

ST FORMAT

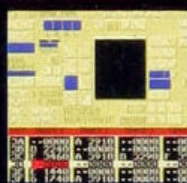
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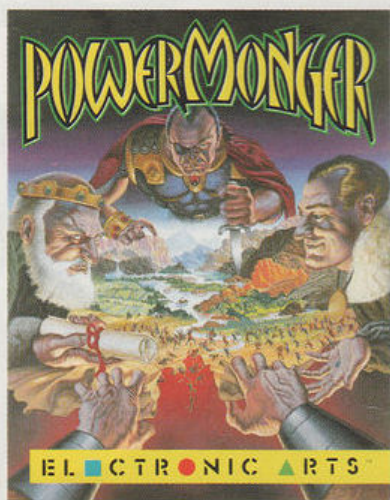
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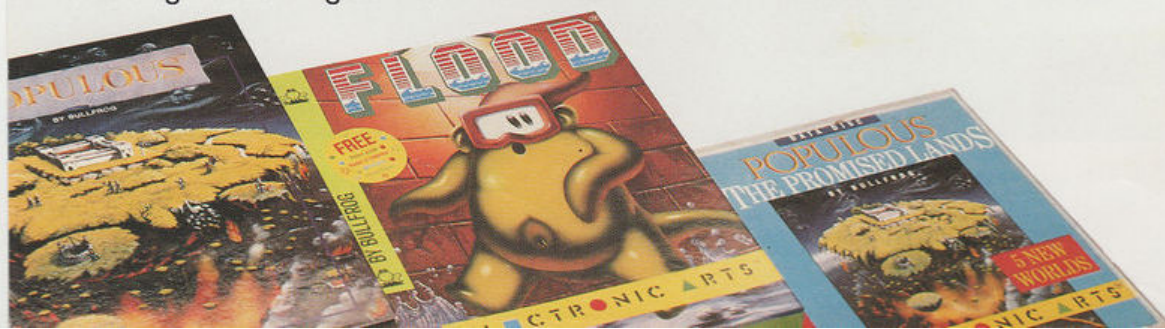
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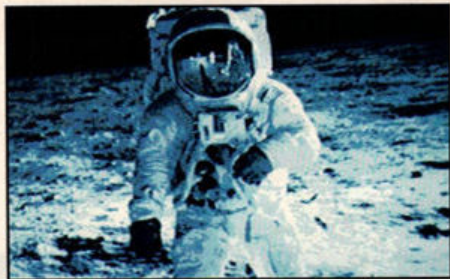


"Better than Populous", Peter Molyneux of Bullfrog, Creators of Populous.

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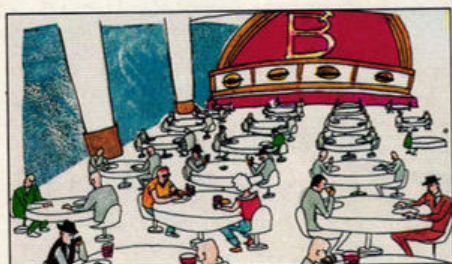
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Get active with your ST

Why should someone else have all the fun – and make all the money? Throughout this issue we explore just a few of the many ways you can put yourself in charge – how to start up your own Public Domain library, for instance, or create a fanzine, or set up a bulletin board, or start programming, or...

The ST FORMAT Guide to Doing It Yourself gets under way on page 24. The rest is up to you. Take it away, matey!

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January – June 1990

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cover disk p35

"IT'S DISGUSTING. ALL THIS ENJOYMENT. IT SHOULDN'T BE ALLOWED. I'M DISGUSTED"
— MRS MARY WHITEHOUSE, SPEAKING OUT ABOUT THIS SEXY DISK YESTERDAY

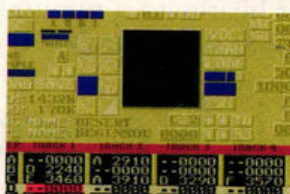
IT'S WHOOAARR!

Fully playable demos of *Atomic Robokid* and *TCB Tracker* plus much, much more



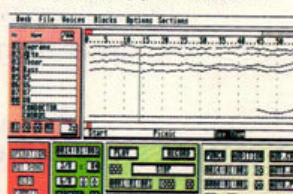
ATOMIC ROBOKID

The most fun you can have with your clothes on, prob'ly



TCB TRACKER

It'll make you want to kiss and even fondle your own forearm



HENRY COSH

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ST FORMAT, the market leader by 15,000, comes to you from the company that also publishes *Amiga Format*, *New Computer Express*, *Amstrad Action*, *Ammodore Format* (quite good, prob'ly), *Your Sinclair*, *PC Plus*, *S*, *8000 Plus* and *Classic CD*

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He who laughs last, laughs longest.

