it - if you live in America. Hmm, Internet: the 'global information superhighway'. Not.

VERDICT: 20%

Dull. George Lucas should disown it.

INTERPLAY

<http://www.interplay.com/>

LOOKS

One of the best sites in terms of flash features with Macromedia and Netscape 2 enhanced pages, but a bit too 'showy'.

POPULARITY

Quite a bit of stuff here, and as many of the pages were very slow to download we'd estimate that it's 'very popular'.

LAST UPDATED

By the minute probably, as their Web programmers seem to be so big-headed.

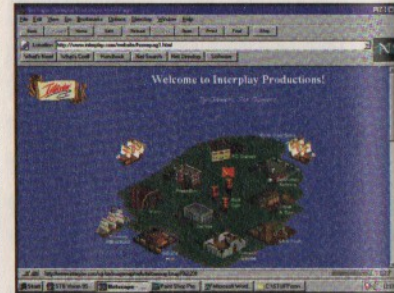


WHO ARE THEY? RECOMMEND

Interplay gave us *Descent* and *Descent 2*, and *Descent* for Windows 95 is on the way - but they were also the people responsible for *Battle Chess*. Also known for *Cyberia*, *Stonekeep*, a couple of *Star Trek* titles and (eek) *Voyeur*.

WHAT'S THERE?

All the usual fare - a Cool Sites page, customer support, FTP sites for demos, Web Tools, an unfortunate roll call of staff (like, cuz we want to know), info on console games, Other Attractions (such as a *Conquest Of The New World* demo, a multiplayer God game and Tommy, an



interactive 'history' of the awful album, film and stage play), job adverts and a Press Box. The Hints and Tips section offers booklets on Interplay's own games and downloadable cheats for a selection of other titles from *Alone In The Dark* to *Future Wars* to lots of others.

VERDICT: 80%

Good. Very good. A blueprint for other sites to follow.

GT INTERACTIVE

<http://www.gtinteractive.com/>

LOOKS

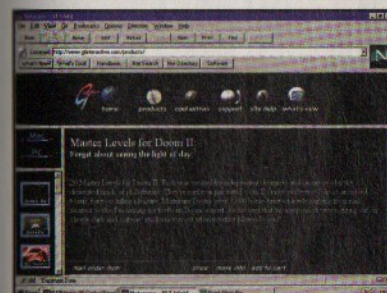
Très chic Netscape 2 compatible pages mean multiple frames on-screen and a black background. Like iD's site you can choose from 'pumped' or 'lean and mean' versions depending on your connection speed, although the only difference seemed to be a slightly brassier GT logo. Well thought-out with proper headings for sensible categories, making it easy to find what you want when you want.

POPULARITY

Despite the 'Top 5%' logo we seemed to be visitor number '0', as there was no counter. Probably popular judging by the crippled paraplegic snail's pace at which the homepage downloaded.



(Top right) Another GT page dedicated to *Doom*, quelle surprise.



(Right) GT Interactive use Netscape 2 to full effect with frames and coloured pages, even if they are black like everyone else's.

LAST UPDATED

Yesterday, last year, 1962 - who knows?

WHO ARE THEY?

Home of *Doom 2*, *Ultimate Doom*, *Final Doom*, the *Doom 2 Screensaver*, *Wolf 3D*, *Hexen*, *Heretic*, *Superkarts*, *Mortal Kombat 3* and some other crap games too, such as *Island Casino* and *Ice and Fire*. There's lots of *Doom* as well (natch).

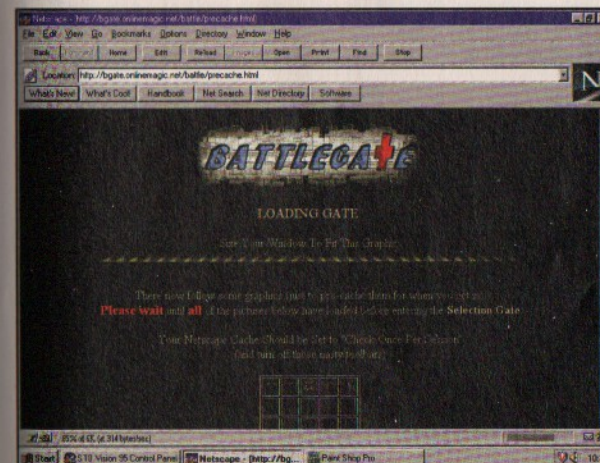
WHAT'S THERE?

⚡ Product section reviews what's available and will even let you use your credit card 'securely' to pay for GT's games over the Internet. Cool Extras has demos, sound and video clips as well as mini sites, including one devoted to *BattleGate*, a weird and extremely dull looking on-line game, a sort of *Battleships* without the thrill factor.
 ⚡ Support pages with FAQs and forums for just about every product (even one for the ghastly *BattleGate*), an e-mail support service and an FTP site for patches, game demos and bug fixes.
 ⚡ Subscribe to Flash Bulletin service via e-mail if you really want to stay up to date on the latest happenings at GT.

VERDICT: 60%

Marked down for *BattleGate*.

(Below) Turn back immediately if you see this page.



SALES CURVE INTERACTIVE

<http://www.sci.ro.uk>

One site which rather excellently diverted from the norm was the SCI homepage. Dedicated entirely to their newest game *Gender Wars*, the whole design of the page takes you into the advertising, which is written and designed like the imaginary yet confrontational propaganda of a gender war. You choose your side - male or female - and then the site branches off into the two camps. Blokes, aside from the customary screenshots and QuickTime movies, get links to real-life sex war sites, beer homepages, and pages scribbled by misogynists and the primeval readers of *Loaded*. Girlies get the same paraphernalia, plus hyperlinks to feminist homepages, and other such female stuff. Good looking and entertaining. Worth a look.

VERDICT: 90%

Tops - we'd definitely download it!



ID SOFTWARE

<http://www.idsoftware.com/>

LOOKS

Very very nice looking, with a bit of Netscape 2.0 enhanced guffery and copious use of the new 'Quake' font. It's a bit on the large size though, with some pages weighing in at well over 100k, although a less shiny text-only version is available.

POPULARITY

You probably wouldn't be called a 'dildo' if you thought that this site was popular, but as far as we could see the sheer number of digits involved is not apparent on any of the pages.

LAST UPDATED

Er, recently. But not that recently.

WHO ARE THEY?

Er, hello? HELLO? If you don't know by now who they are you really are being a dildo.

WHAT'S THERE?

Hate to say it, but it's quite disappointing actually. The majority of the content from the file archives has been mirrored a quillion times on a zillion other sites, making a visit to this homepage for downloading rather silly and somewhat unnecessary. Unfortunately, most of the cool and really exciting sounding bits - namely *DeathMatch Maker* and *Shopping Maul* (ho-ho) - are currently 'under construction', which means that you have to content yourselves with the pedestrian bits.

There's a rather sketchy set of bios for the iD team which includes useless snippets of information such as the fact that Jay Wilbur drives a Ducatti, and that Adrian Carmack ate at Taco Bell constantly for three months.

Cool sound departments - Hot New Stuff & Killer Games - lead to bare press releases and the odd nouvelle screenshot.

VERDICT: 60%

Good looking but content-free. It will definitely blossom when *Quake* finally gets going.

VIRGIN INTERACTIVE

<http://www.vie.co.uk/vie/>

LOOKS

Functional and marginally stylish. Lots of scanned game logos and that funny plastic typeface everybody's using these days. Nice 'watermarked' white pages.

POPULARITY

Not a clue. Probably not stunningly high since this is a UK company.

LAST UPDATED

Dunno. Seemed to be quite recent but there was no way of telling.

WHO ARE THEY?

Virgin Interactive, games playing arm of the Branson group (whose other interests include airlines and pickle). Responsible for distributing to us *Doom 2* and *Command & Conquer* (cool). Rather unfortunately, their site is a little tricky to find. A search for 'virgin interactive' produced (this is all true!): Virgin Models, Virgin Girls Cum Cum Cum, Why Virgins Are Better, Asian Virgins, Interact With Our CUSeeMe Virgins, The Church of The Virgin Mary, Virginity: The Sacred Chasuble, Amateur Virgins, and then - in very small letters - Virgin Interactive UK. (Incidentally, we reckon we deserve recognition for the self-discipline we displayed in not ignoring the Virgin Interactive site and browsing through the rest of the list instead.)

WHAT'S THERE?

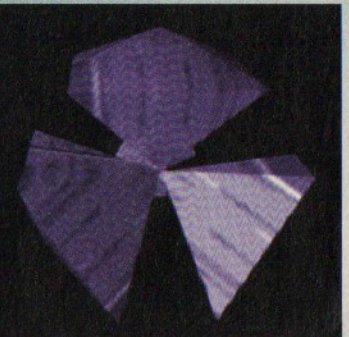
The usual stuff. Screenshots and info on their up'n'coming games, especially the latest Capcom signings. Interestingly, this seemed to be one of the only games sites to support the Internet Blue Ribbon campaign - a protest against the Communications Indecency Act currently been poked through the US Congress (see last issue's *On-Line*). All the blurb on the page was quasi-official press release toned, but they did list all the customer support e-mail addresses. Z

VERDICT: 70%

Good. Functional. Interesting. Plus one mark for supporting Blue Ribbon.

The Guide Bot

(DESCENT 2)
 What's the point of having something that's supposed to go off and find secret passages and stuff, if it doesn't also tell you that, although there's a nice little weapons cache hidden in a cosy nook, there are also 5000 homicidal robot-killing machines having an old-school re-union right next to it? None.



Hate

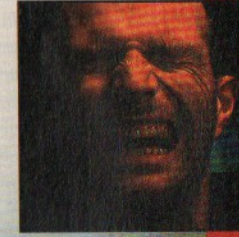
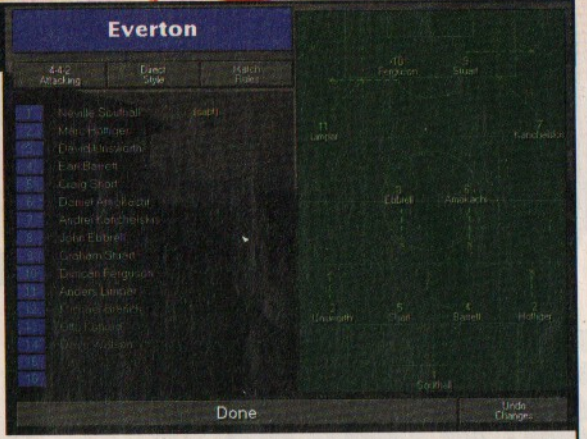


The Goalkeeper in Actua Soccer

(ACTUA SOCCER)
 Who, as everyone knows, plays like a quadriplegic with impaired vision, who's been injected with opiates by one foreign betting syndicate and is taking bribes from another, has lost the will to live and sees little point in the ultimately pointless pursuit of football in general and goalkeeping in particular, given the state of the world.

Everton

(CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 2)
 Everyone knows that Olly, the programmer of CM2, is an Everton fan, but nobody knows why he felt the need to cheat for them when he made the game, boosting their hidden ratings so that they win things every year, do well in Europe (snork) and have Anders Limpar voted European Footballer of the Year even after he's transferred to a team in Brazil. This, frankly, is almost as sad and pathetic as supporting Everton in the first place, and extremely annoying after a while. Especially when you can't sign a decent player because Everton always whip in at the last minute and nick them, no matter what financial incentives you offer, and how unlikely the player is to even get a game with the Scouse also-rans. Or when they seem to spend their time looking over your shoulder at your shortlist, and buying players on it even when they're "Unavailable" to you. If you control a lower division side, and are thereby reduced to grubbing around among the flotsam and jetsam of the Endsleigh League, this role seems to fall to Sunderland. (The reason why this should be has foxed the most powerful minds in the universe.)



Sol 'The Ponce' Cutter

(BURN:CYCLE)
 He's a ponce and Thea (Zone Production Ed) really, really loves him. We don't know anything about him and we don't care - all we know is we hate him, because she loves him. (Note to the creators of Space Quest: this is an in-joke, and thus not funny.)

Aerosmith

(QUEST FOR FAME)
 We hate them. We hate them so much it makes the milk in our tea turn to cottage cheese. They have no right to be alive in the first place, never mind starring in a sodding computer game. Conclusive proof that the wrong people always survive the old rock 'n' roll druggie lifestyle.



Roger Wilco

(SPACE QUEST)
 Now Roger Wilco is one helluva guy - in the worst possible sense. As you can see from the picture, he's totally gormless. As if that's not bad enough, he ponces about in a poxy space suit, is thick as shit, makes in-jokes in a stupid and thoroughly irritating voice, and you wouldn't want to be him in a million trillion years. If you had a choice between reincarnation as a viral infection on a dung beetle's mouth, or Roger Wilco, you'd go for the viral infection every time. He's simply unbearable. The last time I saw an arsehole this big, there was a diverticulitis outbreak in the elephant house at London Zoo (I'm not entirely sure I really wanted to know that! - Ed).



game: yourself. When you're creeping around in a dark monster-infested room in *Doom* or *Duke Nukem 3D*, the reason you jump at the slightest noise isn't because of the character you're nominally controlling - it's your own bony ass you're worried about. And that's because you love yourself. If you start to love yourself too much, of course, you start to talk to everyone else about how good you are at computer games and get impossibly arrogant. But that's a different story altogether.

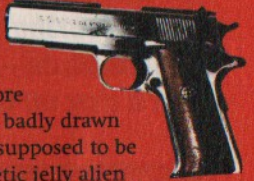
Who we hate

There are also people it's easy to hate. Among the more prominent ones are badly drawn characters who are supposed to be scary, like the pathetic jelly alien scum in *X-COM*, for example - how's a bit of reconstituted beef dripping supposed to frighten anyone, never mind fire at them? We hate people who talk too much, too, like the bloke in the lift in *Normality*, and the entire cast of both *Phantasmagoria* and *Hell*, who make the doddering bores in *Last of the Summer Wine* look like a mad biker crew. We hate 'cool' characters, people who are supposed to be hip but clearly aren't. It's a scientifically-proven fact that the more cool a games designer tries to make a character, the more objectionable they are to the average normal human being: this is because programmers themselves are such misfits that their idea of cool is anything in a head-band, an acrylic pullover and purple cowboy boots. 'Rad' characters are even worse: look at the main geezer from *Normality*, or the chick who slags you off between races in *Extreme Games* - clearly two geeks who were bullied at school.

