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Rainbow Islands complete guide! Starts on page 53

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FOR THE BEST IN S

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THIS IS AMIGA POWER

20–50 GAMES OF THE MONTH

Not necessarily the best games of the month (in terms of whether they’ve got the highest marks or not) but certainly the most interesting. Amiga Power’s flexible reviewing system allows everything the space it needs, be it two pages on a simple (but nonetheless jolly good) arcade romp like Chuck Rock, or up to five (!) on something a bit more complicated...

53 COMPLETE CONTROL

Page after page of hints and tips to give you Complete Control over your games. This month, overdose on the biggest, bestest Player’s Guide to Rainbow Islands you’ve ever seen. (Plus lots

99 WIN!

THE AMIGA POWER ALL-TIME TOP 100 GAMES!

80-96 AMIGA POW

Every new game that didn’t quite make the Games Of The Month section reviewed, be it full-price or budget. Good, bad or ugly, if it’s released this month it’ll be covered in the most fearless review section around...

105-110 THE BOTTOM LINE

Amiga Power’s unique reference guide – six pages packed to overflowing with mini-reviews of every significant full price Amiga game released over the past year. Classics, turkeys and in-betweens (lots of in-betweens) – you’ll find them all here!
10 TRUE STORIES
News, gossip, interviews, compos, and the Gallup charts. If it's happening in Amiga games it's happening in True Stories...

EVERY MONTH Amiga Power carries a demo-packed disk stuck to the cover. Normally, that is - to kick off with it's all a little bit special...

AND THIS IS BOMBUZAL
That's right! To get the ball rolling we're actually giving away complete games on the first two issues - and not just any old games, either. No, these are titles picked from the Amiga Power All-Time Top 100, and as such guaranteed absolutely exceptional! This month it's Bombuzal, the famous puzzle game, and - to make sure you get the most out of it - the next few pages present a complete Player's Guide put together by the fair hand of the inimitable Gary Pen...

POWER FEATURES
Interviews, opinion, Work In Progress features and more - the middle of the Amiga Power will bring you things never seen before in computer magazines. And it all starts with the bits over on the left there...

76 Birds Of Prey - four years in the making!

Famous Five
The Power
Arborea
Excalibur

GAMES

112 IF I'D KNOWN THEN...
Our regular back page feature, where famous industry types look back on their past work and admit where they went wrong. This month, Peter Molyneux of Bullfrog talks about Flood, Powermonger, and this little thing called Populous...

BANG! More Get Up And Go-a Than Krakatoa!
* BLAM! More Kerpow! Than T'Pau!
* BOOM! More Force Than Two

ONTO THE GAME PROPER...
In Bombuzal there are hundreds of explosive situations (level to you and me) to defuse. Each task centres around a floating platform built from tiles, some of which support bombs or other explosive devices, others which sport other, um, things. (We'll get onto what they all do in good time). It's up to you - or a friend, for this exercise can involve a second player - to destroy...
all the bombs found on each level without getting yourself blown to kingdom come in the process. To do so, you control a little blue, bobby character, whose sole task in life seems to be a very cruel form of bomb disposal — there's no defusing things in this game, the only way you get rid of something is to blow it up.

**BOMB DISPOSAL**

Bombaloz has two different types of explosive devices: Mines and Bombs. Both come in different sizes, and both types must be destroyed to complete a level.

The size of a bomb (or mine) determines its blast radius — basically how many tiles it strikes if it’s capable of destroying. When a bomb (or mine) explodes, any other bomb (or mine) within its blast radius is destroyed too. In this way complex chain reactions occur and can be used to your advantage when it comes to clearing a site. It also means that if you don't take a bit of care you could blow yourself up quite happily.

Mines are easy to spot — and detonate for that matter. Simply step onto a tile bearing a mine and BOOM! It’s game over time — you’re dead. The only safe way to set off a mine is by triggering it with an adjacent explosion.

Bombs, on the other hand, are a different kettle of fish. Every bomb has a three-second fuse, and pressing the firebutton while standing on top of the bomb starts the countdown, while releasing the firebutton before zero is reached aborts the countdown and resets the fuse. The bomb won't actually go off until you step off the tile on which it resides, so it's no big problem if the counter reaches zero and you're standing right over the bomb.

Don't push your luck though — before you set one off, make sure the bomb's small enough that you'll be able to get out of the blast area in time, and that it's one you really want to destroy. Setting off bombs in the wrong order can make a level impossible to complete, so you should only really activate a bomb if you're sure you want to do it.

**LOADING BOMBALOZ**

Heavens, you should try failing off logs sometimes. (That's far more difficult than getting Bombaloz bailing from your TV or monitor.) First, ensure that no other program is running and that no-one's left a disk lying around inside the Amiga's internal drive. If all is clear, insert your Bombaloz disk. If your Amiga is turned off, turn it on.

The gorgeous picture shown here should appear during the loading of the main program, only to be replaced by an option-packed title screen once the first stage of disk accessing action is complete. Please note that you must leave the Bombaloz disk in the drive (that's right, funny guy — under your dad's car) during play.

**AND WHAT YOU SHOULD DO IF IT DOESN'T WORK**

Hold it! Something's not quite right around here!

In the unlikely event that Bombaloz fails to load, remove any peripherals from your computer (memory expansion devices should not cause a problem) and repeat the loading procedure. If Bombaloz still fails to load — and it’s a pain I know (not to mention highly unlikely) — then I'm afraid you must have a faulty disk.

All is not lost though. First try using the DISK-DOCTOR utility on your Workbench disk to correct it — full details on how to use it can be found in the user's manual that came with your machine. Still no joy? Then don't worry — we'll replace it for you. Simply pop the offending item — along with a SAE to keep it company — into a niceeco envelope or jiffy bag, and send it to:

Bombaloz Disk Returns, Amiga Power, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW

We'll replace it within the month.

**BUT BEFORE YOU DO ANYTHING ELSE...**

...you'd better pick your options from this title screen. You can use a joystick, the keyboard or the mouse to move the arrow around and select an option (we recommend that you use the mouse — it's the fastest and easiest method) and then select it by clicking on it. Once the parameters of the game are set to your requirements, they stay the same until you change them.

**ONE UP**

Anyone without friends or hard enough to go it alone should choose this single-player option. It’s also used to turn off the TWO UP option.

**CONTROL**

Hey, whatever takes your fancy. This is where it's at for Player One, with a single click cycling through these control possibilities.

**START**

Pretty obvious really.

**CODE**

Determine Player One's starting level by pointing here and pressing the mouse's left-hand firebutton to make four dashes appear. Now you can enter a new four-letter code — and there's no need to press the RETURN or ENTER keys after the fourth letter. Incidentally, the key still acts as a backspace.

**VIEW**

Here's where Player One decides how he or she would like to see events unfold during play. The default symbol of four blocks refers to the fact that the view chosen is determined when START is selected. However, should you choose either 2D or 3D instead, this view overrides that chosen from the START menu.

**CODE**

Guess what? You get it — the egocentric's graveyard. When you get bored with viewing the super scores that you and your friends have achieved, press a firebutton to return to the options screen.

**VIEW**

Player Two's view, which can in fact be different to Player One's.

**TWO UP**

The popular people can play with or compete against someone else if they select this. The border around this little box will turn green to show that it's active. Note that both players can choose to begin play from different levels. Or maybe you'd both like to choose the same level and help each other over the one who gets the furthest. Whatever your choice, Player One and Player Two play alternately.

**CONTROL**

Player Two's control method is chosen here.

**CODE**

Yes, you can actually decide which level Player Two is to start — and it can be totally different to that for Player One.

**CALL THIS A HERO?**

Not really. He is, however, the character you play — a fat, blue, brain-dead blob with a big red nose called, well, he doesn't really seem to have a name, so I'll call him Guy. (But we called him Malcolm in the All-Time Top 100 supplement, Gary! Ed.) Yes, but I don't like the name Malcolm, I like Guy.

Anyway, Sadie, Guy (Malcolm, Ed) hasn't really got the sort of swoony, missy-magnificenec that you'd normally associate with guys his line of work. Nope, Guy's a bit of a girlie's blonde really. You just watch, right? When the gunpowder goes up, he stands there, rooted to the spot, with his big white hands over his eyes and a dopey, 'It's not-scary' expression on his face. What a jipster.

In gameplay terms, what this means is that you've got to get him well out of the way of an explosion before it actually happens, because when it actually goes off he'll stop running and if he's too close his pants get blown to an end. He doesn't even get to go to Bombaloz Heaven because there isn't one. It's a simple as that.

One other thing: Guy may be soft in the head, but his body's not. If he falls off a tile and onto the blue parquet-style floor below his feet, (Just be careful not to overshoot too often) HOlt IT RIGHT THERE!

One thing you've got to remember while playing the game is never, never stand still for too long (no matter how tempting it may be you're trying to squeeze out the layout of the level and so on). Remaining stationary for 10 seconds or so prompts the appearance of a five-second timer. When it starts to tick down below your head you know something's got to happen and if it's not like the before the timer reaches zero.

What sort of bad thing? Well, if you happen to be standing on one of the more normal tiles when the timer depletes, the tile in question turns into a Spinner. These nasty little blockies whisk you off your tile whether you wanted to go or not — usually in a decidedly fatal direction. Spinners don't appear on dissolving tiles or tiles with bombs on, but that's nothing to write home
CONTROL POSSIBILITIES

JOYSTICK
To keep everyone happy, two modes of joystick control are on offer. With the pointer on this icon, double-click the left-hand mouse button (that's two quick successive presses) to call up the two directional options. A single click of the mouse's left-hand button while pointing at the relevant icon will determine whether you play using diagonal movements (useful if you play in 3D mode) or horizontal and vertical movements.

MOUSE
To be honest, this isn't the best method of control. Forget it. Just in case you're stupid enough to use the mouse to play, the left-hand button acts as the fire button.

KEYBOARD
Those are the keys to please...
RIGHT / LEFT
DOWN Z UP A
FIRE RIGHT SHIFT
Alternatively, you can always define your own. With the pointer on this icon, double-click the mouse's left-hand button. Now you can choose your keys. Note that there are four keys which cannot be used as their functions are carved in stone. Those keys are: the SPACE BAR, F1, ESC and the - key that lies directly below it.

STARTING THE GAME!

Right then. Here's where the adventure begins. Selecting this option calls up a choice of four other options...

2D
View the action from above. Unless you chose differently via the VIEW option, Extensive research has revealed that a majority of Bombuzal players prefer to keep their eyes on the game in two dimensions as opposed to three. So use this viewpoint if you want to seriously get somewhere in the game.

3D
View the action from an isometric angle. Unless, of course, you chose differently via the VIEW option. The graphics are bigger, prettier and more detailed here, but getting your mind around just where everything is in relation to everything else can be tricky. Our tip: use this option to impress any passing chicks.

CONT
Play Bombuzal starting from the level determined by the code in the CODE box.


There are various sorts of bomb you'll come across while playing Bombuzal.

Here's a quick bomb spotter's identification guide, complete with the first appearance of each in the game.

AERIAL BOMBS
Or A-Bombs as they are sometimes known. These devils devices are just like their regular counterparts but with a special feature: when one A-Bomb is detonated it sets off all the other A-Bombs on that level, regardless of their proximity. They come in two sizes too...

SMALL A-BOMB
First Appearance: Level 12
LARGE A-BOMB
First Appearance: Level 12

SWELL BOMBS
These are so-called not because they are but because they do. The Swell Bomb increases and decreases in size (is sometimes it's effectively a small bomb, sometimes a large one) until either it or any other type of explosive is activated. Then it goes off - when its blast radius is determined by its size at the time of the incident.

SMALL BOMB (OR MINE)

MEDIUM BOMB (OR LARGE MINE)

BOMBS AND THEIR BLAST RADIUSES (OR DEATH AND HOW TO AVOID IT)
The size of a bomb is directly proportional to its blast radius. Thus a small mine and a small bomb will have the same destructive force. The only exception being the Large Mine, which has a blast radius equivalent to that of a Medium Bomb.

SHADED
Bombs (or mines) on these tiles will be set off, and the tiles themselves destroyed (with the exception of those that are invulnerable - more on these later).

OPEN
Bombs (or mines) on these tiles will be set off, otherwise the tiles will remain intact.

LARGE BOMB
A bomb (or mine) will only set off another if its blast radiuses actually butt up against each other. Here are two examples...

EXAMPLE ONE
Bomb A (small) will set off bomb B (medium) which in turn will set off bomb C (large).

EXAMPLE TWO
Bomb A (small) will set off bomb B (medium) but NOT bomb C (large).
DURING PLAY
Bad luck. There's no pause mode, so you can't sit back and assess the situation at your leisure. Come to think of it, you can't even stop to answer the door or the call of nature. It isn't the programmers being forgetful that's omitted the pause mode by the way — since a lot of the challenge of the game is that you've got to keep moving and think on your feet, allowing you to assess the situation at your leisure would obviously be a no-no.

That having been said, there are a few very special keys that it might prove useful to know about. And they are...

SPACE BAR: Before you even begin to blow up any bombs, it's a good idea to take a butcher's at an overview of the situation. Press the SPACE BAR to call up a map of the current level. Press the SPACE BAR again (or the firebutton) to return to the real world as it were. Note that the timer does not stop while you actually view the map — that'd make life far too easy.

ESC: Press the ESC key to quit to the title/option screen.

TONY'S TOP TIP
Here's a tip from Tony Crowther — When you come across a layout with lots of dissolving tiles, walk over as many as possible before attempting to complete the level. This earns you far more points than you'd get with the Floor Bonus.

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS
Apart from all the brilliant bombs and top-hole tiles, Bombuzal features four freaky alien types, two of which are good. The other two are — surprise — bad, and should be avoided at all cost.

THE GOOD GUYS: When you find one of these chaps you can take control of in much the same way you set off bombs — by holding down the firebutton until the timer hits zero. While you are in control of one of these robots, Guy can't be hurt by any enemies, so it's safe to just leave him where he is and forget about him for a while. He can still be blown up though, so watch out as you're going. When a good fellow is dead, you'll find that the control reverts to Guy.

BUBBLE: This red robot is so stupid it treats all bombs as mines. Just mind he doesn't fall off the edge before he gets the chance to explode.
First Appearance: Level 17

SQUEEZE: Your blue buddy is marginally more intelligent than Bubble, and as a result does anything you can do — including falling off the edge.
First Appearance: Level 13

AND THE BAD BOYS: Ooh, and aren't they just. You can avoid them or blow them up — but whatever you do, don't touch them.

SINISTER: This big yellow ball only ever turns left. First Appearance: Level 17

DEXTER: The cluster of four yellow balls always turns right. First Appearance: Level 11

KNOW YOUR TILES
As with the bombs, things aren't as simple as they first appear. In fact, there are oodles of different sorts of tile, and they all have some decidedly different properties. Such as...

NORMAL TILE: Mundane is every way. It's destroyed by explosions but not through contact with Guy. First Appearance: Level 1

DISSOLVER: This tile, recognisable by its interesting cracked appearance, lives up to its name by dissolving as soon as Guy has touched it and moved on. You can't go back that way again.
First Appearance: Level 1

ICE: You just can't stand still on one of these. In fact you can't stand on one of these tiles at all.
First Appearance: Level 2

SLOT: Here's a novelty - bombs may be moved about on these from one slot to another connecting slot. A bomb on one of these special embossed tiles is picked up with a quick tap on the firebutton and dropped with another quick tap. Note that you cannot carry a bomb past another bomb or from a slot to any other type of tile.

When moving bombs, it's not always easy or time effective to execute a quick press of the firebutton to drop them. Instead, if possible move onto another tile either with a bomb on it or without a bomb. The bomb will automatically drop to the floor. First Appearance: Level 3

TELEPORT: It doesn't, as you could be forgiven for expecting, teleport you to another tile with a teleport on it. In fact you 'won't know where a teleport takes you until you enter into it'. But then it may be too late. Yes, it's a risk, but one that's often worth taking, and at least the destinations remain constant for each level. Note that if Guy moves into a teleport tile after detonating a bomb, he won't reappear until the exploding has stopped - even if the teleporter is destroyed. This can prove a very useful way of saving your life, especially as the large bombs are notoriously difficult (read 'impossible') to get far enough away from to survive.
First Appearance: Level 6

RIVETED: Riveted tiles are rough 'n' tough and more than capable of surviving the mightiest of explosions.
First Appearance: Level 13

TEMPLE: By absorbing the explosion of a neighbouring bomb (or mine), this tile suppresses the blast radius to a single tile and destroys itself in the process.
First Appearance: Level 17

SPINNER: Throws you off one tile away in a randomly determined direction. These also appear if you hang around doing nothing for too long.
First Appearance: Level 17

SWITCH: It works in much the same way as a bomb, only it doesn't explode when the timer runs out. Instead, it's effect is reversed. A switch which is thrown will change the map in some subtle way. It could be the addition of a tile of any description. It could even be the addition of a bomb. Cool! (It's always worth throwing any switches you come across to see what they can do — often a level will only be completeable when you take advantage of them).
First Appearance: Level 11

AMIGA UPDATES – AND HOW THEY CAN AFFECT YOUR PROGRAM
Owners of the very newest Amigas (the ones with the little green power lights) may find Bombuzal looks slightly different on their machines to on older Amigas. This is due to subtle changes Commodore have made to the inside of the machines, but don't worry — it won't make any difference gameplay at all. It does make the in-game music run slightly faster than you'd expect though (opinion in this office is split over whether it's actually an improvement or not) and means the bomb timers will run down that bit faster. They won't go off until you've stopped off the tile though, so it doesn't really change the game.
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Bitchin’!

Ocean’s home computer incarnations of television’s favourite family The Simpsons are in the capable hands of Arc Developments, the team most recently behind Activision’s Dragon Breed conversion. Incidentally, Arc is currently applying the finishing touches to the long-awaited conversion of R-Type 2 for Activision. First impressions are good, with programmer Tim Round (who did such a smart job on Dragon Breed) seemingly managing to capture the flavour of the coin-operated original — including the parallax scrolling backdrop. Look out for a full review in a future issue.

Shirley quits Amiga

Fans of Firebird’s Quartz and Electric Dreams’ Spindizzy Worlds won’t be pleased to hear that the author of these two gems, Paul Shirley, has left 16-bit programming behind him to concentrate on conversion work for the Sega MegaDrive console. And it’s unlikely he’ll return...

...And so does Phillips (He’ll be back though)

John Phillips, author of the Amiga Power All-Time Top 100 game Nebulus, has also left the 16-bit scene to get down to some Sega conversion work. John’s last released computer project was Eliminator through Hewson over two years ago. Since then he worked on Scavenger (also for Hewson) which was unfortunately shelved.

As with all of John’s previous work, Scavenger utilised a novel new technique — Nebulus contended around those silky-smooth rotating towers, Eliminator had slick road and sprite expansion routines, while Scavenger’s ‘thing’ was that it contained shadows that distorted realistically against background objects. Fortunately, unlike Mr... Scavenger now shelved.

Shirley, John will be returning to the home computer scene. Work on his next original project is likely to begin sometime this month and — yes! — it’ll utilise an updated version of those very same shadow techniques...

Interesting if true...

Rumours abound that Mirrsoft has secured the licence to bring Aliens 3 to the home computer. However, spokespeople refuse to confirm or deny the fact.

In contrast to its predecessors, the movie doesn’t feature any hi-tech hardware. Instead heroine Ripley (played by Sigourney Weaver) apparently uses an axe to fend off the aliens’ advanced! It’s also rumoured that there are a few extra alien types this time around, including a giant space cow! Aliens 3 is currently being filmed at Pinewood for release towards the end of this year.

While Ocean work on Terminator 2 (see story to the left), Virgin has the licence to bring the original Terminator to the Sega console system. Whether the company can extend this to the Amiga remains to be seen...

Welcome to Amiga Power

It’s always a bit of a problem with first issues. What do you say? Do you say hey wow, fab and groovy, look at all the great things in this magazine, why buy any other (and so on)? Or do you go really quiet and sheepish and not say anything very much, hoping the magazine will speak for itself. Hmm. I think we’ll go for the first option myself.

So, Amiga Power! It’s fab and groovy! It’s got full colour all the way through! It’s going to review every game that comes out — not just the best ones, or the ones that just happen to plop through our letter box each month! It’s going to be honest - there’ll be none of this ‘every game gets 80% stuff! It’s not going to have anything irrelevant in it at all — no techie, widdly stuff, and certainly not a load of old rubbish about pop stars/ clothes/comics/whatever! It’s going to carry a disk packed with hot demos and ‘stuff’ on the front every month! It’s going to run compendious reviews of older software too, giving you a proper perspective on whole gaming ‘scene’! It’s going to...but, ah. I give up. My heart just wasn’t into all that trumpet blowing, willy-waving stuff I’m afraid.

No, I think you’re going to have to judge us by what we do and not by what we say. Which means it’s time I shut up right about now.

Matt Bielby

Amiga Power/Millennium Moonshine Racers Competition

Win! Two Formula Fun Dirt Buster remote control off-road buggies!

It’s true! Each car is about 11 inches long, goes like a rocket, and would normally cost you between 40 and 50 quid. While they’re not quite the same as the cars the good boys drive in Moonshine Racers, they’re sort of similar, and certainly the nearest we could get down our local remote control car shop.

Winning one is simple. Everyone knows about illegal moonshine smuggling — after all, we’ve all seen the Dukes Of Hazzard — but what exactly is moonshine? And how do you make it?

The best two recipes or explanations — we’ll be trying them out in the office to see if they work — win a car each. (We can’t really say fairer than that.)

Just send your instructions (make them easy to follow please) to Moonshine Racers Cemmo, Amiga Power, 29 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. And get them to us by May 24th or you won’t stand a chance of winning!

Ocean’s home computer versions of Terminator II: Judgment Day are in the hands of Dimentia, the team (partly) responsible for Core Design’s Corporation and more recently Probe’s Golden Axe for Virgin. The film, once again starring Arnold Schwarzenegger under the direction of James Cameron, opens sometime later this year.
POPULOUS — WITH LAUGHS?

This is Mega Mania from Sensible Software — and yes, you’re right, it does look a little like Populous. The scenario has you and three computer opponents landing on a watery planet which you’ve got to colonise from scratch. Time passes — moving from the prehistoric through Roman to English Civil War, industrial Victorian and so on — while all the time you’ve got to defend your colony from attack and possibly fight and defeat your opponents.

Slighter than Populous, but faster moving and potentially more fun, its main claim to fame is that it comes with one whole disk loaded with digitised speech — real actors were brought in to make the recordings apparently — to really add character to the proceedings. Look for an August release from Image Works.

Veteran publisher Novagen’s latest is to be a new version of an old favourite — the company’s debut release in fact. Encounter first appeared way back in 1983 on the Atari XL, and this new Amiga incarnation features pretty much the same straightforward yet ‘n’ mouse blasting as its forerunner. Amiga Encounter will both look and sound a lot better though, in large part thanks to some swish three-dimensional effects... (continued)

CRIB SHEETS

The first in a series of quick guides to people, companies and, er, ‘things’ in the software industry for people who should know all about them already (but probably don’t).

No1 U.S. GOLD

Contact: Danielle Woodyatt at U.S. Gold Ltd, Units 23 Holcot Way, Holfort, Birmingham B6 7AX.

History: Formed in 1984 by Geoff and Anne Brown of Cornsoft (the software distribution company) with David Ward and John Woods of Ocean as directors and shareholders. Ward and Woods are still involved, though less so than they used to be.

Affiliated labels:

Current: Access, Delphine, Epyx, Futura, Kixx (budget), Lucasfilm, Millennium (distribution only), New Worlds, SSI

And in the past: Accolade, Adventure Soft, Broderbund, Cosmos, DataSoft, English Software, MicroProse, Origin, Rainbow Arts, Toosoft, Ultimate, Vertex Software and (probably quite a few others we’ve forgotten).

Biggest successes: Commercially, games like Beach Head, Gauntlet, OutRun, Raid Over Moscow, Winter Games and — yes! — World Cup Carnival have really done the business for them. In 1985 they perhaps reached their peak, with Impossible Mission the biggest selling game of the year and Gauntlet recognising U.S. Gold as the most successful UK software house. Recently, US Gold have had less in the way of sure-fire commercial hits — they seem effectively to have given up on commercialising with Ocean as the biggest selling UK software house. In fact, the rise of the 15-bit format has seen the company invest heavily in developing new genres of software, notably in the 16-bit format. Lacking in-house programmers of their own, they’ve had to find new ways of working with external development houses to release new titles on the Amiga.

Biggest failures: World Cup Carnival (a dreadful last minute mess which received some of the lowest marks ever seen by a computer game), has to be seen as the all-time low point, despite the commercial success, while Shirley Muldowney’s Top Fuel Challenge (an appalling drag racing game from Cosmos) and Channell (a rather tasteless release which had claims of being the best drag racing game on the Amiga), are two of the biggest flops in the future, apparently.

Typical US Gold game: Hard to say now. Used to be fairly arcade based, but more recently the product line up has been changing, with a wide range of fantasy and role-playing titles being released, as well as an increasing amount of critical acclaimed original 16-bit product. Expect more of this in the future, apparently.

Typical industry comment on USG: Well, it’s not quite the force it used to be, is it?

Things to come: Highlights of the year will include Cruise For A Corpse from Delphine and The Secret Of Monkey Island from Lucasfilm (both due soon) as well as the long awaited arrival of OutRun Europe (first previewed earlier this year). Look out for the official Godfather series of games — of which Delphine’s adventure version, at least, sounds very promising indeed.

Cruise For A Corpse — new from Delphine.

ALAN GRANT

Alan Grant writes comics — he worked on Judge Dredd for years (often sharing writing duties with the strip’s creator John Wagner) as well as many of the other famous 2000AD characters. Currently he’s working on Batman for DC in America, a new UK comics project called Toxic, and has a number of other stories in a number of other titles — one of which is this new departure, a text adventure game called Demoniac.

How did you get involved with this project then Alan?

Palace contacted me through a friend of a friend — they had this new adventure game idea and they wanted someone who could bring a fresh approach to a game, perhaps someone from the world of comics. They knew my material already, they’d seen Batman, Judge Dredd and so on. And how did you respond?

I was very happy to do it. I’d already been involved in computer games in a different way, doing a strip called Computer Warrior for the revived Eagle. The stories were based on the plots of computer games but both John Wagner and myself didn’t like playing them so we got someone else to do it and then tell us what the stories were about. I like simple arcade games like Space Invaders or Centipede but I can’t handle complicated ones because I’m basically computer illiterate.

How did you go about creating the game?

They got me to come up with the characters first and the basic scenario, then we got together — the Palace people, myself and the programmer — at the Palace offices in London and hammered it out. I did a more detailed synopsis and they explained what we could and couldn’t do. Then every so often over a period of about a year we’d meet and see how it was coming on. It seemed like a very long time scale to me — I’m used to people wanting comic stories really fast. From what you’ve seen do you think it’s been a success?

Well, I haven’t actually seen the finished thing yet, but I liked the way the last version I saw was going. I have to admit that I’ll probably never play it when I do get a copy, but I’ll look forward to just owning one anyway. And yes, I’d be quite interested in doing another one, but we’ll have to see how this one does first. After all, it might bomb out.

PALACE

One of Alan’s very comic book-like characters from Demoniac.
DAMOCLES 2: DOUBLE TROUBLE

We'll have to wait a bit for this one, but it should be worth it. Damocles 2: Double Trouble is the sequel to the sequel to Novagan's mould-breaking adventure Mercenary. Once again the comet Damocles is heading towards the planet Erich. With only a few hours to spare, the race is on to prevent disaster. That's trouble Number One.

The other half of the Double Trouble is the result of Novagan taking note of a criticism levelled at the original Damocles - that the going got a little too lonely at times. Now we have a villain to contend with too.

The bad egg in question goes by the name of K.C. Kim. He rules the outer reaches of the Damocles solar system, but for some bizarre reason wants to restrict his dominance by destroying the other planets. Needless to say, his exploits cause their own share of problems on each planet.

Damocles 2 will be released this summer, a year since its predecessor first came amongst us. Incidentally, for those on a tighter budget, Mercenary itself is now available at the budget price of £2.59.

Powerdrome author Michael Powell is putting the finishing touches to his latest project, CyberFight. It's a sexy-looking first person perspective polygon-based beat-'em-up of sorts involving robots. Michael has written CyberFight on the IBM PC first, which sadly means that the Amiga version won't be with us until next year.

Having made a mark with its arcade conversion debut of Gottlieb's Exterminator, Audigier are set to produce a sequel of their own design. The company is looking to silence critics of the original who were quick to condemn the title's playability, as Exterminator II will contain many enhancements, including some special new weapons and secret rooms. Stay tuned for further details...

WHERE DO YOU GO AFTER KICK OFF?

Steve Screech knows. With the award winning Kick Off and Kick Off 2 to his name, he's currently in the final throws of putting together another similar game - but based around a very different sport. Tip Off, as it's called, is a basketball simulation, and sees Steve working with Kick Off programmer Dino Dini once again. Apparently they've been making use of extensive video footage of American basketball to ensure that the tactics employed in Tip Off are as authentic as possible. Look for it to be released from Anco sometime this summer.

THE AMIGA POWER ROCK-HARD QUIZ

Compiled by Gary Penn - These questions aren't easy. They aren't even just plain tough. Nope, these questions are rock-hard. No prizes for answering them, but if you can you can seriously count yourself a grade-A software smart-arse.

(Softies can flick to the bottom of page 16 for the answers.) 1) In which Amiga conversion would you find two rock-hard hero types called Paul and Vince? 2) In which Amiga conversion would you find two rock-hard hero types called Ben and Andy? 3) In which Amiga conversion would you find two rock-hard hero types called Hit Man and Max Force? 4) In which forthcoming Amiga conversion would you find two rock-hard hero types called Mobs and Robo? (This one's easy - the answer's in this very True Stories.) 5) And... just for variety... in which Amiga conversion would you find two sickeningly cute sweetheart types called Betty and Patty?

Oh dear...

The first in an occasional series where we take a game we think is useless and are really horrible to it.

No1. STREET HOCKEY (Gonzo Games)

After bursting onto the Amiga games scene with the generally well-received Wipe Out, Gonzo Games (We like games!) unleashed this simulation of one of the fastest-moving and most dynamic sports around. (Can you guess which one?) Officially endorsed by the British Street Hockey Association. Street Hockey promised to be thrilling, violent, and 'so addictive it should be illegal'. It wasn't. It was crap.

No, crap is far too bland a word to describe its breathtaking awfulness. The monumentally dire graphics were the least of its problems, indiscriminate and jerky though they were. The mind-bogglingly hopeless sound ('mluhh') was but a distant gunshot wound, and the epidemic of bugs (such as goals being scored during the halftime break) didn't so much spoil the game as provide some light relief.

No, the real problem was with the playability. It simply didn't have any. Players skated around at random, fell down at random, hit the puck at random, and lurched randomly into walls as the computer switched the player you controlled, well, pretty much at random.

After about three seconds of play, the featureless pitch made it impossible to tell which way you were facing - not that it really mattered as it was impossible to tell where the puck was anyway. Or where any of your players were. Or why you were still playing this scarcely-believable excuse for a full-price computer game. Utterly, utterly abysmal.

WHERE DO YOU DO OCEAN'S SMASH TV

With the conversions of Super Hang-On, Power Drift and (more recently) Super Monaco GP under its belt, programmer ZZKJ is turning his hand to a conversion of a different genre - Williams' ultra-violent blaster Smash TV. You can expect to see the fruits of ZZKJ's labour later this year through Ocean. Incidentally, veteran video game manufacturer Williams (who enjoyed much success in the industry's formative years with such innovative wares as Defender, Stargate, and Robotron 2084) are in the middle of making a comeback of sorts. Having concentrated on some highly playable pinballs during the past decade, the company is set to release a host half-a-dozen new video games. NARC you'll have already seen, while next up is Total Carnage, the sequel to Smash TV, which promises to be even more OTT (if that's possible) than its predecessor.

3D SNOOKER

If bashings in Firebird's 3D Pool (budget price review this issue) left you feeling a little sore, here's an alternative - 3D Snooker, from the man who brought you 4x4. Featuring all the rules of the real thing and an impressive 3D polygon display, it looks as though Archer Maclean has chalked up another winner. The game was originally to be released through Activision, but with that company well and truly 'wound down' these days, Virgin Games will be publishing instead. Expect to see it sometime this September.

HEAD OVER HEELS COMES TO AMIGA

Jon Ritman's classic 8-bit isometric arcade adventure Head Over Heels is set to appear on the Amiga, but Ocean isn't sure when and how. Head Over Heels concerns the exploits of two cute characters, one called Head and the other - surprise - Heels. What makes Head Over Heels (ah) head and shoulders above other adventures of this type is the unique interaction between its two stars to overcome awkward situations. How well this classic makes the transition to 16-bit remains to be seen...
A few words about the Amiga Power charts...

They're put together for us by Scan Magazine. If you want to know about new software, this is the place to look. If you're looking for interesting games to play, the charts might give you some ideas. But remember, just because a game is popular, it doesn't mean it's good. You might want to try some of the games that weren't so popular, just to see what they're like.

The charts are broken down into different categories: 2D / 3D, Adventure, Basics, Strategy, etc. Each category is divided into different levels: Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced. This makes it easy to find the games that are right for you.

The charts also give you information about the price of the games. You can see which games are expensive and which are cheap.

The charts are updated regularly, so you can always find the latest information. If you're looking for something specific, you can search the charts to find it.

So, if you're looking for a new game to play, take a look at the charts. You might find something that you hadn't thought of before.