The rumours were true, DeluxePaint is to become available at last on ST.
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"The current version available for the ST far outstrips all earlier incarnations.
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The price too, is reason for amusement. For a limited time only, DeluxePaint ST will be available at a special introductory price.*

And should you happen to bump into an Amiga user, do try to keep your hilarity to a minimum, you wouldn't want to upset them now, would you?

Available soon £49.99*



Yet more incompatibility problems for upgrade ST STE faces hard disk problems

by Andrew Hutchinson

Some STEs, it has come to light, are incompatible with certain hard drives. The problem has arisen because of a fault in the DMA chip of the upgraded version of the ST, which may result in hard disk data becoming corrupted after just three or four hours' use.

Paul Glover of the ST Club, who first broke the story, ran into the problem himself when his own hard drive was corrupted. He contacted his supplier and was told that up to 30% of some batches were alleged to be affected. Glover has also been told that once you've had the upgrade there's still no guarantee that your STE can work with any third party drives. And he discovered a confidential report (ST/HW/00070) from Atari informing dealers of the STE problems – yet so far no move has been made to recall the faulty units!

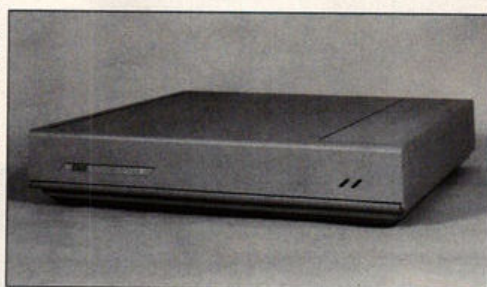
An Atari spokesman told *ST FORMAT* that it is "only a small batch of STEs which were affected," and that Atari were offering a free upgrade to all users.

The problem is not restricted to Atari hard drives but affects third party drives as well. A spokesman for Silica told *ST FORMAT* that they were aware of the problem and had so far checked their ICD range of drives, which had shown no problems, and are currently testing their other drives.

Gasteiner's Ali Shah, who says the company has been experiencing serious problems with STE/hard disk incompatibility, told *FORMAT* that as many as half of all STEs they received had the fault. "Some of them won't work with any drive at all," he said. "That includes Supra, Third Coast, Gasteiner and Atari's own hard drives. We've started changing the DMA chip in offending STEs ourselves at a cost of £25 a go." Shah was also unaware that Atari were offering upgrades for STE owners. "Why should they?" he said. "The problem is far

too big and expensive for Atari to take on."

Atari are aware of the problem, but do not seem overly bothered. A spokesman told *FORMAT* he was "more than satisfied" with the situation regarding the STE. "The STE has a redesigned DMA chip," he admitted, but claimed that this "shouldn't affect Atari drives. We don't guarantee that third party drives will work with the DMA interface, because we don't test all third party drives on it."



■ Atari regret they cannot guarantee the STE will work with any hard drive but their own

When asked about the lack of a specification sheet for the DMA interface the spokesman said that a full technical write up on the STE was available to all software and hardware developers. He was "more than satisfied" with the situation, and added that all STEs shipped in the last three months had a new DMA chip mask and were OK. This is contrary to what dealers have told *FORMAT*.

An electronics engineer said that it would appear the defect on the mask was entirely Atari's fault. "It's their chip," he said. "If they were designing for testability there wouldn't be a problem like this. Though I can hardly believe it, it does look as if they've gone from blue-plan to chip without checks."

Gary Drake of the Data Factory (part of the Aztec Group), who has been trying to push STs as an alternative to PCs, said he was "absolutely

sick to death of finding Atari not offering a tenth of the support any PC company would offer as a matter of course – and that includes cheap Taiwanese imports."

So where did that leave someone with a dodgy STE and a third party drive? "Actually, we thought the problem had gone away in July," Atari's spokesman said. "While we are sympathetic to the problem, we are not in a position to help at this stage."

■ Anyone encountering this problem should get in touch with Atari's customer service line on 081 309 7770.



■ Atari's STE may have more ports and sockets than an STFM, but what use are they?

Atari aim to pack them in

With their eyes on December 25th (less than 40 shopping days to go) Atari have released another ST pack, complete with software. The bundle, based around an STE, comes complete with serious software such as *Basic*, *Hyperpaint 2*, *Music Maker 2* and *STOS* and games software such as *Blood Money*, *Outrun*, *Indiana Jones* and the fantasy game *Dragon's Breath*. In order to sell the £399.99 bundle Atari are claiming to have a £4 million ad-spend between now and December.

As always, such bundles bode well for the future. If Atari hit their target of 400,000-plus ST users by the beginning of '91, that should mean even more software and an even brighter future for the range.

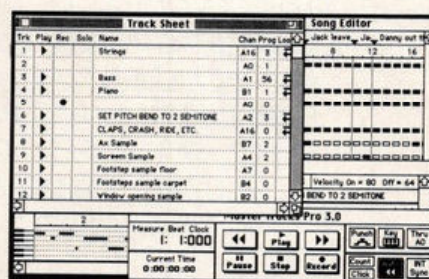
PASSPORT TO MUSIC

High quality music software specialists MCMXCIX have just released *Encore*, a music notation package which accepts either real-time MIDI input or MIDI files and then produces a notation score.