There are two exceptions in the trying-to-be-cool stakes: Ben from *Full Throttle*, who's cool because he has a voice that makes Lee Marvin sound like John Inman, and Tim Curry as Gabriel Knight because... er, well, he wears black clothes so Chris likes him.

We hate William Shatner in *TekWar* (because he's really old, really fat and his acting is as shite as ever)... and come to think of it we hate him in *Star Trek...* and *TJ Hooker...* and everything else. We hate the peasants in *Warcraft 2*, because they're so stupid they make Ann Diamond look like a *Krypton Factor* winner. Tell them to go off and chop down trees right next to where you've painstakingly built a lumber mill, and they walk to Norway.

We hate sports commentators - Andy Gray in *Striker* in particular. Let's face it, getting him to do the commentary is about as advisable as getting Helen Keller to test jet fighters. We hate John 'Aaaaohhh!' Motson in *FIFA*, and we hate sarcastic commentators who slag off your performance when they really ought to be attacking the game designer with a machete. Z



TROUBLESHOOTER

Wouldn't you know it... of all the gin joints, in all the world, that miserable sonofabitch Boggit has to walk into ours. He's the genuine article, and if you're looking for the best adventure game advice and cheat codes accept no substitute - that is unless you'd prefer to give our lovely TruePlayer Tips guy a ring on Wednesday afternoons... Play it again Boggit.

Write to PC Zone

If you have a query concerning a role-playing game or adventure, or you have a hot tip or a cheat to share, then write to:

The Boggit
29 Blackthorn Drive
Larkfield, Aylesford
KENT ME20 6NR

TruePlayer™ Tips

Telephone
0171 917 7698

Ask for TruePlayer™ Tips from 2.00pm to 6.00pm on Wednesdays only

Just ring this number and ask for all the latest 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 to oblige you.

These hacks are copyright of Felden Productions 1996. If you try to pass them off as your own to another magazine, we'll get you, we will.

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READ THIS!

Because our tips line is so busy, and because the man who answers the phone is only a mere mortal, we need you to prove that you have actually bought the magazine and that you're not just a freeloading blagger. To do this, our tips geezer will ask you for a password before you request your tip. This month's password is... "You can't fit quicker than a Kwik-Fit fitter".



Noctropolis

Call me a saddo, but I'm buggered if I can get anywhere in an adventure game: even if I am the Formula 1 World Champion, and I've defeated the Hordes of Hell. Could your Royal Sluggness help me overcome my deficiencies in this area?

Noctropolis is a damn fine game, but what do I do after the Bornick mansion?

Name and address withheld by request
Well, Dave Jones of Fearon Rd, Hastings, East Sussex, there isn't any obvious result from speaking with the lady of the house, but once you've done it return to the mausoleum and re-enter the room with the coffin. Move the body nearest the door to reveal a key - use it to open the coffin, then climb inside.

And while we're on Noctropolis I'll answer another reader's query regarding the observatory. Avoiding the security lights is awkward when you're trying to get to the platform in the centre, but attempting to get out again can be a real bastard. Save the game at this point - when you reload it you'll find you've been moved to the exit you were trying to get to.

Prisoner Of Ice

I'm in Edward's Base. I've opened the safe at Sear's office and taken everything from it. I drew the pentagram, and I've got Hamsun's note-papers with me. I found a stone at the middle of the map of the South Pole, but couldn't extract it. I can see Quincy's card file behind the prisoner, but I can't get it as he eats me each time I get close. Now what?

Naytham Sabru, Cairo
Here are a few things which should move you on a little further. Once you have opened the safe you must look at the table. Use the



photo and rubber stamp on the paper. Use the lift to the basement. Go into the central room and pick up the tin. Talk to Miss Trend to make an appointment to see the doctor. When you see him tell him that Ryan has a stomach ache, and show him the tin. When he leaves pick up the manual from the table and give it to Finlayson. To get into the file room you must pick up the fire extinguisher, use the cigarette on the bin, then hide in the dark corner beside the wooden shelf.

Ultima Underworld II

I've got as far as the ethereal void. I've dispelled all of the Guardian's magic in all of the other realms of existence, but I can't get into the shrine of spirituality. I get as far as the pyramid, but no matter what I do I either get transported back to the beginning of the realm or die. I'm beginning to regret buying this game!

Steve Baker, Somerset
Hmmm... It took me bloody ages to clean up your letter - I bet your Grammy doesn't know you swear like that!

This one's confusing. Here's a shortened version of what the official guide says...

There are several different paths which you must complete to gain access to the pyramid. Each time you solve a path you must climb up and down the pyramid to change the entire colour to that of the path you've just completed. Once you've done that a new coloured path will open - I know there are at least red, purple, blue and yellow ones.

Finally, there's a golden path which must be completed. Here's a tip for this section: beside the etched brass wall, cast the 'fly' spell. Assuming that facing the wall is north, fly west as far as you can then repeat for south. Fly east, then save your game as you are about to enter a fight. Once the gold path is complete you will be able to enter the shrine. Once inside, get the blackrock gem and use the amethyst rod.

Day Of The Tentacle

So far I haven't had too much hassle - except at the bit where I have to dry out the defrosted hamster. I also don't know how to get the dime off the floor which is stuck down with chewing gum.

Mark Anderson, Bridlington

Defrosting the hamster involves the dodgy use of the microwave (don't try this at home kids!). You'll also need to get the miniature sweater from the tumble drier to slip on the poor thing to keep him warm. To move the dime swap a set of keys with a shady character in the street who is carrying a crowbar.

In reply to another reader who asked, "How do I get my mummy to laugh?" try using the box o' laffs and the dentures on her. (On the other hand, if you told her that you were leaving home she might brighten up considerably. And your Dad would be over the bloody moon!)

Ultima VIII

I know that I must make the Golem open some great big doors, but the problem is that I can't find the one which I think is back in the catacombs.

Also, whereabouts in Tenebrae is the hut holding the slayer?

Patrick Dinneen, South Africa

Well, I'm not sure how to direct you back inside the catacombs because I don't know where you are. However, I can tell you that to find the door you must travel from the pit of death, left, south, left and then down the ledge. You create the Golem by using the 'Create Golem' spell on the mud in the top-right of the screen.

The slayer is found on the east side of Tenebrae, south from the executioner's hood, and under the gem.

Sam and Max

I've reached the vortex but don't know what to do now. I've got most of the objects, none of which seem to be of any use. What are the toilet keys and the binoculars for?

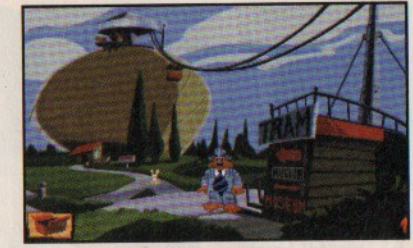
S Aherne, Ireland

Ah... top game! A crazy rabbit performing mindless acts of violence on totally innocent bystanders - cool! Anyway... at the vortex you should walk through the curtain at the back, talk to the assistant and get the tuft of hair. Return to the corridor and note the colours of the doors. Enter the mirror and turn on the magnets to create the colours of the doors - any child will tell you that if you mix red and blue you'll get purple. Each time you create the correct colour you'll be able to unlock the corresponding door. Behind the last one you'll find someone who wants a mood ring; providing you have the golf ball retriever you'll be able to get the ring from the ball of twine.

I can't believe you've lived this long without learning what a toilet key and binoculars are for! In fact it's not the key you want, but the large metal rasp file which is attached to it; later in the game a Yeti will be only too pleased to receive it. As for the binoculars, you'll need them in the restaurant on top of the ball of twine to find the frog rock.

And finally, just for Steve Wardale, here's how to get into Trixie's caravan: in the tunnel of love, get your torch out (won from the rat game) plus the lens (found in the rat tent) just before you reach the fuse box. Use Max on the box to stop everything. Pull the fat man's moustache to open a secret door - your answer lies within.

(Right) Visit the giant ball of twine with Sam and Max...



(Far right) ...or a prehistoric jungle with Jurassic flesh eaters ready to pull you off your C&C NOD bike and bite your joystick off.



Descent 2

Here are more cheat codes than you can point a sharp stick at, and it's all thanks to Darren Dhanda from Glasgow.

- ZINGERMANS God mode
- MOTHERLODE Weapons
- CURRYGOAT Key cards
- ERICAANNE Missiles bounce off walls
- WHAMMAZOOM Level select
- JOSSHUAAKIRA Full map
- EATANGELONS Homing weapons
- BITTERSWEET Acid
- ALIFALAFEEL Accessories

Command & Conquer: The Covert Operations

The following information has got to be the strangest I've ever encountered. If you have the add-on disk containing the extra missions for Command & Conquer you may be flabbergasted to know that there are even more missions hidden on it than you thought. Not only that, but they take place in Jurassic Park!

Raptors, Tyrannosaurus (and other monsters too difficult to spell) are roaming the battlefield. I kid you not, they're out there.

To access the prehistoric levels, begin the game by typing: <C&C FUNPARK>. From the menu select "Start New Game". Choose either side to play.

MechWarrior 2

If you look in the directory \MEK you'll find files which hold each of the variant Mechs that you've created during gameplay. It's possible to rename such files to that of a different kind of Mech and to give it more capacity and tonnage.

Here's an example: Create a Dire Wolf Mech (file name DRWOUSR.MEK - DRW99USR.MEK) which will have a capacity of 100 tons. You can now rename this file to a Firemoth type (FRMOUSR.MEK - FRM99USR.MEK) which will give you a 100 ton Firemoth. This means you'll have far better armament,

but you'll retain a high underweight bonus which will advance you in career honour. Also, with this cheat you can use what is a 100 ton Mech in a 50 ton maximum mission by selecting a small Mech. The Mech will not move as fast, as they take on the engine values of the larger machines, but they gain in extra armour and heat sink values.

HANDY TIP

Place ammo in your right arm, as this one seems to get shot at less, which means less risk of an ammo explosion. (Submitted by Andrew Fort, Tyne and Wear)

Warcraft II

I loved this game, and no doubt when the added levels become available I'll be hooked on it again. Of course I don't want to know any cheats or it will spoil things for me, so I'll type the next few lines with my eyes closed...

Okey, mi eyyes ar no clod, so her we goo.

DECK ME OUT

Upgrades all your technology
ON SCREEN
Reveals the map
EVERY LITTLE THING SHE DOES
Grants full magic capabilities
GLITTERING PRIZES
Gives all players everything!

Sensible World Of Soccer

I'm not sure about this cheat - it seems just too good to be true...

Load Norwich.
Change both kits to all red.
Change team coach to <SATAN>.
Change team name to <LOST SOULS>.
Give all of the players white faces and black hair... And now try and play against them.

Personally, watching 22 men kicking a bag of wind around a field is not my idea of fun, so anything that gets this game over with quickly is well worth advertising. Have a go at this:

debug
ncheat.car
1
e d6dc ff ff 0f
w
q

Now you'll have enough money to buy a whole squad of teenage cheerleaders with frilly knickers which you can watch instead. (Submitted by Ryan Joyce of Corsham, who's in for a severe kicking if this is a wind-up!)

If you feel naked without a zillion gold pieces and weedy unless you've got 100% health, read on to find out how to become a superhero the easy way...

Kingdom O'Magic

(Below) Choose whether you want to play as Shah-Ron, a babe from the planet Comely, or Thidney, a 7-foot lizard who can sustain a lot of blows to the head with virtually no noticeable change to his mental ability. He also sounds like Victor Meldrew on a bad day!

Fire-breathing dragons, elves, trolls, girls with unfeasibly big knockers – Kingdom O'Magic has it all. What more could a hardened adventurer want? Well, we thought a complete solution might be handy, so we crammed all we had into a leather jockstrap and gave this one a good going over.

THERE ARE ONLY A COUPLE OF differences between the quests whether you're playing Thidney or Shah-Ron – ever helpful, we'll let you know when they occur.

The Traditional Quest

Go to the costume shop and hire a '70s disco outfit. Wait until dark and then enter the disco. When the dancer has finished, attempt to speak to him. If you're playing as Thidney he will drop a talisman and 'leggit'; otherwise he will go outside with you and you can take the talisman. Use the talisman in the disco to win the golden boots. Find the wandering dwarf called Goliath and talk to him until he takes your prize. He will go off to war, but when he returns talk to him again to be shown the secret entrance to the Dwarvish Halls.

Now go to the wig shop and get the special offer toupee: this will allow you to enter the hair salon and pick up the holiday brochure. Speak to Granny until she leaves to make tea, allowing you to grab the child in the cage.

Take the ferry across to Baker's Island, and use the child to eat the attacking gingerbread men. Enter the hall and take the box of donuts. Go to the structurally

insecure pier and let the policeman eat the donuts – he'll then fall into the water, leaving his sunglasses behind for you to pick up. Leave the town and head for the Gorgon's Valley. At the entrance to the valley Thidney must pick up the book of spells which lies beside the statue of the man with the binoculars. At the entrance to the Gorgon's cave pick up the sword. (Shah-Ron must also pick up the axe which lies nearby.) Enter the Gorgon's cave and your character will automatically use the sunglasses to save themselves. Use the cooker to gain the action man doll, and pick up the paper bag from the floor.

Enter the Backwoods and examine the pair of smoking shoes to receive a security card. Grab the mobile phone and the list of instructions lying nearby.

Follow the trail west to move through De Lorean, then Eastwood to Minar Tragedy. (Note: As you make your way through the snowy Kalibre Pass you will automatically lose hit points.)

Enter the inn in Minar Tragedy and talk to the suspicious character; he will invite you to play a Pacman game, which you must win to be given your own little yellow pacman. Go next door to the baker's shop



and use the sword in the vat o' dough. The baker will cover the sword in bread and leave it in the french stick basket. Take the french stick and head for the palace at the other end of the street. Speak with the guards to gain entrance to the palace. Go to the throne room, use the sword to kill the high steward and clean up his remains with the paper bag. Place the action man on the small throne and leave.

Find and enter the trolls' cave, then use the holiday brochure to turn them to stone. Pick up the wedding/invitation list. Walk along the Great Eastern Road until you find the abandoned car, which you must then examine to find the crank handle. Continue along the road to the ferry, then use the crank handle to move the ferry across the river. Go north from the ferry to find Timmy the dog and have a few words with him. (He won't say much, but you'll get the message that he isn't going to let you enter the Barrows.)