And remember, just because a game is popular, it doesn't mean it's good. You might want to try some of the games that weren't so popular, just to see what they're like.
**Gameboy**
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- FREE Special Reserve membership
- FREE Shockwave Gameboy holsters

**Atari Lynx**

**Sega Megadrive**
- Official UK Version.
- Free extra Joypad and membership.
- FREE extra TURBO Joypad
- FREE Special Reserve membership

**Amiga 500**
- Screen Gems Pack
  - £359.99

**Amiga Peripherals**
- PHILIPS 8035 ARTIST COLOUR STEREO MONITOR
  - £299.99
- AMIGA A503 20 MEG HARD DRIVE (AUTOBOOT W/ KICKSTART) SOCKETS FOR 2 MEG RAM
- GSC INTERFACES FOR PERIPHERALS CONNECTION
  - £269.99
- CUMANA EXT 3.5" 80WK DISK DRIVE
  - £79.99
- AMIGA A501 512K RAM UPGRADE TO 1 ME
  - (£GENUINE AMIGA ITEM WITH CLOCK)
  - £79.99
- ZYDEK 512K RAM UPGRADE TO 1 MEG W/ CLOCK
  - £49.99
- AMIGA V600 RAM EXPANSION
  - £39.99
- NAISH RAM, BRACKET AND RAM (AMIGA OR ST)
  - £32.99
- COVER FOR AMIGA
  - £5.99
- COVER FOR MONITOR
  - £8.99
- KIND WORDS 2 (WORD PROCESSOR)
  - £31.99

**Disks 'n Bits**
- £59p
- £50

**SONY**
- 3.5" DS/DD DISKS + LABEL
  - £19.99
WIZARD KITES

This is Air Duel from MicroProse, a simple, action-packed flight sim based almost entirely on a series of dog fights, and consequently lacking any of that complicated controls/loads of navigation/basically tricky stuff so beloved of the teams behind most flight sims. Put together by Glyn Williams, the chap behind Warhead, it has its roots in game called Fokker he first started working on ages back. That was a World War 1 flight sim based on encounters between Sopwith Camels and Fokker triplanes over the trenches of 1917; this is a greatly expanded version, retaining the wizard kites but adding three other classic dogfights from different time periods. There's the air war over the Pacific from WW2, for instance, starring Grumman Wildcats and Mitsubishi Zeroes; then there's a present day F-18 Hornet vs MG-29 Gulf War scenario, and a futuristic thing set in space. What you see here are some slightly scrappy, yet-to-be-cleaned-up graphics (the Star Wars thing wasn't really feature craft so obviously ripped off from the big-screen, for instance). What you can't see is the neat range of play options that'll be included on the finished version, including a human vs human split-screen affair.

The Fokker triplanes that started it all... still make a strong showing in the WW1 level...

...joined by Grumman Wildcats in the Pacific war scenario.

SPEEDBALL' IN 3D?

Saddest news of the year: Hewson going under. The veteran UK software house, responsible for all-time classics including Parador 90 and Nebulus, entered administrative receivership in March this year. Hewson, which had been around since the early '80s and published games by well known programmers like Andrew Braybrook, Steve Turner, John Phillips and Raf Cecco, thus joins the sad ranks of victims of the current recession. News on reasons behind the collapse and future possibilities are scarce - and look like they'll remain that way for some time but it has to be hoped that a buyer will be found for the

BACK! BACK! BACK! TWO OLD 'FAVES'

Just when you thought it was safe to go back into the arcade... Domark has acquired the licence to convert Taito's Super Space Invaders '91 to the home computer format. You can expect to meet everybody's favourite aliens, along with their new chums including large boss creatures and - got this - cows (!) before the year is out.

One film licence which Mirrorsoft has definitely not acquired is the sequel to one of last year's biggest-grossing flicks - Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. Rather than bring Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: The Secret Of The Ooze to your screens, Mirrorsoft is producing conversions of the Konami coin-operated version instead.

The story behind Konami's rolling beat-em-up sees the Turtles and their chums in all sorts of trouble. First their favourite reporter April O'Neal has to be rescued from a burning building. Then there's a battle with the deadly duo Bebop and Rocksteady. And on top of all that Splinter gets kidnapped by the evil Shredder... Probe is handling the task of converting Turtles to the Amiga, in time for a proposed Christmas release.

AMIGA POWER RECOMMENDS

Our favourite games of the past few months. (If you haven't bought them yet, why not?)

SWIV

Storm

The zappiest zap since the last really zappy thing, Storm's 'sort of follow-up to the classic SWIV packs a staggeringly amount of humdrum graphics, ear-splitting sound and devilishly tricky nasties into a vertically-scrolling shoot-em-up with just one level - but it's a level that's over 105 screens long! No gaps, no disk-accessing pauses, just terrifying violence on a genocidal scale.

PRINCE OF PERSIA

Broderbund (Domark)

Well thought out flip screen arcade adventure of extreme violence and really extreme violence has garnered rave reviews everywhere, and there's a very good reason. It's bloody brilliant. (Or brilliantly bloody). Easily the best future sport sim to date, and with one-player, two-player and management modes, it'll stick to you like napalm. Absolutely unmissable.

SPEEDBALL 2

Image Works

The Bitmap Bros' subtle blend of extreme violence and really extreme violence has garnered rave reviews everywhere, and there's a very good reason. It's bloody brilliant. (Or brilliantly bloody). Easily the best future sport sim to date, and with one-player, two-player and management modes, it'll stick to you like napalm. Absolutely unmissable.

LEMmINGS

Psynosis

Not sure quite what to say really - this game's a phenomenon. Lots of levels and lots and lots of Lemmings - tiny sprites wandering blindly across landscapes riddled with danger, always perfectly happy (if you don't stop them) to plunge to their doom in level-losing numbers. It's like a cute platform game crossed with a god sim crossed with a Roger Rabbit cartoon. Will anyone dare do a clone?
Blue Max
ACES OF THE GREAT WAR
WWI Air Combat Simulation

Take control of one of eight classic WWI fighters and find out how good you really are. Fly with the best—Richthofen, Fonck, Manack, Rickenbacker—and learn their tricks and techniques.

- Action dogfight, solo, and team missions for one or two players using a single computer with any combination of keyboard, joystick, or mouse.
- Strategy flight: For the skilled pilot, Blue Max acts like a highly-intelligent strategic board game, allowing you to work out detailed battle sequences and play back the moves in "realtime" 3D.
- 8 airplanes to choose from, each with its own highly-detailed flying characteristics.
- Perform missions with, as, or against the Aces of the Great War.
- Dozens of historical missions around 4 different locations within France.

How strong are your nerves at 2,000 feet, with an armed Fokker DR.I on your tail? Forget glory, friend. Think survival.

VGA color air combat sequence

VGA 256 color air combat sequence

VGA 256 color air combat sequence

VGA 256 color air combat sequence

VGA periscope view of enemy aircraft

VGA periscope view of enemy aircraft

Now available for the Amiga

DAS BOOT
GERMAN U-BOAT SIMULATION

Winter, 1941. The icy waters of the North Atlantic. The deeper you dive, the greater the pressure. Depth charges explode around you, hanging on the hull of your U-boat like iron fists. Nerve and cunning make you the terror of the Allied convoys.

- 3D submarine warfare: For the first time, a sub warfare game lets you deal with threats below and above the surface in a true three dimensional environment.
- Real communications: Use the German Enigma coding machine to send and receive information.
- Many missions to choose from—into the North Atlantic and Arctic inland along the coast of Norway, into the Bay of Biscay, and through the Straits of Gibraltar.
- 3 different levels of difficulty, from beginner to realistic.
- 3D graphics in 256 VGA colors, with multiple internal and external camera views in a complete 3D world.

Do you think well under pressure? How about 300 pounds per square inch of pressure? Take a deep breath, captain....
Just Who the Hell Do We Think We Are? (Well...) -

**MATT BIELBY**

Matt started life as a humble staff writer at C&VG before defecting to the rather more wild 'n wacky Your Sinclair, where he was deputy editor and then editor within a remarkably short space of time. His career sort of went on hold at that point, though, only Evelyning up when Future Publishing bought Yo from the London-based Dennis. He moved down to Bath, got YS (sort of) up and running on DTP and was just starting to get wigged when the 'polly exciting' launch of Amiga Power came along. He likes cars, comics, boats and fish.

**MARK RAMSHAW**

Before Amiga Power, Mark used to write, design and edit three monthly newsletters for the Amstrad User Group, including the thrilling Amstrad FCW News. A professional Geordie, he likes Béatrice Dalle, Jane's Addiction and Fishbone (these last two are both groups apparently), Thunderbird wine and models himself (rather uselessly) on Jim Morrison. He's currently conducting a series of running battles with the woodlice that've invaded his house.

**STUART CAMPBELL**

Planets as 'a computer fanzine for people who don't like computers. Or fanzines. Or life in general'. He likes 'intergalactic punk rock hip-hop' (whatever that's meant to be) and arguing.

**TIM SMITH**

A cheerful, fluffy bunny sort of a fellow. Tim likes (deep breath) trashy films, playing charades, The Beano, pool, football, whisky with pink lemonade, the city of Atlanta, and probably plenty of other things we've forgotten. A natural wit and raconteur, he's much in demand at local weddings and bar mitzvahs.

**GARY PENN**

Gary's been about a bit. He was editor of Zzap! (in the days when it was good), co-launched The Games Machine, filled in on (ahem) Knave (but only for two months), launched The One and so on. An amateur TV presenter (he introduced a videotape for Mirrorsoft once), Gary lives in Cafford where he attends skipping classes and goes shopping. He likes small children and one day hopes to have his own.

**COLIN CAMPBELL**

Colin likes football. He likes football to the exclusion of just about anything else in fact. He's got an Amiga on which he likes playing football games. In between watching matches he occasionally does a bit of news editing for New Computer Express.

**RICH PELLEY**

Stone Roses and The Happy Mondays and chasing chicks (an activity at which, we have to admit, he shows a remarkable degree of success).

**ANDY IDE**

A bit of a sax beast. Andy likes films (my favourite is Prone by Joe Dante), Frank Zappa, root (my favourite meal is muscles and chips with mayo), being 26, editing Your Sinclair (he took over from Matt in fact), and breasts. A man of diverse tastes.

**JONATHAN DAVIES**

The strong, silent type, Jonathan, er, actually, there isn't that much to write about Jonathan. He's just there. He lives in Herne Bay, goes to uni, plays computer games even though he doesn't like any of them very much (It's okay I suppose). Is high praise from him indeed and is contemplating a career as an actor.

**TREVOR GILHAM**

and the original version of ACE. He likes playing football, watching Arsenal and 'anything Japanese'.

**MATTHEW WILLIAMS**

Stridently heterosexual (and he doesn't care who knows it), Matthew fancies himself as quite a photographer (his pictures appeared in a show during Leicestershire Art Week), has just given up weight training, and likes British cinema. He thinks that he might be quite into surfing too, but he hasn't actually done any yet.

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**BRAYBROOK - BLOWING HOT AND COLD**

Legendary designer/programmer Andrew Braybrook is currently working on an unusual (and rather innovative) new arcade-style run 'n' jump ramp called Fire And Ice.

Unusual! Well, for a start the star of Fire And Ice is a dog. Of sorts. A large, furry, floppy sort of dog, in fact, on mission to save his puppy children from the arrival of the horrible Fire Creatures. This isn't a rescue mission, as you might expect, but in fact takes the form of a sort of odyssey, with our cuddly canine chum leading his pups away from their Arctic home, across the world, and towards a confrontation with the being responsible for this invasion.

Fortunately for our furry, floppy-furred friend the ferocious Fire Creatures are, by day, and local, noonal. The planet's natural inhabitants on the other hand are not. Fuelled by fear, the cowardly critics spend a lot of the game trying to kidnap stray puppies to give to the Fire Creatures in exchange for peace. And so it goes.

As our hairy hero makes his way from Arctic conditions, across mountainous terrain and through deep jungles towards his foe, he finds he has to take on all manner of puppy-loving pests, which he does using some handy ice weaponry. In fact, ice prove to be a multi-purpose tool, coming in useful when negotiating various physical obstacles too.

Andrew, who has been responsible for many Commodore 64 classics and recently enjoyed chart success with the Amiga game Paradroid 90, isn't blowing hot and cold about Fire And Ice. In fact, he's rather confident.

'I want everything in the game to be alive,' he told us. 'Even the bushes run off if you leave them for too long. Nature forces play an important part too. It'll have a realistic feel to it, with proper contoured landscapes where you can roll things down hills and everything moves faster going downhill than up. In a way I'm trying to mirror real life physics, but without the boring bits.'

Expect a September release from Image Works.

**THE AMIGA POWER ROCK-HARD ANSWERS**

Oh dear, oh dear. Couldn't do them, eh? Well, don't worry - we're not going to hold it against you. Just pull yourself together for next month's quiz, okay? 1) Kari (2) Warriors of the Elite (3) Crack Down (US Gold) (4) NARC (Ocean) 4) Bonanza Bros (will be US Gold) 5) Bobbie Bobbie (Firebird)
Now your money goes even further with Commodore.

There’s a little bit of Commodore in all of us. Excitement and adventure, you saw it for yourself in our Christmas commercials. Now your money goes even further with Commodore.

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Our Amiga 500 Screen Gems pack, the UK’s most popular 16 Bit home computer has now doubled from 512K to 1 Megabyte of RAM. This gives even more power to educate, entertain, inspire and stretch the imagination. Yet it's still only £399.99, saving you almost £100.

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If you’re looking for great Amiga value, you could even trade in your old computer for a fantastic world of graphics, animation and sound.

For just £329.99, you can now buy the Amiga 500 computer and modulator, saving you £70 on the normal price.

The C64 with joystick and games cartridge just £199.99

A spectacular fall for the C64

Undoubtedly, the world’s best selling home computer, the C64 is now excellent value down from £199.99 to £119.99.

This month, the C64 brings instant fun for all the family and comes complete with joystick and games cartridge consisting of International Soccer, Klax, Fiendish Freddy's Big Top O'Fun and Flimbo's Quest.

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Commodore
THERE'S A LITTLE BIT OF COMMODORE IN ALL OF US
Welcome to the Games Of The Month section, 24 pages covering the best and most interesting games in the greatest detail. For full details of our scoring system see page 80, but as a quick tip bear in mind you won't see the sort of high scores you might expect from other mags. After all, if you give everything 70 or 80 percent the whole concept of scoring gradually begins to mean nothing very much at all...

The people who brought you the CYBERCO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Game</th>
<th>Cybercon III</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Publisher</td>
<td>US Gold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td>£24.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programmer(s)</td>
<td>The Assembly Line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Release Date</td>
<td>Early May</td>
</tr>
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You'd think that by the 21st century people would have realised that if you build a giant computer and put it in charge of all your defence systems, it's a dead cert that within minutes it'll have gone haywire and taken over the world. But no such luck.

So with a naively founded upon years of sniffing dodgy test-tubes, the Democratic Union's scientists built a giant computer and put it in charge of all their defence systems. With painful inevitability it went haywire and took over the world. How hum. But, as if that wasn't bad enough, it decided that to be on the safe side it had better kill everybody. So it did. Apart, that is, from you and a bunch of resistance-type chumps who've decided to save the world by getting inside the computer and blowing it to kingdom come first. Sounds like a tall order. Well, it's a dirty job, but some gullible schnuck's got to do it.

If you're planning on going through any locked doors, using lifts or activating cameras, consoles or other important objects you'll need a sonic key. It's a bit like one of those things they have on Renault adverts for unlocking their cars, only a whole lot more sophisticated. For a start it's programmable - load it with three of the symbols in your icon strip, point it at a door and (if the code's right) the door will open. Alternatively, point it at something and press the 'interrogate' button and it'll try to extract the code for you. (Nicked a Renault in the 21st century would be a dodger.) You only start out with a few symbols and have to collect more as you go on.

Sonic Key Status: This bit's where you load codes into the key and where codes appear when you interrogate something.

Secondary System Display: Slightly complicated this. It's got three modes which you can cycle between: Weapon Selection (where you can choose between three weapons or the sonic key), Camera Selection (where you pick the camera) and Camera Movement (which lets you wiggle the cameras about and zoom them in and out).

Primary Management System: Here's where you switch on and off the PA's five main systems (Power Assist, Shields, Weapons, Auto Repair and Surveillance), monitor their energy levels and so on. If you start running low on energy it might be a good idea to shut down any non-essentials until you get a bit more healthy.
stunning solid 3D - and a computer that wants to control the world!

Jumping over that chasm might prove a little beyond your capabilities. A more successful route might be to interrogate the terminal device, just ahead. With the right code combination (or simply a lot of luck) you might find the chasm bridged.

Oops, looks like we've come face to face with a security patrol droid. These ones are fairly easy to overcome, however. If your energy is low there is a way to avoid confrontation - simply remain stationary, and the droid won't be able to detect you.

THE HEART OF THE MACHINE
Not much is known about Cybercon III. Except its name, obviously. And the fact that its buried deep in the heart of Mount Adam and is very heavily defended. Oh, and another thing: there's an entrance on one side of the mountain that the computer's defences don't seem to know about - a sort of 'blind spot'. It might be possible to slip one man in unnoticed. (Guess who.) Fortunately a suit of power armour has been captured from Cybercon II that'll make it a lot safer to explore the complex, so you strap it on, put the finishing touches to your last will and testament and step through the entrance, which closes firmly behind you.

Well, that's the plot. What's the game all about? The screen-sheets are a bit of a giveaway, to tell the truth. It's pretty clear that we're dealing with a 3D exploration and puzzle solving game, with the vague possibility of one or two things to shoot. Your objective is to locate the Brain Stem at the heart of the complex and take it out, or, failing that, to shut down the force-field surrounding the complex to make an assault easier. That's going to mean solving some pretty devious puzzles while lighting off the complex's range of automatic defences.

ONE SINGLE, COMPLEX ENTITY
There's plenty to gawp at in Cybercon III, its graphics being its most outstanding feature. Not only are they fast and slick, putting Freescape games, like Driller, to shame, but they're also colourful (lighting-up things really seem to glow, while the general decor is very tasteful and atmospheric) and complicated (there are all sorts of strange machines in some places). After travelling around a bit you'll find that, rather than being split up into distinct rooms, the complex is very much one entity (if you see what I mean). You can look through the door of one room and see whatever lies ahead. And in some really large rooms, sort of 'hallways', you can look around and see for miles in all directions, so agrophobics beware. Some areas also have transparent floors which you can stand on and look into the bits →
The only way you'll be able to save your position is by going into a special 'Save game' room. And to get out again you'll need your sonic key and the slyly black anti-piracy wheel supplied with the game.

Ladies' underwear? Fraid not. It's 'electrical' on every floor. Just tap in the code for the one you want and you'll be whisked there in seconds (assuming you've got the right symbols, otherwise nothing will happen at all).

Up to four cameras can be dropped anywhere you like so you can keep a track on things. They're handy for covering your rear, but can't move under their own steam. 'Parrot' cameras are better - they can...

The top programmers at the Assembly Line are the team responsible for a long line of critically acclaimed Amiga games, including Pipe Mania, Interphase, E-Motion, Vaxine and Exterminator. With Cybercon III it looks like the boys are set for another hit, so Stuart tracked them down to a country mansion in a forest near Bristol and asked, may, demanded that they answer a few taxing questions for us. Unfortunately they made him promise not to ask them any questions about polygons or (indeed) programming in general. A bit of a blow! Instead then, here's what he managed to come up with...

STUART: So, why are you called 'The Assembly Line'? It hardly seems appropriate given all the different sorts of game you've produced.

JOHN DALE: Well, the alternative is 'Hand Cranked Software', so I think the reason is obvious.

STUART: With your impeccable track record, have you thought about making the break from just programming and moving into publishing for yourselves, like, say, the Bitmap Bros or The Sales Curve?

ANDY BEVERIDGE: No, we're fine as we are. Now that we've got a few hits as a team under our belts, we're getting a very fair deal from outside publishers. We don't need the extra hassle.

STUART: Well, that's enough of the techie stuff. Who's your favourite member of the Sugarcubes?

ADRIAN STEPHENS: I think for me it has to be that cute girl singer, what's her name?

JOHN: Yes, it's Bjork for me too. I think it's the cardigans.

STUART: If you were offered five million pounds in cash, on the understanding that if you accepted you would cause a Chinaman somewhere in China to fall off his bicycle and die, would you take the money?

ADRIAN: Oh yes.

ANDY: Yes, I think most people would.

RICARDO PINTO: Yes, but I'd use the money to set up a benefit fund for Chinese widows.

JOHN: Mm, I'd donate at least a tenner to that.

STUART: How would you replace the Poll Tax?

ADRIAN: Well, whatever it is to be means-tested in some way. I think a local income tax is probably the best bet.

RICARDO: I agree. I don't have any problem with people with more money contributing more to the running of the community.

JOHN: Local income tax is fair and collectable, but it could prove to be something of an administrative nightmare unless you control it from central government, which rather defeats the object of the exercise.

ANDY: Actually, I thought the old rates were fine.

STUART: Do you think the CIA were implicated in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy?

JOHN: Uncidentally.

ANDY: Absolutely.

ADRIAN: Definitely.

RICARDO: Yes.

STUART: Who's the best psychologist, Pavlov or Jung?

JOHN: It has to be Jung, some of the experiments Pavlov did on dogs with hormones and rubber tubing were quite despicable.

ADRIAN: Jung, because I don't like meringues.

STUART: Finally, as a whole, do you think we should run any more interviews like this, or do you think we should do sensible ones?

ASSEMBLY LINE: Well, it made a nice change, but I doubt if it'll catch on...

ASSEMBLY LINE: It's a pleasure.

A BRAVE NEW WORLD

Cybercon III is state-of-the-art as far as games go, and even if you don't have much luck with the puzzles there's plenty of fun to be had exploring the playing area and taking out robots. The 3D is certainly some of the best we've seen - bright, colourful and smooth - and it certainly manages to create a very convincing 'world inside your Amiga' (which seems to me to be a lot more fun than the one outside it). Just be careful you don't get sucked into some kind of weird time-warp and get trapped inside it. The real world might be less fun, but you don't get shot at as much.

Jonathan Davies

UPPERS

The top 2D graphics yet, a huge playing area, hard puzzles and things to shoot too, plenty of variety and a genuinely spooky sense of actually being there.

DOWNERS

Takes a while to get to grips with the controls. No sound on 512k machines, and the facility for saving games is a bit crap.

THE BOTTOM LINE

A deeply serious, immensely playable and generally enormous 3D espionage game that's quite possibly the only one you'll need to buy this year.

88%
Chuck Rock's peaceful existence has been shattered by the kidnapping of his beautiful wife Ophelia by the evil Gary Gritter.

In his quest to find her, Chuck kicks and belly butts his way through over 500 screens played over 23 comical zones of exciting and addictive gameplay.
Arcade adventures were all the rage once. Seems like only yesterday when you couldn't move for the things - arcadey ones like Sabre Wuff and Vril-9 or more cerebral ones like Dragonstoria and Avalon. Seems like only yesterday, but in actual fact most of us haven't done much maze-mapping and object collecting in years. Not since the days of C64s and Spectrum's reality - for some reason a lack of interest in arcade adventures and the rise of 16 bit computers coincided, and precious few ever made it over to the Amiga.

No, arcade adventures are certainly 'out' just now. And 'in'? Well 'in' seems to be the Sierra/Delphine/Lucastim film-like adventure approach, which more or less totally abandon the arcade aspect altogether. That's one way of doing it, sure, and certainly one that's more accessible than most text-only efforts, but there's only so much room on a disk for pretty pictures, and inevitably interaction is restricted so that the task seems a little too linear.

Which is where Exile comes in. Yes, it's got arcade bits, yes, it forms an intriguing adventure: yes, there are lots of graphics, yes and (this is the big one) there is an awful lot to do and see - the

'WHAT THIS ACTUALLY REPRESENTS IS A SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE BETWEEN THE CREAM OF TEXT-BASED ADVENTURES AND THE ARCADE-STYLE SHOOT-'EM-UP.'

task in hand is anything but too linear. What this actually represents is a successful marriage between the cream of text-based adventures and the arcade-style shoot-'em-up. To all intents and purposes it's the first in what will hopefully become a new breed of dedicated modern arcade adventure.

So as you'd expect, Exile has a sizable map to explore, packed with generous helpings of action and a goodly number of objects to collect and use. Nothing wrong with that, but it's all fairly unremarkable - what makes Exile so dreamy is the way in which it so successfully mimics the real world while artfully missing out all the dreary bits. Step away from it a second and look at it from another angle - where have you been? In the office or in your environment? Not in another game, that's for sure. No, it may sound overblown, but in many ways Exile effectively acts as a simulation of everyday life on an Earth-like planet.

It's because everything in the game obeys the laws of physics to realistic effect. It's because every object has its own mass and so, when combined with the gravitational pull of the world, a host of swish inertial effects can be experienced by the player. It's because if you want - and I'd recommend it to anybody - you can forget about the big task in hand for a bit and immerse yourself in the simple challenge of trying to fly about the place holding a flask full of water in one hand without spilling a drop.

As you might have guessed from that last sentence (the word 'holding' was the giveaway) you don't control a ship or a robot in Exile, but a lone space soldier. This guy has to be one of the most versatile computer characters ever seen. Initially equipped with just his bare hands, a jetpack, and a protective suit with four 'pockets' (objects small enough to fit in these can be stored for later use), he can run, jump and fly in pretty much any direction. Not only that, he can duck, pick up and drop items, throw objects or shoot in a definable trajectory (which is especially handy when it comes to lobbing grenades) and all sorts of other stuff too.

Of course, despite my efforts to persuade you to the contrary, Exile isn't really a simulation at all, it's a game, and as such it contains certain chores that you must set out to complete. Your task is to rescue a handful of fellow space soldiers from where they're trapped by a mad professor deep within a vast network of underground caverns. The playing area is proportionally a half mile square, and the number of puzzles to solve is... well, it's difficult to quantify, as most of the problems come about through the unique way objects interact with each other. Let's just say there are an awful (awful) lot.

Further emphasising that it's actually a game we're talking about here, portlets are awarded for every kill made and for
Inside that roaring flame is a most useful object - the Remote Control Device, which is used in conjunction with passes to open doors and activate teleporters. Remotely of course. A flask of water will extinguish the flame, but the door covering it closes whenever you near. Think about it...

Here's where the story begins: inside your spacecraft. The mad professor holding your soldier mates captive materialises briefly before beaming out with a vital piece of equipment. Looks like you should have stayed in bed...

There's nothing better than an exchange of gunfire to get the heart pounding. And there's plenty of it in Exile.

To turn on teleporters such as this one you need the correct key. Oh, and a special piece of kit known as the Remote Control Device...

A powerful cannon which is too big to take out the back door. The only way to get it out is through the teleporter to the right - and that doesn't work. (Yet).

Feeding this energy pod and denying it serves to test your supply.

One of many vicious gun emplacements dotted around the landscape.

Hmm. I don't know quite where to start really. This reminds me of an old Commodore 64 game. The control and layout feels a lot like Thrust. It's very cute and appealing in places, it's very big and it has a nice feel to it.

Don't get me wrong - I like the game. But the future of arcade adventures? An educational tool? Come on. I can't for the life of me see quite why Gary's gone so overboard about it, and am desperate for him to really sit down and explain it to me. I'm coming at this with an open mind, I'm willing to be persuaded, but on a first look (and from the admittedly fairly small amount of playing time I've given it) I can't quite see what all the fuss is about. It's good, it's fun, but for my money it's not really worth much more than...

80 percent – Matt Bielby

performing certain tasks, though of course the pleasure gathered from making a discovery or actually solving a problem is the far greater incentive. It's almost as if the programmers are aware of the temptation Exile gives to abandon the job in hand and zoom off and explore in another direction for a bit - to ensure players keep on the move, and to instill a sense of urgency, a point is lost for every second which passes.

As you make your way around in Exile, you'll find there are three problems that keep coming up. Firstly, how do you keep your energy level high and how do you ensure you've got the right weapons for the job? Secondly, just how are you meant to interact with all the animals you keep encountering? And thirdly, just how are you meant to get about the place anyway? Let's deal with them all one at a time, shall we?

A SMALL MATTER OF ENERGY
There's this to consider of course. Your jetpack needs it, as do your guns. Ah yes - the guns. The first of many weapons - you don't come equipped with any to start with, remember? - is found just beneath the surface. It's a low-powered handgun →
which is only really effective against the weakest of the planet’s inhabitants. Deeper into the caverns there’s a second, more powerful handgun waiting to be discovered, along with two meaty (but energy-hungry) blasters. Watch for the nodot though – it’s a little on the strong side. (We are talking about a game where you realistically interact with your environment, after all.) Meanwhile, back on the surface, a powerful cannon sits inside the wreckage of a ship. The only problem is, just how do you bring it out into the open?

So with all those options you should be alright gun-wise. What you need now is the power to run them on, and fortunately (though the use of energy is realistic in the game, and you do need to keep ‘looping it up’) it’s never too inhibitive. There are normally plenty of booster packs to be found, and if the worst comes to the worst you can always transfer energy from one device you’re carrying to another.

**TALKING TO THE ANIMALS**

Here’s something else to consider – the inhabitants of Exile’s world. These have varying degrees of intelligence and spend most of the time going about their own business. Some creatures are scared of newcomers and so attack almost immediately – certain breeds of bird for example – while others tend to keep themselves to themselves until they are interfered with. Don’t worry about the killer bees too much, for instance – they’ll only go for you if you threaten them (if you start shooting at their hive, for instance). More fearsome are some of the creatures you’ll come across in the pools and lakes you discover deeper into the adventure – crabs, giant cains and piranha fish.

One set of creatures you should be especially wary of are the Imps. Try picking up a frog or similar and giving it to them – these mischievous monkey-like beings have pouches in which they carry stolen items. I came across a handy stick-like torch and power replenishment packs, and with a bit of persuasion got them to give it to me. Be careful though – they are mischievous, and take great delight in throwing things at you, which can be problematic. (The spores from the mushrooms will temporarily block your jetpack, for instance.)

Potentially most helpful of all the creatures encountered is Fluffy – a sickeningly cute ball of fluff (no surprises here) who has a tendency to sack uncontrollably when loud noises such as gunfire disturb him from his usual happy state of eating. He becomes your sort of sidekick with very little persuasion, and can prove very useful indeed – his speciality is squeezing through gaps smaller than you can handle.

Not all animals, but near enough to warrant inclusion here, are the mobile robot types to occasionally have to contend with. One, called Chatter (and it soon becomes pretty obvious where he got his name from), is actually friendly, and can prove as useful as Fluffy. Feed him with a certain type of crystal (either found lying around or converted by burning mushrooms) and he’ll be on your side – one of two who can be used to control Chatter and get him to help you out.

(Incidental note: The Imps were in fact monkeys don’t point to the way they act. I guess. They were charged after the Japanese saw Exile and went sparky – not surprising when you realise monkeys are in fact sacred in Japan.)

**THE SAFER WAY TO TRAVEL**

Getting from A to B in such a vast playground can prove time and energy consuming – and tiring too. That’s why the smart hero about town gets around via the many teleporters dotted throughout the caverns. Your good self is not the only thing capable of being teleported. Anything goes, even objects, robots, creatures – even bullets. The only problem is, most of the teleporters can only be turned on and off if you are in possession of the relevant pass.

A limited form of teleportation is also built into your suit. It’s a more of a simplistic position save of sorts really, with the facility to store the coordinates of fours destinations’. This feature has more use than is at first apparent. For a start, you don’t actually die in Exile – instead you are teleported back to the last teleport position remembered, or to the default position of your ship orbiting above the planet. Better still, the personal teleportation can be used to pass pushy aliens. By remembering your position before allowing yourself to be pushed, you can teleport behind the being and continue. Fortunately, there’s also a more fullsence save function – either quickly to RAM or more permanently to floppy disk.

Exile’s great strength lies in the fact that you can do pretty much anything you would do in an equivalent real life situation. The lighter the object, the better it floats and the further it can be thrown. Objects or creatures which look as though they should burn down. How should you best go about exploring the underground lakes, for instance? Simple – carry an object heavy enough to make you sink. Everything seems real, everything works, and this attention to detail seems to be present on almost every level. Sconce it’s impressive too – objects make an audible splash when they hit water, and every creature and almost all events have distinctive sound, as with the volume varying depending on the distance between you and the noise. You can hear the bees buzz, the birds squawk, and so on.

The problems you’re faced with turn out to be pleasingly logical too. Whether simple mechanical failures prevent you from getting past the thick sliding doors, say, or slightly more complicated biological ones (how to cope with the poisonous mushrooms) the answers actually make sense, rather than seem arbitrarily placed there.

Exile even has educational potential. Learning with textbooks can be dull at the best of times, but with a model such as this you can actually go around and do things for yourself – introduce chemical X to chemical Y for instance, and with witness the reaction – and learn through enjoyment. Exile promotes experimentation without having to deal with a ho-hum series of windows or pull-down menus.

But pretentious possibilities aside, Exile is a bit tasteless and no mistake. It’s entertaining, highly rewarding and so involved that you won’t get through it in a hurry. Apparently, it takes the authors about six hours to play from beginning to end – and they know it inside out.

Where does that leave us? Well, with a new sort of arcade adventure – better than the last one, and opening hundreds of possibilities for the future. The arcade adventure is dead. Long live Exile.

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**THE MEN IN EXILE**

Who are those three names behind Exile? Surprisingly, between them they have had little commercial success.

Jeremy Smith wrote Firebird’s Thrust (an ‘official’ tribute to which appeared as ZaraThrust from the late Lawson recently), but Peter Irwin on the other hand – well, he’s only ever written an ancient (but rather cory) shoot-em-up called Starship Command for the BBC.

The long-standing Irwin/Smith friendship flourished into a partnership when they decided to write a game from scratch. From this, Exile originated on the BBC and was converted to the Commodore 64. William Reeve then reproduced the C64 version on the Amiga before Peter rewrote it to take fuller advantage of the new machine. Exile has taken a year to reproduce and enhance on the Amiga, partly because Peter had to learn about the Amiga from scratch, but also because ‘You lose inspiration after a while. After about six months or so it all starts to slow down.’