Encore enables you to show up to 64 staff systems with up to four voices per staff. Other useful features include multiple key signatures, smooth slurs, slanted beams and lyric entry.

From the same company comes *Master Tracks Pro*, the American answer to C-Lab's *Notator*. The sequencer enables you to have 64 multi channel tracks, SMPTE support, 240 clocks per quarter note resolution and countless other professional features. The program comes complete with a song editor, a track sheet, a transport window, a conductor window, a step editor and MIDI data windows.

Passport Encore costs £429 and *Master Tracks Pro* £499, both from MCM Building, Tudor Estate, 708a Abbey Road, London, NW10 7UW (☎ 081 963 0663).



■ Mastertracks Pro, from the company they call MCMXCIX (it's Latin, you know)

ATARI ON TOUR!

Don't forget the Atari "Whistle Stop Tour 1990," at the following railway stations:
 October 23: Bristol Temple Meads
 October 24: Manchester Victoria
 October 25: Leeds
 October 26: Newcastle
 October 27: Glasgow Central, and finally
 October 29: Birmingham International.
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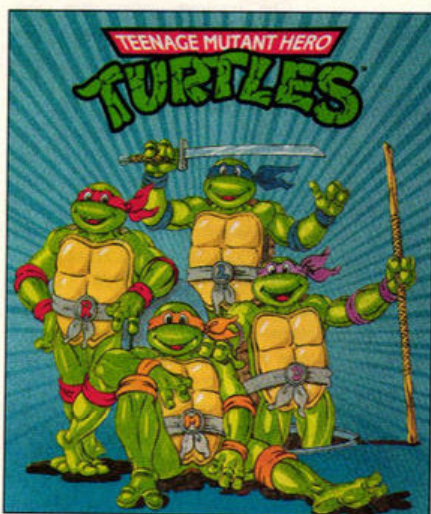


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➤ *Fast food, sweat and tears before bedtime. Ooer missus, it's the show they call...*

CES, Earls Court 1990



■ As a personal favour, Mirrorsoft want you to save up all your pocket money from now until the release of this game

Hot as hell, sweaty, cramped, tiring and teeming with a billion small boys, all with Ninja Turtle fixations and plastic bag fetishes. It was a fiver to get in, queues stretched right around the block and once you got in it was evens as to whether you were ever going to get out again in one piece. Yet despite the odds (and the sods), the first **European Computer Entertainment Show**, held at an increasingly knackered-looking **Earls Court**, still managed to be exciting, even if it wasn't always fun...

For the **trade** the show offered a platform for those computer companies who a) produce games, and b) have money to burn. Notable absentees included **Atari** themselves, saving their efforts for the train tour this month (October)....

Esther Rantzen and **Frank Bruno** came along to open up shop and promote **Childline**, while other stars dropping by included **Betty Boo** (doing a live do), **Candy Flip**, **Renegade Soundwave**, the **Brookside** and **Grange Hill** casts and **street hockey players** of assorted shapes and sizes. The **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles** (prats in a half shell) were there in strength, as was **Robocop** and the even more hideous **ST FORMAT** team...

As usual **Ocean** and **US Gold** competed for the most enormous stand, with **Ocean** just shading it – though **US Gold's** Lamborghini was certainly attracting lustful glances...

Ocean were showing a list of licences which would put **DVLC** to shame, including **Nightbreed**, **Navy Seals**, **Epic**, **NARC**, **Robocop 2** (nearing completion and looking very tasty), **Total Recall** and **Sky's** latest cartoon hit **The Simpsons**. The year's big sci-fi movie was without a doubt **Total Recall**, and having fought off stiff competition to acquire the licence **Ocean** are looking to produce a suitably hi-tech game. Other forthcoming titles are **Battle Command** (follow up to **Carrier Command**) and **Billy the Kid**...

US Gold were showing demos of **Strider II**, for which **ST FORMAT** have the exclusive on the preview this month (see page 34) and the review next

month. Other tasty looking software from the software veterans included **Night Shift**, which involves running a toy company (are you sure about this? – ed). And they announced the acquisition of the **Godfather** trio licence – a big buy but a wise one, with the possibility of producing a brace of games for each of the three instalments. Perhaps they'd made an offer that couldn't be refused?

Domark's new games included **Badlands** and **Hard Drivin' II**. Among their other titles are the intriguing **MiG-29**, **Nam**, **The Spy Who Loved Me** and a **3-D Construction Kit**. Top of the heap, though – assuming it can be finished in time – is the superb coin-op **Stun Runner**. If it's as fast on the ST as early demos suggest, we could be in for a big treat...