Go south to the Gates of Edam, which makes a day pass. Return to the ferry and read the notice on the pole. Return to Timmy and take the drugged meat from his bowl. Go to the Gates of Edam and use the meat to get inside. Enter the inn and go upstairs, where you'll encounter a cat guarding a white sheet – the problem here is that you have to kill it (which includes all of its nine lives), but you can't do this without resting in-between and regaining your strength. Fight the cat until you are almost dead yourself, then go downstairs and pay for a room for the night; sufficiently restored you can return and finish the bastard off. Take the sheet, then enter the honeymoon suite and examine the bed. Having obtained the mirror, go downstairs and take the visitors' book.

Go to the Barrows burial chamber, wear the sheet, and hear the ghost speak. Leave the chamber, then return to be given a wedding gift.

Head for the entrance of Rivendull near the cross-roads of the Eastern Road and speak with the mafia elf

to get inside. Before having a chat with Don Elrondo, save the game. Speak with the Don and get the hamster which he's using as a paper shredder.

Return to the eastern side of the map, once again using the Kalibre Pass. As you pass through, find and pick up the piece of ice lying on the path. Go to the clearing in De Lorean and enter the tree house to find the king and queen. Speak with the king, who will tell you that he wants some ice: use it on him to be given a wrench. (Note: The ice will melt if you take too long.) Talk to the queen to blackmail her into giving you a wonderful bracelet – which she will then change for a bottle of bleach!

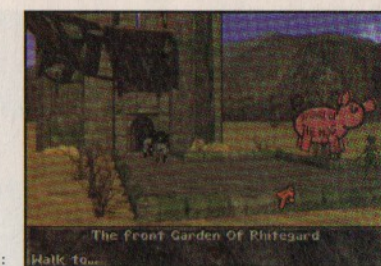
Wander the map until you find Terry the wizard, who will then give you a microphone in exchange for the yellow pacman. Return to Flake Town and speak with the Elvis statue outside the disco. In exchange for the microphone, Elvis will give you a rubber plunger. The plunger and the bleach can be used on the blocked toilet at the back of the Moronica tavern, or on the very public toilet. In either case this will clear the

(Left) Recover your strength at any of the welcoming inns scattered around the Kingdom.

(Right) Rhitegard Tower, the home of Marshghast the incontinent wizard.

(Below) The term 'public toilet' is taken quite literally in the Kingdom...

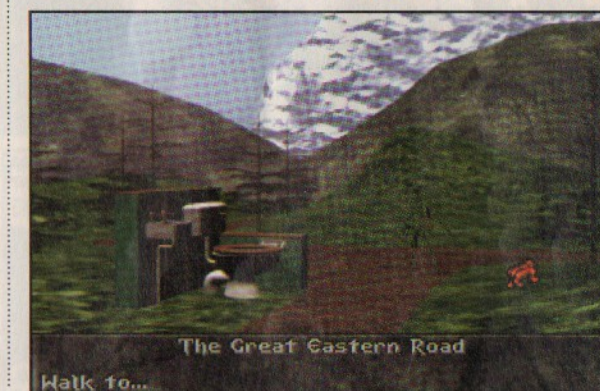
(Bottom) If you can find Terry the wizard a friend he might just come up with the goods you're after.



Sewer Lake which lets you travel between the east and west side of the map without using the Kalibre Pass – useful, but not essential. (Note: The eastbound trip requires you to use the access card on the crack in the door of the western entrance to Moronica.)

Use the hamster on the letterbox to get inside the Big Dark Tower O' Backwoods. Now go upstairs, get the palantine, and use the empty box on it. Examine the 'for sale' sign outside to find the telephone number. Use the mobile phone to ring the number, whereby you'll discover information about the Tower of Rhitegard.

Go to Rhitegard and enter the tower. Move around until you stand on a tile which creates a staircase. Stand near the valve at the bottom of the stairs and use the palantine. By watching you will see when the wizard upstairs enters the toilet; if you get the timing right you





The 'Hung Horse' Tavern

Walk to...

can use the wrench on the valve to blast him through the roof. Go upstairs and pick up the light sabre, then continue to the roof to get the sheep.

Return to Flake Town and get the sheep shorn in the hair salon. Take the wool to Granny who will knit you some woolly underpants. Go to the woods and give the underpants to any wandering elf, who will then reward you with a gift voucher. Take the gift voucher to the mafia guard at Rivendull to have a contract taken out on the dragon.

The Magnificent 7-11 Quest

What quickly becomes obvious with the two subsequent quests is that they are simply the Traditional Quest with a few additional tasks - and it's these tasks that we're going to concentrate on in this part of the walkthrough. The object of the quest is to recruit the following characters: Super Gingerbread Hero, Balrog, Elvis Golem, Small Caged Beastie, Conrad the Barbarian, Goliath, and the Tree Bloke.

Go to the Flake Inn toilet and promise Conrad you will fetch him toilet paper. Use the sack beside the side door of the disco to get the parrot from Flake Inn, and give it to the ferryman. Go on the ferry to Baker's Island and talk to the water elemental to power the baker's oven. Pick up the rope and the plans. Take the donuts and use them as before to get the policeman's glasses. Once again win the golden boots and give them to the dwarf to recruit him. Go through exactly the same actions at the Gorgon's Cave as before, collecting the same objects. Find the cave with the big chasm and tie the rope to the rock - use this on the Balrog to remove his bad tooth and hence recruit him.

Win the Pacman game in Minor Tragedy, and hide the sword in bread from the baker's next door. Kill the high steward as before, then find Terry the

(Above) If you're not 'banged-up', and you want to be, you'll find the answer to your problems in the wine cellar beneath the inn in Edam village.

wizard to swap the Pacman for the microphone, which will recruit the Elvis statue. With your health at a maximum, go to the troll's cave and get the wedding list. With no brochure to assist you you'll need nimble footwork to get in and out alive.

From the inn at Edam you must get the hand mirror, the white sheet and the duvet, then find the trap door in the bar below which leads to the cellar. Pick up the cork. Get the wedding gift from the Barrows as before.

Get the hamster from the Godfather, and the wrench and the toilet cleaner from the king and queen as before. Attack the three dwarfs nearby; while they are all squashed you'll be able to pick up the tubbaware. Obtain the palantane from the tower and use it at Rwhitegard as before. From the Tower of Rwhitegard get the sabre o' light and the jar o' lightning. Recruit the beastie from the cage on the roof.

Go to the top o' the falls and use the duvet and the cork on the barrel. Go over the falls in the barrel and use the tubbaware to get the grail, which you



We've got a cow, a lovely cow!

(Right) Giant spiders can be a knotty problem, but they'll look quite different after you've taken a flamethrower to them.

must give to King Afro to get the toilet paper. Give the paper to Conrad. Use the jar o' lightning outside the baker's house. Use the rolling pin and then the gingerbread cutter on the dough. Go to the balcony and use the switch to activate the gingerbread man. Find the wandering Tree Bloke and recruit him.

The Bizarre and Slightly Twisted Quest

Get the wig from the wig shop, then pick up the brochure and hairspray. Return to the salon and get the spare hair. Trade the hair at the wig shop for the sign. In the inn get the parrot using the sack, and trade the sign for a lighter. Use the lighter and the hairspray to make a flamethrower.

Go to Baker's Island and get the donuts, and then go and obtain the policeman's glasses. (Note: there is a Book of Knots to be picked up here.) Go through the Gorgon's Cave routine.

Go to the spider's web and use the flamethrower to create giant raisins - euuggghh!!! Use the Book of Knots to get the cow.

Find wandering Jack and trade the cow for magic beans. Find a bale of hay in the caves of Moronica and feed the horse in Dimwit Dale to create manure. Plant the beans to create the beanstalk. Enter the giant's kitchen and trade the raisins for a giant candle.

Kill the high steward to get a small key. Perform exactly the same actions as before to get the hamster, followed by the previous routine in the Dark Tower and Rwhitegard. In Rwhitegard get the sabre o' light and the stilt plans.

Go to the Dwarven Halls and give the stilt plans to the dwarf. Take the asbestos suit. In the field outside Minar Tragedy you'll find the eye-on-a-stick. Use the small key on the elevator and go to the middle floor. Use the side entrance to the watch-tower, and use the eye to fool the retina scanner. Go to the first floor and wear the orc clothes. Go to the Dark Tower and ring the doorbell three times. Use the giant candle to light the lamp. Z



CONTINUED NEXT MONTH...

Welcome to the all-singing, all-dancing PC Zone Buyers Guide, which is to gaming what the BR timetable is to trainspotters. You name it, it's here - painstakingly compiled by our very own game driver.

Myat

(67) Electronic Arts - Adventure £44.99

Surreal and atmospheric, if not realistic.

Pacific Strife

(80: Recommended) Electronic Arts - Flight Sim £49.99

Miles better than Strike Commander but requires a state-of-the-art minipc.

Pagan: Willem VII

(78) Electronic Arts - Role-Playing Game £44.99

Without doubt a love/hate relationship for Ultima purists.

Avantoff

(78) US Gold - Role-Playing Game £45.99

A playable and accessible RPG.

Red Hall

(80) Cyberdreams - Adventure £39.99

The graphics are poor and the control system is dire. Avoid it.

RedShift

(95: Classic) Maris Multimedia Ltd - General Interest £39.00

A space-themed game which will be hard to beat.

Sabra Team

(60) Krisalis - Strategy £29.99

This has all been done before, and done much better as well.

Snowdowner

(70) Electronic Arts - Role-Playing Game £39.99

Considerable enhancements for CD but the gameplay remains the same.

Spacewalk

(70) Reactor/Ubisoft - Adventure £44.99

Very slick, very polished. The gameplay's a bit limited but it's fun all the same.

TFX

(80: Recommended) Ocean - Simulation £44.99

Great game with totally superb/fun bells and whistles.

The Patriotic (CD)

(70) Daze Marketing - Strategy £39.99

A good game on disk, slightly better on CD.

Buzz Aldrin's Race Into Space (CD)

(43) Mirage - Role-Playing Game £44.99

Don't ask your friends to play this if you want to keep them.

Unnecessary Roughness

(66) Accolade - Sport £39.99

Best described as 'all right'. It's as good as most American foxy sims.

Winning DC Soccer

(85: Recommended) Supervision - Flight Sim Add-On £39.99

One of the best flight sim add-ons to date.

Blizzard

(75) MicroProse - Role-Playing Game £39.99

Hindered by outdated implementation, but still well worth a look.

Carriers At War II

(63) Electronic Arts - Strategy £44.99

For die-hard strategy aficionados.

Darkzone

(90: Classic) Cyberdreams - Adventure £44.99

If you have a taste for the macabre, you'll never forget the Durksed affair.

Diggers

(40) Millennium - Puzzle Game £34.99

Mind-numbingly tedious.

Disney Animation Studio

(75) Infogrames - General Interest £99.99

More serious approach with superb animations that you can't use!

DragonSphere

(69) MicroProse - Adventure £39.99

A beautiful adventure game that won't tax your brain too heavily.

Dragon's Lair

(67) Elite Systems - Adventure £39.99

An interactive cartoon that's more 'cartoon' than 'interactive'.

Eye Of The Storm

(40) Rebellion - Space/Strategy £39.99

Very futuristic, very elite and very, very crap.

Great Naval Battle 2

(86: Recommended) US Gold - Simulation £45.99

SSI cruises easily to the head of the fleet with this simply stunning sim.

Hand Of Fate (CD)

(78) Virgin Interactive Entertainment - Adventure £49.99

Good game, shame about the conversion. In this case, more equals less.

Hanna-Barbera Animation Workshop

(75) Empire - General Interest £49.99

Tries to make everything fun and encourages you to try out other methods of animation.

Jack Nicklaus Signature Edition

(85: Recommended) Accolade - Sport £19.99

A good golf game at an amazing price.

Jenny Holman's Whirlwind Soccer

(80: Recommended) Spectrum Holobyte - Flight Sim

As that well known saying goes: 'If you like Falcon 3, you'll just love Hernet.'

Lucky's Casino Adventure

(60) Mirage - Card Game £44.99

Challenging, fun, totally addictive but a bit pricey.

Lure Of The Temptress

(55) Hit Squad - Adventure £14.99

Old and fading.

Power Game 2 (CD)

(70) Activision - Simulation £29.99

Worth looking at if you don't have the hardware to run the latest sim.

Robinson's Requiem

(85: Recommended) Daze Marketing - RPG £39.99

Highly original, addictive 'survival sim' which, unfortunately, has some annoying bits.

Sam And Max Hit The Road

(93: Classic) US Gold - Adventure £45.99

Brilliantly original, a highly humorous jaunt.

Sim City Classic

(70) Hit Squad - Strategy £16.99

Still a great game but check out Sim City 2000 first.

Sim City Enhanced

(82: Recommended) Interplay - Strategy £49.99

Sim City's an excellent game but 50 quid is a bit steep for a few enhancements.

Sleepwalker

(45) Hit Squad - Platform Game £9.99

Third-rate platformer. Stay well away from it.

Space Hulk

(87: Recommended) Electronic Arts - Strategy £39.99

Still a tremendous game, but not as good as the disk-based version.

Summer Challenge & Winter Challenge

(80: Recommended) Accolade - Sport £19.99

Good compilation, great value.

The Horde

(87: Recommended) US Gold - Strategy/ArCADE Game £44.99

Not an original concept but extremely well implemented.

The Rock 'n' Roll Years - The '50s

(70) Supervision - General Interest £24.99

Handy for 50's music lovers or as a reference - but we doubt if it'll get you rockin' round the clock.

The Settlers

(89: Recommended) Blue Byte - Strategy £39.99

A damn fine, engrossing game.

Theatre Of War

(70) Hit Squad - Strategy £12.99

Excellent strategy game and it looks cool, too.

UFO

(93: Classic) MicroProse - Strategy £44.99

Our Chris's favourite, this is an incredibly addictive strategy game.

Wembley Rugby League

(66) Audioengine - Sport £29.99

This manages to be quite an improvement on previous rugby games.

Wolfpack

(60) Optima - Strategy £29.99

Disappointingly average.

World Cup Challenge

(48) Winsport - Sport £29.99

Disappointing, absurdly RM-hungry and limited in its playing life.

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(Left) X-Wing: groove on down to the old 'destroy the Death Star, save the croissant-haired princess' tune.

Empire Soccer
(57) Empire - Sport £29.99
Let down by small viewing area, unintelligent player reactions and poor scrolling.

Good To Firm
(50) New Era Software - Sport £29.99
Horse-racing fanatics might get something out of it, but the experience will pall.