It didn’t help that the ideas behind Exile weren’t particularly clearly thought out at first, either. ‘It started off basically with just the concept of some spaceship flying around and having collisions with real forces and creatures bouncing off each other,’ Peter reveals. ‘We designed the game around it from there. It evolved very slowly – only later did we realise it should be totally modelled on real life. It’s one of those games which, having written it, if you were to write it again you could do it an awful lot faster.’
PREDATOR 2

EASTERN

... HE'S IN TOWN WITH A FEW DAYS TO KILL

AVAILABLE ON:
AMIGA, ATARI ST, COMMODORE 64/128,
SPECTRUM, AMSTRAD CPC, IBM PC & COMPATIBLES
There has been a lot written about Gods. A lot of very complimentary stuff. As complimentary in fact as the reviews of Speedball 2 and Cadaver, and, indeed, just about everything the Bitmaps have ever done. It's easy to see why everyone goes for such a bundle on them too - exceptionally slick presentation, some neat ideas, the strongest image of any team, and a knack of updating old ideas in the cleverest ways. They're the nearest thing to a sure thing this industry's got - always producing games that are good to look at, interesting to play, but never too unusual, and never taking too much of a commercial risk.

There's a downside to this as well though - for a team that spends so much time talking about the importance of the creative process, the evils of licensing and so on, they're conspicuous in that they've never actually produced anything all that, well, original. Where's their Populous? Where's their Dungeon Master? Where's their Lemmings? It's not here, that's for sure. Maybe it'll come with time.

So, then. Gods. And yes, there's no denying it - it's a very good game indeed. Well up to the standards we've come to expect in fact, and I'm sure improving on their old stuff in a lot of tiny but significant ways. It certainly looks gorgeous - packed with incredibly detailed backgrounds and lots of (usually) well animated little sprites. It's perhaps a little too detailed at times (your character often gets a bit camouflaged against the wealth of background detail) and it would be nice to see a move away from this trademarked metallic look, but visually it is a bit of a stunner. It would be carping outrageously to try and claim anything different.

It sounds nice too - the soundtrack this time is by Nation 12, a more obscure Rhythm King act perhaps.

Since Speedball 2, has had a lot of publicity

**ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**

**AND WHY YOU MIGHT NOT RECOGNISE IT**

Much has been made of the clever way in which the badges sprites have a share of artificial intelligence, and the way the game re-adjusts itself to how well you're playing, making things easier or harder as you go on. It's a good job that much has been made of it too, as you'd never know from actually playing the thing - or at least you wouldn't straight away. The game is so subtle you'd probably only realise something funny was going on when you'd been living with it for a couple of days.

The artificial intelligence first, then. Badges come in a few sorts - your normal stupid ones, that hang around on platforms or wherever they're put until killed (as you get in most games) - and your super special clever ones. The smartest of these actually know where your car is and are perfectly capable of finding the quickest route to you, avoiding your fire (so they have a degree of self preservation built-in) and so on. One variety of clever monster is thieves, which try and steal treasure for themselves, while a lot of the others are more aggressive.

Then there's the player monitoring system. This is even more subtle, in that it judges how well a player's doing and tails the game to suit. Thus first time round you'll probably find oodles of energy top-ups and bonuses lying around - it'll realise you need them. As you get better though, scoring more points, it'll all get that much tougher.
A GAME OF NICE TOUCHES

Having taken on board the ho-hum plot and unremarkable structure, it's quite hard to define (graphics aside) just what it is that makes the game so nice. Mostly it's things that fall into the 'neat touch' category, and come backed by some big claims. It's got a

LEVEL 1 WORLDS 1 AND 2

Here we are in the two sub-worlds that make up the start of the game. If you're wondering where all the baddies are - well, we killed them all, didn't we? (How d'you think we got this far?)

ON THE OTHER HAND...

I agree with most of what Mart says, but when it comes to marks I think he's being a bit silly. If Gods wasn't by the Bitmaps, people would see it for what it is - an average platform puzzler with outstanding graphics and great sound. As a game, it's slow and unexciting, and all the prettiness in the world can't save it. Clever though it may be, the artificial intelligence stuff doesn't make any real difference to the way you play it either. It's still good fun, but very ordinary.

76 percent Stuart Campbell
MicroProse enter the epic strategy game stakes with a title best described by Railroad Tycoon.

Game
Railroad Tycoon
Publisher
MicroProse
Price
£29.99
Programmer(s)
Sid Meier
Release Date
Early May

But hang on, I hear you cry, 'I've never heard of the Bremen Girl! Well, locomotive fans, there's a damn fine reason for that. The Bremen Girl exists only in the algorithms of my copy of Railroad Tycoon, a new game from everyone's favourite supplier of monster simulation games with inch-thick manuals, MicroProse. And just take a guess, quiz fans, at what kind of a game this is. A cutie platform job perhaps? A coin-op shoot-em-up conversion? Strip poker? No, it's an incredibly involved and complex simulation of the pioneering days of rail travel, covering the whole range of operations from laying track to selling shares, and all points in between. (Did you spot the little railway-type joke there, humour fans?) In fact, Railroad Tycoon probably has more depth in its setting-up screens than most games do in their whole code.

IT'S JUST THE TICKET
There are four basic game scenarios (Eastern USA 1830, Western USA 1866, England 1828, or Europe 1900) and you can choose to play at any of four basic difficulty levels (Innovator, Financier, Mogul or Tycoon). Within those there are loads of other options which you can combine in any way you wish (for example, you can choose whether your trains can crash into each other or not, and how competitive all the other railways are), and you can even select how complex the economy of your chosen country/continent will be. Once you get into the actual game, well, things start to get really complicated...

I couldn't hope to explain Railroad Tycoon completely without taking up the whole magazine, so it might help if you imagine it as being a bit like the railway-building bits in SimCity, except that as well as building the track you have to build...
the actual train, make sure it has the right kind of carriages for the cargo it's going to be carrying, build and operate stations and signals, build factories for the train to deliver and collect materials from, lay track to take account of gradients and land values, sell shares in the company but ensure that your competitors don't gain control of it. Keep up with technological advances, build bridges and ferries to cross rivers and lakes, cut tunnels through mountains, decide whether to lay single- or double-track lines, and, and... (cont'd p.94).

THE END OF THE LINE

Sounds a bit overwhelming, doesn't it? And frankly, it is. You'll spend many hours at first just shutting passengers and mail back and forth between neighbouring towns — totally ignoring all the other things you really should be keeping tabs on at the same time — but the trouble is that by the time you're ready to expand,you'll be so fed up with the painfully slow play and clumsy player interface that you're just as likely to decide not to bother. Quite honestly, there's no excuse whatsoever for a 1 meg

'IF YOU LIKED SIM CITY BUT FOUND IT JUST A BIT TOO FAST-MOVING, RAILROAD TYCOON IS THE GAME FOR YOU'

Amiga game in 1991 (or a 1K ZX81 game in 1982 for that matter) displaying 'Press any key to continue' when it actually means 'Press Return or you'll be here all day,' and that's just one tiny example from the vast list of niggly little things (and there are plenty of them) that don't actually affect the gameplay in any way, but will have you tearing your hair out in utter annoyance long before the game has had a chance to do itself justice.

Playing the Europe scenario. (Nothing like jumping in at the deep end, I suppose).

A real hive of activity here. Taking the train through these sheep farms ensures that the citizens of London are never short of lamb chops and woolly jumpers.

Take a tip from the competition — minimal rural disruption is the best route to success.

There are probably people out there with the patience and plodding nature to overcome such minor irritations (in fact, the average train spotter could well fall into this category, which means MicroProse have got everything well sussed after all) but I'm not one of them. If you are, and if you liked Sim City but found it just a bit too fast-moving, Railroad Tycoon is the game for you. It's just that you'll have to be unemotional or the Duchess of York to have the time to get into it properly, and some kind of saint not to be driven out of your tree by the coynessness of the programming while you're doing it. The very best of luck to you. — Stuart Campbell

RAILROAD TYCOON VS SIM CITY

Which game really impresses in the grand-scale strategy stakes? Sim City may have greater variation, but will Railroad Tycoon's depth shine through? Let's see...

SPEED

Sim City - 9

It doesn't exactly go like a rocket (ho-ho) but there's never a dull moment.

Railroad Tycoon - 6

Paintingly slow, and switching on Turbo mode just makes things silly (you can't read land information, for instance) without making them noticeably faster.

MEGAOLANOMA FACTOR

Sim City - 9

Completely unrivalled control of absolutely everything.

Railroad Tycoon - 6

Great if your idea of total global domination is railways, but lacks the scope for that real feeling of omnipotence.

GENOCIDAL ALIEN MASSACRE RATING

Sim City - 1

Well, at least you get to take on Godzilla now and again.

Railroad Tycoon - 0

A complete alien-free zone.

TRAIN COUNT

Sim City - 4

Quite a few trains, and at least you can have more than one line without needing to link them up.

Railroad Tycoon - 9

Positively awash with locomotives.

AND THE WINNER IS...

Sim City - 22

Railroad Tycoon - 19

A GUIDE TO SETTLEMENTS CIRCA 1900

Before you can lay tracks anywhere useful, you'll first have to pay for right of way through these:

- Winery £10,000 per mile
- Farm £5000 per mile
- Coal Mine £10,000 per mile
- Textile Mill £10,000 per mile
- Factory £50,000 per mile
- Vineyard £10,000 per mile
- Chemical Plant £15,000 per mile
- Steel Mill £5,000 per mile
- Sheep Farm £5,000 per mile

UPPERS Utterly vast, you'll certainly get a lot of game for your money. I'm sure it's very rewarding if you stick at it too.

DOWNERS Doesn't even register on the two-o-meter, and the graphics and sound are primitive in a major way.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Huge program that'll keep you playing for weeks but that's partly because it's so slow it'll take you that long to get anywhere. Very shabbily put together too, though good fun despite everything.
CHUCK ROCK

Game: Chuck Rock
Publisher(s): Core Design
Price: £24.99
Programmer(s): Chris Long, Robert Churchill, Lee Pullen
Release Date: Out now

Chuck is a caveman, both historically and socially. So when he hears that the evil Gary 'Gritter' (for this is a game that lets no caveman/rock joke go unexploited) has kidnapped his beautiful wife Ophelia, his first thought is 'So what? There's plenty more women out there, and my trusty club hasn't let me down yet.' But then he realises she hasn't quite finished the washing yet, and that unless he wants to spend the rest of the week wandering around in a soggy loincloth, he'd better do something about it.

Thus motivated, Chuck sets out on his quest, which turns out to be a lengthy five level trek though every unlikely prehistoric situation the boys at Core could come up with. For the most part the wildlife remains fairly indifferent to our Chuck's plight - some ignore him, some treat him as potential food, but you get the feeling that they're not so much obstacles deliberately set in his path as the natural hazards of a caveman's life. Chuck's by no means totally defenseless though - smaller lizards and the like can be billy-buttled out of the way by his not-insconsiderable bergegut, flying kicks can come in useful with some of the taller ones, and then of course there are the rocks.

You see, Chuck Rock isn't just our hero's name, it's pretty much a description of him too. There are all sorts of boulders lying around the place which he can quite happily pick up and a) throw at animals to squash them, b) use as stepping stones to help him clamber up onto higher platforms, or c) use as a slightly unlikely umbrella to protect himself against the huge boulders which occasionally bounce down the screen for the unsuspecting Chuck.

Dinosaurs! Hairy elephants! Sabre-toothed tigers! Fred Flintstone meets the Amiga Power

Handy hints to save Chuck from becoming an extinct species.

OUT AND ABOUT IN PREHISTORIC TIMES

Just bounce on farts's inflated tum to spring up the screen.
A quick billy-butt here and it's a rotted, powered forklift tusk time.
Doing smart! Anti-clash Chuck gets jet-propelled elephant-style.

Who'd have thought this little bird could carry such a flabby caveman?
Ever wondered why crocodiles have such big flattened snouts?

OUT AND ABOUT IN PREHISTORIC TIMES

Handy hints to save Chuck from becoming an extinct species.

Just hop on board for a scenic tour across some of the swamper regions.
ABOVE - Going up in the world, animal magic style. Drop a rock on that helpful crocodile to spring you up onto one of the higher platforms.

RIGHT - Hurray! Chuck completes the sub-level. One large step for Chuck, one small step for cavemankind. Of course, there are still untold horrors just waiting to thwart our hero. Luckily, Chuck isn't afraid. (That's because he's stupid.)

LEVEL 1.2
And so off he goes, hell-bent on traversing yet another sub-level in the search for his beloved Ophelia. There's an awful long way to go, but our Chuck doesn't mind - he's a hard guy. (Hard as a rock in fact.)

RIGHT - Who says that chemical waste wasn't around when dinosaurs ruled the earth? Watch out for the Dino do-do. Not only is it smellly and offensive, it's lethal too.

RIGHT - With a leap and a bound, Chuck crosses the chasm. Collect that pig's head for some extra sustenance. (With many prehistoric protagonists yet to be tackled, you'll need it.)
Chuck Rock boasts one of the neatest intros around at the moment on the Amiga. Here's a quick synopsis:

Chuck enjoys a few beers in front of the TV, little knowing that...

...the evil Gary Gritter has got his eye on the sweet Ophelia.

Uh-oh. It looks like Ophelia can forget about doing the washing...

because Gritter's right behind her! Look out! (Thwack!) Too late.

And there he goes, dragging poor Ophelia off goodness knows where.

Don't just sit there, Chuck, forget the teely and go after them!

Think fast, Chuck! (Not his strongest point, it has to be said).

That's right – follow the birdie's advice (but get some kit on first!)

Mario Brothers in Core's madcap, platform extravaganza. Rock 'n' Roll.

Where Chuck improves on Torvak is that it actually has a decent game hidden under the graphics. Within a pretty basic platform format, it's packed to the brim with original features, well thought out gameplay and nice touches that make it a positive joy to sit down with. In fact, the phrase 'nice touch' could have been invented for this game, with every new prehistoric obstacle bringing a smile to your face. There isn't nearly enough space to list everything I'd like to mention here, but personal favourites include the way Chuck behaves underwater, the crocodile see-saws (whol'll spring you up to a higher platform if you stand on their tails and drop rocks on their heads), the obviously freezing-to-death badgers in the ice levels, the mud monsters (horribly scary, these ones), and the cute little dinosaurs that split into two smaller ones when you bash them, then split again until they're so small they get crushed between your toes.

So there we have it really – not the most complicated game in the world, but a definitely neat one, put together with care and imagination (remember, both Chris Long and Bob Churchill worked on Rick Dangerous 2, so you know the level of ambition to expect) and reaching the lofty peaks of playability only normally associated with the best Japanese arcade games. My only real niggle (and it's a slight one) would be that the difficulty level is perhaps pitched just a touch too low (a real surprise when you think it comes from people involved with Rick 2). All the same, for a platform game that you'll keep coming back to again and again, you could much worse than pick up a Rock.

Stuart Campbell

UPPERS
- Superb graphics and sound, imaginative gameplay, and more 'real touches' than you'll find in any ten normal games.

DOWNERS
- A bit on the easy side perhaps. Getting sent all the way back to the start of a sub-level when you die can be frustrating.

THE BOTTOM LINE
- Superbly playable. A brilliant platform game, put together with great care and attention and a feel for character.

Dogfight with opponents over villages for command of the skies, or attack ground targets which serve the enemy's cause.

Night time sequences afford excellent cover for secret movement and actions, illuminated by the glare of your jeep's headlights.

The playing area of three million cubic miles is not restricted solely to areas above ground. You have full freedom of movement underwater, and three types of 'submarine' in which to achieve it.

Seek out and destroy enemy shipping units, condemning them to a watery grave on the sea bed, from where the ocean's surface is clearly visible above.

TOTAL FREEDOM- FROM RADIO CONTROL

(1,000 miles long X 1,000 miles wide X 15,000 feet high.) + (4,000 characters X 22 more)
A three dimensional environment packed with action, adventure and strategy. Entering it is easy......breaking free is what's hard!

A million square miles of accurately mapped 3-D terrain, generated by fractal techniques, and fully light sourced throughout, provides a playing arena far superior to even its predecessor, Midwinter I.

Fly the skies above the forty-one islands by helicopter, zeppelin, parachute, rocket pack, or, as seen here, biplane and balloon, all offering superb views of the land and of the other aircraft.

The sea surface is generated by constantly moving fractal points, causing you to bob up and down as you swim or sail across it.

The enemy have a vast array for firepower aimed at you, on land, in the air, and across the sea, and react quickly and intelligently to your actions.

Flames of Freedom will be available shortly for your Commodore Amiga, Atari ST and IBM PC compatibles.

BIRD MASTERS OF STRATEGY

(transprt X 1,000s of buildings) = 3,000,000 cubic miles of Action, Adventure and Strategy.
Games of the Month: PGA Tour Golf

1. There are four courses to play on, three 'real life' ones plus a bonus one that they've made up too. Here's Avenel, where, according to the interesting information at the back of the instruction booklet, the mixed topography of the rolling Maryland countryside requires a player to take a substantial number of risks to complete the course. In other words, it's more than a little bit tricky.

2. Before you tee off they show you this nifty 3D expanding fly-by view of the hole you're about to attempt (as if you were flying around in it in a helicopter or something), complete with some invaluable advice from one of the ten professional golfers featured in the game. Here, Larry advises us to go for the green in either two or three shots. Thanks, Larry.

3. Time to tee off. You automatically face the flag on all shots, while that cursor in the middle of the screen (which you can move) shows you the direction in which the ball will be hit (leave it in the middle to aim directly towards the flag). Here the wind is blowing you over to the right, so move the cursor slightly to the left to compensate for this and hit the ball at full power.

4. Before you attempt each hole (and after each shot has been taken) this overhead view map is displayed. That line shows the route your ball has taken. Yes, yes. I know it's a better idea to actually stay on the fairway, but let's not be fussy, eh?

5. Hurrah! We're on the green and ready to putt. The putter is selected automatically (so, no, you can't try and do it with a nine iron), but you can select the distance you require the ball to travel if it's hit on 100%. Otherwise the most appropriate one is selected for you.

6. A club can be made to hit further than usual by means of 'overswing' – this involves allowing your power to build up higher than what the game (rather ludicrously) refers to as '100%'. Your ball will go further if you do this, but any hook or slice will be vastly exaggerated, so you're taking a risk – you'll have to be pretty nifty with your button pressing to the Leaderboard.

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The handy thing about computer golf is that, compared to the real thing, it's relatively easy to play – sinking a hole of 594 yards in three shots is actually perfectly feasible (if admittedly pretty hard). The best thing about this is that it opens up ample opportunity to invite over some of your less knowledgeable friends and (provided you've practised a bit) fool them into thinking you're not only brilliant at the computerised version, but a complete professional at the real thing too.

A corkscrew of an idea, I've thought, especially as these golfing games tend to be pretty good fun even when you're not dead set on impressing somebody. The only problem is, which one to buy?

Until now, the choice has been rather limited because (apart from the dated, if rather brilliant, Leaderboard series), most
Oops - sliced it a bit to the right, as this instant replay shows. Ahem.

And this is where we ended up. The computer kindly picks the most appropriate club to use for each shot (although you can change to another one if you prefer). Here a pitching wedge seems like the best bet to get out of the heavy rough - the 'ball lie' (what sort of land it's just landed on) is given before each shot, incidentally, which can prove useful.

First the good news - we're almost on the green. Now the bad - we're actually trapped in a bunker. (I think this calls for the sand wedge).

Naturally, the slopes and bumps of the green will affect putting considerably, so this 3D grid thing is presented every time you reach it so you can see how things lie. It's quite clever actually - you can twiddle the entire contour map around for a different perspective on things if you desire.

Thank you, thank you. I've potted the ball (and only one over par as well). I'll have to do better than that when I get onto the tournament though.

series. And (joy!) it isn't endorsed by some tedious old golfer either!

GETTING TO GRIPS WITH PLAY

RIGHT, SO HOW DO YOU TAKE A SHOT?
Taking a shot relies on the tried and tested 'bar method'. See that number on the far left? That's approximately how far the club will hit the ball on full power (not taking into account wind and slope). Right, now click the mouse to start the bar going from right to left, then click again when it gets to the power you require - the bar will now start returning. Get ready - you want to click it exactly when it gets back to zero. Do it too early and it will hook to the left, too late and it will slice to the right.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE WIND?
You will, of course, have to take into account the direction and the strength of the wind - it will carry or slow down the ball, but it will also change the direction of flight (more significantly on longer shots). That's where this little windometer comes in handy.

of them have been endorsed by some golfer or other. This means things tend to be a bit 'one sided' as far as gameplay tactics are concerned, and (worse still) they mean a picture of a grinning Jack Nicklaus or Greg Norman cropping up on screen every two seconds (which tends to put you off a bit). Add to that the fact that most golf games tend to be a little too complicated to play, and rather slow while they're about it, and you'll soon see that while they're all 'quite good', there's no clear cut winner. Until now, that is, because there's another one, and it's actually jolly good.

There are a lot of good things about PGA Tour Golf (we'll call it PGA for short), but the real beauty of it is that it's all so simple to play - so simple in fact that you could probably throw away the instruction manual and work out how to do it for yourself. Let's dive in for a closer look.

Some points about the game:

1. Everything you'll need is operated via pull down menus, or single key presses if you prefer, which makes for an incredibly user-friendly game. Starting to play is a real cinch, therefore - my advice would be to practice your driving (ie. wacking balls into oblivion) on the driving range, then your putting on the green, before you actually get down to any serious competitions. (That way you'll be suitably ready to impress any chaps who happen to pass by while you're playing).

2. Once you've got the feel of the controls (which won't take a minute), you can put your driving and putting together and practice on the four courses, playing either the whole of each course, or swapping ->
between courses and holes at will.
Chances are you won't be getting par for a while (in other words, you won't be completing the hole in the number of shots it would take you if you were any good), but don't worry, it'll come with effort.

3. For added excitement, a multiple player option is available, allowing you to play with up to three others, which ups the fun of things considerably. If all your friends are, or aren't then you can play with some pretend ones (the computer plays them for you) - this can prove rather useful because you can watch how the computer plays the hole, then copy it and achieve a better result than you would have done beforehand.

4. As you play, various maps of the course, previews to each hole, overhead views of where you've got so far and details of where your ball has landed are given to you automatically if and when you need them - a nice touch which saves you piddling about with the menu every shot as in some golf games. You can turn any of the features off if you'd prefer, and then only have them displayed if selected.

5. Slightly crap players will be pleased to hear that PGA allows you to take an infinite number of 'mulligans' - in other words cheat, and replay your last shot without the one you've just taken counting.

6. Once you've got to grips with the courses, then you can enter the Tournament. Once again, up to four players can enter (either real or taken by the computer) and game play is the same as before, though you can't change courses or holes or rely on Mulligans to see you through. You are playing against sixty other players (although you don't see them play, thank goodness - it'd take forever) who appear merely as statistics displayed on the Leaderboard after each hole. Most of the players have already started when you and your optional friends begin (some have practically finished the course), so you start out halfway down the table and have to score a number of points below par for the course to rank among the top 48, and so move on to round two (and with any luck rounds three and four after that).

THE SHAPE OF PUTTS TO COME

Hole 11. PGA WEST. 618 yards. Par 5
Hole 16. PGA WEST. 440 yards. Par 4
Hole 16. PGA WEST. 571 yards. Par 5
Hole 18. TPC SAWGRASS. 440 yards. Par 4

Here's a sneak preview of some of the rather nastier holes you'll encounter throughout the four courses.

BEST GOLFING GAME TO DATE?
It all sounds pretty good, doesn't it? And it is. More than pretty good I'd say. It is - yes! - probably the best golfing game for the Amiga to date.
Without a doubt the best thing about it is that it's such a joy to use - everything you possibly need to know is given automatically just when needed, so you can concentrate on playing your shots and still know what's going on. Even the most unknowledgeable golf person will be able to work out what to do, while the game offers enough realism to keep the experts happy. Providing you didn't really throw the instruction manual away (that was just my little joke back at the beginning, you see) you can check out loads of information on the courses, find out the way the pros would tackle certain problems in real life, and pick up hints on the best way to face any problems you might come across. Being easy to use, and still fairly accurate, is all very well, I hear you saying, but is it actually any fun to play? Well, yes it is. PGA is utterly (utterly) addictive - whether you're practising 'en' seul', playing a 'friendly' with some pals or completing in the tournament, it's one of those games which will have you itching for just one more go before bedtime (or whatever). The 72 different holes (4 courses x 18) would provide long term entertainment too I'd imagine, with the tournament keeping you playing and playing until you're actually good enough to win some money. In short, I'd say that if you want a golf game for your Amiga, then this is the one to buy - it really is, for want of a slightly more original word, a 'corker'.

Rich Peley

THOSE TRICK SHOTS IN FULL

To impress your friends further (and to pretend you actually know what's going on), you can use one of the trick shots PGA offers. Here's a run down.

PUNCH SHOT
This one's particularly useful for getting out of the rough or a bunker. Instead of hitting the ball up, and having it perhaps zoom off in the wrong direction, you hit it low and straight - much more chance of making the hole.

CHIP SHOT
The idea of the chip shot is that when you're close to the green, or on the fringe around it, you chip the ball high into the air (but only in a weak sort of a manner), cross your fingers and hope it goes into the hole.

FRINGE PUTT
If you're on the fringe, and decide to chip the ball rather than putt it, and then decide it would perhaps have been best to use the putter after all, simply select the Fringe Putt and Bob's your uncle.

UPPERS
Simple to use, with the difficulty level pitched just right, loads of holes to play, all the features you'd ever need (even a 'cheat' option), nice graphics and (to top it all), it's really rather addictive.

DOWNERS
Er, well, it's not particularly original is it? There are no breathtaking, outstanding new features here, which is perhaps a bit of a shame.

THE BOTTOM LINE
A jolly good golfing sim which is not only easy to play and true to life, but rather sneakily playable too.
No ugly wart-nose is gonna make a monkey out of me! But that's just what that witch has done - one minute I'm the mighty Toki and the next I'm having breakfast delousing my armpits. I can't walk a step without tripping over my knuckles and, oh, there's an overhanging vine - time to swing out sister! But my broken heart is going ape. My beloved Mho (I can't wait to share a banana with her) has been kidnapped and somehow I've got to regain my manhood - until then I'm just swingin' in the rain!

The arcade sensation by Fabtek Inc. is now available for your micro.
ARMOUR-GEDDON

HOW NOT TO GET STARTED ON ARMOUR-GEDDON

Okay, I've just booted up the game, opened the selection screen, and I can see the various options. I'm about to start the first mission.

What vehicle should I use?

A bit of strategy, a good dollop of flight sim, some easy-to-use

Game: Armour-Geddon
Publisher: Psygnosis
Price: £25.99
Programmer(s): Paul Hunter & Ed Scio, Jim Bowers, Lee Carus, Gary Corbett, & Chris Wylie
Release Date: Out now

AN OFFENSIVE GAME

So, here are the points in your favour:
1) You've got a big bunch of scientists and engineers along with you in your bunker, complete with plenty of high-tech machinery and a fair smattering of natural weapons.

'SUSPEND YOUR FEELINGS OF DISBELIEF AND YOU'LL FIND THAT IT ALL MAKES FOR A PRETTY ENGROSSING STORYLINE'

Again, I'm afraid, with the vast bulk of the planet devastated, and the area you happen to be living in one of the few bits to get left un-mutilated. (Unless you count the odd pyramid shapes of the 3D polygon mountains as mutations, that is.)

You play the leader of a high-tech military group hidden in a series of bunkers underground. Safe, well equipped, you've only got one problem – you're living in a state of siege. The surviving surface population of the earth blames you for the war, you see, and are out to get you using any means (which mainly involves bombing around in similar futuristic weaponry to your own) that they can.

The Stealth Fighter – fast, well armed, very manoeuvrable and forgiving to fly – for most missions, this is the way to travel. (And it's pretty too.)

Carrier Command: Much more than Battle Command, the real follow up, did in fact. Just check out the similarities – both have gigantic scared wargames a-plenty, both offer a range of vehicles and weapons to bomb about and do some damage with, both overload on snazzy 3D polygon graphics and – yes! – both boast lashings of ultra-violence. In fact, the biggest difference between the two seems to be that Armour-Geddon offers rather less water and rather more of everything else – a wider selection of tanks and planes to control, prettier 1990s graphics, and (perhaps most importantly) a better set of user-friendly controls. While it might not be quite as stunningly original (in fact, you couldn't really say it was original at all) as its illustrious predecessor, it does give the impression of updating everything quite well. I've done the review. You can all go home now.

What? You want more? Oh dear. Okay, plot first, and it's a doozy. We're back in post-War II land once
How about a helicopter? These are excellent for ground attack work (you can just hover over something and blast it at) and fairly durable. A pretty good choice, though landing safely’s a bit of a problem, and since I’m not a very good pilot...

...the Stealth Bomber might be a better idea. It’s not too slow, can carry the Neutron bomb on the final mission (that’s its main use really) but it’s very tricky to fly. No, a far better idea would be...

...a Stealth Fighter! This is more like it – fast, easy to fly, and equipped with nice guided missiles! I’ve flashed quite a few already though and don’t want to waste any more.

So here I am about to take off (I opted for the Chopper in the end). As you can see we come up a big lift thingie Thunderbirds-style onto the surface before take off.

And here I am actually in the air. This is one of a selection of external views by the way, and very nice it looks too...

Time I took out a few baddies, I guess. (This is the missile’s eye view as it locks onto a ground target somewhere over on the horizon there, by the way). Eat Sidewinder, Johnny.

Hun! Hee hee hee. (And so on. The only problem with all this running around shooting things stuff is I’m liable to get shot at myself any time now, and since I’m not really a very good pilot that could cause problems. Let’s just hope my little scientists have built me a few more planes and things, eh?)

controls and a fair smattering of shooting – could this be the recipe for a Carrier Command for the ’90s?

resources. They’ve already built you a nice little squadron of vehicles to get about in but (at the rate at which I smashed them up, anyway) it’s always worth having a few more. In fact, it’s a good idea to start the game by dividing your non-fighting types into little working parties and getting them busy with their Meccano sets.

Erm, that’s more or less it actually for points in your favour. Points against, however, stack up rather horribly.

1. The surface population are building a giant beam weapon which, when aimed up into the sky and bounced off an orbiting satellite, provides a ray plenty strong enough to fry you in your concrete warren.

So which weapons should I take? Well, here’s part of the selection. For this trip I think maybe a night sight (the game run on a time scale where a minute of real time equals an hour of game time, so darkness – a nice effect – tends to come around fairly often, and a good supply of homing missiles would be best.

FROM THE PILOT’S SEAT

Here’s what the game looks like from inside the cockpit. Despite the oddities of controls (all far too involved to get into now, though real-life flying isn’t all that complicated once you’re in the know) this isn’t really a flight simulator – it’s more of a flight simulation. It’s not setting out to be technically accurate – though your plane can stall and so on, it can also be abused in flight a lot more readily than in most sim – and so picking up a rudimentary knowledge of how to keep airborne isn’t too tricky. Landing’s a bit of a bugger however, but – hey! – don’t worry too much about that, you’re bound to be shot down or crash a long time before any fancy ideas of returning to base occur to you.

The Stealth Bomber – one of the more impressive plane’s in flight (as you can see from this external view) but a real nightmare to fly. (I crashed my first three in take-off!)
SOME THINGS TO DO BEFORE YOU PROPERLY SET OFF

2) They'll have finished it and be ready to fire by tea time (within a few days in the game's terms) so you'd better find a way to stop them first.
3) Actually, you might as well give up looking for ways to stop them - there only

is one, and I'm about to tell you what it is.

The thing is, the only weapon powerful enough to destroy the enemy cannon is the world's last remaining Neutron Bomb. Unfortunately the five parts of the bomb have been scattered about the landscape.

- it's your job to locate them, collect them in your various vehicles, get your scientists chaps to build them into a complete bomb, and take off on your final bombing mission in your cumbersome, difficult to control, bomber. I can't claim to have got that far myself, but it seems to me that (considering the unforgiving nature of the baddies and the near impossibility of getting anywhere without coming under heavy attack) that you're going to have to be pretty bloody good to complete this game - you're either going to totally decimate the enemy forces so your final bombing mission goes unopposed, or you're going to have to do something very sneaky (I haven't quite worked out what yet) to get through their lines, or (at the very least) you're going to have to be really skillful at flying four of five planes at once, so you can provide a nice fighter escort for your bomber, perhaps set up some diversions and so on. In fact, thinking about it, you're probably going to have to do all three.
4) Just to re-emphasise the point again, there are an awful lot of baddies about - and it's lucky if you manage to get any of your craft out of their underground Thunderbirds-like hangars and away from your base without getting attacked by at least one of them, and (in the early days at least) that'll mean the runways will be littered with pretty burning wreckage.

THE PLOT DOESN'T THICKEN
Hmmm. Anything strike you as being a bit peculiar about the plot I just went through? Yes, that's right - it's utter nonsense. For example, if you've got the technology to build teleporters (I haven't mentioned these yet, but they do appear in the game) what are you doing bombing about in fairly primitive contraptions like tanks and helicopters in the first place? And why on earth is a Neutron bomb doing spread out in five places across the landscape anyway? It all seems rather dubious to me.

Having said that though, suspend your feelings of disbelief, and you'll find that it all makes for a pretty engrossing storyline. It's a take a while to engross you though, it has to be said - all I've really done so far is muck about with the various vehicle simulators and go on a few sorties. Actually taking a serious stab at the real mission is a bit beyond me and is likely to remain that way for some time. This is a complicated, time consuming old thing alright, and (please correct me if I'm wrong) but I'm sure many purchasers will get nowhere near completing the thing, just like they didn't with Carrier Command.