Tee You Are Tee Elle Ee Power was inevitably much in evidence as **Mirrorsoft's** latest licence did the rounds endlessly. The heroes in a half shell (©) game follows the plot of the film closely, the idea being to rescue **April O'Neil** from the evil **Shredder**. **Speedball 2**, the **Bitmaps'** farewell title (see story on page 10) is nearing completion. And there are three new **Cinemaware** titles on the way, tastiest of which is undoubtedly **Wings**, a World War I fight-'n'-flight simulator...

New boys **Renegade**, an alliance between the **Bitmap Brothers** and **Rhythm King Records** (currently doing the do with **Betty Boo**), unveiled their plans to promote the programmer as artist. "No-one ever bought a record because it came from **Chrysalis**," **Bitmap Brother Steve Kelly** said; "we want people to concentrate on the people who make the game, not the company that sells it to you." Best of luck to 'em...

Future Publishing, the home of **ST FORMAT**, had a stand too. Thanks to everyone who bought the latest issue and big girlie kisses to those who made complimentary remarks. Those who handed in competition entries at the stand can rest assured that they will reach their destination...

Quality software house **Psygnosis** confirmed that **Shadow of the Beast** is finally nearing completion on the ST, honest, along with an army of other original games. **Spellbound**, **Nitro**, **Matrix Marauders**, **Armour-Geddon**, **Lemmings**, **Killing Game Show**, **Obitus**, **Cutipoo** and **Carthage** are all pencilled in for pre-Christmas release...

Elite are going right out on a limb and launching a soccer game. Initial impressions are favourable, though the suspicion remains that they may have missed the footie boat. **Elite's** **Gremlins 2** is set



■ **Gremlins 2: The New Batch**. Early version looks good: coming soon to make a nuisance of itself on an ST very near you, **Elite** fondly hope

for an autumn release: early demos look highly impressive, but whether the game manages to retain the humour of the film remains to be seen...

Microprose were giving it loads, demonstrating a whole host of games (including **F-19** and **Rick Dangerous II**) on video with live commentary to much acclaim...

Electronic Arts are feeling pretty pleased with themselves: new title **Powermonger** is set to become an ST classic. Head **Bullfrog** honcho **Peter Molyneux** had rashly agreed to demonstrate the making of the game all day in an insufficiently sound-proofed room, and by lunchtime on the first day was beginning to look desperate. Assuming he recovers, expect **Powermonger** in late November...



■ Boat-missing on a grand scale? just when you thought World Cup fever was all over, out pops a soccer sim from **Elite**

An honorable mention for those who don't make games but braved it anyway: **Rombo** were showing off an almost-finished version of their long-promised ST colour digitiser, while **MPH** were doing brisk business with their brand new **TCB Tracker**. They'd persuaded **AN Cool**, shy Scandinavian author of the program and renowned demo musician, to come along, and he spent his entire weekend talking to the hundreds of ST bods who just wanted to meet him. You can, too, on page 128, where he gives his first interview...

Oddball licence was undoubtedly **Subbuteo** from **Electronic Zoo**, whose boss **Stuart Bell** was last seen demolishing the props on the stand in an attempt to make an interesting photo (he succeeded, but not quite in the way he had intended). Programmed by **Goliath Games**, the game has three levels of play and a 360 degree-rotatable pitch. Also from **EZ** is the stonking puzzle game **Welltris**, follow-up to **Tetris**. Programmed by **Bullet Proof** software, it should be out by the time you read this...

Gremlin seem to be concentrating on racing games: their stand included a head to head challenge on the arcade game **Lotus Esprit**, the ST version of which is due later this month. They were also showing demos of an excellent 3-D motorbike racing game and a good-looking rally car simulation called **Toyota Celica GT4**...

Next year's show is unlikely to follow the same format – we hope it's not at **Earls Court** (Olympia?) – but on the whole it could have been much, much worse. Shopping list next time: paracetamol, steel toe-caps and earplugs. See you there... **stf**

➤ "16,000,000 colour £200 games ST on the way?"

New rumours fly: colour ST console, new super-TT?

As something of a declaration of war on consoles like the Sega Megadrive and the NeoGeo, influential sources have whispered, Atari are to release their own console, based on ST technology. Codenamed the Panther, the console is said to be set for launch in the States some time early next year, with British distribution from summer '91.

With an initial price tag estimated to come in just under the vital £200 mark, the console is said to be cartridge based, although rumours suggest that plans are afoot to design a 3.5 inch disk drive adaptor.

Technical specification information is so far very sketchy, but a shrewd guess suggests a 68000 processor chip running at 12MHz, with a 4,096 colour screen from a possible palette of 16 million. Sound is likely to be 8 Bit four channel stereo. The price of the games cartridges is likely to be about £20 each, though software houses may bundle three or four games on the same cartridge.