International Tennis Open
(88: Recommended) Phillips Interactive Media - Sport £44.99
Definitely the new number one seed in the field of PC tennis simulations.

Jack Nicklaus (CD)
(78) Accolade - Sport £16.99
A perfectly serviceable golf game with a good course editor tacked on. Wait for me while I put my golfing shoes on...

Newsweek 3 Globocop (CD)
(0) Mindscape - General Interest £39.99
The most expensive beer mat in the world.

Overlord
(85: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment - Simulation £39.99
An old idea made new with some interesting tweaks.

Pinball Dreams 2
(70) 21st Century Entertainment - Pinball £19.99
Not bad at all. There's plenty for pinball wizards to get their flippers into.

Shanghai II: Dragon's Eye
(88: Recommended) Activision - Puzzle Game £29.99
Puzzles galore in this excellent addition to the rather mediocre range of games currently available for Windows.

Sherlock Holmes - The Case Of The Serrated Scalpel
(48) Electronic Arts - Adventure £49.99
Elementary, my dear Watson... and that's the problem.

Simon The Sorcerer (CD)
(89: Recommended) Adventuresoft UK Ltd - Adventure £44.99
A tricky adventure jaunt boosted by excellent talkie bits.

Syndicate (CD)
(92: Classic) Electronic Arts - Strategy £39.99
What a game. What a bargain.

Tactical Legend
(75) Black Legend - Sport £34.99
An interesting little number with the odd weakness, but several nice ideas.

Theme Park
(93: Classic) Electronic Arts - Strategy £44.99
A highly inventive 'business' sim that's fun, fun, fun. Hip hip hoorah for Bullfrog!

Walls Of Rome
(74) Digital Integration - Strategy £16.99
Good, if thin, fun.

World Cup USA '94
(78) US Gold - Sport £32.99
Good features; difference of opinion over the gameplay.

Zool 2
(82: Recommended) Millennium - Platform £34.99
As they say, if you liked Zool, you'll love this.

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Beneath A Steel Sky (CD)
(72) Virgin Interactive Entertainment - Adventure £39.99
Comic book-style adventure with excellently funny dialogue but lacking any real depth.

D-Day
(40) Impressions - Wargame £39.99
A sluggish, unrealistic and bug-ridden attempt at a wargame without many redeeming features.

FIFA International Soccer
(70) Electronic Arts - Sport £39.99
Looks and sounds great, but lacks gameplay.

Harpoon II
(70) Electronic Arts - Simulation £44.99
Massive, embarrassingly serious sim. Superb detail, occasionally nail-biting, always sloooooow.

Inherit The Earth - Quest For The Orb
(72) US Gold - Adventure £39.99
A well-thought out gentle little brainteaser for those who fancy a 'sensible' game.

International Sensible Soccer
(78) Renegade - Sport £19.99
One of the best on the PC, but still not up to the Amiga version.

Lili Devil (CD)
(88: Recommended) Gremlin Graphics - Adventure £34.99
Excellent, original and addictive.

Metal And Lace: The Battle Of The Robo Babes
(35) Megatech - Beat 'Em Up £39.99
Totally devoid of any entertainment value whatsoever.

On The Ball
(68) Ascon - Sport £34.99
Too many frills, not enough body.

Outpost
(84: Recommended) Sierra On-Line - Strategy £49.99
A superb game. Addictive if you've got the hardware, hell if you haven't.

Shadow Of The Comet (CD)
(88: Recommended) Infogrames - Adventure £39.99
A worthwhile reworking of a great game, but still very idiosyncratic.

Soccer Kid
(30) Krisalis - Platform Game £29.99
If you want happening platform action, then buy something else.

Theatre Of Death
(35) Psygnosis - Arcade/Strategy £34.99
Below average imitation of an above-average game.

TIE Fighter
(94: Classic) Virgin Interactive Entertainment - Space Sim £49.99
Sheer, undiluted quality. Go out and treat yourself to a copy.

Issue 19 - October 1994

74 Wargame Construction Set 2: Tanks!
(90: Classic) SSI - Wargame £39.99
Never mind the 50-ton tanks - this is 50-ton of solid, fire-belching wargame. Absolutely brilliant.

Battle Bugs
(65) Dynamix - Strategy £TBA
A battle game with bugs in it (as opposed to a bugged battle game).

Dark Legions
(85: Recommended) SSI - Strategy £35.99
Wonderfully entertaining animations and game screens with hidden strategic depths.

Heimdall 2
(45) Core - Adventure £39.99
Great game, shame you can't play it.

Hell Cab
(50) Time Warner - Adventure £49.99
It's the same old story. Great graphics, but sadly lacking in gameplay.

IndyCar Racing Expansion Pack
(94: Recommended) Virgin Interactive Entertainment - Driving £17.99
These tracks are better than the original tracks (if you pretend Phoenix doesn't exist).

Ishar III: The Seven Gates Of Infinity
(50) Simarlis - Strategy £39.99
Sum up Ishar III in one word? Avoid. Simple as that. The worst of a bunch.

KGB
(65) Hit Squad - Adventure £14.99
Bargain? Maybe. Boring? Definitely.

Kick Off 3
(55) Anco - Sport £29.99
Nice features, but gameplay isn't up to much.

Manchester United Premier League Champions
(60) Krisalis - Sport £29.99
Sensi revisited (although not as good) with a lot of features thrown in.

Planet Football
(68) Infogrames - Sport £39.99
The World Cup produced a rash of rush releases. This is not one of the best.

Police Quest IV - Open Season
(80: Recommended) Sierra On-Line - Adventure £44.99
Atmospheric and very entertaining. A bit of a let down at the end, though.

Summer Challenge
(73) Hit Squad - Sport £12.99
Not a bad game by sports sim standards and easy to cheat at, but do you really want another sport sim?

Under A Killing Moon (CD)
US Gold - Adventure £59.99
Pigs can fly. Interactive movies do exist. Sort of.

Wing Commander: Armada
(76) Electronic Arts - Flight Sim £44.99
Lots of good ideas stuck together but somehow it doesn't hang quite right.

Issue 20 - November 1994

Allen Legacy
(80: Recommended) Sierra On-Line - Strategy Game £39.99
Space strategy thing which is a bit like Outpost without the pretty bits. Daunting at first, but ultimately very rewarding.

Chaos Engine
(80: Recommended) Renegade - Arcade £32.99
A damned good, multi-direction scrolling, shooty thing with lots of big guns and silly characters.

Colonization
(90: Classic) MicroProse - Strategy £44.99
Try to imagine Civilization with more depth and better graphics. Well done... you've just imagined Colonization.

Cyclemania (CD)
(83: Recommended) Accolade - Arcade Game £39.99
Extremely competent Road Rash 3rd rip-off with lovely digitised backdrops and big motorbikes.

Desert Strike
(78) Gremlin - Arcade £34.99
Conversion of the Mega Drive classic, isometric helicopter, blast 'em up game. The graphics are a bit crap but it's immensely playable.

Doom II
(90: Classic) Virgin Interactive - Arcade Game £49.99
The sequel to one of the best games ever. New graphics, a new gun and brand new monstie-wonsties. Miss it at your peril.

Inferno (CD)
(88: Recommended) Ocean - Space/Sim £44.99
Eagerly awaited game from DID. Lots of big space ships and silly looking aliens. One of the better space combat games.

KA-50 Hokum
(85: Recommended) Virgin - Simulation £39.99
Without a doubt the very best helicopter sim money can buy. Something for the propeller heads (yes, we know you're out there)...

NHL Hockey 95 (CD)
(91: Classic) EA - Sports/Arcade £34.99
A new version of the top-down scrolly, ice hockey game. Basically the same as the original (reviewed issue seven) but with new stats.

PGA 486 (CD)
(91: Classic) Electronic Arts - Sports £44.99
Gorgeous looking, solid playing, tasty little golf game. One of the best on the PC so far.

Pinball Dreams CD
(70) 21st Century - Arcade £39.99
Eight wonderfully designed, smoothly scrolling pinball tables. Why's it on CD? 'Cause there are lots of pointless rendered bits, that's why.

System Shock
(95: Classic) EA/Origin - Role-Playing Game £44.99
Paint-wettingly fantastic, cyberpunk, RPG thing. All hail System Shock, that shalt be king hereafter (at least until System Shock II comes out, that is).

Issue 21 - December 1994

Alone In The Dark 2 CD
(93: Classic) Infogrames - Adventure £44.99
A sequel that is noticeably better than the original and comes with some serious CD enhancements. What a refreshing change.

Dawn Patrol
(80: Recommended) Empire - Flight Sim £44.99
A gorgeous looking svGA WWI flight sim with a bit of a different idea behind it... it's an interactive book, apparently.

Dreamweb
(74) Empire - Role-Playing Game £44.99
Cyberpunk RPG with lots of violence and a shagging scene that has now become infamous.

Ecstatica
(93: Classic) Psygnosis - Adventure £44.99
An utterly brilliant Alone in the Dark-alike with ellipsoid-generated characters and lots of pert buttocks.

FIFA CD
(76) Electronic Arts - Sports £39.99
A smart-looking footy game that just falls short of being an absolute belter.

Little Big Adventure
(93: Classic) Electronic Arts - Adventure Game £44.99
A truly amazing adventure with pretty graphics and weird French gameplay. Gobs-macking.

Magic Carpet
(96: Classic) Electronic Arts - Shoot 'Em Up £44.99
Bloody excellent shoot 'em up - looks brilliant, totally addictive. A must-have.

Project X
(76) Team 17 - Shoot 'Em Up £19.99
A very competent and nicely low-priced little shoot 'em up.

Rise Of The Robots
(88: Recommended) Mirage - Beat 'Em Up £44.99
Possibly the best beat 'em up on the PC so far with some excellent rendered sprites.

Space Simulator
(75) Microsoft - Simulator £39.99
A huge simulation of man's quest for space that is just a little too ambitious for its own good.

Star Crusader
(60) Gametek - Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
Basically this is a poor man's Wing Commander with some nice CD bits.

Transport Tycoon
(94: Classic) MicroProse - Strategy £44.99
One of the best strategy games around and a more than worthy sequel to Railroad Tycoon.

Total Carnage
(74) ICE - Shoot 'Em Up £27.99
Good challenging fun and a more than competent conversion of the original arcade machine.

Issue 22 - January 1995

Aces Of The Deep
(90: Classic) Dynamix/Sierra - Naval Sim £39.99
Graphics, gameplay, sound and atmo combine to make this the best sub game available.

All New World Of Lamplings
(78) Digital Integration - Puzzle Game £39.99
If you like all the other Lemmings games, you'll like this one, too.

Armored Fist (CD)
(86: Recommended) US Gold/Novologic - Simulation £44.99
Comanche on wheels. Er, tracks. You know what we mean.

Creature Shock
(78) Virgin - Adventure Game £49.99
An engrossing, atmospheric 3D adventure game. Great graphics, absorbing levels, but lousy soundtrack.

Cyberwar
(55) SCI - Arcade Adventure £49.99
It looks amazing. The gameplay isn't.

Dark Sun II
(80: Recommended) Mindscape - RPG £44.99
Love it for its brains, not for its looks.

Discworld
(96: Classic) Psygnosis - Adventure Game £49.99
Discworld is possibly the best point-and-click adventure game ever made.

Front Page Sports Baseball
(85: Recommended) Sierra - Sport £44.99
It takes all the best bits from all the best games and ends up being the best.

Klik 'n' Play
(88: Recommended) Europress - Game Designer for Windows £39.99
Neat intuitive, and loads of fun.

Novastorm
(40) Psygnosis - Shoot 'Em Up £44.99
Repeat ad nauseam: 'Pretty graphics doth not a game make.'

Power Drive
(50) US Gold - Racing Game £39.99
Knock off 30 whole points for no two-player mode. Sod off Power Drive.



(Left) Simon The Sorcerer: at last, an adventure game with a sense of humour - albeit a bit Pratchett-esque.

Quarantine
(80: Recommended) Gametek - Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
An excellent blast and it looks good, too.
Retribution
(45) Gremlin Interactive - Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
Not only is it a below average shoot 'em up, it has pretensions too.
US Navy Fighters
(90: Classic) Electronic Arts - Flight Sim £44.99
If it had a multi-player facility, we would've given it 100. But it hasn't, so we won't.
Warcraft
(75) Interplay - Strategy £39.99
Good, simple, addictive strategy game.

Issue 23 - February 1995

Alone In The Dark 3
(95: Classic) Infogrames - Adventure £44.99
The mega-stonkingly weird and wonderful final chapter in the Alone In The Dark trilogy.
Cannon Fodder 2
(74) Virgin Interactive - Arcade/Strategy £34.99
Just more of the same, or is Cannon Fodder 2 a significant improvement? Sensible returns with more 'fun with a gun'.
Commander Blood
(81: Recommended) Mindscape - Adventure Game £44.99
It's French, and guess what? It's weird. Very weird. We try not to get at them for it... but this is just plain mad.
Cyberia
(80: Recommended) Interplay - Adventure/Shoot 'Em Up £49.99

A contender for the 'Best-looking game of 1994' award. Tastier than treacle pudding with lashings of thick custard, and almost certainly better than Rebel Assault.

Dragon Lore
(81: Recommended) Mindscape - Adventure £44.99
Cryo's epic multi-CD graphic adventure finally arrives. Is it just more French weirdness or is it actually a decent game?

Hammer Of The Gods
(77) US Gold - Strategy ETBA
Nordic domination and general Euro-bashing in this simple but addictive strategy war sim from New World Computing.

Kyrandia 3
(87: Recommended) Virgin - Adventure £44.99
Westwood's Fables and Fiends series makes it to number three, and this time you get to play the bad guy!

Lion King
(71) Virgin - Platform Game £29.99
The smash-hit movie turns into a reasonable platform game. PC Zone good tip number one - just pretend your PC is a Mega Drive.

NASCAR Racing
(84: Recommended) Virgin - Racing Sim £44.99
Papyrus follows up IndyCar with the popular American sport of driving round in circles.

Noctropolis
(79) Electronic Arts - Adventure £44.99
For a change EA goes all weird, gothic and horrific in this unusual super-hero adventure.

Ultimate Body Blows
(78) Team 17 - Beat 'Em Up £29.99
An Amiga conversion from Team 17. But don't be put off by that - it's actually quite good.