So what exactly is it we've got here? Well, we've got a low degree of management stuff to start with, (organising the time of your scientists and so on, as well as making sure you're liberating enough essential supplies from enemy bases to keep them going). Then we've got a level of war game-like generalship, where you've got to work out how best to use your resources, where to send your forces (as well as controlling each vehicle, you can let the individual commanders do most of the work, guiding their craft towards their directives while you keep swapping screens to keep an eye on things and take over from them when the going gets tough) and so on.

And then, on top of it all, sits the graphics factor and most enjoyable bit - all this zooming around in lots of different buggies and blowing things up. This tends to be fast, doesn't behave massively realistically, and proves to be a humungous bundle of fun - as a high-tech shoot-em-up this game is one of the best.

In other words we've got a bit of a winner on our hands here I think, and it's the phenomenal Lemmings aside) a strong contender for the title of Best Game Pygmy Ever. Did, if you've only got the money to buy one game this month, this has to be a serious contender.

Matt Bealby

CLOAKING DEVICES, TELEPORTS (AND OTHER STUFF THAT CAN BE VERY USEFUL INDEED).

You see this thing here? It's a cloaking device. Instead of leading a weapon you can take this instead for a trouble-free(ish) ride. Teleports can be even more useful - take one out into the countryside somewhere, drop it, and then scuttle back home. Now you've got a handy gateway to that region of the Armour-Geddon map - simply park your vehicles under your floating base teleport (tracker than it sounds - subtle control at speeds under 30mph takes some getting used to) and you'll be able to instantly teleport yourself to the device you dropped earlier. Bingo! Saves lots of time, and can prove very useful.

AMIGA POWER MAY 1991

UPPERS Fast, pretty 3D graphics, some fairly interesting missions and a vast range of high tech hardware to fly, drive and trash.

DOWNERS Lots of keyboard controls take some learning, and there seems to be a bug here that mucking about with it as a high tech shot-em-up and actually getting around to taking a serious stab at the missions.

THE BOTTOM LINE
I can't see Armour-Geddon making anything like the impression or encouraging the level of devotion Carrier Command did (we've all seen a bit too much since then) but it's an excellent game in a very similar genre nonetheless.
Morgoth, Lord of Chaos, he who brings nothing but death, worships nothing but destruction has infected your world with his evil. In sorrow and anger the gods drown all except the land of Arborea, home of the four sacred crystals of harmony, stolen by Morgoth and his servants. In a race against Chaos, Prince Jarel and a band of trusted companions must find the crystals and restore them to their sacred shrines. To fail is to lose everything.

- A fascinating blend of strategy and role-playing.
- Unique large screen 3D perspective.
- Over 10000 locations to visit.
- Brain-teasing puzzles.
- Strategic fight sequences, using force of arms and magic powers.
- Independently controllable characters.
- Choose and customise your own team.
- Beautiful atmospheric graphics.
Games of the Month

**Eye of the Beholder**

Just when the Dungeon Master games seemed to have got the FRP market...

Before we begin, let's get one point quite clear. Yes, Eye Of The Beholder does look remarkably similar to Dungeon Master (and Chaos Strikes Back, its latest incarnation). But it's got a very good excuse. You see, Eye Of The Beholder is actually the latest in SSI's line of official Dungeons & Dragons computer games. Now, as any role-player worth his magic armour will tell you, Dungeons & Dragons games are by far and away the most popular and influential fantasy games money (or dragon's gold) can buy. In fact, almost every computer role-playing game

**'While never looking old fashioned, it doesn't really push the game style far enough'**

ever released borrows heavily on the concepts of D&D. Dungeon Master included (let's call it DM from now on to save me typing it out each time), so it's only fair that SSI should eventually borrow from DM in return. And now they've done it, applying a 3D maze design to their D&D licence. Yes, you'd be perfectly within your rights to cry 'Just a minute, that looks very familiar'. But before you do so just remember that this is as much down to DM ripping off D&D as Eye Of The

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**What's What in Eye of the Beholder**

- The main action screen - A 3D view of your surroundings (including any nearby golems like this one) is presented at all times.
- Movement icons - They allow backtracking and left or right slides, as well as ninety degree rotations and plain old marching forward.
- The message box - Eye's only real concession to text adventuring.
- A quick resume of your party's health and the things your people are carrying. It doesn't look good - three of them are unconscious!
- Your compass - A must-have for any serious adventure.
- Selecting 'Camp' allows your party to rest, heal themselves, and re-learn spells. The game can also be saved or loaded from here (though you can't do any of this when there are monsters about!)
- Ulbert forces the door.
- He may look mean, but in actual fact he's only a crummy little Kobold. Don't worry - they aren't any threat unless there's a whole pack of them.
- Level Four is guaranteed to give you the creeps. The whole thing is packed with giant (and highly poisonous) spiders. (Time for a little magic, I'd say).

---

IT'S THE REAL THING

A couple of days into playing, and you'll realise two important things. Firstly, just how massive the game is (making mapping essential). They may say size isn't everything, but when you are a hardy, adventurous kind of a guy, it's nice to know that it's there. The second thing you notice is just how bloody addicted you are. For crying out loud, why did they have to make...
Despite appearances, D&D games aren't all the same...

Way back in 1987, TSR (the Dungeons & Dragons people) decided that the time was right to grant a licence for the D&D game system to be transferred to computer. Effectively auctioning the rights to their name, software companies were invited to demonstrate what they could achieve with the system before any decisions were made. Having already established a reputation as one of the USA's leading strategy, wargame and role-playing companies, SSI was able to snap it up quite happily, paving the way for what has become a whole range of D&D-related software.

From fairly inauspicious beginnings (it has to be said, their first efforts weren't really very good), they've continually experimented with game formats, each time looking at the D&D system from a new angle. The last two releases, Pool's of Radiance and DragonStrike, refined the style to the point where it really started to work. The former used an Luftra-style gaming system, while the latter broke from the mould entirely, offering a 3D vector combat game.

Having said that though, it's only with Eye Of The Beholder that SSI really seem to have hit the nail on the head. Excellent though this game is, it's the avenues it opens up for the rest of the series that make it really exciting. SSI now have a wide range of different game engines to switch between.

SSI's forthcoming Shadow Sorcerer - a new direction for Dungeons & Dragons games. and you can see how keen they are to experiment by checking out the titles scheduled for this year. There's Pool's Of Darkness, for instance, the final chapter in the Pool's saga, while the Pool's game engine also makes an appearance in another D&D title entitled Gateway To The Savage Frontier, which opens up another storyline entirely. Later games in the Gateway series are unlikely to use the same game system, however. Two possibilities are to a) use the Dungeon Master-influenced set-up employed in Eye Of The Beholder (which would be something to look forward to, particularly if they manage to refine the style yet further) or b) to take the same approach as their other new D&D game...

Which is what? Well, it's called Shadow Sorcerer, and it promises several innovations, not least that there will be up to eleven characters interacting on the screen at any one time! Set in the DragonLance D&D world, Shadow Sorcerer looks more arcadey than most, with 3D isometric graphics and lots of real-time combat.

Finally (for the moment), there's another 3D isometric effort (one of our favourite ways of presenting an adventure game) being developed in Europe for the company. Details are rather vague at the moment - other than telling us that it will probably be set in the Forgotten Realms world (the one depicted in the Pool's saga and Eye Of The Beholder), SSI are keeping it all a bit hush-hush.

While to the non-D&D fan it no doubt looks as if SSI are in the business of churning out hundreds of near identical products on a production-line basis, variety actually seems to be the name of the game, with new ideas and game engines being experimented with constantly. This can only be welcomed as a Good Thing - just take a look at the now hopelessly outdated Bard's Tale series to see what happens when you give up trying.

Crowned, SSI make a comeback and take the genre into the '90s.

What's in his pockets?

Eye Of The Beholder uses an object management system very close to the one in Dungeon Master. Things have been refined even further however, making just about everything pretty easy to get your mind around from the word go.

Level? Here we come (the entrance is down that ladder there). Being the domain of the Undead, it's packed with skeletons and zombies - good job we've got a cleric (or holy man) with us really, isn't it? He can have great fun down there warding them off.

Ugh! The first level of the Waterdeep dungeons is crawling (or slithering - whatever the word is) with giant leeches. Watch out! They'll rear up and try to bite you! (Yes, you're right - D&D leeches don't behave quite the same as 'normal' ones!)
The giant, poisonous spiders of Level Four are back, and – oh no! – they seem to have made pretty short work of our party! It’s so computationally fast I’ve lost hours on this game – more so than with anything I’ve played in ages. Whereas in DM my characters simply felt like cyphers to be manipulated as I saw fit, the ones created in Eye really grew on me (must be something to do with male bonding). The addition of NPCs (that’s computer-controlled non-player characters) joining and leaving the party heightens the realistic effect yet further.

This dedication it engenders reaps you rewards too, after all such clashing of swords and casting of spells, your little guys gain enough experience to move up a level in their chosen profession. This means greater strength and better spells, and, believe me, you’ll need them too in the later levels, where (as the traps and tests get deadlier) things get very involving and – yes – frightening indeed. I can’t think of a delicate way to put this but, well, some of the monsters really scared the crap out of me.

THE LOOKING GLASS

And there we have it really. Eye Of The Beholder may look a lot like Dungeon Master, it may nick quite a few ideas from it (especially the character inventory screens and the user interface works), but I find it quite easy to forgive. There’s a simple reason why too – in all respects it improves things, adding a true D&D flavour to the proceedings. It’s just a shame all these features weren’t included in the ‘real’ Dungeon Master, the first piece – I can’t think of any real reason why they couldn’t have been.

No, the only problem I can really see with Eye Of The Beholder is that, while never looking old fashioned, it doesn’t really push the game style far enough. It’s 1991 now, and there are a number of things which could (and should) have been given a bit more spit and polish. Smooth animation when walking through the dungeons would have been nice, for instance, as would some degree of character interaction (even if it was only on the same level of complexity as in the Lurker games). And just for once I’d like to see a monster with a little bit of intelligence crop up, perhaps one that you don’t have to kill on sight. (And it can be done, most notably in an old, pre-DM Spectrum game called Swords & Sorcery – a flawed masterpiece if ever there was one). Still, these are minor groans, and don’t really affect the enjoyment of the game as a whole too much. (But programmers please note – if you intend doing another role-playing game, you’ll have to get your fingers out!).

It’s hard to define exactly why I like this game so much. I know it can be argued that it’s already been done five years ago. I know that the only reason it looks so state-of-the-art is that most role-playing games are so dodgy anyway. I know all that, and I don’t stop this being just so classy, so involving, and so satisfying. The use of real Dungeons & Dragons rules and elements really elevates it to a new level. I just can’t help being in love with it. So there.

Mark Ramshaw

Simply press the button on the wall and – open sesame! – you can go through. (I don’t know if you’d want to though).

Let’s add a little character, shall we?

Generating your party of characters in Eye Of The Beholder follows the original D&D character creation rules remarkably well. First, a character race is selected, followed by a profession. The actual professions available to you depend on the race – for example, elves, for example, are particularly adept at multiple professions, such as fighter/cleric or fighter/thief/mage. (For the uninstructed, clerics are holy men who possess the ability to ward off undead creatures, cure wounds, and so on, while Mages are basically wizard types, who can cast some great spells, but in scrapbooks usually turn out to be as soft as muck.).

It’s always handy to choose a good spread of professions when constructing your party. This gives you a thief to unlock doors, a cleric to heal the group, a magic user who can become very powerful later in the game, and a fighter to beat hell out of the monsters.

Once the race and profession have been chosen, Eye Of The Beholder allows you to choose the gender, and then a face for your character. A nice touch, as choosing a female character gives you a whole new set of faces to choose from. Finally it’s time to roll your adventurer’s stats (numbers representing excellence in various fields). Your race affects how these fall, and remember – certain professions need to be good at certain things.

Eye of the Beholder – the latest in a long line of D&D epics.

EYE OF THE BEHOLDER VS DUNGEON MASTER (1&2)

And here we have them – the two most important dungeon-based role-playing epics in the world today. Put your prejudices aside, for the result comes tops! Here’s a blow-by-blow comparison.

Round One – Graphics

Visually, Eye Of The Beholder wins hands down. The dungeons are more atmospheric, the icons prettier, and the monsters are actually quite well animated. Dungeon Master does have the added attraction of clever lighting effects (ie things get progressively darker as torches run out), but that can actually work better than anything else.

Round Two – Atmosphere

Eye Of The Beholder wins again. I’m afraid. Atmosphere can make or break a fantasy game, and decent sound is one of the most effective ways to help create it. Eye Of The Beholder manages to grab you with the volume turned right down, so imagine how engrossing it is with sampled screams and so on. (Oh dear, Dungeon Master seems to be lagging somewhat behind). Eye 9 DM 7

Round Three – Design

Just which game has the best dungeon design is more of a subjective thing. Dungeon Master concentrates on pushing a lot of puzzles at you, making progress harder. Eye On The other hand, offers a more spacious affair, giving the player plenty of room to roam around, hacking up the odd monster and so on. Eye 7 DM 7

And the winner is…?

Eye 24 DM 20

And so here we have it. Dungeon Master quite clearly suffers due to its age, comparative lack of atmosphere, and sacrifice of some fantasy elements in favour of more puzzles. Thus Eye Of The Beholder quite convincingly takes the role-playing crown from the previous champion – but for how long?

Uppers At last – a role-player which makes decent use of the Amiga’s graphics and sound (dig those sampled screams), and comes with an intuitive control system to boot. And it’s so huge! A game to play for months (and months) to come – there’s still life in this old dog.

Downers A major factor explaining why this looks so good is that so little has been done post-Dungeon Master to really push forward the fantasy role-playing concept. (We want realistic-style 3D with full character interaction, and we want it now!). There is a price to pay for such an expansive game, too – yes, it’s megabucks. But that’s all right, I’m afraid.

The Bottom Line

Not really as big a leap on from Dungeon Master as I would like, but still sufficiently different to make it an essential purchase. Intelligent and yes, it’s a real achievement, it’s done post-Dungeon Master of software and no mistake.

Let’s add a little character, shall we?

Here we are on a character selection screen. The cameos on the left show the current members of the team, while on the right a new character is just about completed. He's an Elf, so I think I'll call him... National! (Oh dear)
Are you ready to take on Kiki and her friends in this unique game of strategy and skill?

Match up the 2 patterns of stones on the screen - special combinations give bonuses and secret levels. Succeed within the time limit and gorgeous girls will lead you to the next tantalising level.

If Kiki isn’t temptation enough, then 400 levels of stunning graphics, sound and speech, and gameplay so addictive that you will have to be dragged screaming from the screen, surely is.


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**The Killing Cloud**

The classic that, erm, wasn't. The Killing Cloud.

Green politics and poisonous rumour. It may well have been caused by the vile, crusty, rotten way in which we treat the planet. Or person or persons unknown may have whipped it up to start a major crime wave and get rid of all the Californian hippies. Who knows?

Actually, apart from getting in the way and making life difficult, the cloud plays little part in what you have to do during the game. In fact the whole thing should really have been called something like The Dirty Low Down Black Angels Get Tough and, erm, There's This Toxic Stuff Too, but the name would have been far too long to fit on the packaging.

**A Five Course Meal**

The Killing Cloud has this habit of not actually doing what you think it's going to do. Visually, it's a delicious five course meal with coffee. All 3D tinted vector graphics offering dizzying flying sequences, altitude perspectives, and a real feeling of danger in the majority of the ten scenarios. However, and that's 'however' with a capital H, it is also riddled with some frustrating inconsistencies.

Try this one out for a starter. Your main task in life, as a hitech San Francisco cop, is to catch members of the Black Angels gang. You are not allowed to kill the beggars unless they shoot first – in fact you have to catch them in order to interrogate them. That, as any torturer worth his or her salt will tell you, means getting them alive. (To digress for a moment, there was in fact a torture scene included in the game until Amnesty International objected, and it was cut. End of digression.) You achieve the capture by way of nets – for a fuller explanation see the box over there on the right.

Now, instead of carrying these nets with you in your XB500 hoverbike, you have to leave them scattered about the city. Why? Why oh why, if you're so damned technologically advanced, do you have to do this? Why isn't there a tiny area of the bike in which to store the net? (For instance.) It's stupid. Maybe a few more scenarios and no net collecting would have added to the buzz of what is potentially a superb game.

Still, one positive side about the nets, or Nets as they are known to the SFPD, is that you can use them as landmarks via your on-board radar. You have to do this because some stupid...
NET PROFITS

Your Hover Bike — no, it doesn't look much like a bike (more like a plane) and yes, it does look big enough to carry a few little nets!

Even though you're oozing hardness (which hides compassion and a love of flying because it unites you with your inner spirit) your major weapons in the fight against the Black Angels are nets and PUPs. Net stands for not, while PUP looks like it should be an acronym, but is actually named after those small dog-eyed creatures which follow you around. Pups are in fact mobile holding pens which are planted throughout the city.

The idea is that, during the briefing period for each of the ten missions, you check out the lie of the land, and (rather logically) you then plant the nets and PUPs around the place. That's right, instead of bringing them with you, you plant them from the briefing room. Remember to make sure that the PUPs are planted near to the nets, though. Why? Because they don't have a wide range. Your first task after launch is not to get to the criminals with your limited fuel; nope, you have to re-locate the nets.

Once you've done this, you pick the net up in the form of a missile which you then arm. Next, find the foe, drop the net, land and walk through the 'Killing Cloud' in order to read him his rights. Then re-call the PUP. Bureaucracy? We love it.

Three points to bear in mind here: Firstly, yes, there's a lot of pointless running around. Second, don't be fooled into thinking that the ten PUPs and nets you have at the start of the game are replenishable — they're not. You have a set for each mission. (In fact, when I tried to lay more than four in one go, the Amiga simply locked up.) Third, the Black Angels will steal these unreplenishable tools if they can. Don't get frustrated, just kill the little scamps.

The Streets of San Francisco

Or rather, the air above it — here's where the game really comes alive...

Right, here we are, flying around San Francisco in our hover bike (ie plane). There seems to be some sort of bridge ahead — it could be the Golden Gate, but I rather doubt it (that's red), unless they've repainted by 1997 of course...

I know, let's fly a little closer and check it out. Ah, look, the computer's sussed it — this is the Bay Bridge apparently, and not the Golden Gate at all. Let's see if we can fly under it, shall we?

Right, here we are a bit further on, heading for somewhere called 'bobb hill'. You might be wondering what all that pink stuff is — it's the 'Killing Cloud', of course, which hangs around the place at just over floor level.

Wheel! Let's make a low-level run through Chinatown. (By the way, only a cynic would suggest they put all this cloud stuff in so that they didn't have to bother drawing all the ground detail in filled 3D!)

The potential to be the best game in the mag — it's still technically superb, but lazy thinking screws the gameplay a treat.
The Killing Cloud.

Andy Craven is the boss at Vektor Grafix, and while he didn't personally work on the game, he did oversee the actual work on The Killing Cloud. He did oversee the whole thing, who better then, to ask a handful of questions about it?

What do you think about the controversy over the torture scene that was cut out of the finished game?

To be honest, first of all I didn't think it was over the top at all, but in the end it wasn't my decision and it was taken out. I think it's a bit of a shame.

On the other hand, that is you happy with the way the game turned out?

Yes, I'm very happy with it. It's got loads of atmosphere and there's tons of stuff in there that you don't discover even right up until the end. We're very proud of the AI routines for the badies too. They can actually 'see' the game building and obstacles and react and try to avoid them, using realistic techniques. The feel of San Francisco is really good too.

Ah yes, San Francisco. How true to life is the city map?

It's fairly close actually. The shoreline is extremely accurate and we've included most of the major landmarks. There are actually something like 2400 real ground objects featured.

A little undocumented tip is that if you press the 0 key during the first level, the fog actually clears and you can see for miles.

Where did the storyline come from?

Well, the story was written in-house. We also did a special 4x2 comic that Mirrorsoft are distributing as a point-of-sale thing, which is partly done with the game and partly to give Vektor Grafix a head start for the plot.

Are there any plans for The Killing Cloud 2?

Obviously, it depends on how successful this one is. If we were going to follow it up it would be nice to extend the gameplay and missions a bit, and improve the look of the fog and the such. We used only a very small fraction of the story we wrote in the game. We've got lots of scope for sequences, but when we wrote it with other things in mind.

Like what?

Well, through Activision we've got links with the movie industry, and we'd like to see what we could come up with in that direction. It would certainly make a change from the way these things usually go, but again we're just waiting to see what happens.

Stuart Campbell
Take to the skies in this all-action arcade game for 1 or 2 players.

White Sharks is packed with features, including simultaneous 2 player gameplay, near-photographic graphics, hi-fi quality music and effects, and a completely unique weapon customising screen that allows the player up to 37 million different weapon combinations!!

To succeed, each level and alien will require different tactics, while the fast-paced action will keep the trigger finger on overtime. Take the challenge in this shoot-em-up with a difference!!
GODS
THE BITMAP BROTHERS

Are you bored of games that pose no real challenge? Mindless adversaries that can't fight back? Dumb nasties who just ask to be slaughtered?
GODS is a complete departure!

Featuring a revolutionary system of artificial intelligence, your opponents react to your actions and interact with the environment. Perhaps quite will achieve more than brute strength! Your cunning, as well as skill with the fearsome array of weapons at your disposal, are needed equally to overcome the enemy...

Award-winning Bitmap graphics and music by Niton 12 make this their most exciting game ever...

Have you got what it takes to be a GOD?
Amiga, ST, PC

© 1991 The Bitmap Brothers. Published by Renegade
1. **RAINBOW ISLANDS**  
See Gary's Big Rainbow Islands Guide in the coming pages for everything you could ever want to know about Rainbow Islands, as well as lots of stuff that it hadn't even entered your mind to wonder about.

2. **LEMMINGS**  
Save blockers from certain death by digging the ground out from under them, thereby turning them into walkers. Some codes for later levels are:  
- FUN - OCHWMDLCKJ - level 10  
- HFLLCNEDY - level 20  
- TROKY - CONNLIEJ - level 10  
- ONIKOGCKENV - level 15  
- LULPOCF - level 20  
- MCENLHHFFY - level 25  
- HMGWCOMFMW - level 30

3. **SPEEDBALL 2**  
Forget about spending cash on your team's attributes, just save up and buy star players instead.

4. **SIM CITY**  
Press Caps Lock and type 'FUND' for a $10,000 bonus.

5. **VIRUS**  
Pause and unpause the game while holding down Enter. Now press 'C' to toggle special effects, 'L' for a free missile, 'F' for fuel, 'D' for a demo, and 'N' to toggle cheat mode.

6. **POPULOUS**  
Try these selected codes to later worlds, drawn completely at random from the depths of our own Encyclopaedia Of Completely Stupid Words Used By Programmers And No-one Else Ever.  
- TMHEOHLE  
- HURTUSLOG  
- VERYQUEER  
- SWATHDILE  
- SADDIOLS  
- SWAOPPAP

7. **KICK OFF 2**  
Run your fingers along the function keys while playing and S12 or S14 should appear in the corner of the screen. You will now be able to substitute one of your players for the opposition goalie. You can do this twice, by which time the chances are the replacement keeper will be rather on the crap side.

8. **FALCON**  
Hold down 'X', 'CTRL' and Shift for in-flight re-arming.

9. **INDIANAPOLIS 500**  
Always put 10 gallons of fuel in for qualifying, and always have the turbocharger set to maximum. You can turn it down to save fuel when you're well ahead, but don't risk it any earlier.

10. **STUNT CAR RACER**  
If you get stuck in a hole or at the bottom of a jump, drive slowly up to the wall and accelerate with boost. This will minimise your damage.

11. **PANG**  
On the map screen, type 'WHAT A NICE CHEAT'. The map should turn purple, enabling you to select any level to start on (you'll have to be quick, though).

12. **PRINCE OF PERSIA**  
Say goodbye to stuck-on-a-level misery by pressing Caps Lock and 'L' to skip rounds. (This only seems to work up to level 4)

13. **SPINDIZZY WORLDS**  
For more precise control, put your computer on the floor and hit the space bar with your foot to brake (it's a good idea to take your shoes off first).

14. **NEBULUS**  
Type 'HELLOIAMJUMP' on the title screen, then use F1 to F8 to select any starting tower. (With infinite lives).

15. **CARRIER COMMAND**  
Pause the game and type 'GROW OLD ALONG WITH ME'. Now you can toggle immunity with '+' and '-'.

16. **DUNGEON MASTER**  
For weapon-free dispatching of monsters, simply go through a door and stand on the other side. When they try to come through after you, repeatedly close the door on their heads. Ha!

17. **RICK DANGEROUS II**  
Enter 'POOKY' on the high score table. Now on the level select menu you will be able to choose between full-length or shortened versions of the game.

18. **ULTIMA V**  
Search the Crypts carefully to find some magic wands. Also, save all of your characters twice in case of mishaps.

19. **THE NEW ZEALAND STORY**  
On the title screen type 'GRATSABWIKNEKUFRETHOTM' (that's in reverse order, censorship fans) for infinite lives, and level-skipping via the 'HELP' key. If this doesn't work, try Del. Then 'M', then 'FLUFFY KIWIS' for the same effect.

20. **THE SENTINEL**  
Borrow a close friend's brain, you're going to need a spare one...

21. **DAMOCLES**  
On Midas reference 577-341 you can find a pyramid which contains a magic crystal.  
To use it, you'll need the book from the trader at Eris Capital City (13-15). Reading the book while in possession of the crystal will allow one wish to be granted. You may like to try some of the following wishes. (And then again you may not, but quite frankly I don't give a hoot either way.)  
I WISH I HAD MORE TIME  
I WISH I COULD RECEIVE 1,000,000 CREDITS  
I WISH THE UNIVERSE WAS MORE COLOURFUL  
I WISH I KNOW HOW TO USE THE AUTHOR'S COMPUTER  
I WISH I HAD MERCENARY 3 NOW

22. **PARADOX 90**  
Don't go around shooting everything, transference is best. Even if you grapple against a lower-powered droid, consider switching to it to save your batteries.

23. **PLOTTING**  
You're never in much danger of running out of time, so study the screen closely before you make any moves, even when everything looks clear. Watch out particularly for the ceiling formations, some of them are very sneaky indeed.

24. **TYPHOON THOMPSON**  
On the later levels, shoot lots of islands at a time. Blast the battlements and there'll be so many sprites in the water you won't be able to fail to pick up a load.

25. **LASER SQUAD**  
On the tougher levels, forget about buying armour. It won't do you much good and the cash is better spent on good weaponry. When shooting at things, always use Auto Fire.

26. **KLAX**  
Simply press '4' during the game to go straight to the final wave.

Over the page we've got a giant Rainbow Islands guide. For the rest of the 100...
Take Control of Rainbow Islands

To kick off our tips section, what could be better than the biggest
damage guide to the ins and outs of a game you've ever seen - and
what game would make a better subject than our All-Time Fave-
rave, Rainbow Islands? Welcome, then, to Part One (the rest comes
next issue). Your guide, Mr Gary Penn...

In the finished Amiga version, then, there are seven Islands to conquer,
whereas the coin-op had 10. This is why you won't have a 'real winner'.
The Japanese plot thingy was referring to the fact that these final three islands (secret
islands, if you will) only rose out of the
water at the end of the game if the player
was in possession of all seven large gems
on completion of Dragon Island. There are
no secret islands in this version, so no
'real' victory. The missing three are
Magical Island (with an obvious theme),
Darius Island (with features and graphics
from the eponymous Talio shoot-em-up)
and Bobble Island, (in keeping with the
story) has features and graphics from
Bubble Bobble - bubbles rising up in front
of the screen is one we remember. (This
feature has actually been implemented in
another form in the Amiga version as one
of the specials - see the next issue).

Along with the final three islands
various other interesting features were
missing from the Amiga version of the
game. One of our favourites was the
peculiar special weapon found in the
Secret Room at the end of Darius Island.
It comprises two rainbows, made from the
first four colours of the rainbow (red,
orange, yellow, green) and turned through
90 degrees, which shoot out from each
side of Bubby and zoom off the screen.
(And that's on top of the rainbow magic
you've always got!)

The observant among you will have
realised that there are only seven colours
in the rainbow, each one relating to one
of the first seven islands, so what's the score
when it comes to the final three islands?
Simple - rather than get large gems for
collecting seven smaller ones, on these
islands Bubby or Bobby receive a Copper,
then Silver, then a Gold mirror instead. So
now you know.

The boys begin with three lives each. An extra life is awarded when
100,000 points are scored, and a second extra life is given for acquiring
1,000,000 points. Thereafter any extra lives are not score-related. Bubby
and Bobby can have a maximum of nine lives each, not including the one
they have in use.

Bubby and Bobby are very versatile fellows with many talents. The
following skills are amongst their repertoire...

WALKING They strut at one of two speeds - normal at first, then
faster when the Magic Shoe is worn. Not only can Bubby and Bobby
walk on platforms or rainbows, they can bump into enemies too - if
the chaps are invincible at the time, that is!

JUMPING The boys' jumping ability extends to 10 different heights.
The length of time the jump button is depressed (or the joystick is
held in the jump position) determines the height of jump. Bubby
and Bobby always jump at least their own height (20 pixels),
keeping only when the maximum of 64 pixels is reached.

FALLING Bubby and Bobby are tougher than they look. They can
carry any distance and not get hurt - well, unless they land on an
enemy or in the water, that is. To slow their descent the boys flap
their arms like birds, and this allows them to be steered slightly as
they fall. When falling is often advisable to hold down the jump
button (or the joystick in the jump position) so that should Bubby or Bobby land
on a rainbow they will jump off it rather than break it.

FIRING RAINBOWS As you know, Bubby and
Bobby are given the
power of Magic
Rainbows. This means
that both boys are
capable of throwing a
Magic Yellow Star which
leaves a rainbow in its
wake. Special petitions
increase the speed at
which the Yellow Star
weaves its magic and
also its strength,
allowing more than a
single rainbow to be
created with one throw.
The star explodes once
it has formed its last
rainbow.

HURRY! Bubby or Bobby mustn't dawdle, for
the islands are slowly but surely sinking.
Should Bubby decide to hang around for
too long, a warning sounds and the
'Hurry!' message appears (the time it
takes varies from Round to Round). Eight
seconds later the water rises.
The trick is not to panic - you see, the
water scrolls slightly down with the screen
in its early stages of flow, allowing vital
seconds to save yourself.

RESTART POSITIONS The numbers at the right hand side of
a Round represent Restart Positions. This
means that should Bubby die with lives
remaining he is returned to the last Restart
Position passed in the Round. The boys
faint invisibly for five seconds when they
reappear, so take advantage of the
situation and go wild.

The place where Bubby dies affects the
time remaining before the 'Hurry!' message appears. A percentage of the
Round's overall time limit is used, based
rainbows are far more versatile than they look. They can be walked on, jumped from, used to trap or remove creatures and objects, used as protection to deflect the flying beasts or broken to crush enemies or objects that happen to be lying below.

A freshly thrown rainbow stays on screen for approximately 12 seconds before its magic begins to fade and it flashes for a second and disappears. A maximum of 12 rainbows can be on screen at once, which is enough to allow complex arrangements to be built. The appearance of any more rainbows causes the oldest rainbow to dissolve. However, there are two main exceptions to this: throwing a strip of two rainbows with three bands already on screen causes the oldest band to disappear, as does throwing a strip of three rainbows with two bands of three already on screen. It's up to you whether you prefer to play with fast single rainbows or slightly slower multiples.

When extra height is required, make a rainbow stairway and walk up it. This comes in handy on the later islands which are platform-starved. Bubby's height of jump is increased when he leaps off a rainbow. Jumping off a rainbow is worth 10 points.

Shoot rainbows and break them almost simultaneously by jumping into the rainbow as soon as it's thrown. This is useful when it comes to dealing with a Boss, as it counts as two hits - one from the Magic Yellow Star and the other from the broken rainbow.

The Magic Yellow Star which produces the rainbows can be used to hit creatures or collect objects. Hitting a creature with the rainbow-producing Star results in a Bonus Object being left behind (see BONUS OBJECTS).

Jumping on a rainbow causes it to crumble and fall, crushing or collecting anything below. Any rainbows connected to it will also fall. This quirk allows Bubby to attach a fuse of sorts to a form of rainbow bomb. Each rainbow crushed is worth 10 points.

The same result can be achieved with a different technique. Throw a rainbow so that the top of it touches a creature or object, then break the rainbow to collect the object or effectively crush the creature (and thus produce a gem - see GEMS).

Finally, bear in mind that most creatures are so dense - or consumed with rage - they fall into rainbows. Take advantage of this by laying traps.

The end of the fourth Round of an island doesn't have a 'Goal In'. Nope, instead it has a Boss Room in which the big Boss of the island resides. The big Bosses are hardy creatures and unlike their smaller kin they require many hits to destroy them. The Boss' energy is shown as bars at top of the screen.

An advantage of the fact that the Boss doesn't move for a couple of seconds when Bubby first enters the room. The best trick to play on a Boss is to lay a trap of rainbows. As the Boss moves...
THE ISLANDS

Note the figures provided for each Round are for the time it takes for the 'Hurry' message to appear. For each inhabitant the name of its true form is provided. This gives you an idea of how it will behave. Any oddities follow NOTES. The difficulty level concerns the speed at which creatures move, fire, get angry and re-evaluate Bubby's position. The difficulty level increases whenever you move to another island, or enter a Secret Room or activate any of the cheat codes.

Into it, break the chain - any rainbows touching the Boss will deplete its energy by a unit. Remember to crush any unused rainbows, otherwise Bubby may find himself walking on them and end up in mid-air with no place to go but Rainbow Islands heaven.

With the Boss out of the way a large magic chest drops to the floor. Like its smaller counterparts found at the end of first three Rounds of every island, this one throws out 16 bonus objects. There's also the added bonus of a large bonus item worth 100,000 points, which makes up for the fact that the Boss isn't worth any points at all.

Note that even in the Boss Room Bubby isn't safe from drowning! After 45 seconds the 'Hurry!' message will roll across the screen, then eight seconds later the water will rise.