■ And in a busy month for new launches from Atari, rumours are also circulating of a mid range ST, placed somewhere between the TT and the standard ST and codenamed Jaguar. With an appearance date some time in the spring of '91 the computer is expected to have a price tag of about £750.

ATARI BOUNCE BACK

At last! If the rumours are true – and they sound too specific to be pure hot air – Atari are beginning to bounce back. While the embarrassment over the STE fiasco continues to rumble on (see story on page 9), and with Atari's absence from the first Earls Court CES Show setting tongues awagging, more optimistic whispers suggest that the long-awaited *Atari II: The Revenge* is about to happen.

The long-delayed but still impressive £2,000-plus TT may not be for the likes of you and me, but once the ST-compatible hardware is in place there's no reason why Atari shouldn't be aiming to build a machine halfway between the TT and the STE. It's an opportunity too good to miss.

The Mega, which would have been left even higher and drier if the STE had been any cop, looks increasingly lame and ripe for replacement. How about a Mega-based machine with that beautiful keyboard, some of the clout of the TT and none of the stupid and careless mistakes that made the STE the laughing stock of the entire home computer industry? We sincerely hope so.

SHORT STORIES

■ If, like us, you're altogether crap at picking out likely horses from the newspaper in the morning, then *The Tipster* from TAM Marketing could conceivably be of some help.

The program, which has been around for many years and has now been updated, uses data on such factors as jockey weights and previous wins, entered from a newspaper, to calculate the likely outcome. Aspiring punters can purchase *The Tipster* from TAM Marketing at 7 GD Units, Cofton Road, Marsh Barton Trading Estate, Exeter, Devon, EX2 8QW (☎ 0392 215485).

■ Microdeal (☎ 0726 68020), distributors of *Quartet* and *Replay* playback and sampling packages, have released four new and updated products. The *Playback* cartridge enables a normal ST to play stereo sound back via the ROM port. *Quartet Stereo* is an updated version of the popular sequencer, now a direct competitor to *TCB Tracker*. *Replay Stereo*, an 8 bit sampler with input and output ports and some professional software, looks set to go head to head with 2 Bit's *Pro Series 12 Sampler* reviewed on page 143.

■ American company John Russell Innovations have announced a range of new add-on releases, including an internal Genlock system for Mega STs and an external one for STEs which would certainly prove to be major competition for current British products. Their most interesting product, however, is an extended colour palette board for all STs which gives access to 4,096 colours and retails in the States at just \$49.95. Other products include a 68000 co-processor board and a series of SIMM type RAM modules for standard STs. John Russell are looking for a British distributor, but you can contact them direct at P.O. Box 5277, Pittsburg, CA 94565, (☎ 0101 415 458 9577).

■ A retouching package has come out for the ST. *Retouche* enables the user to retouch (hence, no doubt, the name) and raster images for importing into DTP or CAD programs. Digital effects and smooth gradient filled areas can be overlaid on images and colour pictures can be converted to monochrome.

A zoom function enables you to enlarge from 100% to 1,600% with 256 grey levels in an ordered dither mode. Other features include a large array of drawing tools and instruments, and effects such as structurise and smudge as well as a clarity adjustment.

Editing high resolution black and white images is not easy, so *Retouche* should prove welcome at the professional artist end of the market. Which is just as well, because the package costs in the region of £200 including printer and scanning drivers from Copycare Graphic Services, 231 Northborough Road, Norbury, London, SW16 4TU. (☎ 081 679 7307).

TO ALL READERS OF ST FORMAT: AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Due to circumstances beyond our control – principally the increase in the price of postage, but also the ever-expanding nature of *ST FORMAT* – Future Publishing regret to announce that we are unable to keep the subscription offer price at its current level.

As of next month (December issue), the price is to rise substantially. If, therefore, you wish to ensure that you receive *ST FORMAT* every month – and you wish to take advantage of our extraordinarily generous £25's worth of free software – you should put down that cup of tea, run around in circles for a few minutes waving your arms above your head howling, "Aaarrgghhh, aaarrgghhh, aaarrgghhh!" at the top of your voice, and then turn to page 159. There you will find the aforementioned truly wonderful deal.

This has been a Public Service Announcement.



■ Behold the new and enhanced Soundblaster, a 5 watt per channel stereo amplifier complete with speakers, power supply and all the necessary. "It's new! It's enhanced!" screamed Siren Software's Simon Cobb at the recent CES Show. "It's got increased bass response! It also comes with free stereo headphones for a limited period only! Buy now while stocks last!" Price? £52.99, but mention *ST FORMAT* and you'll get yourself £3 off, taking the whole kit and caboodle down below that psychologically crucial £50 mark. Cheques and mentions of *STF* to Siren Software, 84-86 Princess St, Manchester, M1 6NG – or ☎ 061 228 1831

BITMAPS TO GO IT ALONE

Those popular and gifted programmers the Bitmap Brothers have left their current software house to set up their own label, Renegade, with Rhythm King Records. The move away from software house Mirrorsoft was due to what they see as lack of recognition for artists' work.