Voyeur
(40) Interplay - Adventure £39.99
Not as pervy as you might think. Yes, there are suspenders and brassieres in it, but don't buy it hoping for nudity or naughtiness 'cos you won't find any (er well, not much, at least not enough to satisfy the male staff on PC Zone).

Wing Commander III
(62) Electronic Arts - Flight Simulation £59.99
Four million dollars. Luke Skywalker and a well-known porn actress - a potentially interesting situation, if ever there was one.

Issue 24 - March 1995

Aladdin
(70) Virgin - Arcade £29.99
He leaps tall buildings, cuts through baddies with his scimitar and wears pointy slippers. He's Aladdin - who else?

Dark Forces
(95: Classic) LucasArts/Virgin - Action Adventure £54.99
The empire is finally Doom-ed, but is it better than the real thing? We bring you the first review of the game everyone's itching to get their hands on, in a special world exclusive, courtesy of LucasArts and Virgin.

Doom Clones: Head To Head
(55) Merit - Action Adventure £39.99
We put Merit's *Dr Radiaki* up against Elite's *Virtuoso* and run for cover (well, *Doom*, actually).
Hell: A Cyberpunk Thriller
(25) Gametek - Adventure £39.99
It is: it isn't. If it's really this bad then start praying for forgiveness immediately.

Kick Off 3: European Challenge
(70) Anco - Sport £29.99
The last Kick Off was an absolute nightmare. Has Anco finally got it together in Europe?

King's Quest VII
(93: Classic) Sierra - Adventure £44.99
The latest point-and-click extravaganza from the Roberta Williams' school of mushy-wushy, cutesy-wutesyness.

Knights Of Xenia
(10) Megatech - Adventure £49.99
A plentiful lack of beat 'em up action strides onto the PC, courtesy of Megatech. Ouch!

Menzoheranza
(66) Mindscape - Role-Playing Game ETBA
Not a tasty lozenge that promises to clear your stuffy nose and soothe your sore throat, but a rather ordinary role-playing game.

Metaltch: Earthsiege
(87: Recommended) Sierra - Simulation £39.99
Go stomping mad in this spectacular HERO-fest. Just one thing though, why have extravagant HERCS that walk when the terrain is flat?

Realms Of Arkania: Star Trail
(85: Recommended) US Gold - Role-Playing Game £44.99
The sequel to the keenly received *Blade Of Destiny* finally makes it onto CD-ROM. Hip, hip...
SuperKarts
(82: Recommended) Virgin - Action ETBA

The most fun you can have with your bum an inch off the ground, when wearing a crash helmet and clad in brightly-coloured leather.

TIE Fighter: Defender Of The Empire
(73) LucasArts - Space/Action £19.99
Two new missions and a new ship. What ever will they think of next?

Wings Of Glory
(78) Electronic Arts - Flight Sim ETBA
Chocks away as Origin reach for the skies to do battle with the Hun, chaps with 'aches and every other WWI flight sim ever created.

Issue 25 - April 1995

BC Racers
(62) Core Design - Racing Sim £34.99
Best described as a kind of *Chuck Rick* meets *Super Mario Kart*. Unfortunately, the dash of these two mega-games hasn't proven to be that good. Oops.

Big Red Adventure
(70) Core Design - Adventure £39.99
This is the follow up to *Nippon Safe...* argh, keep it away! Hang on a minute, though. *Big Red Adventure* looks like it could be quite good.

Bioforge
(95: Classic) Electronic Arts - Action Adventure £44.99
The first 'real' interactive movie? Or is it just another game that looks like *Alone In The Dark 2*?

Descent
(94: Classic) Interplay - 3D Shoot 'Em Up £44.99
Could this be the game to finally knock *Doom* off the top spot? The fabulous 3D game from Interplay arrives at last.

Heretic
(78) ID/Raven - 3D Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
'Doom-in-lights'. Can a fighting fantasy version of the greatest game of all time, ever, ever, really be better? Er, no.

Iron Assault
(57) Virgin - 3D Shoot 'Em Up £34.99
A distinctly average 'big robot' game joins the ranks of other distinctly average 'big robot' games on the PC.

Legions
(65) Mindscape - Strategy Wargame £34.99
This is definitely one for the Hex-heads, this is. It's in tense, ludicrously strategic and it runs under *Windows*. Eek!

Lost Eden
(76) Virgin - Adventure £34.99
Cryo's dinosaur game finally arrives a year after it was unveiled. It's a bit like *Jurassic Park* meets *Dragon Lore*.

Issue 26 - May 1995

Atari Action Pack
(50) Activision - VCS Atari Compilation £24.99
This compilation includes lots of really ancient Activision Atari VCS games, all for *Windows* and all on one CD. So what's it like? Well, it's like a time machine that takes you somewhere a bit crap!

Cyclones
(78) Mindscape - Adventure £44.99
Yet another *Doom* clone - but not a bad one by any means - from the team that brought us both *Heretic* and *Shadowcaster*.

Football Glory
(60) Kompart - Sports ETBA
Q: When is *Sensible Soccer* not really *Sensible Soccer*?
A: When it's a not-quite-so-good copy called *Football Glory*.

Gulity
(58) Psygnosis - Adventure £39.99
Sequel-ola *Gulity* is the follow up to the awful *Innocent Until Caught*, and it's significantly better, but still not brilliant.

Jungle Strike
(79) Gremlin - Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
Another sequel... this time, the sequel to *Desert Strike*. But this shoot 'em up is bigger, more varied and harder than the original. Not bad at all.

NBA Live
(90: Classic) Electronic Arts - Sport £44.99
EA Sports awakens from a period of dormancy with this absolutely corking basketball arcade game - the best of its type around.

Renegade
(75) SSI - Space Sim £44.99
SSI's *TIE Fighter/Wing Commander* wannabe in glorious SFCA. A surprisingly playable space warfare game.

Rise Of The Triad
(82: Classic) US Gold and PD Selections - Adventure £39.95
Some love it and some hate it... but of the *Doom*-likes, this is one of the best.

Super Frog
(40) Team 17 - Platform £19.99
A platform game with a frog in it... Uh-huh. Okay.

Tank Commander
(66) Merit Software - Sports Sim £39.95
Ice hockey sim with FFA-style viewpoint, but impossible control system, and comes no where near *NHL Hockey '95*.

Alien Breed: Tower Assault
(81) Team 17 - Shoot 'Em Up £29.99
The sequel to *Alien Breed*, but superior to the PC version of the original. Great graphics and frenzied, addictive shooty action.

Brett Hull Hockey '95
(73) Accolade/Warner - Sports Simulation £39.99
Top-down ice hockey game, which doesn't match the king of ice hockey sims, *NHL Hockey '95*, but betters *Alex Dampter Pro Hockey '95*.

Blind Date
(25) Dornak - Adventure £39.99
Chris had a jolly splendid time reviewing last month's 'interactive-try-to-get-laid-simulator'. What will the softies come up with next?

Full Throttle
(92: Classic) LucasArts/Virgin - Adventure £49.99
Hooray for LucasArts adventures. Big, tough guy bike stuff this time. Splendid.

Daedalus Encounter
(58) Virgin - Adventure £44.95
Interactive movie game that fails to make the grade - and, for what it's worth, stars Tia Carrere, the babe from *Wayne's World*.

Hardball 4
(83: Recommended) Accolade/Warner - Arcade/Sports £39.99
Returning May's theme of 'sequels', Warner Interactive brings us the fourth *Hardball*. Surely Warner have to call it quits now?

High Seas Trader
(62) Impressions - Strategy/Simulation Game £39.99
Affectionately referred to as 'High Street Trader' in the PC Zone office, this is the latest strategy offering from Impressions.

Magic Carpet: Hidden Worlds
(80: Recommended) Bullfrog - Arcade/Strategy £19.99
A sort of add-on thingy for *Magic Carpet* with lots of snow. The trouble is though, it's completely and utterly, stupidly, bloody hard.

PyroTechnica
(69) Psygnosis - 3D Shoot 'Em Up £29.99
A very poor *Descent*-wannabe from Psygnosis. Fortunately though, it's considerably cheaper.

Psycho Pinball
(78) Codemasters - Arcade £44.99
Pinball from Codemasters. Some nice tables. Some nice music. Sorted.

Slipstream 5000
(88: Recommended) Gremlin Interactive - Arcade/Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
Slipstream is a three-dimensional-fabby-whizzo racing/shooting/speedy thing from Gremlin. Splendid stuff, and better than boring, run-of-the-mill racing games.

Star Trek: TNG - "A Final Unity"
(94: Classic) MicroProse - Adventure £49.99
Yes, it may have a ridiculously long title, but this is, without a doubt, the best game to bear the *Star Trek* name so far.

Super Streetfighter II Turbo
(90: Classic) Gametek - Beat 'Em Up £39.99
SFTII Turbo is one of the best arcade conversions ever seen on the PC.

Ticonderoga
(78) Mindscape - Naval/Strategy £44.99
Silly name but a damn fine naval strategy game. Lovely graphics and splendid CD bits.

Virtua Chess
(85: Recommended) Titus - Strategy £44.99
Snazzy 3D SVGA chess thingy from Titus. France. This one's different looking and with a ninja bastard brainbox.

Warriors
(85: Recommended) Mindscape - Beat 'Em Up £39.99
What, yet another beat 'em up? Anyone would think there's a shortage of 'em or something.

Issue 28 - July 1995

1830
(68) US Gold - Board Game £39.99
Set in the early years of American colonisation, a sort of *Railroad Tycoon* meets *Risk*. Strictly for those of transporter persuasion.

Alex Dampter Pro Hockey
(66) Merit Software - Sports Sim £39.95
Ice hockey sim with FFA-style viewpoint, but impossible control system, and comes no where near *NHL Hockey '95*.

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On sale 4 July

Dominus
(42) US Gold - Strategy Game £39.99
Fantasy battle game with good graphics and comprehensive interface but lacking that vital ingredient - gameplay.

Frontier: First Encounters
(78) Gametek - Space Strategy Simulation £39.99
Disappointing enhanced version of *Elite II*, which is also buggy to jiggery.

Jagged Alliance
(72) Mindscape - Strategy Game £39.99
Risk meets *Syndicate* in this strategy battle jaunt. It's not groundbreaking or particularly original but quite good fun all the same.

Loadstar
(35) BMG Interactive - Shoot 'Em Up £34.99
Dreadful FMV shoot 'em up not worth the paper its manual was printed on.

Machiavelli The Prince
(89) MicroProse - Strategy Game £44.99
Colonization-style sim packed with political intrigue, assassinations, plagues, pirates and a unique play by e-mail feature.

Man Utd: The Double
(71) Krisalis - Sports Sim £29.99
The best *Manchester United* game yet, but it's still not a patch on the excellent *Sensible Soccer*s of this world.

Sim Tower
(70) Maxis - Strategy Game £39.99
Basically *Sim City* viewed from the side with the emphasis on tower blocks, but not as addictive - and the presentation is dire.

Virtual Pool
(91) Classic Interplay - Sports Sim £44.99
Superb gameplay and 3D graphics, complete with a multi-player network option. This is about as close to a real game of pool as you can possibly get.

Civil War
(83: Recommended) Empire - Strategy Game £44.99
The sequel to *Fields Of Glory*, and jolly nice it looks too.

FX Fighters
(93: Classic) Philips/GTE - Beat 'Em Up £39.99
The closest thing to *Virtua Fighter* on the PC, and by far the best beat 'em up you can buy. We love it!

Hi-Octane
(83: Recommended) Bullfrog/Electronic Arts - Racing Game £39.99
Bullfrog surprises everyone by releasing a racing game, and surprises everyone even more by not saying anything about it until it's nearly finished. Hmm.

Micro Machines 2
(92: Classic) Codemasters - Racing Game £44.99
A brilliant, simple and effective racing game with a rather nifty little track designer thrown in for good measure.

Orion Conspiracy
(36) Domark - Adventure Game £39.99
Domark unveils what has to be the worst-scripted computer game ever conceived.

Perfect General 2
(82: Recommended) Mirage Software - Strategy Wargame £44.99
Hex-tastic strategy game for those of you who really like your wargames intense.

Picture Perfect Golf
(30) Empire - Sports Sim £44.99
Pretty bloody naff. But hey, if you want to look at nice, digitised pictures of a golf course, this is well worth the dosh.

Prisoner Of Ice
(88: Recommended) Infogrames - Adventure £44.99
The second in the *Chulhu* range - and it's a stonker of a point-and-click adventure.

Scottish Open Golf
(60) Core Design - Sports Sim £39.99
Core Design finally releases its 3D virtual golf thing. There are some okay bits and some pretty nob bits. Unfortunately, it's the nob bits that win through.

Silverlaced
(7) Millennium/Psychosis - Adventure Game £39.99
Millennium and Psychosis team up to produce an adventure which is truly... quite awful.

(Right) *IndyCar Racing*: great graphics and playability make this the best ever driving game.

(Far right) *Sam & Max*: The clue's inside the cat. Rip its head off! (Sick, or what?)



Striker 95
(62) Time Warner - Sports Sim £34.99
A football game that looks really fab and groovy, but doesn't quite cut it in the gameplay stakes.

Ultimate Doom
(90: Classic) GT Interactive - Shoot 'Em Up £29.99
The original *Doom* re-packaged with an extra episode. Is it another classic or just a colossal rip-off?

Vortex
(80: Recommended) Warner Interactive - Interactive Movie £39.99
It's an interactive movie. No, it's a game. It's an interactive movie. No, it's a game. Arrghh!!!

Across the Rhine
(86: Recommended) MicroProse - Strategy £44.99
If you're a propeller head you'll think it's the dog's gonads. If you're a bit of a thick, you'll still like it, once you work your way through the laborious manual, that is.

Action Soccer
(50) UbiSoft - Football Sim £34.99
It had potential, but ultimately *Action Soccer* seems to have been relegated to the ranks of 'another crap footie game'.

Air Power
(84: Recommended) Mindscape - Flight Sim £44.99
Rowan teams up with *Mindscape* and chucks in all the best bits from his other flight sims, to make up a sort of fantasy strategy game, which is really pretty groovy.

AIV Networks
(80: Recommended) Infogrames - Business Sim £44.99
A business sim for people who love trains. (Yes gods! What next?)

Dungeon Master 2
(59) Interplay - Role Playing Game £44.99
It came out late and it wasn't worth the wait. Disappointingly out-dated and old-fashioned.

Last Dynasty
(45) Sierra - Space Combat Sim £44.99
A good *Windows*-based adventure game, which is completely ruined by crap combat sections.