SECRET ROOMS

Collecting all the gems in the correct order - that's in the rainbow sequence from red through to violet - not only results in a Completed bonus but also allows access to a Secret Room. When you reach the end of an island (that's every fourth Round), a Silver Door appears in the Boss Room. Avoid the Boss and touch the entrance to appear in the Secret Room.

There's more to entering a Secret Room than meets the eye. Look at the top of the screen - those hieroglyphics represent the cheat modes (see IF AT FIRSTin the final section). How clever.

INSECT ISLAND

ROUND 1. 55 Seconds

BABY WORM
ZenChan

MINOSUKE
ZenChan
NOTES: The baby of the Boss is a tricky little devil. It homes in on Bubby and Bubby's position, spinning webs up the screen to follow them when they are above it. When Bubby or Bubby is on the same level the Spider bounces left or right after them.

BEETLE
Monster
NOTES: When Bubby or Bubby is above an angry Beetle it flies in straight lines after them. Otherwise the Beetle drops down to their level. The Beetle gets angry quite quickly but doesn't re-evaluate the boys' position very often. It's also capable of climbing over rainbows.

ROUND 2. 50 Seconds

SPIDER
Rancho
NOTES: The baby of the Boss as a tricky little devil. It homes in on Bubby and Bubby and Bubby's position, spinning webs up the screen to follow them when they are above it. When Bubby or Bubby is on the same level the Spider bounces left or right after them.

HIVE
Puru Puru
NOTES: The Hive drops down from off the screen and releases Bees. It's first encountered on Round 2 where it releases two Bees. On Round 3 it releases three Bees. It's wise to leave the Hive to release its Bees then quickly destroy it for the benefit of an extra enemy.

CROW
Monster
NOTES: The Crow hatches from an Egg, which is also a Monster. It stops regularly to check the boys' position.

ROUND 3. 60 Seconds

BIG MOM SPIDER
BOSS

She stands between Bubby and Bubby and the second island. She's asleep at the top of the screen (her eyes are closed) when her room is first entered. She awakens as she drops down from her web then bounces after you. The best trick is to throw as many rainbows as possible beneath her before she drops. When she hits the rainbows, break 'em. Walk back and forth across the screen as she bounces, unleashing and breaking rainbows in the process. Alternatively, a fully-equipped Bubby can go straight to the top of the room and throw four successive strings of rainbows at her. She should be dead before she even gets a chance to awake.

SECRET ROOM FEATURE

Magic Shoe: Permanent Fast Walk
**COMBAT ISLAND**

**ROUND 8. 60 Seconds**

- **TANK** Hi De Gonsu
  - **NOTES:** Shoots a single bullet which travels just under half the screen's width.

- **TRUCK** Zenchan

- **HELICOPTER** Puru Puru

- **BOMBER** Invader

- **GUN** Matta
  - **NOTES:** Shoots out a deadly bouncing bomb which behaves similarly to a Banan. But isn't.

**ROUND 7. 100 Seconds**

- **BIG HELICOPTER BOSS**
  - Its movement pattern is easy to follow. It flies back and forth, re-evaluating Bubby's position when it reaches the sides of the screen and then moving vertically to match his height. Your best bet is to try to create rainbows at the top of the screen and drop them on the Helicopter. Try not to get caught at the sides.

**ROUND 6. 40 Seconds**

- **BUNKER & SOLDIER** Banan
  - **NOTES:** Sits there harmless enough (Bubby and Bubby can even touch it) until its eyes appear. Then it throws out two

- **SECRET ROOM FEATURE**

  **Red Pot One:** Permanent Double Rainbow

**ROUND 5. 40 Seconds**

**ALTERED STATES**

- **The Boss Of Shadow** has used a Disguise Spell on his minions. Collecting the Crystal Ball breaks the spell. Now when an enemy is killed it spins away in its true form... as one of the Bubble Bobble baddies. The eight Bubble Bobble baddies appear in different forms depending on the island's theme. Each alter ego behaves similarly to its real self. For example, Rainbow Islanders which bounce about a lot are more often than not not the Baneo in disguise.

- **INVADER**
  - This actually the original Taito invader. Just the like the original, it moves back and forth across the screen, though this guy drops bombs. It first appears as the Bomber on Combat Island.

- **ZENCHAN**
  - Generally walks back and forth along platforms, turning only when it reaches a gap or blockage. Unless its angry, in which case it falls down holes and turns to walk in Bubby's direction. On later islands the ZenChan always falls down holes, regardless of mood. It's also capable of walking over rainbows, so watch out. The ZenChan first appears as the Baby Worn on Insect Island.

- **HI DE GONSU**
  - It behaves pretty much like the ZenChan only it fires. The life expectancy of the projectiles—the distance they travel—increases on later islands. The older Hi De Gonsu will fire in Bubby's general direction, then eventually it will jump after him. The Hi De Gonsu first appears as the Tank on Combat Island.

- **BANEO**
  - Bounces horizontally towards Bubby, jumping him if he rises above it. Later incarnations wait until Bubby nears before it reacts. The Baneo first appears as the Spider on Insect Island.

- **PURI PURU**
  - The least dangerous of the flying enemies, the Puri Puru moves in an obvious pattern at approximately 30 degrees to the horizon. It turns only when it collides with solid scenery. The Puri Puru first appears as the Bee (and the Hve) on Insect Island.

- **MAITTA**
  - It behaves pretty much like the ZenChan and Hi De Gonsu. Initially the Maitta fires a single projectile but eventually it fires more often and acros across greater distances. It also passes through platforms, so beware. The Maitta first appears as the Gun on Combat Island.

- **MONSTER**
  - The other flying enemy. It homes in on Bubby and stops regularly to check on his position. Later incarnations move faster and in shorter bursts, checking Bubby's position more often. The Monsters first appears as the Beetle and Crow (and the Egg from which it hatches).

- **DRUNK**
  - It only appears on the last three islands – of the original arcade version.
ROUND 9. 90 Seconds

FRANKENSTEIN
Zanchan

WEREWOLF
Hill De Gonsu
NOTES: Wanders back and forth on its platform, stopping to shoot a single fireball across the width of the screen in Bubby's general direction — and that's regardless of whether he's on the same horizontal line or not.

SKELETON
Banebo
NOTES: It starts life as a skull on the ground — until Bubby gets close enough whereupon it springs into action. The Skeleton attempts extra high jumps whenever Bubby gets above it.

BAT
Monster
NOTES: It

ROUND 10. 105 Seconds

hanging upside down until Bubby comes into range whereupon it flies after him. In many respects it's not much worse than the Crow.

DRACURA
Monster
NOTES: He starts as a pink bat then transforms into Dracula when he gets close enough to Bubby. He then infrequently fires a lightning bolt in Bubby's general direction.

GHOST
Invader
NOTES: It's not quite like the Invader as it moves at 45 degree angles, but it's similar enough.

BIG DRACURA BOSS
He's one of the worst! Bosses you are likely to meet. Dracula moves very much like his smaller brothers, only when he stops to re-

ROUND 11. 120 Seconds

evaluate Bubby's position, he shakes his Cape to let an arc of six big bats fly out in Bubby's general direction. Shoot them. Dracula moves towards Bubby in a straight line. The best advice available is keep moving around the outskirts of the screen, laying traps as you go. Actually, because of the slightly smaller screen, this Boss Room is marginally harder than the arcade original.

ROUND 12. 165 Seconds

SECRET ROOM
FEATURE
Yellow Pot: Permanent Fast Rainbow

MONSTER ISLAND

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27. SWIV
Pause the game and type 'NCC-1701' for infinite lives.

28. INDY JONES ADVENTURE
To get the Grail diary, pick up all the rubbish on your desk. To get the bottle of wine in the restaurant, read the label.

29. F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER
For practically all missions, carry as many Mavericks as possible, along with some Sidewinders for maximum massacre capability. Also, if the enemy are giving you a hard time, land near a runway and taxi to the edge of it (but not onto it), then shut down your engines and wait. Bizarrely, this will cause the enemy to get bored and clear off.

30. E-MOTION
To get the secret bonuses,
BONUS 1: Complete a bonus level with the last digit of the timer showing a three.
BONUS 2: Collect four pods in a row without creating any new balls.
BONUS 3: Collect the last blue pod of a bonus level first.
BONUS 4: Complete a level without ever wrapping around the screen.
BONUS 5: Complete a level without ever rotating right.

31. CAPTIVE
In the earlier stages, brute force is your best friend. It's a good idea then, to trade your droids' experience points for brawling skills and simply clobber all the opposition.

32. POWERMONGER
Don't kill all the sheep. No, really.

33. XENON 2
Do it to them before they do it to you.

34. PUZZNIC
Assume the logical, the right move in Puzznic is very rarely the most obvious one. If you start a level by taking the most roundabout routes to blocks, you'll more often than not find things fall quickly into place.

35. SUPER OFF-ROAD RACER
Win every race by the narrowest margin you can. (Sit just in front of the line until the computer cars are about to catch you). This will make the opposition slower in the next race.

36. F-29 RETALIATOR
Landing can be a real bitch in this game, so when you complete a mission, simply fly over your base and eject. It'll cost you some points, but who cares about points? Besides, it's fun to watch the plane as you parachute down, and even more fun when you realise you can still control it! To be really, REALLY clever, eject high up then turn the plane round and crash into yourself. (Laugh?) I nearly donated my kidneys to medical research, by accident.

37. VAXINE
In the course of play type 'WILDEBEESTE', then F1 and F3 will advance you one and ten levels respectively, and F2 and F4 will go back levels in similar style.

38. INTERPHASE
During play type 'Fenny' (with a capital 'F') to access the 'object viewer utility'.

39. CASTLE MASTER
To kill the ultimate baddie, wipe out all the other spirits in the castle first, then shoot him in the forehead. Incidentally, if you can't find any spirits in the dungeon, think rodent...

40. CAR-VUP
Enter these codes on the high score table.
PUSSYCAT - To give you nine lives
BUMPER - Equips you with a bumper at the start of every level
ARNIECAR - 100,000 point bonus
WOAARRGH - Gives you a Speed Turn Alternatively, define as 'FIELDS OF FIRE' and 'IN A BIG COUNTRY' and qualify without even trying!

41. SUPER HANG-ON
WHOOPSIE - Start on the Prehistoric level.

42. PRO TENNIS TOUR 2
Change your name to Dorothy, it'll help you identify with your player better. (Hey, it's a brand new game, you don't want us to spoil it for you, do you?)

43. STARGLIDER 2
Start the game, press F1, show your craft to a standstill, then press 'DEL' to pause. Now type 'WERE ON A MISSION FROM GOD' and press '1'. From now on, pressing 'K' will arm your ship with enough weaponry to decimate most of the free-thinking universe. (You fascist.)

44. SHANGHAI
If you can possibly help it, don't move trees which you can see three of.

45. LOTUS ESPRIT TURBO CHALLENGE
Define the player names as 'MONSTER' and 'SEVENTEEN' for an especially rocky ride (shortlist).

46. operation stealth
To escape from the cave, operate the stones on the ground then use the ropes on the metal object. Operate the ground (?) to find the pick-axe, then operate the pick-axe where the fresh air is coming from until there's a hole big enough for you to walk through.

47. WORLD CLASS LEADERBOARD
Wear some plus-fours while playing the game. It won't improve your scores, but it will make every game a much more fulfilling experience.

48. ARKANOID 2 - REVENGE OF DOH
Hold down the left mouse button while the game is loading for an odd little commercial break.

49. BATTLE SQUADRON
Start the game and type 'CASTOR' for invincibility. F6 to F10 will now choose weapons, and F1 to F5 will vary your weapon power.

50. TOWER OF BABEL
When collecting klonides, turn the grabber to face them and programme it with fire, right, right, right, and fire again. The game will think you've collected two klonides, so each level is now only half as much trouble.

51. WINGS
See 'TV Sports Football'.

52. CADAVER
In level 3, if you go to the Royal Court and touch Wulf, he'll give you a quest. Fulfil the quest and return, and he'll give you another quest and a new key to help you cope with those locked-door blues.
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a shot. This should give you a chance to get the ball straight into the tunnel in the shortest possible time, while decreasing the risk of concoding goals.

70. BALANCE OF POWER
1990
Listen to your advisers. You CAN win in situations they don’t like, but it’s not worth starting WW3 for, which is frequently the outcome.

71. RICK DANGEROUS
Enter ‘POOKY’ onto the high score table to start from any level previously reached.

72. LOOM
Listen carefully to the Guild Of Glassmakers. They cast spells which you can hear and then copy for your own use.

73. ROCKET RANGER
Don’t ask me, I can’t play the bloody thing to save my life.

74. ST. DRAGON
Press Caps Lock during play and type ‘DECAFFEINATED’, then press Return and Caps Lock again for invincibility. Or, if you’re not a complete Jessie, type Caps Lock, ‘WHATS WRONG NEVER SEEN A GUY WHO SLEPT WITH A FISH BEFORE’, Return and Caps Lock for infinite lives. For a bit of a giggle, replace the words in quotes with ‘I HATE THE RADION ADVERT’ or ‘KYLIE’. Finally, for a real challenge, complete level 1 without shooting anything except the end-of-level robot cow. (Use your tail!)

75. ELITE
On the protection screen, enter ‘SARA’ as the word from the manual. At the second attempt, proceed with the protection as normal, and you’ll then be able to ‘poke’ certain values to increase your cargo and weaponry by pressing * (the asterisk).

76. QUARTZ
When your energy gets low, simply stand still and don’t fire to build it up again.

77. FLOOD
Even more level codes. LONG - level 4
GRIP - level 8
VINE - level 12

78. BUGGY BOY
The only way to really big points is to hit the flags in order, so go out of your way to get the right colours. The same applies to extra time flags – if you know where they are it doesn’t take any more time to get to them, and they can make the difference between reaching the checkpoint and failing doomly.

79. ZANY GOLF
Cabbage cabbage giraffe cabbage. There, you can’t ask for anything much zanier than that.

80. PIPE MANIA
Guess what? It’s some level codes.
BALL
BLOB
WILD
DOCK
GRIP
OOZE

81. TOTAL ECLIPSE
Hold down ‘1’ and ‘9’ and press fire for a little surprise.

82. DRAGON BREED
Pause and type ‘IREM’ for infinite lives and level selection with the ‘N’ key.

83. JAMES POND
Type ‘JUNKYARD’ during the title sequence. Start the game and press Return, then the bottom row keys (‘2’ to ‘7’) access levels 3-12 respectively, Return toggles the protective fairy. ‘D’ unlocks padlocks and F10 will take you to the “Techsperts’ Delight”. Whatever that is.

84. VENUS: THE FLY TRAP
Swoop me, it’s time for some level codes again.
MANTIDS - level 2
CICADAS - level 3
PSYLLIDAE - level 4
PERIDES - level 5
SATYRIDS - level 6
LYCAENID - level 7
PYRALID - level 8
NOCTUID - level 9
Typing JUPITER will also give you infinite time, and ‘PLUTO’ provides infinite ammo. Clever doggy.

85. TETRIS
Buy a Game Boy.

86. TV SPORTS: FOOTBALL
Buy another disk drive.

87. DISTANT ARMIES
Make sure you collect lots of power-ups before taking on the big end-of-level guardian on the Chaturanga level.

88. TURRICAN
Type ‘BLUESMOBIL’ for 99 extra lives.

89. TREASURE TRAP
Make better use of your keys by dropping them on the floor, where they will deflect the path of oncoming monsters.

90. BATMAN THE MOVIE
On the title screen type ‘JAMMMM’, then skip levels with F10.

91. SWITCHBLADE
Enter ‘POOKY’ on the high score table. Now press 1 to 5 before you press fire to start a game, and you’ll start on the relevant level.

92. SUPERCARS
Enter your name as RICH to start with £500,000.

93. THEIR FINEST HOUR
On look, I don’t know, fly around and shoot all the bad guys or something. You don’t expect me to be brilliant at ALL these games, do you?

94. MIG-29
Don’t rely heavily on your missile locking system. Even with a red lock you’re liable to miss unless you’ve got a good position, so get right in close before you unleash any air-to-air death devices.

95. MONTY PYTHON’S FLYING CIRCUS
Enter ‘SEMPRE’ on the high score table for a menu of new options. Also, try the old ‘POOKY’ routine again.

96. GOLDEN AXE
Whatever you do, don’t get knocked off the edge of the 5th level! You’ll regret it...

97. GHOULS’N’GHOSTS
Type ‘KAREN BROADHURST’ during play for invincibility.

98. RED STORM RISING
Avoid firing missiles unless you’re running very deep (note authoritative use of submarine terminology there, fool fans), as you’ll just give your position away. (It says here.)

99. XYBOTS
Enter ‘ALF’ on the high score table, and you’ll cop yourself a load of add-ons in the next game.

100. GRAND MONSTER SLAM
Bloody hell, how simple do you want it?

Contributions: Stuart Campbell, Gary Penn, Mark Ramsay, Mat Evans, Daniel Moore, Daniel Pemberton, Harryst and you have it – the end of our very first Complete Control. Remember the message at the other end (to start contributing tips now!) and see you next month for Rainbow Islands and more!
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WHICH AMIGA GAME DO YOU REALLY WISH YOU'D WRITTEN? (AND WHY?)

Well, there's a question - two in fact. Gan Penn put them to some of the software industry's leading lights, to

STEVE SCRECHE
Designer Kick Offs 1 & 2

'PIECEMAKER... I thought it was quite good. I could be wrong but it was the fact that it looked like it didn't take two years to do it. The things I do take a long time and an awful lot of effort is spent figuring out what's going in. But with a game like PieceMaker it's a simple idea which is easier to implement than some of the deeper stuff that's appearing now. It'd be nice if at the beginning of a project you could see the finished product and you knew what was going to go into it. When you start with a blank sheet and only an idea of the sort of thing you want to do, you could do so much only to have to scrap it. Something like Stunt Car was harder to do than a conventional racing game because its terms weren't so easily defined as it's all made up, whereas with real life simulations you have a comparison to hand. Something like PieceMaker is a good idea - whether it took someone months to think of the idea I don't know, but that's what I like about games like that: a good idea that's well executed.'

GEOFF CRAMMOND, Author The Sentinel, Stunt Car Racer

'F/A-18 INTERCEPTOR... It's always been the best flight simulation. It's not particularly realistic as such but it has the right balance of flying and combat. It's a game I played a lot. It's nothing technically special but it plays the best.'

DAVID JONES, DMA Design and the author Lemmings

'LEMMINGS... It's refreshingly different and fun too. We're all very impressed with it here. And it's going to make lots of money, I'm sure.'

ANDY BEVERIDGE The Assembly Line

'KNIGHTS OF THE CRYSTALIUM... It was a gem. It was the most unusual program I've seen. The music was absolutely fantastic and so was the game. It wasn't that successful but it was an excellent product all the same. I'm not surprised it took the author a couple of years to write.'

GEOFF BROWN, Managing Director of US Gold

'TURRICAN... It's just really, really good and a lot of really, really good things in it. There are lots of really, really good effects and interesting things to find and do. And it's got that really, really good weapon that goes around you and goes 'Wang!'

JO DONAR Producer of Probe

'SHADOW OF THE BEAST... Because it sold loads. Computer games ARE art but there's no point in being pretentious about it - at the end of the day the aim of the game is to make money.'

ANDREW WRIGHT Director Virgin Games

'POPULOUS... Apart from being original in every sense of the word, it was very very playable, forging new frontiers in terms of computer entertainment. And it enjoyed great commercial success.'

GARY BRACEY Ocean

'DUNGEON MASTER... It kept us addicted for weeks and weeks. It's big, well designed and easy to get into. The learning curve is perfect, and it's got just that right balance of fighting and puzzle solving. We've got a lot of respect for TCI.'

STEVE KELLY, one of the Bitmap Brothers

'POPULOUS... There's a lot of original stuff in it. Actually, it wasn't totally original. It managed to draw on other ideas without actually copying them. Ermm... none of which spring to mind.'

JOHN PHILLIPS Author Nebulus and Eliminator

'DUNGEON MASTER... Because it took the longest time to hack and therefore had the longest shell life.'

IAN HETHERINGTON Managing Director & Software Development Manager of Psygnosis
which they invariably replied: 'Ooh, that's a tricky one.' After a bit

of thought though, here's what they had to say...

'KICK OFF. Because it sold well and it deserved to sell well, unlike certain other games which promise more than they deliver.'

JON HARE
Orchestrating Director of Sensible Software

'KICK OFF. Because it sold well and it deserved to sell well, unlike certain other games which promise more than they deliver.'

JON HARE
Orchestrating Director of Sensible Software

'MARBLE MADNESS. It's a simple idea that's very well executed. It's the only one he played for some time.'

BRUCE JORDAN
Novagen On Behalf Of PAUL WOAKES
Author Mercenary and DamoBalls

'SPEEDBALL. When it came out it was just completely wonderful and nobody had played anything quite as good as that. I'd liked to have generated that level of enthusiasm with a product.'

TOM WATSON
Renegade

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GLYN WILLIAMS
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RENEGADE AND THE BITMAP BROTHERS

What are they trying to do? Is it working? (And who the hell do they think they are?) Perhaps it's time, suggests Matt Bielby, someone really asked them...

You all know the basic story, of course. Last year the highly publicised Bitmap Brothers — certainly the industry's best know programming team, and arguably its best — upped and left the protective wing of Mirrsoft, who'd published their hits Speedballs 1 & 2, Xenon 2 and Cadaver. It was quite a shock to many people — though Mirrsoft are on record as saying they'd seen it coming — especially when they set up shop with (of all things) an indie record company.

With the three original Bitmap Brothers — Eric Matthews, Steve Kelly and Mike Montgomery — firmly established as directors of the new Renegade outfit, it was the nearest thing to self-publishing on a major scale that the UK industry had ever seen. Many people were willing it to fail, quite a few wanted to see it succeed, but all were watching. And the Bitmap/Renegade crew, never shrinking violets at the best of times, made sure that there was something to watch too, with a string of quotes and barbed comments that pointed out plenty of the idiocies of the software status quo. It was quite some going for an outfit that had yet to release a single game.

All that's about to change though. The first Bitmap/Renegade product, Gods, is at last shipping out and is reviewed this very issue. Stage one of the plan — that they'd actually manage to get a product out there — now seems more or less complete, so it seemed like a good time to talk to them about how things have been working out. Over the page programmer Sean Griffiths, one of the newer generation of Bitmaps, talks about Renegade's second project, Magic Pockets, while Steve Kelly outlines the thoughts behind the Cadaver levels disk. First, though, Tom Watson, an ex-Mirrsoft man himself and the one responsible for the day-to-day running of Renegade, outlines how it all happened, why it had to happen, and where it goes from here.

TOM WATSON

At the moment, to all intents and purposes, Tom Watson is Renegade. Sure, the publishing company has other directors — some of the Bitmaps and a couple of blokes from Rhythm King, the indie record label that owns much of the company — but no other employees as such. "Maybe I'll get an assistant in a bit," he says, 'That'd be nice.'

Not that he really seems to need one — over the past six months or so since the outfit was officially announced, Tom has built up a pretty sizeable reputation for it, thank you very much. To a large extent that's down to the existing rep of The Bitmap Brothers, but it's also down to the intriguing nature of the idea. After all, here we all are in a young industry that's always drawing parallels between itself and the music business, and — what's this? — suddenly some bona fide music biz types are getting directly involved. What will they think of the way we work? How will they do things differently? It's both threatening and intriguing in almost equal measure.

They are doing things differently too, with the emphasis on creator's rights, original product and building up a loyalty to developers, rather than a publishing outfit. There are problems with this of course, as many established software publishers would keenly point out. Not every programmer wants the high profile of the Bitmaps, for instance. And then there are original products, which can be a big risk — they take longer to do generally, and they may not get much of an audience when they come out. There are many great games — ones which everyone knows, and magazines rave about — which never really sold all that many copies at all. And then there's the question of the way the time gets eaten up when you're in a self-publishing type venture — suddenly there's that much more to do, and your productivity rate goes way down.

But anyway, these are all points we'll tackle later on. First, what exactly is the story behind Renegade? How did it get started? How well is it working? And where will the industry itself be in a few year's time? Let's go over to the man himself...

So, to start off with — what's the big picture? How did it all begin?

Okay, the big picture. Two years
It’s ‘easier’ to develop around a licensed product, and when you’re doing that the product suffers because it’s the name you’ve bought that’s really the most important thing.

A few years ago Xenon 2 was being produced and everyone was talking about what sort of music should go with it. The Bitmaps were at Mirrorsoft then – they’d been there since Virgin (their original publisher) turned down Speedball and they had to look elsewhere.

That was a bit of a mistake on Virgin’s part, wasn’t it?

Yes, products they missed. I don’t know exactly why they turned it down exactly, but obviously they thought it wasn’t commercial enough, that it wouldn’t work. It’s difficult to say what was going through people’s minds at the time.

So anyway, the Bitmaps took Speedball round a couple of places and it went to Mirrorsoft. That was a one-product contract, but everybody was so happy with how it worked that a contract for three more products was drawn up, those three being Xenon 2, Cadaver and Speedball 2.

Which brings us back to Xenon 2, the first of them, and the problem with finding suitable music to go with it. Eric (Matthews, the Bitmap’s main games designer) was listening to Into The Dragon by Bomb The Bass at the time, particularly the Assault On Precinct 13 thing, and thought it’d make a really good theme. He rang me up and asked if I thought we could get it.

You being where?

Me doing marketing at Mirrorsoft at the time. I found out a name at Rhythm King, the Bomb The Bass record company, and rang him up. The name was Martin Heath, and he just happened to be the guy who ran the company! It turned out he was a games nut – he’s got about 500 games, some board games, some computer games – so this was like manna from heaven for him.

Had he already heard of the Bitmaps?

I don’t think so actually, because he’s more interested in strategy games. Anyway, he came round the next day going, ‘Can I raid your stock cupboard, please please please?’ We all got on well and as far as the music was concerned it was yeah, what a brilliant idea, let’s do this. The thing about Rhythm King is that the style of music they work in is all ST driven, so new technology and computers aren’t a problem for them.

So anyway, Tim (Simenon, of Bomb The Bass) helped Eric cut it – it was a creative process, not just a ‘Can I have the rights to use that music?’ sort of thing – and Xenon 2 went out 18 months ago. Everyone was very happy with it, everyone agreed what a good idea it had been and said yes, we must do it again sometime.

And that was that?

For the time being, yes. Now at the same time, from my perspective, I was getting extremely pissed off with the value judgements being made in the software industry. What I was starting to suspect was that companies find original product difficult to produce, both in terms of the judgements they make when signing a product in the first place, and in terms of the creative values that run through its development. It is easier to develop around a licenced product, and when you’re doing that the product suffers because it’s the name you’ve bought that’s really the most important thing.

I didn’t like the move towards licensing that was going on at the time because a) it worked against trying to do the best they can and b) ultimately was reliant on the creativity of others. So you’d find a load of scripts going round, Schwarzenegger scripts and all this crap, and it was all just generally getting more and more depressing.

So at what point did you leave the company?

We came to a position at the PC show which was the launch of Xenon 2 where I’d totally fallen out of love.
INTERVIEW SPECIAL

with the industry, so I quit and went to work for a small film production company and that was it. I'd managed to escape from software!

So I'm out, I'm in the film industry, and I'm working on a project that involved Virgin Vision and also involved Rhythm King, which was just neat and curious and fun. It was like 'Hi guys, haven't seen you in ages'! At the same time, or around the same time, a freelance journalist got a commission from Melody Maker to write a piece on music and technology, and there was a link there to Xenon 2. So Martin at Rhythm King thought, 'Ah, I should get Eric in on this, it's not just my side, it's more him really'. So they did an interview together, and then they went to dinner and Martin quizzes Eric on how the software industry worked. He was quite shocked by some of the things he heard.

Such as?

Under-exploitation of a whole number of areas – developer's profiles, how we fail to build a sense of allegiance and familiarity with the game player, but also the way developers are treated commercially, their rewards, their funding and so on. Martin's one of these very lively, dynamic, get up and go people, and he said, hey, let's do something about this.

Lots of talks later, and we decided – I was in there at the same time – that something could be done. We made a triangle of people who knew each other and had worked together who could say let's do it the way it should be done. Myself from my side, the Bitmaps as developers, and Rhythm King as outsiders to the software industry saying I don't believe this, some of this crap.

Effectively what we decided to do was recognise the fact that the key thing we have is our creativity and the products we can produce.

Just listen to the Japanese companies that you see wandering around people's corridors at the moment. Talk to them and they'll say, 'Look, what

WHAT WE HAVE TO DO IS GET THE BEST CREATIVE PEOPLE WE CAN AND CREATE FOR THEM THE BEST ENVIRONMENT POSSIBLE SO THEY'LL DO THEIR BEST WORK.

we're good at is marketing and management – those are our skills. Creatively were crap. You're good at creativity – let's do it together. And as a broad rule of thumb that's true.

When you say there are Japanese people wandering around the corridors, whose corridors do you mean?

A-ha! That would be telling! The thing is, the Japanese are buying up intellectual property rights left, right and centre, in the music business, in films, and the same is, or will be, true of software. They produce the brown goods, the hardware, and for the brown goods to work they need to produce software to run on them, and in the broader sense software is films, software is music, and so on. They're the products that give the brown goods relevance and purpose, and since they're keen to control the whole thing, they're going to get increasingly involved in buying up bits of our industry too.

WORK IN PROGRESS

Sean Griffiths, the Magic Pockets programmer, down on the waterfront.

Currently there are about ten in-house programmers and graphic artists who come under the umbrella label! The Bitmap Brothers, working in three teams on three different projects at once. At the moment there's the bunch who're just polished off Gods, of course (see the review this issue), another team who're just starting work on a newie that'll remain a secret for some time yet, and then there's this lot, who're working on Magic Pockets. By this lot I actually mean is Sean Griffiths, in his first major project as a Bitmap (previously he'd done a few bits and pieces on Cadaver) and Mark Coleman, veteran Bitmap who was responsible for the graphics of games like Xenon 2 and Gods.

So what, you may ask, is Magic Pockets? Well, you may have seen bits of already, most obviously on the Saturday morning kids' TV show Motormouth, where an early demo version has been used in their phone-in computer game slot. The thinking seems to be that having tackled shoot-ems-ups, sports sims (sort of) and arcade adventures, the next obvious game genre for the Bitmaps to take a crack at was the cutie arcade platform game. And take a crack at it they have.

So what's the concept, Sean?

Well, basically, it's about a kid who has bottomless pockets – there's a whole world inside them. What's happened is that he's popped his favourite toys into them and they've got lost in a magic kingdom that's in there somewhere – naturally he wants to get them back. At the start of the game you see him whisk a black hole out of his pockets, drop it on the floor, and then jump through it into the magic kingdom, where the game proper begins.

The first level seems to have that distinctly Bitmap metallic look.

Well, perhaps a bit, but that's not representative of the game as a whole. What you see here is the underground cave level which is the first one we've completed – in the finished game there'll also be a jungle world, a lake where you soak up the sun, and a snowy mountain world.

There'll be quite a bit of variety there – and it won't all be metallic looking!

What about the weapons he uses? They seem to look like little whirlwinds.

That's because that's what they are! I have the feeling his pockets are like a sort of void, so they're full of swirling mist, dust, ice, and things like that, and it's those that he uses as his weapons.

Well, yes, though they're not as controllable as the rainbows. The transport thing is very unpredictable. What happens is that when you get a large whirlwind you can actually get inside it, then let it throw you out, at which point you start bouncing around the screen. You kill everything you touch when you're like that, but you can never really be sure exactly where you're going to stop. Perhaps more useful is the way you can trap bedazzled inside the whirlwind, which sprouts around in the form of coins or sweets. Which sounds even more like Rainbow Islands.

I'm a big fan of Rainbow Islands actually – there's just so many bits to it. There are all the wings, and stuff later on that hardly anybody's really seen, and I've found that a bit of an inspiration – I've been trying to fit as many neat things into Pockets. That's why I've taken the secret room idea from things like the and Super Mario Brothers I want this to be the sort of game where people keep discovering new things even after they've had it for quite a while.
So where does that leave us?

That leaves us with the one thing we've really got to sell, which is creativity. The thing they haven't got. That's what matters now - it's not having, for instance, a strong, heavily staffed company which has excellent access to European distribution. Yes, that can be important in the short term, but when the Japanese get here we'll find that they can do that better.

Let's say, for the sake of argument, that a large Japanese entertainment group decides to launch a world-wide software activity. It's going to be bloody hard for even say, EA, to have any hope of competing, let alone any of the smaller companies, by comparison really small companies like Ocean.

So Renegade fits into all this where?

Renegade says, look, the creative process is our one selling point, it's the one thing we really have. What we have to do is get the best creative people we can and create for them the best environment possible so they'll do their best work. At the moment, most relationships between publisher and developer have become almost combative, which is an utter disaster as far as we can see. Neither side are happy, neither side are doing their best work, which is so sad because ultimately publishers and developers are working to the same ends, those of producing the best products they can and then selling a lot of them.

Do you think that to some extent that mistrust and combattiveness can be put down to a degree of unprofessionalism on the part of many developers? I mean in terms of working to time scales, doing what they're meant to be doing and so on.

Well, look at it like this - if you buy a dog and chain it to a post and kick it every morning it's going to bite your ankle! Unfortunately though, yes, I think that's a very strong part of it. Some developers can be extremely unprofessional. There have been cases of that recently in fact, but what we've got to remember is this basic principle that developer and publisher are working to the same ends and should recognise that fact from the outset.

Moving onto the immediate future for Renegade, it looks a bit at the moment like a sort of Bitmaps self-publishing venture. Do you sound yourselves signing up any other programming teams? And if so, when and who?

Yes, we do. When? Within the next three years, when we meet a team who have the right products, the right backgrounds, the right attitudes and who are not a free steal - in other words, are not tied up in any other situation. When we meet that team we'll do something with them.