The Brothers have set up the new label to provide a platform for new talent as well as a better deal for existing programmers. The tie up with Rhythm King Records came about when the Bitmaps used Megablast by Bomb The Bass as the music on *Xenon II*. They plan to run their software company somewhat like a record company with decent royalties and proper consultation about such topic as packaging and promotion.

This coming together of two seemingly disparate entertainment companies is being touted as the first multimedia platform. To prove they mean business the company have already announced the first two releases on the Renegade label: *Magic Pockets* (a multi-directional cutesy stomp-'em-up) and *Gods* (an eight way scrolling arcade adventure). Both games are due for release early in 1991.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP™ SOCCER



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ST charts

This month's Guest Presenter of the Atari ST Gallup bestsellers charts is Gary "Ooh Gary" Davies, the cheeky Radio One chappie who makes us all chuck with his stupid smug laugh

1 (2) F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER

Microprose £29.99 - STF 12:96%

2 (-) SHADOW WARRIORS

Ocean £24.99

3 (1) KICK OFF 2

Anco £24.99 - STF 14:92%

4 (4) IMPERIUM

Electronic Arts £24.95 - STF 12:87%

5 (16) DRIVIN' FORCE

Digital Magic £29.95

6 (27) RAINBOW ISLANDS

Ocean £24.99 - STF 9:93%

7 (-) BATTLE OF BRITAIN

US Gold £29.99 - STF 15:91%

8 (14) MANCHESTER UNITED

Crysalis £19.99 - STF 11:60%

9 (-) MIDNIGHT RESISTANCE

Ocean £24.99

10 (3) F-29 RETALIATOR

Ocean £24.99 - STF 13:76%

11 (7) MIDWINTER

Rainbird £29.99 - STF 9:96%

12 (12) FOOTBALLMANAGER II

Addictive - £19.99

13 (10) RORKES DRIFT

Impressions £24.99 - STF 13:46%

14 (-) FALCON MISSION II

Mirrorsoft £19.99

15 (13) METROCROSS

Namco/US Gold £24.99

16 (25) BATMAN - THE MOVIE

Ocean £19.99 - STF 6:91%

17 (-) ORIENTAL GAMES

Microstyle £24.99 - STF 10:78%

18 (17) SIM CITY

Infogrames £29.99 - STF 12:92%

19 (-) BSS JANE SEYMOUR

Gremlin £24.99

20 (30) ARCHIPELAGOS

Logotron £24.99

21 (-) LOOM

22 (18) GREG NORMAN'S GOLF

23 (23) OPERATION THUNDERBOLT

24 (24) PRO TENNIS TOUR

25 (5) ITALY 1990

26 (-) CONQUEROR

27 (6) WORLD CUP SOCCER '90

28 (-) PIPEMANIA

29 (26) FOOTBALL MAN. WORLD CUP

30 (-) ANCIENT BATTLES

31 (38) KICK OFF

32 (-) STOS

33 (-) HARD DRIVIN'

34 (8) FLOOD

35 (36) HILLSFAR

36 (-) BLOODWYCH

37 (-) CHAOS STRIKES BACK

38 (-) PLAYER MANAGER

39 (-) BOMBER

40 (15) DAMOCLES

ST BUDGET TOP TEN

1 (4) Targan Action 16

2 (1) Italia1990 Codemasters

3 (10) Fast Lane Action 16

4 (2) Pro Tennis Simulator Codemasters

5 (6) Formula1 Grand Prix Microvalue

6 (-) Summer Olympiad Microvalue

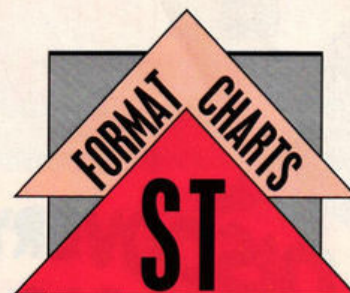
7 (-) Yogi's Great Escape HiTec

8 (-) On Safari Action 16

9 (-) Pro Powerboat Simulator

Codemasters

10 (3) Grim Blood Mastertronic



■ Winner in the Flight-Sim Wars is the Microprose monster **F-19 Stealth Fighter**. Frighteningly realistic and great, great fun!



■ **F-29 Retaliator**: losing out somewhat, this beginner's sim slips to 10. But Ocean should care - they have three titles higher!



■ A puzzle for you: with **Kick Off 2** doing so well - and deservedly - who's buying **Kick Off 1**, still up there at 31?