Lords Of Midnight
(60) Domark - Adventure £44.99
Another very old game that's been given the sequel treatment - our reviewer said it was the biggest let-down since that leak in his inflatable Claire Rayner.

Sim Town
(81: Recommended) Maxis - Simulation £29.99
Fun and educational in equal measures. But even better, you can make people say rude things when they're pissed off.

Simon The Sorcerer 2
(84: Recommended) Adventure Soft (UK) - Adventure Game £44.99
Simon returns with DMs and long hair. Even though Chris Barrie hasn't done the voice this time, it's still a bloody good talkie adventure.

Space Quest 6
(70) Sierra - Adventure Game £44.99
Trite adventure completely devoid of humour. *Space Quest* fans will love it!

Terminal Velocity
(80: Recommended) US Gold - Shoot 'Em Up £44.99
Very good 3D engine, wearing a pair of rather unoriginal, unaddictive 'game-play trousers'.

US Marine Fighters
(92: Classic) Electronic Arts - Flight Sim £19.99
Absolutely brilliant. The only thing that prevented us giving *US Marine Fighters* 100 per cent was the lack of a network facility.

EF2000
(97: Classic) Ocean/DID - Flight Sim £44.99
Something for everyone. The best balance between simulator and game, ever.

Fade To Black
(94: Classic) Electronic Arts - Arcade Adventure £44.99
A corking follow up to *Flashback*, with lots of spiny-roundy polygon bits, morphing monsties and big guns.

The Need For Speed
(89: Recommended) Electronic Arts - Racing £44.99
There's no need to buy a 3D0 now this has made it to the PC! This sits somewhere between *Screamer* and the forthcoming *F1GPZ*. We love the splendid crashes!

Apache Longbow
(96: Classic) Digital Integration - Sim £39.99
The best helicopter sim around; although *Comanche* looks better, nothing comes close to matching the mixture of spot on handling, tactics, networking and atmosphere.

Buried In Time
(77) US Gold - Interactive Movie £44.99
The sequel to *The Journeyman Project* is a tad too lengthy; technically it's great but it's lacking the elements of truly enjoyable gameplay.

MechWarrior 2
(88: Recommended) Activision - Board Game £49.99
Mayhem! Go on a stomping frenzy encased in a massive armour-plated robot body. Good, hard-hitting fun with plenty of missions and a good difficulty curve.

Blown Away
(19) Instant Access - Interactive Movie £39.99
A pretty crap game of a pretty crap film.

Cyberbykes
(10) Gametek - Shoot 'Em Up £24.99
It came, it saw, it sucked. Ideal as a present for someone you don't like.

Lemmings 3D
(71) Psygnosis - Puzzle Game £39.99
We've seen it all before; all that's new is that it's now from a different angle. Yawn.

Player Manager 2
(45) Anco - Sport £34.99
Visually stunted, it's difficult to control the ball. What else? Oh, it's one to avoid.

Championship Manager 2
(92: Classic) Domark - Sport £44.99 (TBC)
Every other football management game is just that - a game - but this one actually becomes 'real life'.

Alien Odyssey
(77) Philips - Space Adventure Game £44.99
A sort of cross between *BioForge* and *Cyberia*, with the odd *Star Wars* reference thrown in; overall a pretty adventure which plods a bit.

Battle Isle 3: Shadow Of The Emperor
(93: Classic) Blue Byte - Strategy £45.99
The third and possibly final instalment of one of the most highly respected strategy games of all time. Certainly worth checking out if you like your strategy futuristic.

Comanche Vs Werewolf
(88: Recommended) Novologic/US Gold - Helicopter Flight Sim £39.99
The sequel takes the original game and chucks in a completely new one for good measure. Maybe not the best helicopter flight sim, but there's plenty to recommend it.

Crusader
(91: Classic) Electronic Arts - Blast 'Em Up £49.99
Action, adventure, people getting their heads blown off - bloody excellent.

Destruction Derby
(90: Classic) Sony Interactive - Racing Game £44.99
The PlayStation game where you can smash yourself and others to pieces comes to the PC... Plenty of network options, five different ways to play, superb graphics - need we say more?

FIFA '96
(84: Recommended) Electronic Arts - Sport £44.99
If you already own last year's *FIFA* and you like it, this is worth buying. But if you want a simple and easy to control system look elsewhere.

Mortal Kombat 3
(90: Classic) GT Interactive - Beat 'Em Up £44.99
This is the best two-dimensional beat 'em up you'll find anywhere right now. Make damn sure you enjoy it while it lasts.

Navy Strike
(90: Classic) Empire Interactive - Naval Sim £44.99
Actually two games in one: a flight sim and a military command sim. In it you pilot a jet fighter in the future - you'll find that once the atmosphere kicks in you're hooked.

Phantasmagoria
(50) Sierra - Adventure £49.99
Without doubt a brave effort (spanning seven CDs) but sadly the interactive part is a bit ambitious. It looks good but that's about it.

Road Warrior
(61) Gametek - Driving Game £39.99
The sequel to *Quarantine* is nothing to write home about, despite the good graphics.

Screamer
(89: Recommended) VIE - Driving Game £29.99
Stunning looking super speedy arcade racer with six different tracks, six different cars (manual or auto) and three different skill levels. Very arcade indeed.

Worms
(84: Recommended) Ocean - Strategy £34.99
A cross between *Lemmings* and *Cannon Fodder*. Four people can play at once, there's lots of weapons and features, and the levels are generated afresh each time you play - good fun.

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AI Unser Jr Racing
(60) Mindscape - Racing Game £29.99
It has all the features you'd expect from a racing game but ultimately it's fun for only a limited time.

Ascendancy
(93: Classic) Virgin - Strategy £39.99
More than just another space-based strategy game, this has got all the best bits of every god/strategy/warfare game available. A word of warning though, get stuck into this and you can say goodbye to your social life.

Battle Beast
(68) 7th Level - Beat 'Em Up £29.99
A cartoon beat 'em up with great animation, cut scenes and special effects - it looks great, but as for gameplay - forget it.

Burns Cycle
(85: Recommended) Philips - Interactive Adventure £44.99
One of the best interactive adventures we've seen; good pacing, sharp plot and plenty of variety combine to make it outstanding.

Crime Patrol & Gamegun
(70) American Laser Games/Mirage - Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
It won't take you long to exhaust the fun factor of *Crime Patrol*, but the gun is compatible with some other games and as a bundled package it's really not bad value.

Darker
(62) Psygnosis - Shoot 'Em Up £39.99
Mediocre 3D blast 'em up with nice smooth polygons, lots to shoot at, but not much more.

Fatal Racing
(88: Recommended) Gremlin Interactive - Racing £TBC
Ridge Racer meets *Stunt Car Racer*... as long as you've got a Pentium, of course.

Magic Carpet 2
(92: Classic) Electronic Arts - Shoot 'Em Up £44.99
It sent our reviewer into a frenzy! The classic game is now even better, with new monsters and a new graphical style which includes scary night-time bits - totally addictive.



(Left) Theme Park: Sim City eat your heart out.

Witchaven (88: Recommended) US Gold - Arcade/Role-Playing Game £29.99

Witchaven is packed with lots of spells and potions to play with, the usual network/modern options, triggers and traps, impressive graphical effects - and if you're looking for game you've found it. Sick, twisted and violent - we like it.

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Actua Soccer

(92: Classic) Gremlin Interactive - Sport £TBC Ranking alongside Command & Conquer as the office favourite at the moment, this is currently the best footie game on the PC thanks to excellent gameplay and a fantastic 3D polygonised pitch arrangement - sorry FIFA and Sensi, but you'll have to step aside.

Entomorph

(78) Mindscape - Role-Playing Game £44.99 If you've already got a copy of Ultima VII and fancy something similar in style, Entomorph is worth a look. It's got a fairly engrossing storyline, although the presentation is somewhat lacklustre.

Fighter Duel

(65) Philips Media - Flight Sim £39.99 There's very little to say about this game as there's actually very little to it - don't expect it to keep you riveted to the screen; even what little scenery there is is dull.

F1 Grand Prix Manager

(85: Recommended) MicroProse - Racing £44.99 One of the most imaginative management simulations around - certainly the best Grand Prix one available, but then it's the only one.

Frankenstein

Through The Eyes Of The Monster (9) Interplay - Adventure £44.99 Starring Tim Curry, this is an excellent gothic adventure. The puzzles are challenging, the storyline is cleverly structured, the visuals are sumptuous, but sadly it's hampered by a dodgy interface which makes it difficult to navigate your way through the locations.

IndyCar 2

(90: Classic) Papyrus/Virgin - Racing £39.99 Polygons with absolutely glorious SVGA graphics. If you already own IndyCar 1, hold out for FIGP2 instead. But if you don't, buy this one. Oh, but if we're really honest here, you ought to try to afford FIGP2 as well.

Mortal Coil

(50) Vic Tokai/Virgin - Strategic Shoot 'Em Up £34.99

Is this yet another Doom clone? It basically involves loads of shooting everything you see from a 3D perspective. A great idea on paper, but it's let down by poor graphics and voiceovers (even with the dubious talents of Dani Behr) - you may well prefer Hexen.

Pinball World

(77) 21st Century Entertainment - Pinball £44.99 For some reason there seems to be more pinball and footie games coming out than you could possibly want, and although you've got a choice of table layouts (which you don't really need anyway) it doesn't really offer anything markedly different.

Pro Pinball: The Web

(90: Classic) Empire Interactive - Pinball £34.99 Don't discount this game because it only features one table as it's packed with goodies, you can see the table in its entirety or from six different viewpoints, it's realistic if you can nudge the table from either side as well as the bottom), and it's got an totally stonking soundtrack as well.

Rebel Assault II

(90: Classic) LucasArts/VE - Shoot 'Em Up £49.99 If you can't see what all the fuss about Star Wars is about or you didn't like the original Rebel Assault, chances are you won't like this one. On the other hand, if you're a die-hard Empire/Rebel fan and spend your nights re-enacting scenes between Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader, you'll love it. Of course solid action, a 'real' live action bits, bloody gorgeous graphics and a corking storyline go some way to recommend it as well.

Sensible World Of Soccer

(60) Warner Interactive - Sport £39.99 We waited a long time for this one. It's got some management bits, some nice rendered cut-scenes and commentary, but it's still not a patch on Actua Soccer.

Stonekeep

(76) Interplay - Role-Playing Game £44.99 It looks a bit dated (mainly because it's flick screen), but in its favour it has a nice, easy to handle control method, a wide variety of levels to keep you interested and a very thoughtful experience system which allows your character(s) to become more skilled with their weapons the more they use them.

Su27 Flanker

(95: Classic) Mindscape - Flight Simulation £44.99 Developed by Russian pilots, this is all about one of the scariest aircraft ever built. It's no lightweight 'hop in and pole around the sky' type product, but unfortunately it's let down by a lack of network or serial link multi-play facility. If you want a comparison it's better than EF2000, MIG29 and Tornádo.

The Dig

(87: Recommended) LucasArts/VE - Adventure £44.99 Another offering touched by the hand of Spielberg. It's a proper adventure with a proper story, a cut above your usual sci-fi adventure stuff. And it's got great music.

Tilt

(80: Recommended) Virgin Interactive - Pinball £TBC You get six tables to choose from (including Monster, Funfair, Gangster, Sci-Fi, Myst and Majik). It doesn't have the depth of the single table in The Web, but it's good all the same.

Williams Arcade Classics

(90: Classic) GT Interactive - Various £29.99 Worth buying for an arcade-perfect version of Defender alone, this '80s compilation also includes Robotron 2084, Stargate Defender 2, Joust, Bubbles and Sinistar. The graphics obviously aren't too hot given the age of the titles, but don't hold that against it.

Wipeout

(78) Sony Interactive - Racing £44.99 Winging its way directly from the PlayStation, this game of anti-gravity racing with floating cars seems to have lost something in the conversion; play it on anything other than a Pentium and you can kiss the PC version's smoothness and graphical details goodbye. Top marks for the brilliant soundtrack though.

Issue 35 - February 1996

Battleground Ardennes

(84: Recommended) Empire Interactive - Wargame £40 (TBC) One for the serious strategy heads among you - hex-wargaming finally gets updated for the '90s. (NB: You'll need Windows 95 to play it.)

Beavis and Butt-head

(87: Recommended) Viacom New Media - Point-and-click Adventure £39.99 Fans of the gruesome two some will love this game (but avoid it if you're not as it's unlikely to appeal). Plenty of puzzle solving and a hilarious script - it's like being in control of your very own Beavis and Butt-head episode.

Extreme Pinball

(65) Electronic Arts - Pinball Game £39.99 So what did our reviewer make of the 'proper' version of Epic Pinball? He had one word for it: "Aaaarrrggghh!" If you're after a top quality pinball game, buy Pro Pinball: The Web instead.

Quest For Fame

(80: Recommended) IBM - Music PPG £49.95 Air guitar rules! Pick up the plastic plectrum and join Aerosmith for a riff extravaganza as you try to make it from unknown musician to mega rock 'n' roll star - if you succeed you get to play with the band then selves!

Terminator: Future Shock

(85: Recommended) VE - Strategic Shoot 'Em Up £34.99 The third title in the Terminator series, this has plenty of action and atmosphere, as well as one of the best 3D engines around.

The 11th Hour

(67) Trilobyte/VE - Adventure/Puzzle Game £TBC The sequel to The 7th Guest has been a long time coming - unfortunately it wasn't really

worth the wait. It's not really that different either, apart from the addition of a 'treasure hunt' challenge. But then if you really, really like puzzles you may find that this game is pretty playable.

The Hive

(78) Funsoft UK - Shoot 'Em Up £39.99 A pre-rendered blaster which is a bit like Rebel Assault, only without the good bits. This Means War!

(89: Recommended) MicroProse - Strategy Wargame £44.99 Strategy, action and lots of futuristic stuff, a sort of Command & Conquer meets Transport Tycoon. It's slower C&C, but addictive once you've got to grips with all the options.

Virtual Fighter Remix

(89: Recommended) Sega/Datrotech - Boat 'Em Up £39.99 A pre-rendered blaster which is a bit like Rebel Assault, only without the good bits. This Means War!

Virtual Karts

(71) MicroProse - Arcade Racing Game £TBC MicroProse have cleverly applied the word 'virtual' to the title - but don't ask why, 'cos the karts don't handle like karts and the hires graphics are jerrk-stastic.