In the last few months we've met one or two who may fit that bill. There are a few people who want to watch Renegade happen, want to see it work, and when it's obvious that we are doing what we're saying we'll do they'll make that stop. It's odd you know, but we've got a very high profile at the moment without having actually sold anything. We have to turn the words into deeds and actions.

How do you find the industry has reacted to Renegade? You've come in here, you've stuck your necks out, you're bound to have raised a few heckles.

Hm. One of the things is that in terms of the way software publishers work at present, everybody knows effectively what everyone else is doing in the way of deals - what publisher x is paying programmer y and so on. You have a balance where most publishers are in more or less the same position, with the same overheads and so on, so most developers will get more or less the same deal from all companies - your decision on who you go with comes down to - a 'Where will I be happiest, who'll sell the most copies of my games?' sort of thing.

What Renegade have offered is a straightforward profit share deal, not any form of royalty. Suddenly there's another totally different option in there for creative teams and obviously for some publishers that's worrying. So people try and ridicule us and poo-poo us, saying we won't be around in a year's time and so on.

Look at it from our perspective though and you'll see that what we're doing isn't totally unique - there're representative aspects of the same thing happening in other industries too. There's the thing in comics with independent publishers, creators' rights and so on, there's the indie record labels in the music business and so on. It's an underlying trend.

Do you think you'll really change anything?

Broadly, if we're to succeed, the best criteria with which to judge it isn't how many developers we sign, but on how the relationship between developers and publishers sits in a few years' time. If you can
WORK IN PROGRESS

CADAVER LEVELS DISK

Steve Kelly is one of the 'real' Bitmap Brothers, the three whose directors of the firm and who should be familiar from oodles of publicity shots (some of which grace these very pages). Recently he's been working on a disk of new levels for the popular Cadaver, an isometric 3D arcade adventure in the style of old 8-bit games like Head Over Heels, Knight Lore, Sweevo's World and so on.

First off, why did you do a game like Cadaver? It seems like a quite novel choice after the likes of Xenon and Speedball.

The reason we did Cadaver was simply that I've always wanted to do an adventure. We started it almost for fun and it simply grew out of proportion. I wanted to do one in the style of the old exciting games like Knight Lore because, unless you're very good with vector graphics, it's the system that allows you to interact with objects the best. You can go behind things and so on.

We started up by writing a simple 3D map maker to produce a game not unlike the old 8-bit ones, but what we ended up with was a full blown game creator. We called it Adventure Creation Language, and it ended up remarkably flexible and easy to use. After putting a bit of effort into it we couldn't really leave it at that - we had to use it again, and that's where the levels come in.

Is this ACL something that can be used without any real programming experience?

Very much so. In fact the kind of people who designed most of the puzzles can't program at all, but he used it quite easily. In theory we could keep on producing new levels with the ACL for as long as people want to play them. This new one we've done will, I think, prove to be a lot better than the original, mainly because we've only just learned how powerful the language we've created really is.

Actually something yet, we haven't had a product out, and no other publisher has been alive this long without actually releasing anything. Of course there'll be problems - day to day ones like a product going late, or a major bug appearing in one we've shipped out - but they're in the nature of the business, and sometimes you just can't help those.

There are bigger ones too, though. Will we be able to attract the developers we want to attract? Will we be able to take our products into foreign territories - and we're looking beyond Europe here - in the way that we would like? And will we be able to forge the links with artists in other fields - something we've already started - as we intend to?

These are all problems we've got to face, but the big one was always 'Will we actually be able to do it in the first place?' and, well, here we are.

The Cadaver team. From left to right: Dan Malone (the graphic artist), Mike Montgomery, Phil Wilcox (the puzzle designer) and Steve Kelly.

If you feel enough better about the game than this, then I think we've got at it. The puzzles are better too. In that they're more logical and well-rounded.

Besides the puzzles we've introduced quite a lot of new objects to the game, and also a little side-kick character, which we've nicknamed the Snoot. He'll collect gold and so on for you from places you couldn't otherwise get to, and being a very small monster he'll sacrifice his life for you if need be.

How well did Cadaver do sales-wise? I don't get the impression that it was as successful as some of your other products.

In the UK it wasn't as successful as Xenon 2, Speedball and so on, true, but overall it did really well - it was our first major success abroad. The Germans particularly liked it, probably because they like good value for money from a game. Personally it's my favourite of the things we've done, not just because this is my sort of game, but because my programming's get better, and I think that shows. Mike (Montgomery, one of the other original Bitmaps) likes it best too. I think - or at least, he did until Gods came along, of course!

Speaking of the next one, how do you feel about doing sequels? The Bitmap Brothers are always going on about the importance of original products. Don't you feel that doing the same thing again is a bit of a waste of time and that you'd rather move on?

Well, in the case of the levels disk, that was part of the plan from the outset. We knew we could get more out of the Adventure Creation Language, so we knew we'd want to use it again. Level development doesn't take much time to do anyway.

In general though, yes, we do sequels, but only when the same creative team to do what's effectively the same thing again. We get new blood in for those, while the old guys go on to something else. That's what happened with Xenon 2, where The Adventure Line did the code to our design, and with Speedball 2. It's possible there'll be a full-blown Cadaver 2 at some point, but since the first took a year and then quarters we need a breather before we get into another one. We'd want to make it quite a different game though to make it worthwhile - one idea we had was to change all the graphics and make it into a science fiction adventure. Another idea that I quite liked had a Victorian London, Jack the Ripper theme. Whether we'll have the enthusiasm to do it is another matter though.

How about the accusation that the Bitmaps just soup up old game ideas, and haven't actually come up with anything that's all that original of their own yet?

Well, I must admit that when I look at a game like Lemmings I think, Christ, I would have loved to have written that. The problem is that it's much more of a risk doing something as original as that. A lot of companies have flounder by running with something that might be very original but just isn't going to sell.

Looking back at games I wish I'd done, well, there's Dungeon Master of course - the classic - but there are plenty of others too. There's an old arcade game called Qix which I like, and one I love at the moment is a coin-op called Rambo from Atari. It's like a little war where you're watching from above and controlling one side. It's just phenomenal.
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BIRDS OF PREY PROGRAMMER CHRIS HUMPHRIES

BIRDS OF PREY

Thirty-five thousand and sixty-four hours. One thousand four hundred and sixty-one days. One twenty-fifth of a century. Whichever way you look at it that’s four years. And with a week in politics considered a long time, what’s four years between friends in programming terms? The answer is Electronic Arts’ Birds Of Prey.

There can be few computer programs which have taken longer to produce than this one. Sure, people have had ideas which have taken years to reach fruition, and it’s not unusual for products to take a year or so to come together, but four years of active development?

‘It’s basically an attempt to improve on all the previous flight simulations,’ reveals programmer Chris Humphries. ‘I’m not saying we’ve succeeded - it would be arrogant to say that Birds Of Prey is the best. But certainly when it comes to the choice of aircraft and the choice of missions, it’s superior.’

AS IS THE CASE with every Argonaut project to date, the whole team has been involved with the production of Birds Of Prey. Programmer Chris Humphries, for example, was responsible for putting together the detailed flight dynamics of the planes and the general Birds Of Prey environment. The slightly less intensive, but equally important, task of incorporating complex mathematics and honing the program’s 3D routines was handled by Peter Warnes, while Ian Crowther brought up the rear with all-round programming support.

‘We’ve also had help from some nice friends in informative places who are involved in the real world of military flight simulations,’ reveals Argonaut boss Jeremy San. ‘They’ve given us comments and feedback and we know that Birds Of Prey is the most realistic flight simulation to be done on a microcomputer. It’s taken years because it’s something you can’t do it quickly. Only recently has it been at a level where people have said it feels good. We can fly it now.’

Birds Of Prey was, until very recently, known as Hawk. According to Argonaut, the name change is testimony to the unexpected immunity of the project. ‘The Birds Of Prey code actually started off as Starglider code,’ reveals Jeremy. ‘That’s become Starglider 2 code and then developed yet again into the Birds Of Prey code. Obviously Birds Of Prey is...”
We all know that the Sky at night wouldn’t be the same without Patrick and that in 1966 England won the World Cup with Bobby. Now we have a flight simulation with more.


And — here’s a surprise — more development time. Gary Penn met with its creators at Argonaut Software for a bird’s eye view.

The F-117A in flight in Birds Of Prey. ‘It’s called the Wobby Goblin,’ Jeremy reveals, ‘because it’s so unstable it needs computers to keep it flying straight forward the whole time.

‘Most of the information about the Stealth came from magazines and TV footage, and measuring up magazine pictures for wing spans and so on. You have to make some assumptions — we’ll never know for sure until the information’s declassified. The original pictures the US released were taken from a very strange angle and it didn’t give us much of an idea as to the exact dimensions of the wingspan and how slender it actually is — it looked very stubby in the picture, so we did a shape and did the flight model for that. And as more and more pictures were released we refined the model.

‘We have a video which gives us an insight into how the Stealth was designed, which was quite funny. It was designed quite a long time ago when computing power couldn’t cope with curves. They knew how to make an aircraft stealthy but they didn’t know how to make it fly. So they simplified the shapes that were involved and built the aircraft out of polygons so their computers could cope with it and try to predict how it would fly.’

According to Jeremy, the super-secret F-22 and F-23 will be the ultimate Stealth Fighters because they’ll be stealthy and manoeuvrable. We’ve got a few seconds of footage of it. It looks quite interesting actually.

Can you name the plane this cockpit belongs to? Probably not, for despite the quantity of planes in Birds Of Prey only a single, generic cockpit is used. ‘It’s there really for people who like cockpits,’ explains Chris. ‘We made a conscious decision not to do forty cockpits — just the code to update them would be phenomenal, and whenever you want to add a new feature to the aircraft you have to do that forty times.

‘It does look an awful lot like an F-16 at a glance. But it could just as easily be an F-20....’

Quite unsurprisingly Birds Of Prey looks nicest when an external view is employed. The outside world can be viewed from pretty much any angle — and from the point of view of any object — with a full pan and zoom facility. There’s a high level of attention to detail in Birds Of Prey, as well there might be considering that everything’s had three to four years of work put into it. Not only can you see the missiles on the planes’ wings, you can watch them drop off, flare up and jet off when launched.

think it has,’ says Chris. ‘Information on the Russian ones was difficult to acquire — they’re very secretive about their equipment. Every missile looks and behaves like the real thing. Fortunately, the flight model for the missiles isn’t as complex as those for the planes.

But as Argonaut is quick, and with that matter — to point out, the quantity of planes and associated hardware is merely one of many features which make up the definitive flight simulation. Take the way the planes actually fly for example:

‘With most flight simulations on microcomputers the programmers have programmed the effects rather than the cause of the flight,’ observes Jeremy. ‘You move the mouse and the plane will turn on everyone else’s program. In our one you move the mouse and the ailerons or flaps or rudder will move and with the plane flying through the air it hits those control surfaces and they cause it to turn. We’ve modelled it realistically, which means we have much more accurate flight dynamics.

The subject of accuracy is something that’s prone to stick in Argonaut’s collective craw. ‘I find it strange that people claim to have produced the most realistic flight simulation ever,’ says Chris. ‘I know for a fact from my research that it’s not possible to get one hundred per cent realism even if you’re concentrating on doing a simulation of just, say, an F-16. The data for the realistic behaviour of the aircraft is not available to the general public, and would never be given.’

And then there are the missions...

One of the things we didn’t like about other flight simulators that have missions is that they were all very specific and once you’d solved them that was that. We wanted mission genres so that you select the kind of mission you want and it will generates something different for you each time.

‘I’m not saying that having fixed missions is bad — it’s good in a way because it means you can concentrate on designing that one mission to be really
well thought out. But rather than do that for *Birds Of Prey*, which would be like copying everybody else, it naturally evolved this way.

'The idea is you can take off and do whatever you want or you can concentrate on knocking out the enemy's defences, winning the war if you like - knocking out runways, destroying factories, destroying their ability to produce aircraft and that kind of thing. If you were ordered to hit a target you'd get more points than if you randomly hit a target.'

**IN BIRDS OF PREY** there are 12 mission types to choose from. These range from air interception to long-range bombing of enemy installations, including their airbases, runways and equipment-producing factories. The level of difficulty within the mission type is determined by the quality of the enemy you encounter, such as aircraft and SAM sites.

But the most important aspect of *Birds Of Prey*'s mission structure is, according to Jeremy, the fact that it all takes place in an interactive environment: 'It's a world out there and it's continuing and it's functioning and the enemy are making sensible decisions the whole time and are reacting to what you're doing.

Even the enemy aircraft actually come out of hangars and taxi down the runway. That's something I hate about other games of this genre - you're flying along and suddenly there's an enemy plane in front of you. It didn't take off from anywhere.'

Rather than attempt to - Ching! Ching! Ching! - cash in on any particular conflict - say, the recent Gulf War - Argonaut made a conscious decision to make the *Birds Of Prey* environment a fictitious one.

'These things tend to date a product,' says Chris. 'Being fictional means theoretically it won't date in the same way. And people do die in these situations, so that could be seen as tasteless. It's basically a straight fight between two fictitious sides. They do have a definite split in that one side has Russian aircraft and the other side has European and American aircraft.'

But what about down-sides? There must be some, surely? Well, yes. For a start, all this luxury comes at a cost to owners of unexposed A500s, to the extent that they simply can't use it. To run *Birds Of Prey* you need at least one megabyte. Chris reckons that it would be very difficult to cut it down to

**MEET THE ARGONAUTS**

In fact, Mr San is remaining tight-lipped about future projects. All he will say is that the next one isn't based on the *Birds Of Prey* code, which means it won't be a polygon-based three-dimensional affair. The reason for this becomes clear when Jeremy talks about the past, present and future use of this particular display technique...

'Birds Of Prey' probably is the longest project we've ever heard about. I don't know we can afford to spend that long on a game, and we probably manage quite a drain on the company.'

'Birds Of Prey is probably the longest project we've ever heard about.'

**FOUR THINGS YOU COULD DO IN FOUR YEARS (If You weren't spending all your time working on Birds Of Prey)**

1) You could walk over 140,000 miles - assuming you never stopped ever. Heavens, that's roughly 5.6 times the circumference of the world! But not if you were Roger Bannister, who as we all know was the first man to run the four-minute mile, in which case you could run around the world some 21 times! That's the equivalent of boiling around 526,000 eggs, one after the other.

2) You could have six babies - that's assuming you really went for it and the little bighters were premature by a month each, and that's not impossible really.

3) You could have sweated almost 274 gallons of fluid, or excreted around 566 gallons of urine. Or even shed around 45 pounds of skin.

4) Or... (Sniff! - Ed)
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GAME REVIEWS

This second review section isn't meant to be seen as a sort of slightly embarrassing poor cousin to the big one at the front, and the games in it certainly aren't all crap. Indeed, you'll find there's no shortage of high scorers in here.

No, the criteria by which we chose what appears where tends to vary - basically if we think a game is particularly brilliant, or (even if not brilliant) particularly interesting and deserving of a fair bit of discussion we'll give it a lot of space up at the front. If, on the other hand, we think something is only likely to be bought by a limited number of people, or breaks little ground, or is merely simple enough to easily explain in a more (shall we say) economical amount of space then it goes here at the back. Thus we get high scorers like Gem-X (pretty, bags of fun, but dead quick and easy to explain) sitting cheek-by-jowl with utter rubbish like... Ah, but that'd be telling, and you'll find out soon enough over the next 13 pages. Yes, you're damn right, it'll be unlucky for some...

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SCORES

(A ND HOW THEY WORK)

They're a simplified version of The Bottom Lines you encountered earlier in the mag - no Uppers or Downers this time (there isn't the room), just a nice juicy summing up sentence and a score. (That's all you really need anyway.) If one of us violently disagrees with the mark the main reviewer goes for we'll make amends with a little On The Other Hand... box somewhere nearby. That's it, now on with the show...

METAL MASTERS

Publisher Infogrames
Price £25.99
Programmer Tual Docaio
Release Date Out now

On dear. The idea of this all sounded quite promising, in a 2000AD-ish sort of way. We're in the future, right, and, well, to quote the booklet that comes with it: 'The metal giants, masterpieces of high technology, implacable and indestructible, fight without respite on tracks of fire or under arches of steel! Always bigger, always stronger, the Metal Masters knows no limits! Will you be up to it? Yes, as you might have guessed, this is a French game, and as such comes complete with our old friend, the dodgy bit of translation. Not knowing quite what to expect then, I bootied it up. First came a rather nice picture of a giant robot, with a few little people standing around welding and making repairs. Then came a copy protection code screen (which seemed to drop up with monotonous regularity...
Fusion continues, with the arrival of Mirrorsoft's new baby, Brat.

Here's Brat, about to collect a jewel.

Dynamite can be collected to blow up later obstacles.

Bridges can be collected for later use.

...in tight spots like this for example.

Chasms are spanned by the bridges moving backwards and forwards continually.

Collect a lot of Brat from a nasty fall.

By dumping a weight on a jack in the box, you can prevent its box from jacking.

This is Brat, what a little (ahem) 'dude'.

By slapping these symbols down on the ground in front of our diminutive anti-hero, he can be guided safely along...at least until the next level.

Learning from experience coupled with a fine mix of forward planning and lightning reactions being the only way forward. At the same time though it's highly playable and easy to get the hang of when you first pick it up. It's beginning to sound like all those whinges were little more than sour grapes, eh readers?

So why don't I like it very much?

Well, I'll tell you why. (Thanks - reader's voice). I don't like babies at the best of times, but Nathan (the Brat of the title) is the most nauseating little git I've ever come across in twelve years of video gaming. With his puffy, his leather jacket, his ridiculous shades and his baseball cap on sideways he looks like a grown-up member of EMF, but without the saving grace of some serviceably groovy teenpop to back him up. And curiously enough, the words 'back' and 'up' (as in 'gets my') also figure heavily in the effect that our 'hero' has on me.

The second-rate Bart Simpson clone that is Nathan irritated me so much that I wanted to do was see him die, and since getting him killed isn't a hard thing to do, the game's lasting appeal clocks in at a number of seconds. In all fairness, this is a pretty good game in itself, but unless you're a lot more tolerant of precocious toddlers than I am (and that's a big zero on the tolerant-o-meter, statistic fans), it's going to be more than you can stomach. It's certainly not the remarkable bit of game creating many people seem to be making it out to be - flawed, and heavily overridden with features to try and make up for it.
Chemistry lessons can be fun. Don't believe it? Then let Psygnosis show you how...

**ATOMINO**

Cohesive bonding: a scary sort of subject matter, isn't it?

Publisher: Psygnosis
Price: £25.99
Programmer(s): Blue Byte
Release Date: Out now

You'd think by now that programmers would be running out of strange and abstract ideas for puzzle games. Tetris, Pipe Mania, E-Motion, Plotting, Puzznic, Gem-X, all of them pretty fab and all of them completely odd. But no, there's something that no-one's tried yet. No-one's written a game about covalent bonding. Well, until now, that is...

Amiga Power World Of Chemistry, Part One in a series of, oh, one, I should think: Covalent Bonding - the principle by which atomic molecules are formed, governed by the number of free electrons in any given atom. Hence, an atom with a single free electron can form a single bond with any other atom. An atom with two free electrons can form two bonds, and so on. And that's the underlying principle behind Atomino.

Atoms appear at random in a tube on screen, and have to be placed into the play area. Each atom has a certain number of free electrons - you have to place them adjacent to each other so bonds are created and molecules formed. When a molecule has no free electrons left over it disappears, and when a set number of complete molecules are formed the level is cleared. Later levels introduce obstacles onto the screen which have to be built around, specific atoms which have to be removed, and lower limits on the size of molecules which must be created, as well as increasing the number of molecules required for completion and the speed at which atoms appear. When your tube fills with atoms you can't do anything with, it's Game Over time. (Don't worry if you didn't understand a word of that, it's very easy to pick up in practice). So that's what you've got to do. The question is, how much will you enjoy doing it?

The answer is, of course, I don't know. Do I look psychic? What I can tell you is that it didn't really grab me personally, but it's kind of difficult to say why. It's very slick, it's novel, and it's tough, but it just doesn't have that elusive magic something that makes a puzzle game great. Call it character, but I just didn't feel any desire to keep playing it after I'd finished a game. It shares a certain amount of feel with Pipe Mania, which I didn't like either, so if you were a fan of that game this could well be your kind of thing.

Don't take my word for it, see it for yourself, but I can't in all honesty recommend this as a good way to spend £25. [Stuart Campbell]

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**ON THE OTHER HAND...**

I reckon Atomino doesn't have that elusive magic something that makes it great (and it doesn't rely on more attractive like other puzzlers I could mention). Actually, if comparisons to Gem-X are in order, then I'd like to point out that Atomino has thousands of levels compared to Gem-X's measly few hundred. That said, the two are quite different styles of puzzle, and I happen to like both - only Atomino more so. Still, Stuart's wrong, I'm right, and that's all there is to it. Atomino's an 85 percent if ever there was one.

---

**KSKI OR DIE**

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Price: £29.99
Programmer(s): Mike Abbot, Nana Chambers, Michael Kosaka
Release Date: Out now

'Snow sports aren't for powder puffs' warns the instruction sheet for Ski Or Die. And judging by my failure to be good at any of its five events (or chat away in the appropriately Californian drone which rather sets the tone for its surf culture), I'm in no position to argue.

The events are a collection of word alpine adventures, which you get to play as practice rounds or competitions. My personal fave was the Snowboard Half-Pipe. This is a skateboarding hybrid which sees you shooting left and right down an open-top ice tube. You can jump high front V, hand plant, double twist and 540 back scratch over as many moguls and 'lips' as your merry little ski board will carry you. It's all too funny, but from then on events speed downhill at an alarming rate of knots. (Hi Ho.)

Not that the other competitions aren't embarrassing. They just haven't the same hook. The Snowball Blitz is an Op Wolfcane with... er... snowballs. Acro Aerials sees you skiing off a ramp and striking as many loopo and twisted poses as you've broken limbs when you eventually hit the bottom, and the Innterube Thrash throws you into an inflated tyke and shoots you off down the slopes in a race against another bloke in an inflated tyke. All of which makes the final sport the Downhill Blitz (or 'skiing' as we say in Europe), swing rather on the dull side, really.

The main problem with these last three events is your view point - you watch your bloke front-on and from a distance. By contrast, part of the success of the Half-Pipe section is that you follow on behind him, so you're actually whizzing down the mountain too.

In general though, all the contests are too short and silly. I also have a more general worry about these multi-game sports sim things - that no matter how well put-together they are, they don't allow all that much scope for anything unusual or interesting to happen. After all, which would you rather do - make out like Tuviaie and Daan, or doggs 3,000 invading alien missles?

Ski Or Die certainly has a nice line in humour, but it's too laid back for its own good. You'll be charmed for the first couple of goes, but then start wondering where the hell the rest of it is. As David Vina wouldn't say, 'It's a bit of wipe-out really, dude.' [Andy Ido]

---

**SKULL AND CROSSES**

Publisher: Domark
Price: £24.99
Programmer(s): Walking Circles
Release Date: Out now

For those of you who cherish romantic notions of buckled buccaneers and pelting pirates braving the waves in search of loot, the life of a Privateer seems pretty much ideal. All that robbery and violence - the appeal of leaping aboard some cracking galloons, pregnant with glittering spoils, and getting down to some serious curfass-swishing, dagger-digging fun seems pretty clear to me.

No, it's a laugh a minute on the high seas alright - until the big boys get wind of your little adventures and figure out a way of stretching your neck, of course.

Now all you budding Blackbeards can practice the art of profitable slaughter thanks to Domark's Skull and Crossbones. It sounds like a little gem, giving you the chance to kill without mercy until you're tired of producing piles of lifeless corpses and stuffing your brawes with bountiful booty. Unfortunately though, the word sounds is actually the most important one in that last sentence. You see, our friends
Hard to know which is the bigger villain – your rival pirates or the terrible gameplay?

at Domark seem to have have forgotten that killing should be a jolly good wheeze rather than a tiresome chore...

Here's the plot: you're striding the deck of your beloved slop when a band of bloodthirsty curs appear below the mainail. Your mission is to cut the brigthers in half. Jump off the ship and chase their leader. He's a wizard who gives you a far old letter-bag before sealing off with all your precious gains.

Thus the scene is set for a gigantic, multi-level chase, featuring much hacking up of Spaniards and assorted monsters in a number of locations. Al very wel, if only both hacking and backdrops didn't hold the dubious distinction of looking and feeling exactly the same.

Yes, I'm afraid killing villains is a but of a matter of arbitrary joystick bashing in Skull and Crossbones, and good swordmanship is not necessarily a useful skill at all. A bit of a blos this, especially as we're talking a

game where the scrapping should be the high point. Enemies may get tougher, collectable treasure might crop up at regular intervals throughout the game and generally things might progress exactly as you'd expect throughout the seven stages, but nothing ever happens to really make you want to keep going. You're unlikely to be bashing back into the swing of things once you crash to the ground and shuffle off to that great quarterdeck in the sky. Nope, you're far more likely to pull S And Out of your disk drive and boot up something a bit more interesting instead.

There's nothing actually wrong with Skull and Crossbones, except that it's desperately and totally useless. For a start, your sword arm can only manage about five moves, of which two but are profitable. For a second, at certain stages your hero is forced to walk into combat backwards (if anyone has any records of the infamous Captain Kidd tackling three jolly jacks with his back turned, the British Museum would surely be most interested to see them)! For a third start... but no. I can't go on. Will it just do to say this game is ever so slightly crip? It's not just me either – I've yet to meet a single person in 16-bit land who's got a good word to say about it.

And there we have it. I'm afraid. As an exercise in the absurd Skull and Crossbones is unsurpassable, but as a valuable piece of entertainment software it falls somewhat short. Splash out on this game, and you really will have been jolly well rogered. - Colin Campbell

THE BOTTOM LINE
Third rate for a C64 game. It must take really clever programmers to make something from a coin-op move this slow. It's a real shame, too, as pirates would surely make an excellent subject for a scrolling hack-em-up.

NERV BOOT
Publisher Mindscape
Price £30.64
Programmer(s) Three Sixty
Release Date Out now

Oh no, please don't make me do it! I pleaded. Don't make me review the submarine game! They're all the same, nothing ever happens, and waiting for it not to happen takes forever, and they always use the same excuse about it being 'realistic'. And if people want a real submarine experience why don't they join the navy, and how do you expect me to take seriously a game with a manual that actually tells you how to make the game more frustrating than it already is, and I don't want to have to be the Nazis, and I

don't care even if it does have some quite groovy 3D arcade-type sequences, it's still going to be completely tedious, I hate submarine games, I hate them I hate them! I hate them! Please? It didn't work.

Bearing in mind that I hate submarine games, this is actually quite fun. It isn't as slow and action-free as most games in the genre tend to be, and while there's absolutely tons to do, you can still play it on a fairly superficial level and enjoy it. The graphics are passable and the sound is very atmospheric, you can choose from three different types of sub and from three difficulty levels, there are loads of options to configure the game in favour of playability or realism, and you can even speed the flow of time when there's nothing happening. You can practice just about every aspect of the game, and generally it seems to have been engineered for maximum playability.

We were going to review this game next month. So we did.

BACK TO THE FUTURE
PART 3

We were going to review this game next month. So we did.

SHOOT THE LAMP HANGING OVER ON THE RIGHT HAND SIDE FOR A NICE SHOOTING GALLERY SURPRISE!

Publisher Image Works
Price £24.99
Programmer(s) Probe
Release Date Out now

The previous two Back To The Future games were both so completely awful that many people wished they could change places with Marty McFly and go back in time and alter events so that they would never be born, thus avoiding ever having to play either of them. Hopes weren't high, therefore, for this, the third game in the series (The third one? Really? - reader's voice, which makes for an incredibly strange Believe-It-Or-Not scenario when it turns out to be a bit groovy.

Following what has become the tradition with movie licences, BTTF3 features several sub-games, each one representing a particular scene from the movie. None of the games are especially mentally taxing - well, actually they're not even slightly mentally taxing - being mostly arcade reactions tests, but put together they form a whole which is at least challenging and varied. It's more than

you can say about many of the games we've seen this month, at least.

The first section sees Doc Brown galloping across the desert to save the local teacher from plummeting into a ravine in her runaway buckboard, getting caught up in the middle of bank robberies and cavalry battles on the way. The gameplay is terrifyingly simple but very addictive, and a superb banjoe rendition of 'Ghost Riders' does wonders for the atmosphere. The other levels feature a shooting gallery, pie-throwing, and the old run-along-the-top-of-a-speeding-train wahoo, but all are essentially executed despite being old as the hills. Or indeed somewhat older than the hills, come to think of it. The screens are all linked by still shots accompanied by some genuinely chuckle-raising captions, such as those of a bobby referred to as 'Bobby', a young man in a white shirt and tie, who is wearing a police uniform, and the words 'Hello, Mr. Smith. I'm here to help you. What do you need?'

THE BOTTOM LINE
76 PERCENT

Animated horses are always a bit of a risk, but - yes! - these are actually quite good, and the music throughout is crap in a nice, endearing sort of way.

My only problem with this game is that the limited format is going to wear a bit thin after a relatively short time, but BTTF3 is just about addictive enough to get away with it. If ever there was an argument for a midway price between £25 games and budget software, this is it, but even at full whack, you could do a lot worse than this.

Stuart Campbell
A bizarre choice of licence gives their Famous Five their very own adventure game. Lashings of ginger beer all round, we'd say.

THE FAMOUS FIVE

Publisher: Enigma
Price: £24.99
Programmer(s): Nick Byron
(graphics) Michael
Harrahan
Release Date: Out now

For those reared on 'Commando' comics and Action Men the antics of Noddy, the Secret Seven and the Famous Five will probably mean little. But those who like myself, modelled their childhoods and, indeed, philosophical outlook on the wholesome world of Enid Blyton's characters, will no doubt feel their hearts palpitate when they catch a glimpse of Five On A Treasure Island, the Famous Five's first computer outing.

The Five themselves consists of Julian (the tough, mature one), Anne (a bit of a girly), Dick (rather weedy), George (reputedly a girl) and Timmy (the dog). The packaging shows them all kitted out in 50s fashions, Nikes and sleeveless t-shirts, but there's no hiding the fact that, given the choice, they'd go for shorts, sensible shoes and v-neck jumpers every time. And roll hoops along by hitting them with sticks.

Now, as with most of these types, they're heavily into healthy outdoor activities - adventures as they like to refer to them. To this end, Julian, Dick and Anne have all gone to spend their 'hols' with George's mother, who's called Aunt Fanny. (Oh dear.) She lives in a 'gay' cottage by the sea in a village called Kirrin where there are bound to be heaps and heaps of mysteries for the gang to solve.

What you've got to do is tell them what to do, adventure game-style. That means typing in things like 'N', 'E', 'GET ROPE', and getting back answers like 'I don't understand'. 'You can't do that' or 'Anne steps on your face' - that sort of thing. By making sure you've got the right objects in the right places at the right times and doing the right things with them you should have the mystery wrapped up and everyone home in time for tea (with plenty of bread and jam). You can take control of any of the Five, and swap between them at will, anyone you're not controlling goes off and does their own thing.

There are plenty of nice pictures to look at, some fairly predictable but

THE BOTTOM LINE

Well, the sound's pretty good throughout (though some actual sound effects would be nice) and to be honest it's not quite as bad as Chase HQ, but then what is? Inexplicable disk-swapping, no gameplay, in a word, crap.

40 percent — Mark Ramsaw

ON THE OTHER HAND...

There's another way to look at this - that the game's a lead of manky old rubbish, and doesn't belong in this decade - but I wouldn't want to be the one to suggest it, of course, I think I'll leave you to make up your own minds...

43 percent — Mark Ramsaw

THE BOTTOM LINE

It's hard to imagine a less fashionable subject for a computer game licence, but the result is a jolly enjoyable romp, an adventure-garish sort of way.

60 percent — Jonathan Davies
NOW CONTAINS 1990 NFL TEAM/PLAYER DATA!*  
"From my point of view, the game has kept me sitting up at nights and through holidays and weekends for up to 12 hours at a stretch, with miniscule breaks for food and other necessities. It is a game I have no hesitation in recommending to anyone with even the slightest interest in American Football."

ATARI USER REVIEW

OUR PRIORITY: GAMEPLAY

HEADCOACH V.3

THE GAME

Headcoach is the complete American Football simulation. You take charge of the latest recruit to the National Football League, and through skillful design of gameplay and the use of the college draft, build up a 45 man squad to keep your fans happy and win the Superbowl. Unlimited seasons, and ageing players, produce a realistic game of fluctuating fortunes.

THE MATCH

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TRAINING CAMP

Here is an opportunity to assess your players before they take the field. The appropriate coach will give you his view of the current form of any of the players and how they are performing in training. The current sharpness of any player can be assessed from their time in the 40 yard dash. Wide receivers, cornerbacks, running backs and linebackers are all positions where speed off the mark is crucial.

COLLEGE DRAFT

During the 16 match season, plus whatever playoff matches you achieve, you will find yourself praying for a second classy running back or wide receiver, or need to beef up your offensive line too many sacks.) There can be many weaknesses. The college draft should be used to find those stars of the future and make sure that they're playing for you.

STATISTICS

The statistics section will encapsulate your team's and your players' season. Total yards, rushing yards, passing yards, kick-off returns, punt returns (and averages for all these), interceptions, sacks... all these are kept for each match, the whole season, for the team and for each player.

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AMIGA POWER  MAY 1991
**GAME REVIEWS**

**CRYSTALS OF ARBOREA**

Publisher: Silmarils
Price: £24.99
Programmer(s): Louisanne and André Racqueux, Michel Pernot (Graphic Artist: Jean-Christophe Charter)
Release Date: Late April 1991

There's one sort of person who's likely to get very excited about this indeed - the die-hard Lord Of Midnight fan. Hey guys, this one's aimed directly at you. It's nothing less (or more) than a French interpretation of Mike Singleton's 8-bit classic. Younger players may find it easier to liken it to Midwinter, but without the solid 3D graphics, futuristic scenario, and certainly without the depth. They might also find themselves wondering what all the fuss was about.