ATARI ST GALLUP SOFTWARE CHARTS

Victory in the autumn F-number flight-sim war goes to Microprose's **F-16**, moving up a place to the top spot in place of Anco's **Kick Off** sequel (yet still people buy the original, which also remains in the Top 40!), a short neck ahead of new entry **Shadow Warriors**. Indeed, Ocean must be pretty chuffed, managing four in the top ten, including that monster platform epic **Rainbow Islands** (6 - suddenly up from last month's 27). Alex Ferguson must be envying the silicon version of **Man U** (up to 8 from 14 - he should be so lucky!), one of seven footie titles in the top 40. (And **Elite** are just about to release another one?)

Still, this chart offers a number of puzzlers. What the hell is **Archipelagos** doing back in (20)? And why the continued success of **Rorkes Drift**, despite its awfulness (13)?

Fast faders include Millennium's **Resolution 101** (50) and the astonishingly successful **Robocop**, sinking at last to 66. **Damocles** takes a sudden tumble (down 25 to 40), while Mirrorsoft must be wondering what went wrong with **Back to the Future II** (59) and **Theme Park Mystery**, languishing way on down at 63.

Top non-games appearance is good old **STOS** (32), while in the budget chart **Action 16** give budget bandits Codemasters a run for their fiver. **stf**

AND FINALLY...

Games that keep getting nicked from the ST Format offices

- 1 **Kick Off II** - Anco
- 2 **Resolution 101** - Millennium
- 3 **Sim City** - Infogrames
- 4 **Xenon II** - Mirrorsoft
- 5 **Blood Money** - Psygnosis
- 6 **Rainbow Islands** - Ocean
- 7 **Populous** - Electronic Arts
- 8 **Emmanuelle** - Tomahawk*
- 9 **Kick Off** - Anco
- 10 **Stunt Car Racer** - Microprose

* Which desperate little pervert...? Answers on a postcard, please, to...

■ (Main chart: last month's position in brackets; STF refers to issue and score of review in **ST FORMAT**). These full price ST and budget ST top ten charts are compiled by Gallup Ltd © European Leisure Software Publishers Association Ltd 1990

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previews

September's CES show was the biggest display of entertainment software on the calendar. Mark Higham rummages through the best offerings to bring you a round-up of the games we'll be playing over Christmas



MUD SPORTS

Rainbow Arts

Get down in the dirt and be dead mean in this comic sports game combining action with strategy. On the field your objective is to slam a live frisbee into the opposing team's goal; when you've had enough of that, you can manoeuvre your way to the top by choosing the right hotels to keep team morale high, bribing other teams and booting out wounded players. Bit like the real thing, by the sound of it.



Lucasfilm spotted enormous potential in *MUD Sports* so they signed a deal which involves them in its design and production. They sell the game in the US under their own label – where its stablemates are famous names like *Zak McKracken*, *Loom* and *The Last Crusade* – while European versions carry the Rainbow Arts tag. The last time Lucasfilm made a similar deal was with Empire's *Pipe Mania*, and that was superbly addictive. Can Lucasfilm repeat that success with *MUD Sports*?

VOODOO NIGHTMARE

Palace

The invasion of cutesy games continues, this time with the last home micro game from Zippoo who previously programmed *Cosmic Pirate*. They've now started programming for the Nintendo games console and that influence is obvious in the visuals and style of *Voodoo Nightmare* (though not, I suppose, in the title).

The game is played in an extensive jungle and the aim is to find and visit different temples in the correct order. When you reach each temple you find a problem to solve which may involve moving around on secret teleporters or pushing giant elephant's tusks around the screen in a bid to discover a path through the jungle. On your travels you can collect bananas or special gems to trade at shops for extra lives, maps and potions.

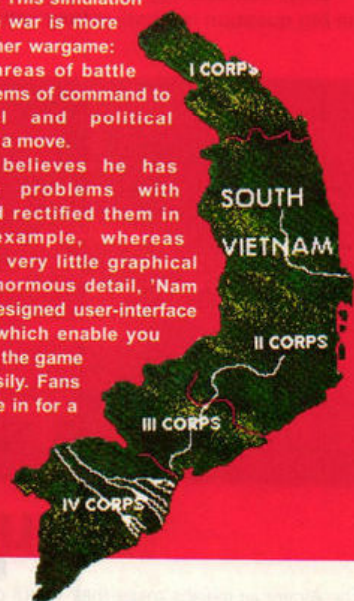


VIETNAM

Domark

Matthew Stibbe, the game designer behind Electronic Arts' popular *Imperium*, strikes again with *Vietnam* or 'Nam for short. This simulation of the Vietnam war is more than just another wargame: it covers all areas of battle from the problems of command to the financial and political implications of a move.

Matthew believes he has spotted the problems with *Imperium* and rectified them in 'Nam. For example, whereas *Imperium* had very little graphical content but enormous detail, 'Nam includes a redesigned user-interface and graphics which enable you to interact with the game much more easily. Fans of *Imperium* are in for a real treat.