William Shatner's TekWar

(54) Capstone/US Gold - Shoot 'Em Up £39.99 What a pity, as this is just a Doom clone, and we reckon you could probably quite happily live without it... (sorry Will)

Wing Commander IV

(85: Recommended) Origin/Electronic Arts - Space Combat Sim £TBC The filmed sequences apparently cost over eight million dollars - and it shows, as they really are very impressive. Unfortunately though, despite a genuinely interesting plot, a strong storyline and the fact that Wing Commander IV is the most cinematic gaming experience you'll find, the gameplay's seriously lacking, you'll also need a mighty meaty PC to play it on.

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Absolute Zero

(70) Dornak - Space Shoot 'Em Up £39.99 Don't even consider this one unless your PC's got a serious amount of spare hard disk space - our reviewer found that it needed 20MB just to have the menus running at optimum performance! It's all a bit of a shame really, as this could have been an entertaining variation on the Wing Commander/Elite game: it's got loads of ground-based missions, various different characters, some fairly complex mission objectives, SVGA graphics, alien monsters, a big plot twist... but it's also got bland scenery and a pretty disappointing frame rate. To sum up, it's Wing Commander on the rocks.

Civilization 2

(59: Classic) MicroProse - Strategy £44.99 This is basically an enhanced version of the first game, but the combat's been tightened up and plenty of new units and advances have been added, as well as 'hit points' - even die-hard fans of the original will find that there's still a lot to learn. Of course the biggest difference is that Civilization 2 is completely 3D - although moving up a perspective can make things cluttered and sometimes hard to follow at times, especially if you use the option to have multiple windows open at once. (NB: Windows 95 or 3.1 with WinG required.)

Firestorm: Thunderhawk 2

(60) Core Design - Helicopter Sim £TBC The Sega co-helicopter blaster gets updated for the PC - although we're not really sure why they bothered. Although its got arcade-style controls it's even less realistic than most games of its type, and it's totally spoilt by a haphazard viewpoint - one minute the sky's empty, the next you've got something right in front of you. Eerie worse, targets that you lock onto can vanish from sight as you fire. This means you end up shooting from a stationary position, making you more vulnerable to attack and, basically, ruining the game.

Formula One Grand Prix 2

(95: Classic) MicroProse - Racing £44.99 Our reviewer called this an absolute masterpiece - even menu screens, sub menus, pre-race options and set-up screens can keep you happily occupied for ages. If you want the options and textures in their full glory you'll need a Pentium, but even in low-res it looks great. The attention to detail is amazing thanks to Geoff Crammond's perfectionism, and the physics of the game engine are outstanding - give up your social life now!

Police Quest: SWAT

(83: Recommended) Sierra - Adventure £49.99 Daryl Gates makes a welcome return with what has to be the best game in the Police Quest series. It's a different and enjoyable twist on the traditional adventure game - the only thing holding it back from a classic rating is a lack of compatibility with a light gun.

Rayman

(76) UbiSoft - Platform Game £TBC From the Sony PlayStation come cutesy Disney-esque sprites, silky smooth parallax scrolling and colourful backgrounds with 68 levels; however, there aren't any that clever puzzles or particularly taxing levels, just nice graphics and a learning curve that veers from easy-peasy to annoying. Sorry Rayman, but despite the good presentation, you're ultimately a bit limited and pretty linear.

The Beast Within: Gabriel Knight 2

(88: Recommended) Sierra - Adventure Game £44.99 Admittedly The Beast Within isn't perhaps the most difficult game you'll ever play, but as an interactive movie it's brilliant. The acting is great, the FMV scenes contribute beautifully to the atmosphere and the plot gets increasingly complex and engrossing. Excellent!

Time Gate

(84: Recommended) Infogrames - Arcade Adventure £44.99 From the team that brought us Alone In The Dark comes something that looks like erm... Alone In The Dark, but set back in the days of the Knights Templar. However, there are some annoying inconsistencies, downright infuriating puzzles, items that are impossible to pick up, and it's easy to miss things, on top of that you'll find yourself saving furiously because you keep getting brutally killed when you least expect it. If you like ATD, you'll like this as it's almost exactly the same - which is why we haven't given it a higher score.

Warcraft 2: Tides Of Darkness

(82: Recommended) Zlabac - Strategy £44.99 Despite a dodgy AI Warcraft 2 is still addictive and enjoyable - and it's even better still if you can take advantage of the multi-player option and play over a network. All in all, a definite 'must-buy' for anyone who liked the original.

Allied General

(83: Recommended) SS/Mindscape - Wargame £44.99 The follow-up to the highly successful Panzer General. Not much different, although the interface has been enhanced and thanks to Windows you can have any resolution you like. The ground scale is a bit haphazard and varies too much from scenario to scenario, but on the whole Allied General should find favour not only with wargamers but with casual wargamers as well. Simplistic yes, but there's far more to this game than most of its genre. (NB: Windows 95 required.)

Battleground Gettysburg

(87: Recommended) Empire Interactive - Strategy Wargame £39.99 The second in the Battleground series has an excellent feel for the Gettysburg battles (1-3 July 1863). QuickTime movies really are a visual treat, the sound effects are excellent, and if you get stuck there's a comprehensive manual and a Quick Start guide. Gettysburg is well-produced and highly playable - hex-head wargamers will love it. But, you'll need 130MB hard disk space for full installation, or 60MB otherwise. (NB: Windows 95 required.)

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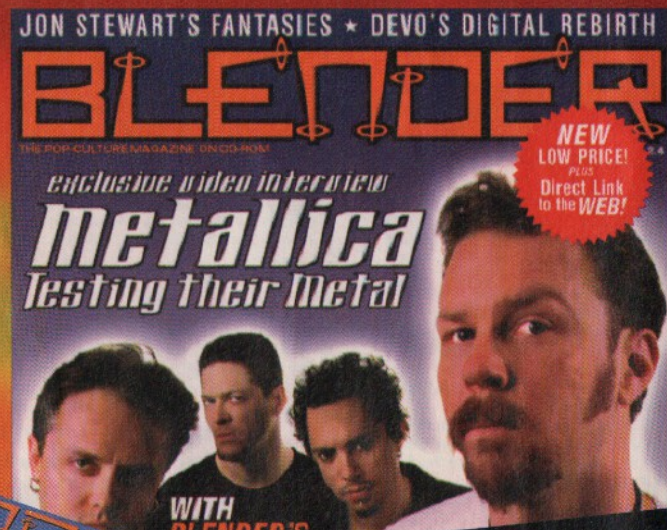
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BUYERS' GUIDE

(Right) *Alone in the Dark 3: More Carnby, cobwebs, murder, mystery and mayhem.*

(Far right) *Command & Conquer: A case of Cannon Fodder meets Dune 2.*



Big Red Racing

(87: Recommended) Domark - Racing Game £TBC

This is rather like a first-person perspective *Micro Machines*. It's brilliant fun, with 24 huge courses (including Mars, Venus, Moon and water) and there are loads of vehicles to choose from (snow ploughs, big foot monster trucks, Florida 'swampmaster' semi-amphibious propeller boat things...). You can even recreate *The Italian Job* bombing round Italy in a Mini!

Comix Zone

(68) Sega - Beat 'Em Up £29.99

Seriously tedious beat 'em up from Sega's newly-founded PC team in which you take on the role of a cartoonist trapped inside a comic book. Yawn, snore, etc.

Descent 2

(90: Classic) Interplay - 3D Shoot 'Em Up £TBC

Hardened *Descent* players will find adequate new perils to test them, but the game's well-paced enough for newbies. There are new weapons, monsters and great sound effects, plus 'Capture The Flag' team games where you can take sides and co-ordinate tactics to overcome your rivals. Overall it's a fun, involving and addictive game. If you loved the original, you'll be totally besotted with this one.

Ecco The Dolphin

(55) Sega - Arcade £29.99

The Mega Drive game from a few years ago. Unfortunately even the pretty animation can't save it from being totally boring. Next!

Extreme Games

(70) Psygnosis - Sport £29.99

The PlayStation 'trendy sports' game involving mountain bikes, skateboards, in-line skates and street luges, but the psx version has excellent graphics and the animation is much, much better - it's too slow on a P133 and even with the detail switched down it plods along, thus destroying any enjoyment factor it might have had.

Ian Botham International Cricket

(78) Beam Software - Sport £34.99

Surprisingly good simulation of one of the world's duller sports. It's not as playable as the SNES version and has embarrassingly cheap and tacky FMV footage - essentially though it's playable and a good laugh.

NBA Live 96

(85: Recommended) Electronic Arts/EA Sports - Sport £44.99

It's basketball's turn for EA's Virtual stadium treatment, which means four different angles for each camera. It's fast, with intuitive controls, reasonably well-animated player sprites as well as being playable in both one- and two-player modes. The in-game graphics are a bit muted and it can be hard to follow the ball when the game gets crowded but it's very playable all the same. There are three levels of difficulty and an option to play exhibition games or a full game season, plus arcade, simulation and custom modes.

Resurrection: Rise 2

(73) Acclaim/Mirage - Beat 'Em Up £44.99

Far better than the original, but a long way from being a classic. It borrows from other established beat 'em ups: it's got *Street Fighter*'s projectile weapons, *Mortal Kombat*'s death moves and the super-combo moves of Nintendo's *Killer Instinct*. It appears to have everything - moves, hordes of characters and secret warriors, bonus levels - but it doesn't have the same addictive gameplay. When you kick and punch the blows don't 'connect', and what's the point of a beat 'em up where you don't feel that you're inflicting any grief?

Tompost 2000

(85: Recommended) Atari - Arcade £29.99

Atari's 15-year old game revamped with a kicking techno track. You have to defend your tunnel by shooting at the enemy craft trying to invade your space - but don't be deceived by the simplicity of it, it's not as easy as it sounds. Hours and hours of classic arcade fun.

Tomcat Alley

(34) Sega - Flight Simulation £29.99

Repetitive gameplay, dodgy graphics. Ugh!

Top Gun

(92: Classic) MicroProse - Flight Simulation £TBC

Excellent, apart from dodgy misleading views and a frame rate in hi-res which is only just acceptable on a P133. MicroProse have pulled off what everyone else has been trying to do, which is to add a cinematic storyline to a flight sim. These bits blend together without being overlong, so that no momentum is lost. Atmosphere, with a capital 'A'.

Warhammer

(73) Mindscape - Strategy Wargame £TBC

Addictive, challenging real-time strategy with an interesting setting and strong plot. Once you're hooked you'll come back for more, even though it really is much too hard, the control system is too fiddly and chance plays too much of a role. (NB: Windows 95 required.)

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ATF

(92: Classic) Electronic Arts - Flight Simulation £44.99

The US Navy Fighters engine gets seriously spruced up and then introduced to a large number of 'conceptual' aircraft. The plane's smooth flying is brilliant and the differences between the aircraft are more than noticeable. This is seriously good stuff for the propeller heads among you.

C&C: The Covert Operations

(84: Recommended) Virgin - Strategy £14.99

Arggh! Spoooge. Spoooge... If you've enjoyed fighting your way through *Command & Conquer* you can carry on - the mission disc is here! It's a must-have for any C&C fan, but be warned that it's bloody hard!

Metaltech Earthsiege 2

(90: Classic) Sierra - 3D Shoot 'Em Up £44.99

Earthsiege is widely regarded as the best of all the big robot games - and the good news is that the sequel has better graphics, better sound effects and loads of new weapons. (NB: Windows 95 required.)

Kingdom O'Magic

(82: Recommended) SCI - Adventure £44.99

More point-and-click fun, but this time with stereotypical gay hairdressers and women with huge boobs. It's quite funny at times.

Normality

(90: Classic) Gremlin Interactive - Adventure £TBC

Gremlin's ambitious and superb 3D point-and-click adventure proves that you can still muck around with genres and come up with something new. It's not quite as funny as the likes of *Sam and Max* or *Discworld*, but it's certainly well worth having a look at.

PGA European Tour

(94: Classic) EA Sports - Sport £44.99

For all of you budding Nick Faldos and Ian Woosnams out there, test your swing with the greatest golf game in existence. It gets de-Yanked and tweaked a bit and is another classic from EA Sports.

Speed Waste

(79) Electronic Arts - Racing £29.99

Imagine a cross between *Virtua Racing* and *Daytona USA* that only costs thirty quid and doesn't look quite as good.

Spycraft

(91: Classic) Activision - Adventure £49.99

Activision have surprised us all with this one. It's basically a 'spy simulator', and if you've ever fancied getting your grubby mitts on spy satellites, decoding routines, image analysers and infra-red goggles, now's your chance. This has loads of FMV, loads of puzzles and has some of the most original features we've seen for a long time. (NB: Windows 95 required.)

S.T.O.R.M.

(70) Electronic Arts - Shoot 'Em Up £TBC

Nice graphics, traditional controls, but what happened to the gameplay? And er... this looks like *Scramble*, but with much prettier graphics.

Virtual Snooker

(60) Interplay - Sport £34.99

A year after *Virtual Pool*, we get the same game, except that this time around it's with snooker balls and loads and loads of FMV of Steve 'intensely dull' Davis. A complete video of a 147 break, anyone? No?

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Assault Rigs

(78) Psygnosis - 3D Shoot 'Em Up £34.99

Direct from the PlayStation, this is basically a 3D platform game in a tank: there are various gems to collect, complicated level layouts and minor puzzles. The controls are a little too complicated but it plays well and is action-packed at times. There's also a network option for up to eight people. Well worth a look.

Azrael's Tear

(90: Classic) Mindscape - Role-Playing Game £44.99

An atmospheric blend of *Ultima Underworld* and *System Shock*, this is a worthy rival to the *Alone In The Dark* series.

Chronicles Of The Sword

(68) Psygnosis - Adventure/Puzzle Game £39.99

Although *COTS* is set in the time of King Arthur, you take on the lesser role of Gawain. The storyline doesn't live up to the potential of the subject matter and although there are some well-crafted puzzles, they don't fit into the gameplay very well. It looks good but it's just a bit too boring.

Conquest Of The New World

(75) Interplay - Strategy £TBC

The Yanks loved it, but we found it slow, cumbersome and lacking in excitement.

Star Trek: Deep Space 9 - Harbinger

(52) Viacom - Adventure £39.99

Unlike *A Final Venture*, this one doesn't quite reach warp speed. It's not as interactive as it should be - even die-hard Trekkers will fail to be swayed by it. (NB: Windows 95 required.)