So yes, it's a sort of strategy role-playing adventure, with you leading a team of six characters (a mix of warriors, wizards and rangers, of which you'd be wise to take two of each) around a mysterious island in a mix of so-called 3D and overhead view map modes. The search is on for four crystals which have to be recovered and restored to their rightful places in towers dotted about the island - both crystals and towers are placed randomly each new game, so if you've so taken with Terra Nova that you'd like to play it again and again it'll be a different experience each time.

Most of your time is spent searching of course - not just for the crystals and the towers, but for various magical abilities (like healing potions, the ability to teleport and so on) which have to be found or earned (often by entering the house of a local warrior or wizard and answering a simple question) to give you any chance of completing the game. It's not all walking about though (but there is a lot of it - the French programmers claim there are 15,000 different locations in the game) as every so often things are broken up by the odd scrap with groups of baddies you'll encounter. And I do mean 'odd' too - these are strange, grid-based strategic affairs, not unlike chess. This certainly isn't a game you could accuse of being packed with gratuitous violent action.

And there we have it really. Crystals Of Arborea can certainly be quite pretty (especially at night) if not outstandingly so, but while it has a lot of screens it doesn't seem to be blessed with a great deal of variety. Add to that a distinctly slug-like pace and rules that seem to have been picked at random (you can only enter a wizard's house when you have another wizard with you - why?) and it all seems rather pointless. I found it took a big snooze.

**SPirit Of ExCalibur**

Publisher: Virgin
Price: £24.99
Programmer(s): Synergistic Software
Release Date: April 1991

Oh dear. They certainly don't seem to treat kings like they used to. Take that Arthur, for instance - ruler of all England, bearer of Excalibur, loved by all... or so you might think. 'Not so', says Virgin. In fact, his power base was so enormous he was able to achieve, which range from taking the throne and recruiting knights to tracking down Lancelot and finally defeating Morgan Le Fey (King Arthur's evil half-sister). At the same time everything is presented very nicely indeed.

The game, with its 16 screen map of Arthurian Britain and numerous graphical interludes, looks like the sort of thing Cinemaware might come up with if they produced a role-playing kind of game. Unfortunately the story, which is based on Sir Walter Scott's novel, is a bit too slow disk access.

A medieval tale of chivalry (and slow disk access)

On his death everything fell apart quite rapidly. Lord Constantine was next in line for the throne, but lacking the muscle of Arthur, and without Lancelot's help (who was too busy serving penance for getting a bit friendly with Guenever), the power of Round Table all but dissolved. At that's where you come in - armed with a sword and your wits, you play Lord Constantine on a mission to claim your rightful place at Camelot.

Thankfully avoiding the temptation to re-fell the story of King Arthur yet again, Spirit Of ExCalibur manages to conjure the same atmosphere, use many of the characters from the legend, yet still be fresh and original - no mean feat. Splitting Constantine's story into five sections gives realistic similarities to the fighting bit, and then the most striking thing about ExCalibur is its speed. There isn't any. It's no good trying to produce a sprawling tale of heroism and chivalry if it takes twenty seconds simply to talk to a character.

The disk-swapping is bad enough, but the access-time is truly appalling. It's a shame that the whole thing moves so slowly, because in many ways it really is quite enchanting.

**DEMONIAK**

Publisher: Palace Software
Price: £29.99
Programmer(s): Chris Stangroom, Mike Walker (Story and Art: Alan Grant)
Release Date: April 1991

Erm, yes, I suppose we'd better admit to first things first. This is a text adventure. Not a sexy Daphne-style adventure with lots of graphics, the occasional arcade sequence and a friendly pull-down menu parser, but your standard old fashioned text adventure with the occasional still screen, lots of writing and, erm, that's about it.

Almost ludicrous to expect anyone to pay this sort of premium price for it, isn't it? Well. Yes. And then again no. You see, Demonik, in it's own quiet little way, is actually rather innovative. It's been written by a proper writer for a start - Alan Grant, a mainstay of 2000AD, who's handled Judge Dredd, Strontium Dog and others, as well as achieved considerable success in the States with his version of Batman. Grant has thrown in the sort of gore, violence, darkly humorous sci-fi / supernatural plotlines and reactions to the comics we'd expect, had a good deal of fun with his grossly exaggerated characters and - yes - actually written some text that's fun.
Arcade quality puzzling, Japanese style. (And it's cute too!)

The left hand side is your playing area.

This is Kiki, your hostess with the mostest.

The larger heart indicates which player is active.
The gem symbol shows the level and screen reached.

To complete the screen the playfield on the left must be manipulated to match the one on the right.

Your pointer.

would cause the colour of any gem to go beyond the last colour in the sequence, that gem will disappear and the others in the pile will fall down to fill the gap (Klax-style). You have only a certain number of moves in which to complete a screen, and you must do it inside a time limit too. And really that's all there is to it.

Rather than go into a deep and involved analysis of the game and then coming up with a conclusion, I'll give you the conclusion now. Gem-X is utterly, utterly wonderful, and here's why. From the start, the game absolutely oozes class. Presentation-wise it looks like an arcade game, and it's structured like one too, with very easy initial levels gently drawing you in, building in difficulty until you're really hooked, then hitting you with screens that will make your jaw drop to the floor in horror and your brain beg for mercy. You won't be able to leave it alone, though, because it's all wrapped up with luscious graphics and impossibly lovely sound, including sampled speech that'll steal your heart away and refuse to give it back. You'll find yourself actually talking back to Gem-X, but no-one will think you're weird because everyone else will be doing exactly the same, completely transfixed by the angelic voice of Kiki, the game's Japanese hostess. Kiki's friends also make the odd appearance in the game, as every time you complete a few screens you get a codeword that lets you start on the higher levels, each one delivered by a beautiful Japanese girl with no clothes on (but tastefully obscured by a fluffy bunny rabbit or some other such icon of cuteness). You probably wouldn't be all that surprised if I was to tell you this makes for some pretty major-league addictiveness, so I won't waste my breath and we'll just take it as read, okay?

When this game came into the office, we all had a look and went 'Oh yes, that looks nice, might have a go on that in a while if I've got nothing else to do.' Some time later, the security guard was enquiring whether we in fact had any homes to go to, as it was the middle of the night and he'd sort of like to lock up the building. We threw him out of a third floor window and had another game. And another game. And another game. And 'Okay, just one more game and then I'm definitely going home.' And then...well, you get the picture. Gem-X. Why haven't you bought it yet? Stuart Campbell

GEM-X

Publisher Demonware
Price £24.99
Programmer(s) T.Lampyun, (music) C Hyslic
Release Date Mid-April 1991

A late entry in the abstract-puzzle-game stakes, Gem-X immediately invites comparisons with both Ocean's Puzzlic and the Sega arcade game Columns. Yes, it's sort of similar to both, though look beneath the cosmetics and you'll see that in gameplay terms Gem-X has a style all its own.

Briefly, the game presents you with a split screen, one half of which contains a pile of variously-coloured gems, the other half of which contains...er, a pile of variously-coloured gems. The idea is to make the pile on the left match exactly with the pile on the right by means of a simple transformation principle. Clicking the mouse (or joystick) on a particular gem will cause it to change colour by two steps in a given sequence. The four gems around it will also change, but only by one step in the sequence. If a transformation

THE ICONS

Moves remaining
Trials left on this level
Levels before next password
Time remaining

Demoniak offers the best of both worlds - lavish pictures and intelligent text. The intro sequence pictured here sets a suitably ominous tone for the dark proceedings to come.

to read. Witty, surprising, it's almost an adventure game first.

Grant's only partly the star of Demoniak though. The other is Palace's new Pure Fiction adventure system, which features what appears to be a very clever parser indeed. As the adventure unfolds it allows you to switch between the main characters (a sort of constantly bickering and mutually suspicious supergroup of the future) and see things from slightly different perspectives - one character will take particular note of a hunny half alien superhero's laser gun, for instance, while another will be more concerned with his 'light, oh so light' jump suit. It's played for laughs, yes, but these different perspectives actually have some bearing on the way the game develops. Certainly, if one of your characters is rude to or snubs another one early in the game, it'll be held against you and you'll find the injured party far less interested in helping you cut later on.

Backed up by intro sequences and the occasional still screen in an impressively comic book style (new artist Jo Walker looks like a name to watch) Demoniak deserves to do well. It has to be said that though it's still saddled with lots of text only adventure type problems - the fact that you can find yourself stuck trying to open a certain door for ages, the problems with what vocabulary I'll understand - as well as that (what seems to me at least) rather optimistic price. The next Pure Fiction game will apparently be a very different beast indeed, with a lot more done in terms of graphics, but in the meantime here's an interesting text adventure. Well thought out and well written. Whatever next? Matt Biedy

THE BOTTOM LINE

The fun you'll ever have having your brain tortured (unless of course you really hate puzzle games, in which case it's a bit of a non-starter).

THE BOTTOM LINE

A clever parser, interesting text and the odd nice graphic go some way towards reinventing the text adventure. I may only though.

You've read our opinion of Demoniak, but just what does Alan Grant think of it? Find out in a special interview in this month's True Stories.
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'Nam

Publisher: Demonware
Price: £24.99
Programmer(s): Johannes Lipp
Release Date: Out now

Take a pinch of Atomic, mix with a nifty rockin' soundtrack, and that's The Power.

In which Demonware continue with their theme of releasing games with titles which are simply excuses to use remixes of songs by Number One pop stars. Snap's soundtracks (and which also bear uncanny resemblances to other games) First came Oopsie Up, a shameless Pang clone, now there's The Power, an arcade puzzle game owing more than a little to Thalion's Atomic. Naughty old Demonware, but nobody's going to mind that much if they've managed to turn out a good game, so let's see if they have...

Firstly, let's deal with that soundtrack. It's very excellent indeed. Right, that's out of the way. Secondly, let's deal with the plagiarist aspect. There's no denying that this is a very similar game to Atomic, but it's just different enough to avoid accusations of a rip-off, largely because it's much more of a collective-ism than the earlier game, which had distinctly Boulder Dash-like elements to it. Thirdly and lastly, let's deal with whether it's a good game or not. And yes, you have to say that it is, really. It certainly is a superbly programmed, although the control method could have been a little better thought out, and the scrolling backdrops are particularly nice.

There are lots of options too, so you can play the game the way that suits you best, and that's not enough there's a level editor so you can make it as easy or as hard as you like. Passwords also make frequent appearances, so you shouldn't have too much of a problem getting stuck on a screen and having to trek through the previous ones to get to it all the time, especially considering you also get eight continues to play with. Generally, The Power is very well put together, but for some reason it didn't really grab me, and I didn't find I had any pressing desire to get to the next level (and I liked Atomic). I can't really put my finger on anything, it's technically very good, but The Power didn't do very much for me at all.

Stuart Campbell

THE BOTTOM LINE

Beautifully done, but a tad awkward to play, and seriously derivative.

THE BOTTOM LINE

A well thought out and potentially challenging wargame that's let down a bit on the technical side of things.

52 out of 100

THE BOTTOM LINE

Dull to look at, dull to play - Quadrel is one of the least appealing puzzle games about. For the same effect get a friend, some graph paper and four coloured pens - then see whether you get £28 worth of fun out of it.
New power-ups and a two-player mode sadly fail to improve upon the original.

(In fact, they make it worse!)

**SUPERCARS 2**

**Publisher**: Gremlin

**Price**: £24.95

**Programmer(s)**: Magnetic Fields

**Release Date**: Out now

This is a game with an impeccable pedigree. Its predecessor, *Supercars*, (pretty obvious really) was one of the most popular overhead-view racing games ever on the Amiga, and also one of the best (as its placing in our Own All-Time Top 100 shows). The programming team, Magnetic Fields, have been responsible for some other major successes of late too, notably *Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge*. Add to that Gremlin generally developing something of a knack for driving games, and expectations for this one were understandably high.

Sad to report, then, that it doesn’t really live up to them. Not that it’s a bad game by any stretch of the imagination, but it hasn’t really got what it takes to make the major leagues. Why? Well firstly, there’s been very little advance made on the original *Supercars*. The game is the same Super-Sprint-with-add-on-weapons mix as before, with only the power steering and other handling improvements available in the first game were actually rather crucial. They’ve taken them out for the sequel and I can’t for the life of me see why. Add to this the narrow, twisty courses and the large number of opposing cars, and what you have is a game that never really gets to the degree it should.

This is accentuated in the two-player game, where the split screen (impressive though it may be) cuts down visibility and gives very little time to react to the unpredictable events in the course. It gets really ridiculous as long tunnels crop up, forcing you to drive blind, hitting walls and cars with monotonous regularity. It makes all for a very high level of frustration indeed.

Although it’s all very efficiently done and nicely presented, the changes they’ve made have actually emphasised the weak points of the game without adding very much. Oh dear. — Stuart Campbell

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**THE BOTTOM LINE**

Simply too frustrating to be addictive. Nice to look at perhaps, but sadly inferior to the original game.

73 / 100
The Bard is back in Thief Of Fate, but it's still the same old song.

THE BARD'S TALE III

Having cut my role-playing teeth on the original C64 version of The Bard's Tale a few years ago, I was pretty keen to see how things had changed in the sequel and one computer on. The short answer is 'they haven't much', but we'll get on to that later in the review.

For the uninitiated, The Bard's Tale series offers a computerised version of the fantasy role-playing game so beloved of sixth-formers everywhere. The player controls one or more adventurers, and guides them through a make-believe world, collecting treasure, fighting nasties and generally having an adventurous old time.

Assuming you don't rabidly loathe role-playing on sight (and plenty of people do), it all sounds like it's a pretty effective formula for a computer game, doesn't it? And it does - the only problem being that lots of people seem to have realised this, meaning we've got fantasy role-playing-style games coming out of our ears.

To really make its mark, then, a new one has to be something pretty special, which is where The Bard's Tale II falls down. It really is business as usual, I'm afraid. From the character creation sequences (where you choose fighters, bards, magic users etc and modify their attributes) to the Dungeons & Dragons-style combat sequences, the whole thing gives a curious feeling of deja-vu. Yes, we've seen it all before, and yet... and yet, I have to admit it still makes for a damn satisfying game: You're certainly not short changed as far as places to go and things to do are concerned - there are potentially months of playing time here, especially as new areas of the game open up to you as you go on. Unfortunately, lack of innovation aside, The Bard's Tale Iii falls down in a couple of areas. The first presentation - simply put, it looks and plays like a C64 game, and you really should be able to expect a bit more for this sort of money. The other problem is the disappointing lack of atmosphere.

One of the most important aspects of successful fantasy role-playing is the feeling of 'being there' and the creation of a sense of wonder, all too often forgotten in computer versions. A bit less of the fantasy and a bit more of the old character interaction would be nice.

Overall then no disgrace to the genre, but (as they say in all the best school reports) they really must try harder. Mark Ramshaw

THE BOTTOM LINE

A competent and highly playable role-player in the classic tradition. What was excellent five years ago, however, is in serious need of an overhaul in 1991.

67

PICK IT!

SUPER MONACO GP

Publisher: US Gold
Price: £24.99
Programmer(s): ZZKX
Release Date: Out Now

'Audacious' is the word many people use to describe US Gold's attempt to convert the monster Sega coin-op Super Monaco GP to the home micros. They said it just couldn't be done, they said such a huge mass of detailed graphics couldn't be shunted around the screen of the humble Amiga at anything like the required speed. And you know, in a funny kind of way, they were absolutely right.

And in another funny way they were wrong. What USG have released here is a very groovy racing game that bears practically no resemblance to the arcade machine whose name it shares. The most glaringly obvious difference is the addition of three new tracks (France, Brazil and Spain) which you have to successfully race before you can let loose on the famous Monaco circuit, a very dubious concept indeed. If you're used to the Monaco track from the arcade, you're going to expect to get the Monaco track, and preferably without having to traipse halfway round the world first. You can see why they've done it - one track might be okay in the arcades, but wouldn't look suspiciously thin on a C64 game - but US Gold's SMGP doesn't give you the option of simply playing the arcade game, and has to be seen as a major flaw.

So not a great conversion, but SMGP is a good game in its own right? 'Yes', is the short answer to that! Programmer ZZKX was previously responsible for Super Hang-On, the fastest and probably the best Amiga racing game available right up until the release of Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge. So who better to program a race game where speed was of the utmost importance? SMGP moves just as fast as the arcade game, even with lots of scenery on the screen, which is quite an achievement on the Amiga for a start. It also plays very well, with sensible and adjustable mouse control so you can find the steering sensitivity level that suits you best. The computer cars are pretty intelligent without being completely impossible to get past, giving you a real sense of achievement if you do manage to haul yourself up a few places. The game's major irritant is that one serious crash will put you completely out of the race, something which tends to happen with disappointing regularity. In fact, it's so tough that many players may never make it to the Monaco track at all! Still, if you're naturally persistent, this one's well worth a play or three. - Stuart Campbell

THE BOTTOM LINE

Fast and playable, but incredibly difficult, and nothing like the coin-op. Nice, but a bit cuffed as a conversion.

WARLOCK - THE AVENGER

Publisher: Millenium
Price: £24.99
Programmer(s): John Gibbons, Edrich The Cat
Release Date: April

Warlock is the third game in a series which has until now only appeared on 8-bit machines. The first, Druid, was one of a long line of Gauntlet clones which came out just at the time of the official Gauntlet licence, and was generally the best received. Although the Amiga wasn't big news at the time, Druid has since been converted and is included in Warlock as an optional introductory level. Warlock itself is largely more of the same, featuring 8 increasingly tough mazes populated by all the usual social misfits with attitude problems. And, er, that's about it.

The first thing you notice about Warlock is how very similar it is to the original game. The graphics follow exactly the same style, and the gameplay is identical, consisting simply of frustration rather slowly around the scrolling mazes, zapping baddies, collecting useful items, and looking for the way out. In fact, Warlock appears to be less of a sequel
to the earlier game than an expansion set, adding tougher elements and different baddies but nothing that you could actually describe as ‘new’. As such, it’s a success, proving tricky and very engrossing, but is liable to be a bit of a disappointment if you’re expecting a genuinely new game.

Someone’s made a bit of a cock-up on the presentation front too, as starting a new game entails waiting some 35 seconds for a long picture to painstakingly scroll across the screen and then for the game to think about loading again. Not too

Naar, naar! Right, that’s got the gratuitous Viz references out of the way – now is it any good?

**Viz**

**Publisher** Virgin  
**Price** £24.99  
**Programmer(s)** Probe  
**Release Date** Out now

Hyped as ‘The biggest rip off of them all’ and coming with the promise that ‘You’ll never play a bigger load of crap’, *Viz - The Game* clearly has a lot to live up to. Programmers Probe have gone off to a good start by setting out to produce a game that’s unashamedly Not For Sale To Children – it’s packed to bursting with steam-bag gags, rude language and toilet humour. Thus we get some highly impressive graphic renditions of some of the comic’s most popular characters and some deeply crap music slapped into a horizontally scrolling race game featuring nearly all of the joystick waggler variety (well, what did you expect), and feature events like Bliffla drinking or Buster bouncing. But what’s that I hear you cry? ‘Never mind all the wacky waffle, is it any good?’, it sounded a bit like.  

**Johnny Fartpants doing what comes naturally, in an effort to inflate balloons.**

Johnny Fartpants, Buster Gonad and Bliffla Bacon.  

**Bliffla and Buster make a frantic (and oh so wacky) sprint across a handy log.**

Your task, as one of the three, is to race through five areas of Fulchester (the beach, the park, the disco and so on) hindered by the entire Viz collection of characters (with the extraordinary exception of Billy The Fish). To improve your chances, you can utilise your own special ‘gifts’ (Johnny farts, Bliffla fights, and Buster bounces on his unfeasibly large testicles) to clear obstacles or avoid a particularly ‘sticky’ path – but only a limited number of times per level, the number determined by how well you do in a couple of sub-games. These are

THE BOTTOM LINE

Easy to play but difficult to get very far into, with re-loading sequences that are actually longer than the game which precedes them. A blast from the past that doesn’t really cut it in today’s market.

65

THE BOTTOM LINE

Good fun, and succeeds in capturing the comic’s feel to a large degree, but that doesn’t stop it being undemanding and overpriced. You’ll enjoy it loads (I did anyway), but you’ll probably end up feeling cheated in the long-term.

58

Chuck Yeagar’s Advanced Flight Trainer 2.0

**Publisher** Electronic Arts  
**Price** £24.99  
**Programmer(s)** Eirion The Cat  
**Release Date** Out now

A word of warning: step carefully if you come across a flight sim that warns you ‘the program will continually access the disk during play’. From my experience of this one, they certainly aren’t kidding.

Still, I suppose you’re asking for it when you try to cram in as many options as this does. There’s the selection of planes for instance – old Chuck certainly doesn’t shortchange you here, offering a choice of 18 from Stealth bombers to the Space Shuttle. The accuracies of the flight models seems a little dubious – flying a Stealth seems suspiciously similar to flying a biplane – but the choice is admittedly impressive.

Guiding a Spitfire through a canyon at just over 600m is hard enough, but using an external view makes it nigh on impossible.

The options don’t end there though. Slaloms, take-offs, landings, races, sprints, formation flying – the decisions you have to make before you take off go on and on. And even when you’re into the game proper there’s internal and external camera views to pick between. Stary backdrops (!) to add or remove, and all sorts. It has to be said that this flexibility does add to the game’s appeal, which is just as well considering what the flying is like. You’ll be amazed that a jet-engined plane can move this slowly.  

Yet, once again speed has been sacrificed for 3D detail and realism, and it mucks things up a treat. Jerky frame updates simply negate all the hard work put into the program. The strange cursor-style yoke control and slightly dodgy 3D don’t help matters either. And then there’s all that access...

I don’t wish to sound too negative though. If you can put up with the snooze-stdout (8) disk access and once-in-a-lifetime screen update (is it updates once in a lifetime?), this can actually get quite engrossing. Taking part in a 1940s slalom race is excellent fun, and the chance to land the Space Shuttle isn’t to be sneezed at. The problem is, there are so many excellent flight sims on the market a new one has to be really special to make its mark, and this one isn’t. Now if only the whole thing moved two or three times faster...

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DEPARTMENT MAY 1981
BLAZING THUNDER
Publisher: Hi-Tec
Price: £5.99
Release Date: Out now

Unusually for Hi-Tec, this game isn't a licence from a Disney film: it's a brand new game called 'Blazing Thunder'. It's actually a totally original product, so much so that it's based on the original game of the same type, Carrying Command. This is a strategy wargame shot-

tem-up with elements of flight simulation. You control a huge carrier, attack aircraft, and amphibious units in a battle to win control of a network of islands. The game is played on a map and involves absorbing the filled-

vector graphics and sound effects, and keeping track of your resources. For two players, the game is actually very playable. With two players and only four levels (although they are very big!), it won't take forever to complete, but it will be long enough for you to get your money's worth.

Everything about Carrier Command is fantastic, and now it's finally your turn to enjoy it. I won't deny that it's very expensive, but it's worth it. I won't deny that it's very expensive, but it's worth it.

Stuart Campbell

3D POOL
Publisher: Mirror Image
Price: £9.99
Release Date: Out now

3D Pool is a pool game. It's in 3D. What else is there to say about it? Well, how about: 'it's a strategic pool simulation, but instead of the traditional overhead view only format, the action can be viewed from anywhere around the table — from overhead or from side view. Zoomed in or out of, and generally mucked around with. It plays a mean game of pool too, with some seriously tough opponents, though with brilliant, precise, instinctive controls that mean you've still got a chance. The graphics are lovely, fast and smooth, and the sound is as good as you can possibly expect it to be, with clicks, thuds, and appreciative applause for really good shots. It's got loads of options to increase lastability too, including one and two-player modes, tournament or practice games, and even a library of minibossing trick shots to shoot off with, along with the option to set up your own ones (and re-live that incredible shot you pulled off when you played it last week). The whole thing has a very professional feel to it and proves ideal if you're looking for a pool game that you can easily play on your own without all that tedious fiddling about buying drinks, bumping into people and getting smoke in your eyes. A bit groovy, all things considered. You could always try saying something like that, I suppose. Stuart Campbell

CARRIERS/CARRIERS
Publisher: Mirror Image
Price: £7.99
Release Date: Out now

Despite sounding like a rather crap prehistoric monster movie starring Doug McClure, Carrier Command is actually a well-respected shoot-em-up from the arcade of 1989. You play a robin with an aeroplane that can strap onto your shoulder, flying around the air and blowing holes into baddies who stream in from your left, right, down, and all around. It all plays out against a gritty rolling post-apocalyptic backdrop of blasted cities, 'dust storms' and underground sewers, and as a conversion you have to say it's still pretty well done. The graphics make for an appropriate eerie atmosphere, and the pace is quick and furious. In fact, it's so fast and furious it'll take you quite a while to catch up with it. The main faults are really those of the arcade, particularly the tricky control system (for the first time you'll find yourself spinning round in circles faster than Michael Baines in his space ship). You can hit only when you want to, and you're left hanging if you let go of the trigger too early.

What's this? It's the way you do. Essentially, you only have one life, and an energy bar that ebbs down bit by bit. This takes away any real feeling of danger — you tend to ignore the fact that you're getting hit until you feel you're going to die. Forgotten Worlds was never an incredibly innovative game but what it did do well. And it still does.

Andy Ide

THE BOTTOM LINE

If you like the ideas of computer pool, an

unsuitable bargain. (Not everyone will of course)

THE BOTTOM LINE

Are you still here? I said

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89 PERCENT

THE BOTTOM LINE

A really dinky budget
game, and a must buy for all

Arcade fans.

75 PERCENT

THE BOTTOM LINE

A fairly enjoyable, though

slightly dated, arcade
tit which benefits from a
two-player mode.

73 PERCENT

FORGOTTEN WORLDS
Publisher: Mirror Image
Price: £9.99
Release Date: Out now

Forgotten Worlds is actually a

well-respected shoot-em-up from the

arcade of 1989. You play a

booby with an aeroplane

that can strap onto your shoulder,
flying around the air and
blowing holes into baddies who
stream in from your left, right,
down and all around. It all plays out
against a gritty rolling post-apocalyptic
backdrop of blasted cities, 'dust storms'
and underground sewers, and as a
conversion you have to say it's still pretty
well done. The graphics make for an
appropriate eerie atmosphere, and the pace is
fast and furious. In fact, it's so fast and
furious it'll take you quite a while to

catch up with it. The main faults are
really those of the arcade, particularly
the tricky control system (for the first
time you'll find yourself spinning round in circles faster
than Michael Baines in his space ship). You can hit only when you want to, and you're left hanging if you let go of the trigger too early.

What's this? It's the way you do. Essentially, you only have one life, and an energy bar that ebbs down bit by bit. This takes away any real feeling of danger — you tend to ignore the fact that you're getting hit until you feel you're going to die. Forgotten Worlds was never an incredibly innovative game but what it did do well. And it still does.
OPERATION WOLF
Publisher: The Hit Squad
Price: £7.99
Release Date: Out now

This is ideal budget fare really. A famous name (one of the most famous, in fact), limited gameplay but, it has to be said, lots of action. This is the original olive drab shooting gallery game, with odeles of enemy soldiers, tanks, jeeps, helicopters and the like leaping up or zooming out in front of you, and only your quick reactions saving you from being sent back to the title screen in an inglorious amount of time. It's the game the term 'genocide' could have been invented for – admittedly the odd nurse, pig and Vietnamese-like civilian crops up who may not be so a brilliantly good idea to aim at – but the basic gameplay is very much of the shoot-everything-in-sight variety.

In a historical context, Op Wolf is mainly notable for the fact that it used such big, arcade-like sprites and had so many on the screen at one time – it looks a bit scrappy now, perhaps, but you have to admit that it still works. Sufficiently similar to the coin-op to do it justice, it's really marred only by a tedious amount of disk swapping – surely it wouldn't have been too much effort to squeeze it all onto one disk? At this price it's a bit of a steal, and suddenly makes all similar rivals (Line Of Fire etc) all at 25 quid look stupidly priced indeed. We'd perhaps wait for the superior two-player sequel Operation Thunderbolt to make it onto budget, but there's no way you couldn't call this a good buy. ■ Matt Blabey

SPEEDBALL
Publisher: Mirror Image
Price: £9.99
Release Date: Out now

Clearly Microsoft are hoping to capitalise on the massive success of Speedball 2 with the re-release of this, its predecessor. The game follows the same basic principle but is simpler in most respects, with a smaller pitch, fewer players, and no management elements. Whereas Speedball 2 was in essence a future soccer game, ST1 is more like five-a-side, with the action zipping from end to end with incredible regularity. The most interesting aspect is probably the bribery feature, where, by collecting tokens on the pitch, you can gather together enough cash to persuade the referee to give you a goal-head lead at the start, or to extend the previously-finished game, giving you a

lovely graphics, and any simple fun that might have been had from it goes out of the window when you're confronted with half-a-dozen disk swaps every ten minutes. Some people love it – our own Gary Penn seems to think it's the bees knees, for example – but I can't for the life of me see why. It's not bad, if you've got a mental degree of persistence you'll find a fair old strategy game in there. But frankly this is best bought as a piece of history, and of course to retain something's value as a relic, it's best if you don't ever take it out of the box...

Speedball – it's not for the claustrophobic!

Stuart Campbell

ROCKET RANGER
Publisher: Mirror Image
Price: £9.99
Release Date: Out now

On the box of this game there's a quote which says 'Rocket Ranger is... a real landmark in Amiga Software history' and for once they're right. When it first came out, Rocket Ranger featured probably the most stunning graphics ever seen on any home computer, and digitised music that gave the game a feel being the name of the company that produced it, Cinemaware. This was a piece of software that wasn't so much a game, more of an interactive movie (a term which has since become so overused as to be meaningless). But wait. Look back at that sentence. "Wasn't so much a game..." Doesn't that sound a bit wrong to you, isn't 'a game' exactly what it's supposed to be? And therein lies the problem with Rocket Ranger. On the surface it's absolutely gorgeous, but inside it's a gameplay-free zone. The sub-games which make it up are all pretty dire in their own right, despite the

THE BOTTOM LINE
Pyramids! This isn't Egypt is it?

STRIKE FORCE HARRIER
Publisher: Mirror Image
Price: £19.99
Release Date: Out now

One of the Amiga's very first flight sims, Strike Force Harrier was also one of the best received. Combining realistic simulation with lots of fast blasting action, it remains one of the genre's most playable games, and for outright speed can give anything currently available a run for its money.

Obviously there's going to be a drawback. Flight sims have progressed quietly a ways in the three or so years since

its original release, and Strike Force Harrier now appears pretty crude and primitive graphically, lacking depth when compared to more recent games. But all the same, if you treat it more as something like Rescue On Fractalus and play it like a complicated shoot-em-up rather than a simple flight sim, you'll probably find yourself having quite a lot of fun. Priced at £10 though, it's unavoidably going to attract unflavourable comparisons with F/A-18 Interceptor, which is technically miles ahead, and available for the same price. The EA game is just as accessible, and much more impressive technically (as its placing in our All-Time Top 100 would suggest) so in a straight head-to-head, Strike Force Harrier is always going to come out second best. With that in mind, I can't really recommend it strongly, but my gut feeling is that it's a really nice game, and one that's just a bit more enjoyable to play than the usual flight sim. ■ Stuart Campbell

THE BOTTOM LINE
It's pretty fine, but at the price it's been rather out-evolved by F/A-18. Do take a look though.

DALEY THOMPSON'S OLYMPIC CHALLENGE
Publisher: The Hit Squad
Price: £7.99
Release Date: Out now

Way back since the days of Superstar and the like on the Spectrum, Daley Thompson has had us frantically wagging our joysticks through many a sporting event. Olympic Challenge was the tie in with the last Olympics (so it's a re-release from 1986 them, and, despite all those fancy digitised graphics, training sessions and in between screens, underneath it's still just a plain old waggy.

Things start off (rather annoyingly) in the gym where the idea is to prepare yourself for the following events. There are three exercises for you to try (or should that be hurt?) your hand at – weight lifting, sit ups and squats. Here, a nice digitised piccy of the big D himself does all the lifting, sit up and squats for you whilst (you yawned) it waggles away feverishly, hopefully filling up that bottle of Lucozade at the top of the screen (as it will apparently effect your performance in the events).

The usual running, jumping and throwing Decathlon events come next, featuring nice graphics, but unfortunately rather one sided gameplay – you simply weld your joystick to the floor, superglue your hand to the shaft, make lots of groaning noises and waggle for your life. Some of the events (if you get that far you have to qualify in each one to get onto the next) involve such complicated manoeuvres as pressing fire to jump and (shock horror) wagging slowly, but all in all there isn't much to it and boredom sets in extremely quickly. There's no way of practising each event either, so you're bound to spend most of your time training and very little on the actual competitions themselves. What a downer, eh? Three years on, Daley Thompson's Olympic Challenge still has a bit of instant appeal but it's just getting really repetitive and boring. There are a lot better ways to spend eight quid. ■ Rich Pelley

THE BOTTOM LINE
Hopelessly old fashioned wagging gameplay. Even the great man's face on the box won't help it sell.

THE BOTTOM LINE
It's a fine game, but if you can afford it, you'll find Speedball 2 is well worth the extra investment.

Stuart Campbell

96

GAME REVIEWS
OPERATION WOLF, SPEEDBALL, ROCKET RANGER, DAILY THOMPSON'S OLYMPIC CHALLENGE, STRIKE FORCE HARRIER

BUDGET

THE BOTTOM LINE
Is it a bird? Is it a plane? (etc)

The Bottom Line

100 PERCENT

THE BOTTOM LINE
Hopefully old fashioned wagging gameplay. Even the great man's face on the box won't help it sell.

55 PERCENT

THE BOTTOM LINE
It's pretty fine, but at the price it's been rather out-evolved by F/A-18. Do take a look though.

69 PERCENT

THE BOTTOM LINE
A fine game, but if you can afford it, you'll find Speedball 2 is well worth the extra investment.

80 PERCENT

THE BOTTOM LINE
You know exactly what you're getting here, and, within its limits, it doesn't really put a foot wrong.

72 PERCENT

THE BOTTOM LINE
Rocket Ranger is nice to have, but not something you'd be in a hurry to spend a tenner on.

68 PERCENT

THE BOTTOM LINE
Daley Thompson's Olympic Challenge is the tie in with the last Olympics (so it's a re-release from 1986 them, and, despite all those fancy digitised graphics, training sessions and in between screens, underneath it's still just a plain old waggy.

Daley Thompson's Olympic Challenge

BUDGET

THE BOTTOM LINE
It's pretty fine, but at the price it's been rather out-evolved by F/A-18. Do take a look though.

64 PERCENT

THE BOTTOM LINE
Again, looks better than it is.

70 PERCENT

THE BOTTOM LINE
A fine game, but if you can afford it, you'll find Speedball 2 is well worth the extra investment.

80 PERCENT

THE BOTTOM LINE
You know exactly what you're getting here, and, within its limits, it doesn't really put a foot wrong.

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It's pretty fine, but at the price it's been rather out-evolved by F/A-18. Do take a look though.
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SO WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO?

1. The music to Xenon 2 is based on the theme from what low budget movie?
2. How is Leisure Suit Larry III subtitled?
3. Shanghai is loosely based on what ancient Chinese game?
4. Name two other games (not necessarily on the Amiga) by Laser Squad creator Julian Gollop.
5. What industry 'cult' character wrote the introductory poem to Castle Master?
6. Rainbow Islands is the sequel to what game?
7. Which flight sim might be hard to track down in your local computer shop?
8. What's the name of Warhead creator Glyn Williams' soon-to-be completed new game?
9. What is the name of the programmer of Firebird's Quartz?
10. Captive is essentially a modern update of what game?
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**Loadsmoney just lying** about the place – collect this to buy lots of lovely things in the shops.

**The shop** - here you can buy keys, magic, smart bombs, weapons and all sorts.

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**Flames** - they'll kill you on contact (unless you use magic to turn them into scrummy oranges).

Collect the flowers and these blocks will fall to the floor making nice platforms to climb.

**Psychedelic backgrounds** - this level is very 1967, all big Beatles symbols and pulsing colours.

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**Ankh** - collect four of these for a free key!

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Matrix - Working for Members
Enter a computer shop and you're going to be faced with more games than we could possibly review this issue. A lot more. And that causes a bit of a problem - now exactly do you tell a must-buy item from a piece of inexcusable junk? Well, with The Bottom Line of course, our at-a-glance guide to every (or almost every) full price Amiga game released over the past year. Each month we'll update the reviews, adding new ones and throwing some of the older games out, to bring you your essential guide to everything you're ever likely to buy. To keep things simple we've dispensed with the normal scoring system and rated everything out of five stars.
shocky, and the sound is guttural. The Bottom Line - An uneven game which fails to hold the interest.

HELTER SKELTER Audiogenic £19.99

Upers - Highly original gameplay; password system greatly increases addictiveness; very good cartoon graphics. Downers - Extremely fussy control method which is difficult to use even with practice. Gets samely after a while. The Bottom Line - Dibulous lasting appeal, but a fun little game if you happen to something a bit different.

HERE WITH THE CLUES CRL £24.95

Upers - Highly original concept (a detective situation) with excellent use of dialogue. Graphics - Solving murders won't appeal to non-detectives. The Bottom Line - A step in the right direction.

HIGHWAY PATROL II Infogrames £19.99

Upers - Fairly convincing 3D read graphics, lots of shiny sports cars. Downers - There's a let's not do it to. The Bottom Line - Makes Badlands look like a classic.

INDERMINUS Electronic Arts £24.99

Upers - As vinyl as they come, with more difficulty strategy bits than you could reasonably hope for. Downers - Maybe strategy graphics lack detail, and the whole game lacks any air of sentimentality. The Bottom Line - One for dedicated strategy-heads only. Superintendent fans might dig it.

INDIANA JONES ADVENTURE US Gold £19.99

Upers - More fine-tuning gives Indiana the friendlier control system yet. It's pretty faithful to the movie too! Downers - Waiting for Indy to walk across the screen all time can get annoying and some of the puzzles and cut-scenes bit too abstract. The Bottom Line - Quite simply the best Amiga adventure to date

INTERNATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING Hewson £24.99

Upers - It's funny (but for all the wrong reasons). Downers - It stinks like a sweaty leotard. The Bottom Line - A bigger face than the sport itself. A decent wrestling game has yet to be written.

IMMORTAL, THE Electronic Arts £24.99

Upers - Amazing game which makes real use of 1 meg memory. Downers - Most Amiga owners will never see it. The Bottom Line - Not the best face for a game, but certainly by any means, the gorgeous graphics lift it well above average.

IMPOSSAMOLE Gremlin £19.96

Upers - There's nothing really wrong with it... Downers - but this is one of the most forgettable. The Bottom Line - Impossamole? What's that?

INDIANAPOLIS 500 Electronic Arts £24.95

Upers - An impressive, playable blend of real racing sim and quick track blast, with a nice choice in racing cars (if you've got a 1 meg machine). Downers - Too repetition rendering's lasting appeal. The Bottom Line - Just fabulous.

INFESTATION Psygnosis £24.95

Upers - Very Allan--esque atmosphere. Watch that blood pressure sharp! Downers - Hard to get into an ingmar Bergman film. The Bottom Line - Persuasive and you'll find a great top-notch 3D adventure.

INTERNATIONAL SOCCER CHALLENGE MicroProse £24.99

Upers - Socc' in 3D. A very brave attempt to do something new with a tired old game style. Downers - unfortunately falls flat on its face. The Bottom Line - Fail.

INTERNATIONAL 3D TENNIS Palace £24.99

Upers - Use of 3D polygon graphics, with fluid animation and nice camera angles. Downers - Its attempt to re-create the feel of tennis isn't entirely coherent. The Bottom Line - Very good, but it's still competition from the likes of Pro Tennis 2.

IRON LORD Ubi Soft £24.99

Upers - Cinema-ware style medieval epic with plenty of sub-plots, background and realistic presentation. Downers - It's just too tough to notch, and with little story to back it up. The Bottom Line - Ultimately repetitive, but fun for a while.

ISHIDO Accordise £24.99

Upers - Take Itchbio, add some Go, then throw in a few herbs and spices and you have... Brown. The result is one piping hot Chinese board game called Ishido. Downers - Irritating dialogue boxes, and the luck element can infuriate the game. The Bottom Line - An engaging piece of Chinese culture, which should really be played with a good strong cup of tea.

ITALY 90 US Gold £24.99

Upers - A wealth of teams and players; reasonable in game graphics. Downers - Clag sound effects, and the action doesn't really grab it should. The Bottom Line - A reasonable soccer bash, but frankly it's last year's game.

IVANHOE Ocean £24.99

Upers - Unusually sublime graphics and cartoon animation we saw them and didn't believe then. Downers - Far too easy to complete. The Bottom Line - Next time we can have a game supplied with our pretty pictures, please!

JAMES POND Millennium £34.99

Upers - Graphics which cut-up Rainbow Islands. The world's first adictive screen and an excellent original conception. Downers - The simplistic flick-screen platform format doesn't appeal to everyone. The Bottom Line - Huge amounts of fun, but not exactly cutting edge. Pay a visit to a Klaw to relax you.

PRIVATE SYNDICATE Virgin £24.99

Upers - It's slicker than a pot of cream, with a beautiful simple gameplay to instantly hook the unsuspecting player Downers - Doesn't make much real adrenaline-pumping qualities. The Bottom Line - Loads of initial rush, but really a pretty run-of-the-mill arcade runabout.

JUDGE DRIDD Virgin £24.99

Upers - Two ancient sub-games offer a real rave from the game. Downers - Another Judge Dridd game screwed up totally. No humour, no graphics, no game. The Bottom Line - One day somebody will do justice (ahem) to the legend of Dridd. One day.

KLAAR Tengen (Dornair) £19.99

Upers - More scope than Tetris; better looking and sounding too; deceptive pace means it gets fairly frantic without you really noticing. Downers - Incredibly irritating. Downers - It's all a bit self-wittled. If you don't have a naturally calm nature you'll luck it down. The Bottom Line - A real mind-bender, but perhaps too perfect conversion.

KNIGHTS OF THE CRYSTAL US Gold £29.99

Upers - HAM-mode graphics, highly realistic experience to boot. Downers - Not one to simply load and go. The Bottom Line - Fans of 3D fantasy, and a good demonstration of the machine's capabilities.

LANCASTER Actual Screen shots £24.95

Upers - Fairly impressive 3D renderings, using an unusual approach to a WW1 sim. Downers - Lack of variation and any real excitement it barely gets off the ground. The Bottom Line - Extreme spawning averagesness to an art form.

LAST NINJA System 3 £24.99

Upers - Excellent 8 bit graphics, and a genuine attempt to inject some strategy into the martial arts genre. Downers - The game isn't quite as absorbing. Downers - If it plays like a pig, the Bottom Line - Not really in the Bruce Lee mould. (It rather plays like a Jackie Chan level to be honest).

KID GLOVES Millennium £24.99

Upers - Graphics which cut-up Rainbow Islands; the world's first addictive screen and an excellent original conception. Downers - The simplistic flick-screen platform format doesn't appeal to everyone. The Bottom Line - Huge amounts of fun, but not exactly cutting edge. Pay a visit to a Klaw to relax you.

LEISURE SUIT LARRY III Sierra £34.99

Upers - Utterly bizarre, over-zealous plot, Adventuring (or consenting adults). Downers - Slight obsessive command parser, and as usual it's over-priced. The Bottom Line - Check it out - but only if you're over eighteen.

LEMMINGS Psygnosis £24.99

Upers - Utterly bizarre, pleasingly original and totally addictive. It invents a totally new category - the save-em-up. Downers - As is the norm with such strikingly original concept, some may wonder just what the fuss is about. The Bottom Line - Love it or loathe it, you can't ignore it. Lemmings rule.

LIFE IN FIRE US Gold £24.99

Upers - Imagine all the Rambo films back-to-back-on fast forward and you have a good idea how much violence this game contains. Downers - You only really need to know about how intelligent it is. The Bottom Line - Despite visually poor graphics, this is one of Psygnosis' best and most playable games to date.

LORD VESTAX Gremlin £19.99

Upers - Great atmosphere, enhanced by the accompanying tape booklets etc. It's certainly a lavish package. Downers - An adventure without typing? It certainly won't appeal to purists, and the audio drama is laughable - but isn't all the same. Downers - In all the same. The Bottom Line - Once again Lucasfilm strives for something different. The results are interesting, if not totally successful.

LOTUS ESPRIT TURBO CHALLENGE Gremlin £24.95

Upers - A wealth of control options lets the gamer go the game more accurately or slavishly according to preference. Bags of 'fun'. Downers - The other game are a bit flat-feeding, and half the screen is wasted in one player move. Downers - Not too adventurous to be turning the amazing music off either. The Bottom Line - An extremely good driving game, even more fun with two players.

MAGIC FLY Electronic Arts £24.99

Upers - Very challenging. Downers - But not too thrilling, and the only touches of the Internet (like 1991 'The Bottom Line' You may not find it worth the bother of getting into it.

MANHUNTER 2 Sierra (Activision) £23.99

Upers - More exciting than normal for this type of game, with very original puzzles, awful graphics, and the killer Fall Launch (say excerable The Bottom Line) at a scandalous price.

MANONCHER Software Projects £9.99

Upers - Pixel perfect copy of the 8-bit original (just right for nostalgic buffs) with a pretty decent scrolling version with extra shots for those to see the Amiga at work, plays as gorgeously as it always do. Downers - Awful sound on boot and boot-up. Downers - None of you is going to want to see an 8-bit game on the new and more modern 16-bit wonder machine. The Bottom Line - You're not going to want to play it only, but if you do you'll be in seventh heaven.

MANIX Millionaire £24.99

Upers - Charming surfing. Downers - But it's just an updated 2-Dvertly isn't it? The Bottom Line - Doesn't really get its hooks on you.

MASTERTOOLER Rainbow Arts £24.99

Upers - Excellent two player mode, fast 3D action - all in all a very respectable updating of the original game. Downers - Despite the new features. MasterTooler looks and feels better, but it also needs a lot more work. Fun for a few hours, but too simplistic to hold any lasting appeal.

MEAN STREETS US Gold £24.99

Upers - Many different styles combine well for (ahem) a wide audience experience. Downers - Dragged down by disk swapping. The Bottom Line - Simply not good entertainment. A bit like Lenny Henry, really.

MIDNIGHT TOWN Ocean £24.99

Upers - Well-balanced gameplay, a smooth difficulty
THE BOTTOM LINE
THE LAST YEAR'S GAMES

***** Exceptional  ***** Nearly there  ***** Very good  ***** Has its moments  ***** Flawed  ***** Dull

MUDS
Rainbow Arts £24.99
Uppers - Quite funny. Downers - We really need another rugby/basketball/violence based game for the 3DO. Giving everything tiny names doesn't make this game different to the others, it's just the same.

MURDER
US Gold £24.99
Uppers - Highly atmospheric, macabre and scary. Downers - Repetitive. The Bottom Line - If you've got plenty of patience, it's an affecting brain- teaser.

MYSTICAL
Imageworks £24.99

NAM
Doraki £24.95
Uppers - Heavily researched. Convincing and (deary word) educational. Downers - War. The whole serious look to the thing comes across. The Bottom Line - Political as well as tactical decision making gives a new edge to war games.

NARC
Ocean £24.99
Uppers - Great blood splattering action, very close to the coin-op. Downers - Very dodgy on the playability font (not to say morally). The Bottom Line - Limited.

NARCO POLICE
Dinamic £24.99

NEBULUS
Hewson £19.99
Uppers - Truly innovative gameplay and graphics which wouldn't look out of place in an arcade. The climb up/down routine makes it almost too addictive for safety. Downers - Not available - some could find this just too frustrating. The Bottom Line - Classically simple design makes for a game that won't let you go once it gets its claws into you (which is about two minutes after you pick it up).

NEUROMANCER
Electric Arts £24.99
Uppers - Very convincing in its field. Downers - That doesn't make it any good though. The Bottom Line - None of the atmosphere of the book. Not so much Chiba City as Average City.

NIGHT SHIFT
Lucasfilm (US Gold) £24.99
Uppers - Graphically innovative and full of character. Downers - Detail-packed background can make it hard to see where the actual plots are, more time spent looking than playing. The Bottom Line - A very interesting concept that would work wonders, but the over-long opening charm pulls it through.

NEW YORK WARRIORS
Virgin £19.99

NINE LIVES
ARC £24.99
Uppers - Cute and inventive platform fun. Downers - Tougher than Mike Tyson in a suit of armour. With a bazooka. The Bottom Line - You've got all the chance of finishing it as Eela E. Coyote has of reaching Road Runner.

NINJA REMIX
System 3 £24.99
Uppers - Closer to what Last Ninja 2 should have been. Downers - Extremely high-quality graphics... Downers - ...and a near- terminal lack of gameplay. The Bottom Line - Ideal for gamers with dirty hands. Otherwise keep the electro-shock equipment handy for those, er, sedate moments.

NINJA SPIRIT
Activision £24.99
Uppers - Fast and violent arcade conversion. Downers - Original was a production line job, no imagination or sparkle. Ack! Downers - Absolutely bloody. The Bottom Line - The game is too tedious.

NINGA WARRIORS
Virgin £19.99
Uppers - Novel Cinematographic style. Downers - Not to my liking. Dynamic Loading System is a boon but don't get so obsessive. The Bottom Line - Extremely repetitive action pulls quickly. The Bottom Line - Every! A game of this type, the gameplay is too limited to hold the attention for any length of time.

NITRO
Playground £24.99
Uppers - Arcade in the Arcane or tradition. Downers - Colossally inferior to the real thing. The Bottom Line - The excellent licensed music isn't enough to save this bare-faced rip-off. Check out the real thing instead.

OPERATION STEALTH
Delphine (US Gold) £24.99
Uppers - More of a James Bond style official James Bond game. Not too much dialogue talking about either (which makes a change). Downers - Arcade sequences will irritate the ardent purist. The Bottom Line - Even a game of this type, the gameplay is too limited to hold the attention for any length of time.

PIEPA
Empire £24.99
Uppers - Very original, slightly abstract, and deceptively fast- moving for a puzzle game. Downers - You can feel you've got very little control over matters. The Bottom Line - Either hooks you from minute one, or goes completely over your head. See it before you buy.

PIRATES
Microprose £24.95
Uppers - More addictive than this kind of game usually is. Downers - Graphical conversion is brass-necked of the first order. The Bottom Line - Necessary to be graphically interesting.

ORIENTAL GAMES
MicroStyle £24.99

OVERLANDER
Elite £19.99

PANG
Ocean £24.99
Uppers - A perfect arcade conversion: novel two player mode and hordes of additivities make it the last word in cute game play. Downers - Long wait between games is a bit of a hindrance. The Bottom Line - You'll be playing for hours.

PARADOX
Hewson £24.99
Uppers - Nothing compares to the game of the year. The Bottom Line - A bit of a spoilsport.

PICK'N'PILE
UBI Soft £19.99
Uppers - Featuring graphics of Puzzlic and Boulder Dash. Downers - Eight-bit graphics don't cut it any more. The Bottom Line - No enough variation to sustain it for long.

PILOTING
Ocean £24.99
Uppers - Incredibly frantic blasting experience. Downers - Not one to fit if you want to show off your speed at the same time. The Amiga's snazzy graphics. The Bottom Line - A Midwinter fan you'll love it. A finely tuned adrenalin machine.

PLOTING
Ocean £24.99
Uppers - Incredibly fast action. Lots of depth if you want it and terrifyingly competitive in multiplayer mode. Downers - A bit too fast and frantic for some. The Bottom Line - One of the most imaginative future sport yet, and arguably the best.

POCKET QUEX
Sierra (Activision) £34.95
Uppers - Er. Very realistic simulation of thisктег that you're half the game is_form-filling. The Bottom Line - Too much like a tedious day at the office.

POWERSHOWER
Electronic Arts £24.99
Uppers - Totally unique gameplay and smooth 3D graphics add up to a game with depth and sparkle. Downers - The icon control system really is very confusing. The Bottom Line - An essential game, but not for every Amiga owner.

POWER DRIFT
Activision £19.99
Uppers - All the arcade's tracks, characters, and secret features. Downers - The graphics can get very confusing, and the gameplay isn't really close to the original. The Bottom Line - A good stab at a very different concept, but not quite good enough.

POWERMONGER
Electronic Arts £29.99
Uppers - The brave new face of Economics - graphics which looks suspiciously like Pulp Fiction, The Bottom Line - Despite similar general elements, there is no way it could be a game for either.

PRINCE OF PERSIA
Broderbund £34.99
Uppers - Phenomenal animation, loads of atmosphere and old fashioned gameplay. Downers - Control is initially a pain, getting used to the movement at the start of a level every time you die is always annoying. The Bottom Line - Technically stunning and great fun at the same time. Why can't all games be like this?

PROJECTILE
Electric Arts £24.99
Uppers - Incredibly fast action. Lots of depth if you want it and terrifyingly competitive in multiplayer mode. Downers - A bit too fast and frantic for some. The Bottom Line - One of the most imaginative future sport yet, and arguably the best.

PRO TENNIS TOUR 2
Ubisoft £24.99
Uppers - Possibly the most realistic sports aim to grace the Amiga, except perhaps for skiing. Downers - So if you hate the real thing, you won't go for this. The Bottom Line - Nothing short of wonderful.

PUSH TO EARTH
Excel £19.95
Uppers - Remiss of Gyruss, the atmospheric arcade rip-off. Downers - But completely crap. The Bottom Line - A great mission for being hit by a real Excelite.
PUZZNIC
Ocean £24.99

Uppers - Classically simple and very addictive, not to mention original. Downers - Tons of fun to just pick up and play - bad news for a puzzler. The Bottom Line - Not bad at all, but have been better presented (and who thought that utterly meaningless name?)

SAFARI GUNS
Infogrames £19.99

Upers - Operation Wolf without the violence. Downers - Sound like a bad idea? 'The Bottom Line' - It is.

SATAN
Dynamix £19.99

Upers - You won’t finish it in a hurry, Downers - Spookily similar to Black Tiger. The Bottom Line - The game that put the ‘age in average’.

SCRAMBLE SPIRITS
Grandslam £19.99

Upers - Close conversion with all the classic features. Downers - Too easy, too similar to every other shoot-em-up you’ve ever seen. The Bottom Line - The words ‘brag standard’ spring to mind.

SHADOW OF THE BEAST 2
Paynoria £34.35

Upers - Jaw-dropping graphics, and, er... that’s it! Downers - Your first few games will be the shorter than the advertising passages between them. The Roger Dean T-shirt is random. The Bottom Line - ‘E34.57 get out of here!’

SHADOW WARRIORS
Ocean £24.99

Upers - Look, leave me alone, it’s close to the arcade game, what else do you want me to say? Downers - Very tough and completely unwrapping. The Bottom Line - It’s as much as game in here as there is in an empty crate with Tomatoes from Greensland stumped on it.

SHANGHAI
Activation £15.99

Upers - Based on an ancient Chinese tile game, so you know it’s going to torture your mind and it does. Friendly presentation too, and the multi-player mode - the clock-games are action-packed enough for the most intense blasting fan. Downers - Slightly fiddly graphics can play havoc with your eyes. The Bottom Line - Scarily gripping for a game with no moving graphics. If you don’t go in it you’ll want to take out an ad in the Times to tell everybody.

SHERMAN M4
Loriciels £19.99


SHOCKWAVE
Digital Magic £24.99

Upers - Lightning fast arcade quality afterburners! The best aircraft. Downers - Tactile section is in the way. The Bottom Line - A potentially great arcade monster shoot-em-up ruined by being to brassy as well.

SIMULCA
MicroStyle £24.99


SIRIUS 7
Cr2 £24.99

Upers - Technically adequate.

Downers - No thought, no imagination, no game, no fun. The Bottom Line - Almost as good as Contra and Xenon 2 in pause mode.

SKI OR DIE
Electronic Arts £24.99

Upers - Skates O’Dee but with ‘in’ skaters. Downers - Skates O’Dee but with snow. The Bottom Line - Fun (for a while) with friends, but basically an old fashioned, pathy collection of unimpressive sub-games.

SPACE ROGUE
Origin (MindScape) £29.99

Upers - Well worked, fairly playable. Downers - Seen ‘E111’. You’ve seen this. Far too many controls, The Bottom Line - So like Elite it’s practically unrecognisable, but nowhere near as good.

STARGLIDER II
ImageWorks £24.99

Upers - Upper-continuous. Downers - Bad all sound-wise, technically nothing to shout about. The Bottom Line - Run-out of the mill.

ST. DRAGON
Storm £24.99

Downers - Ruminating on your death.

Upers - Strange, quirky, intellectual game design, and total addiction. Frustrating as hell, but nonetheless a masterpiece.

STARBLADE
Palace £24.99


STREIDER 2
US Gold £24.99

Upers - ‘Flawless arcade conversion. Downers - The track sequence is out of order but the first 4 races are on track 1). The difficulty curve makes no sense, and control is a lack oversaw.

STORM ACROSS EUROPE
SSI (US Gold) £24.99

Upers - Playing the trailer makes a change. Downers - Takes ages to get into, and the graphics are primitive. The Bottom Line - Too ambitious for its own good.

STREET HOCKEY
Gorizo £24.99

Upers - Jim the Program! The sub-game is...um...not bad, poissonnage lasagne is bowing from a wooden spoon. The Bottom Line - Stupendously dire. User trash. Appealing crap. Not that good at all, really.

SUPREMACY
Virgin £29.99

Upers - Galactic empire-building with some smart graphics. Downers - The number based gameplay renders it all completely unnecessary. The Bottom Line - ‘For accountants and gullible people only.’

SWIV
Storm £24.99

Upers - The music isn’t entirely crap. Downers - Hoelessly slow, graphically pedestrian, terminally lack of excitement. The Bottom Line - We’d rather see a great conversion of Galaxians than someone make a pig of a game where they know they couldn’t convert in the first place.

SUPERLEAGUE SOCCER
Impressions £24.99

Upers - Well-implemented strategy/selection. Downers - ‘Revolutionary’ control system is just what is in practice. The Bottom Line - ‘Crisp footballing action leaves this one lagging behind the competition by 20,000 leagues.

SUPER OFF-Road RACER
Virgin £19.99

Upers - ‘In’ arcade. Downers - ‘In’ extreme arduous.

SUPERNATURAL
Amiga £34.99

Upers - ‘In’ arcade. Downers - ‘In’ extreme arduous.

SUPREME
Virgin £29.99

Upers - ‘In’ arcade. Downers - ‘In’ extreme arduous.
WOLFPACK

Mirsrosoft £24.99

Upers — Very deep (ho ho)

Downers - Blimey never thought of it on the thimble-tack, and this one is no exception. The Bottom Line - Not as silly teche-d based as many in the genre, but still good fun. Recommend to the hardened action junkies. **

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SOCCER

Elite £24.99

Upers - Very good copy of the original (ish) Downers - Poor gameplay, you never get two seconds on ball. The Bottom Line - Stopped in the first round.

WRATH OF THE DEMON

Heydogsoft £29.99

Upers - Cheaper than Shadow Of The Beast... Downers - Almost exactly the same in every other respect. The Bottom Line - If it doesn't do what the Shadow has already bought it, so you won't miss out. Not a very good alternative. **

XENOMORPH

Pandora £24.99

Upers - Lots of上市, neat idea. Downers - Too big, perhaps too big. The Bottom Line - Down by weak sound, but still pretty good stuff. **

XIPHOS

Electronic Zoo £24.99

Upers — Smooth and subtle. Downers — Takes far too long to get into the action. The Bottom Line - Only for the dedicated space trader. **

YOLANDA

Millenium £24.99

Upers - Fruky sound. Downers - Poor graphics make the pixel perfect positions almost too hard to pull off. The Bottom Line - Just too hard.

ZARATHUSTRA

Hewson £24.99

Upers - The Thunders game is timeless, and it's been updated with 1990s graphics, resulting in something very special indeed. Downers - A budget game, so the Bottom Line - Good fun, but not good value.

ZIRIAK

The Software Business £24.99

Upers - Pretty Scramble variant. Downers - But... it's hard. The Bottom Line - Stupidly difficult, too much for almost everyone. **

Z-OUT

Rainbow Arts £24.99

Upers - Highly tactical with low graphics. Downers - A light cycles game in 1990 is hardly the peak of the action (in 1981 it wasn't even the peak of the action in 1988). The Bottom Line - Poor graphics, sound (most everything else) but a fun game. **
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IF I'D KNOWN THEN...

PETER MOLYNEUX'S first game was a mail order business sim in the 'Rock Star Ate My Hamster' mould which sold an astounding... two copies. It didn't put him off though, which has proved to be good news for gamers - his current Bullfrog outfit has been consistently innovative, and in *Populous* came up with one of the landmark Amiga games.

But, looking backwards, what does he really think of his back catalogue now?...

FUSION

THIS WAS THE FIRST ORIGINAL TITLE we worked on as Bullfrog and must be one of the slowest and most tedious games ever released on the Amiga. It had a tiny, tiny title screen, it didn't use the Amiga colour palate properly - in fact, I'm sure Electronic Arts can send you lots of copies if you want because they're desperate to get rid of it.

The problem was that we really wrote the game so that we could learn how to animate on the Amiga properly - we had no great regard for the gameplay at all. It scrolled in eight directions, which was fine except you never knew which one you were meant to go in, and the aliens were very basic in their movements - they'd just shoot away regardless. It just wasn't balanced, probably because we'd hardly playtested it at all.

At the time we already knew we wanted to do other sorts of game, and this wasn't what we were into at all. I.A. thought it was sort of okay though - I mean, we are talking three years ago, and though Xenon had just come out there wasn't really much else that was good to compare it with.

I WOULD HAVE PREFERRED this to have been better than it was (the control was cumbersome and not intuitive enough) but I'm still very pleased with it. I know there are little things in there that nobody's found yet just waiting to be discovered. Happily we're now doing the data disks where we've got a chance to cure all the things I feel are wrong with it.

The worst thing was that we were under incredible pressure to get the game finished by Christmas, so a few features that should have been more polished weren't. The most difficult thing really was not making it too much like *Populous* - people didn't want it to be *Populous 2*, so in some ways we went out of our way to be different.

I don't think this is as good as *Populous*, mainly because I think *Populous* is more enjoyable for more people. I think I could sit anybody who likes games down in front of *Populous*, and after spending a bit of time explaining how it works to them I think they'd not only enjoy playing it, they'd want to go off and play it some more off their own bat. I'm not sure it's the same with *Powermonger*.

POPPUS

THE FUTURE

WELL, THERE'S *POPPUS 2* in the late summer, the *Powermonger* data disks of course, Bob before Christmas hopefully and then another game called *Creation*, which I can't tell you too much about except that it's to do with genetic engineering, early next year. We're more in control of release schedules now which is a good thing - I never want to relive the *Powermonger* experience ever again.
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Software for the
Nintendo, Sega, PC, Atari ST, Lynx,
and Gameboy also available.

All software/hardware is subject to availability. Titles not available will be sent on day of release.

£1.00 P&P on software
Up to £5 P&P on hardware

AMIGA POWER
MAY 1991
KICK OFF 2 greatly enhances the gameplay of KICK OFF, winner of the GAME OF THE YEAR in the U.K., and similar awards right across Europe. A host of new features have been added to the ones that enthralled players the world over.

- Full size multi-directional scrolling pitch with the players, markings etc. in correct proportion.
- 1 to 4 players option. (Amiga and ST only)
- 2 players TEAM option against the computer or 2 other players.
- Hundreds of players each with a unique combination of attributes (stamina, pace, etc.) and skills (passing, shooting, tackling, etc.)
- Instinctive Kick Off joystick controls to dribble, pass, shoot, head or chip the ball and do sliding tackles.
- Set piece FREE KICKS including dummies and the ability to dip the ball or bend the ball round a defensive wall.
- 9 types of corner kicks with full control of shot power. Long and short throw ins.
- Team selection from a squad of 16 with substitution and a choice of tactics.
- Facility to view, edit and save the Action Replays and create a Golden Shots disc (Excl. IBM & CBM 64).
- Facility to load Player Manager teams and tactics for a single or league game.
- Red and yellow cards, 16 different referees, injury time and a host of features to create an atmosphere for a game which is real fun to play.

An International class player takes charge of a third division club as Player Manager. His brief is simple - Bring Back The Glory Days.

His success depends on his playing skills on the pitch and managerial skills in devising winning tactics, acquiring the right players from the transfer market and building a team worthy of the highest honours.

- Unique facility to design and implement your own tactics.
- Over 1000 individual players, each with a unique combination of attributes and skills.
- A lively transfer market. Haggle for the best deal.
- A division league and a cup tournament with sudden death penalty shoot out.

The Player Manager brings the every day realities of a manager's life, his talents as a manager and a player, his triumphs and his failures into a sharp FOCUS.

ST ACTION - A stroke of pure genius.
THE ONE - Successfully blends challenging soccer management with frantic end to end arcade action.
NEW COMPUTER EXPRESS - The sheer depth is incredible. A definitive management game.
COMMODORE USER - At last a management game that requires true management skills - a winner.
ST FORMAT - Brilliant.
AMIGA FORMAT - Enthralling and addictive.
ZZAP - Best football management game ever written.

AMIGA & ST £19.99
EXP. AMIGA £24.99
IBM (AT & XT Turbo, EGA & VGA) £24.99
CBM 64 - SPECTRUM - AMSTRAD £9.99, £14.99
THE FINAL WHISTLE
Amiga - ST £12.99

Raises the skills required and gameplay of KICK OFF 2 to new heights.

Two extra kits.

Look at any player stats (attributes and skill) before selecting squad.

Totally new corner kicks with full control of the power, height and trajectory of the ball.

Enhanced throw ins and penalty shots.

Provision to flick the ball in the air and do a blender header or a spectacular overhead kick.

New two players team mode. Player 1 in position or nearest to the ball and player 2 in position or keeper.

Linesmen and referee on the pitch. (Exp. Amiga Only).

A new player attribute FLAIR. A player with a high level of flair will try a solo attempt at the goal.

4 new pitches - Wembley - Icy - Muddy - Non-League

And Lo’s More

WINNING TACTICS (£6.99 - February.) - A collection of tactics for use in Player Manager or KO2 with full explanations.

RETURN TO EUROPE (£9.99 - April) - Three European cup competitions. UEFA cup - European Cup - Cup Winners Cup.

GIANTS OF EUROPE (June) Best teams of Europe on one disc.

SUPER LEAGUE - Four division league with 24 teams in each division. Automatic promotions and relegations. Teams from GIANTS OF EUROPE can be loaded into 1st Division.

Draft specifications. Subject to changes without notice
AMERICA'S TOP SECRET WEAPON

Super-charged super-fighters who risk all defending America against the world's deadliest forces. A combat unit of indomitable strength and courage. A rescue team of unparalleled skill and daring. THE BEST OF THE BEST

NAVY SEALS

AMSTRAD SPECTRUM COMMODORE ATARI ST AMIGA

"...a brand new and quite sophisticated game-style. Alongside the excellent Mathew Cannon sonics are the superlative graphics. The detail in level one is phenomenal and ranks among the best I've seen..."

"On the subject of presentation I can't enthuse enough. The cartridge is put to full use with presentation screens galore, while instantaneous loading makes for superb momentum. It gives a real 'coin-op feel and shows what cartridges really can do." ZZAP 92%"