Fantasy General

(92: Classic)SSI/Mindscape - Strategy Wargame £44.99

The third in the *General* series uses the same basic combat and movement engine as *Panzer General* and *Allied General*. It's the most exciting strategy wargame of the year so far.

Fast Attack

(86: Recommended) Sierra - Submarine Sim £39.99

Ultra-complex but ultimately rewarding - newbies might find it a bit hard though. (NB: Windows 95 required.)

Silent Thunder

(60) Sierra - Flight Sim £39.99

The follow-up to *A10 Tank Killer* - it looks amazing, but the fact that you're constrained to a very small geographic area, the game map is cluttered and unhelpful and the whole thing suffers from extreme jerk-o-vision makes it bloody annoying.

TNN Bass Tournament

(80: Recommended) Electronic Arts - Fishing Sim £39.99

It's good, but not quite as good as *Trophy Bass* as it's more about amassing money than actually reeling the buggers in.

Terra Nova

(90: Classic) Virgin Interactive - 3D Shoot 'Em Up £39.99

Another robot title, this time from the people who brought you *System Shock* and *Flight Unlimited*. The graphics and sound effects could be better but that aside it's very enjoyable, fast-moving and atmospheric.

Track Attack

(65) MicroProse - Racing Game £29.99

It sounds promising but fails to deliver the gameplay goods. It's slow even on a P75 and lack of control adds to the frustration.

Trophy Bass

(85: Recommended) Sierra - Fishing Sim £39.99

Near perfect, especially as you get to go fishing at any time of year with all the comforts of home. Smart!

Zork Nemesis

(65) Activision - Adventure/Puzzle Game £44.99

Our Chris loved the last game in the series, *Return To Zork*, but was disappointed with this one. The music's very atmospheric and the graphics are absolutely stunning but you never come across any characters to interact with, which makes wandering about solving puzzle after puzzle tedious and boring. However, if you're a fan of *Myst* and *The 11th Hour* it's quite likely that *Nemesis* will appeal.

(NB: Windows 95 required.)

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Afterlife

(88: Recommended) Virgin/LucasArts - God Sim £44.99

This 'concept' god sim shapes up well against the inevitable comparisons to *Sim City* and *Civilization*, except here you do actually play God, sending lost souls to either Heaven or Hell and looking after their needs by building appropriate 'zones'. Long-term playability.

AH-64D Longbow

(90: Classic) Electronic Arts - Helicopter Flight Simulation £44.99

Longbow is justifiably a classic and will appeal most to fans of US Navy Fighters and *Top Gun* (prop-heads skip to *Hind* below). It seems to have been designed first and foremost as a game, rather than sticking to realism à la *Hind*; it's pretty, with superb music and a gorgeous interface - but there's no network play and it requires 97MB hard disk space.

Battle Arena Toshinden

(83: Recommended) FunSoft - Beat 'Em Up £34.99

Warning - this PSX conversion is processor hungry! True to the original, this is more of a sword and sorcery beat 'em up as opposed to pure fisticuffs - even the 'unarmed' combatants seem to carry the most alarming weapons; a bit of simple hand-to-hand violence wouldn't go amiss. It's got serious competition in the form of *Tekken* and *Virtua Fighter* - although it doesn't require a 3D accelerator card.

Duke Nukem 3D

(93: Classic) US Gold - Shoot 'Em Up £44.99

Yup, *Duke* is a *Doom* clone but it's more inventive and more entertaining. It's also a bloody good stopgap while we're waiting for the mighty *Quake*. *Duke* himself is blessed with a great sense of humour, there are new weapons and enemies, a level designer and the facility to convert any *Doom* WAD into a *Duke* map. Excellent value for money!

Gearheads

(90: Classic) Philips Media - Arcade £29.99

Don't knock it 'til you've tried it - okay, so it's about clockwork toys battling for supremacy but it's surprisingly addictive nonetheless. (NB: Windows 95 required.)

Hind

(90: Classic) Digital Integration - Flight Sim £44.99

Propeller heads and fans of *SU-27* and *Tornado* will luvve this one. The emphasis is on hyper realism rather than presentation, so it runs great on low spec machines. Newbies be warned - it's so bloody hard you might be better off with *Longbow*. It scores over *Longbow* in that it has loads of multi-play options (direct serial link, two-player over a modem or eight on a network). Prop-heads persevere - it's well worth taking time to master it.

Silent Hunter

(90: Classic)SSI/Mindscape - Submarine Sim £TBC

This does what it sets out to do, and does it perfectly. It's hard to fault - it's got superlative atmosphere and graphics, loads of cat and mouse stuff, explosions, big splashes, creaking hulls, depth charge attacks, leaking engine rooms - the wwa works, in fact!

Space Hulk: Vengeance Of The Blood Angels

(90: Classic) Electronic Arts - Strategic Shoot 'Em Up £49.99

It's so tough it just about screams "Come on if you think you're 'ard enough!" The tense foreboding atmosphere and new graphics, sounds and 3D engine combine to make sure this offers a long-term challenge to those brave enough to accept it.

TaoOps

(81: Recommended) Strategic Plus Software - Strategy Wargame £44.99

Don't be fooled by the basic graphics, *TaoOps* is a high quality real-time game - with no hexes! Plenty of excitement and endless tactical possibilities make this a must-have. Includes network and play by mail/e-mail options.

Witchaven 2

(72) US Gold - 3D Shoot 'Em Up £29.99

Despite having all the elements of quality gaming (superb graphics, spooky sound, fast hectic action and loads of atmosphere) this is more like an add-on disk for the original, and doesn't quite do enough to better its rivals. Z



Mr Cursor

He's afraid of... John Kettley (but not cockroaches)

I'LL GET TO THE JOHN KETTLEY STUFF later, but first I want to share a tasty discovery with you. I live in a tower block which has recently had a cockroach population explosion (it's swarming with the bastards). The people on the second floor blame the tenants on the first floor, the third floor tenants blame the second floor, the fourth the third... and on it goes, all the way up to the top. And we, all us twelfth floorers, naturally, blame the eleventh floor scum. Here's proof. "I kill eighteen roaches

(Below) Ensure your 'roach is thoroughly cooked to avoid any embarrassing 'scurrying off plate' situations...



yesterday," complained my Nigerian neighbour, in the lift. She continued: "It is the Irish below me who are to blame, I am sure of this, I am sure of this!" I agreed that she may have a point, but added that the weird Spanish bloke next door to them - to my mind - wasn't completely beyond suspicion either. "Yes," she concurred. "He is very crazy!" And he is. He's totally barking. But he's also 100 per cent innocent. You see what I didn't tell my worried neighbour, for obvious reasons, was that the person responsible for the block's cockroach infestation was standing in the lift with her. Yes - it's me! (My cockroach breeding programme got slightly out of control last summer, and about 70 of the buggers escaped through the air vent in the bathroom after I accidentally knocked one of the containment tanks over.) But why was I breeding them in the first place? Listen: having watched every episode of Channel Four's *Bush Tucker Man*, I realised that if a half-starved Australian Bush Beetle constitutes such a good feed, then how about a City Beetle? So, to this end, I visited London

(Far right) John Kettley himself - wonder what he'd taste like with a dash of mustard and a dollop of ketchup?

Zoo and helped myself to a few exhibits from the insect house. I put 22 aside for procreation purposes, leaving nine for culinary experimentation. It took a while, but this - I eventually discovered - is how to correctly prepare a cockroach for human consumption. (1) Remove and discard the solid wing covering flaps. (2) Slice off the head and arse area. (3) Pull off the legs. (4) Make an incision along the back of what's left and crack it open down the middle, revealing the fleshy insides. (5) Place your opened 'roach under a low grill for two minutes. (6) Artistically present it on a plate (ie put a slice of lemon next to it). (7) Yummy! Use a teaspoon and fingers! It looks like a black olive! And the taste? Well, it's sort of 'acquired', as they say - but then the same could be said about caviar, and that vile cack costs a zillion quid an ounce! (While cockroaches are free.)

John Kettley is a weatherman...

So what does cockroach farming have to do with John Kettley, and is there any connection whatsoever between either of these and computers? Read on... It just so happened that I was digesting a cockroach when I first noticed how John Kettley tries (whenever possible) to jokingly link the final item on the news into his following weather report. For instance, the last story (on the cockroach digesting day in question) was about pigeons nesting on London tube trains. End 6 O'clock news, and over to John: "Hmm, it looks as if autumn's come home to roost as well," he smirked, pointing at some rain clouds on his map. A few days later the news petered out with a story on the Harlem Globetrotters. Cut to John: "They're lucky that basketball's an indoor sport," he chuckled, pointing to yet more rain clouds. Zip forward a week or so. The closing news story is (yawn) a Labour conference in Blackpool. Over to a grinning Kettley: "So the Labour Party are discussing Europe," he chirped. "Well, the people in Brighton are also probably discussing Europe at the moment, seeing as that's where all their rain has just come from." I could quote these genuine Kettleyisms for hours on end, but I still haven't tied computers into the equation. But expect that to change immediately...

Okay, while eating a cockroach the other evening I decided to write a BASIC programme which would automatically supply Kettleyisms. The idea was that you'd type in the gist of the final story from a news broadcast, the PC would search its database and do some simple word recognition stuff, and then it'd print out a few 'cheeky links'.

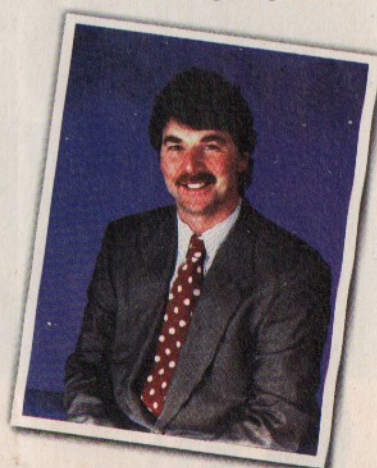
My first computer aided Kettley-ism (seeded with a story about Labour's criticism of last month's Railtrack sell-off) came out thus: "They were talking about trains in the >syntax error on line 690 >programme terminated!" Damn and bloody damn again. (Oh, I forgot to mention that I'm not very good at programming.)

Anyway, I happily scoffed another cockroach, fiddled with a couple of subroutines for about half an hour and tried again, using the same news item. Back to John: "Well, I expect the shareholders are very >DO without LOOP >programme terminated!" Piss!

I then spent two whole days going through the entire AT code and data strings with a fine tooth comb. The problem? A missing bloody comma, would you believe. Which brings us to now. This is live (as it were) and I'm virtually certain that the programme's structure is sound, and, that in simple BASIC, I have simulated John Kettley's entire brain! So I'll give it a really heavy news item to chew on. How about a made-up one, eh? Erm, I'm telling it that a gargantuan volcanic eruption has just killed 815,000 people in New Zealand. I'll press 'return'. (Click...)

"Well, it may be rather hot in New Zealand at the moment, but here in the UK I'm afraid it's >procedure not found >programme terminated!"

Bollocks! I give up. Z



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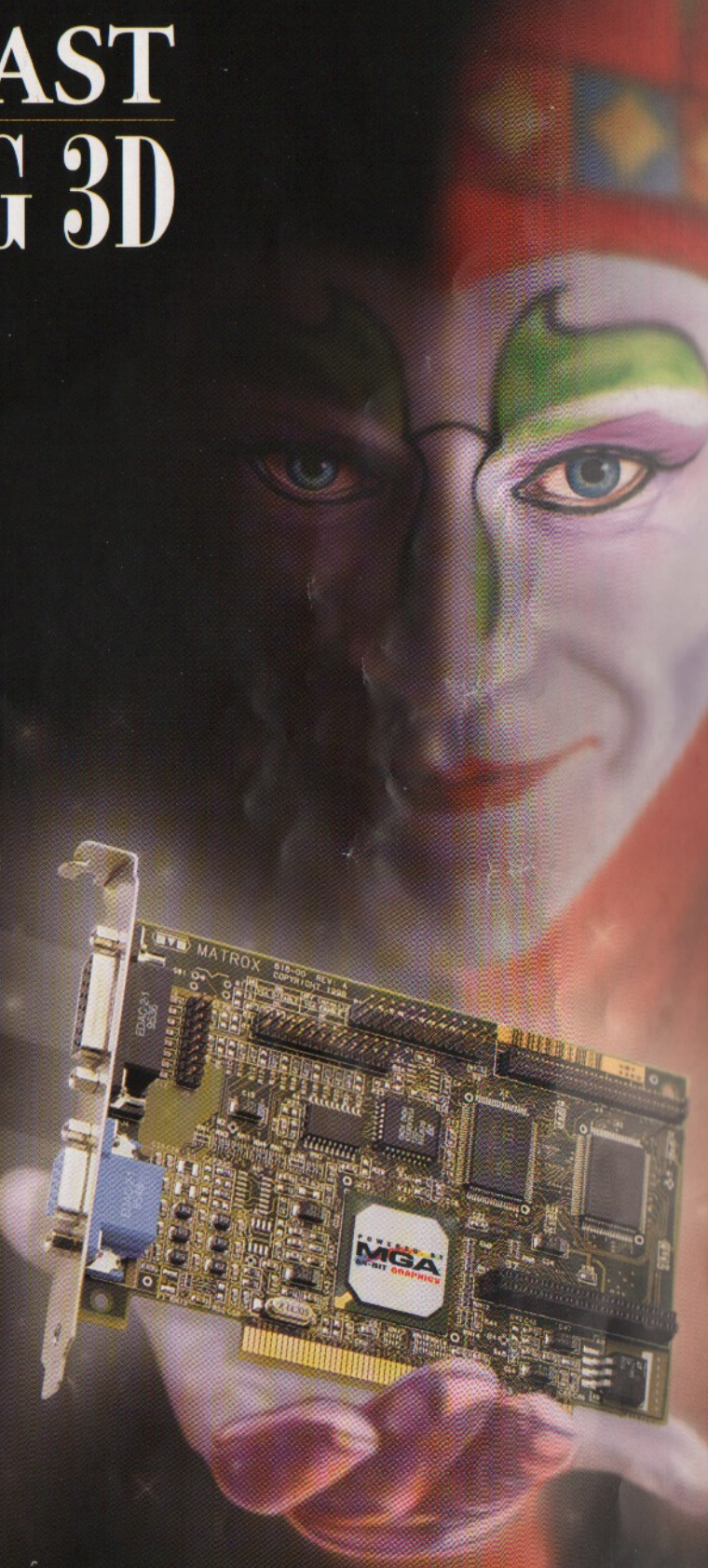
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