LOST PATROL

Ocean

You've got all the Rambo movies on video? You're saving up for a sub-machine gun? You've got a secret desire to swell out in the same places as old Sylvester (not the cat)? Ocean's *Lost Patrol* won't do as much as Callanetics for your bod, but it enables you to flex at least your trigger finger as you try to blast hosts of terrorists rampaging through the jungle. Wonderful visuals, massive sprites and intense action could make it a hit, but programming problems have been hampering progress. Expect it when (or if) you see it. Meanwhile, press on with those press-ups!

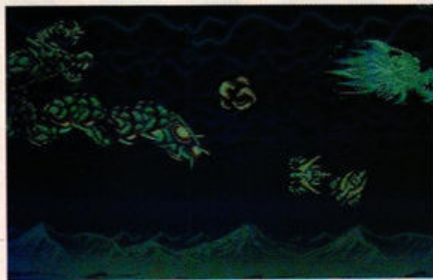
DRAGON BREED

Activision

If you spend the occasional hour (and five pound note) down the arcades you can't fail to have noticed *Dragon Breed*. Activision have acquired the licence to this coin-op monster and are busy writing the home micro conversion in an attempt to get it out in time for a shot at the the enviable position of Christmas number one.

For those of you who hang out somewhere else, *Dragon Breed* is a horizontally-scrolling shoot-'em-up boasting six colourful levels and a hero who sits astride a Chinese dragon made up of 13 segments. He can move around so that the dragon's tail curls in front of him, protecting him from the firepower of some mammoth aliens, or he can climb off the dragon and walk along with his giant laser cannon.

Early demos suggest the programmers have caught much of the arcade thrill but the big question is whether they can keep it running fast enough.

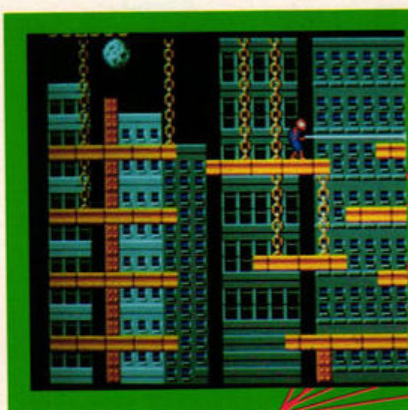


SPIDERMAN

Empire

Yet another superhero adventure, this time set on a series of levels, each one a tortuous maze of tunnels, corridors and ceilings. Playing Spiderman, you have all his amazing powers at your disposal. Shoot (or do I mean "sling"?) webs to swing across the screen or use your climbing abilities to walk along the ceiling.

Graphics look detailed but the playing sprite itself is minuscule. Better make sure you're wearing a magnifying glass under your face-mask before you tackle those arch villains!



OUTLANDS

Millennium

The American Indians make their debut on the home micro and Blazing Saddles it ain't. *Outlands* is still at an early stage of development and the scenario may change, but as it stands you play an Indian spirit with the power to inhabit the bodies of men or animals. Your aim is to rescue the Indians' territory by manipulating these. Winning moves include raiding the bank for essential cash, rustling cattle for food and initiating a rain dance.

Outlands isn't scheduled to appear until early next year, but with visuals which resemble *Populous* and unique gameplay it's going to be one everybody's watching out for.



JAMES POND

Millennium

Bond is back but you might notice something fishy about him. The renowned spy is now a fish and all his activities are now not just undercover but underwater.

Pond is split into as many as fifty levels of varying lengths. At the start of each level a mission objective appears, which may be to collect some keys for releasing trapped crabs from their basket, or to collect dynamite and pile it up around the legs of an oil platform. On every level the backdrop visuals change as you move from water close to the shore right down to the ocean bed.

Okay, *James Pond* is a whacky idea for a game, but early demos look inspiring. Just one word of warning: if you detest the summer surge of cutesy games, steer clear. The graphics give *Pond* a distinctly childish look.



BAT

UBI Soft

It's finally ready. All sorts of wild promises have been made about *BAT* – wonderful visuals, atmospheric and exciting scenario, even stereo sound. So what's the truth?

BAT is certainly a visual feast, as a mere glance at these screenshots reveals, but the most surprising thing about it is that the claims of stereo sound are actually true. UBI Soft are offering a cartridge into which you plug a set of headphones or an amplifier to hear the amazing effects in true stereo. The game costs a staggering £40 with the cartridge (or £30 without), but since it's going to be used in future UBI Soft games and a forthcoming music package, the cartridge may be a worthwhile investment. It remains to be seen whether the challenge of *BAT* itself is up to scratch.

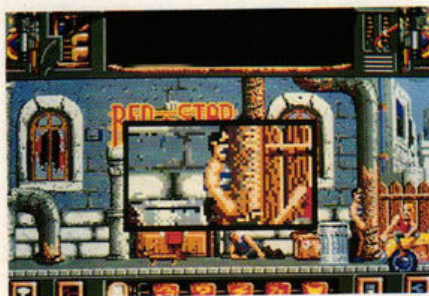


RANX

UBI Soft

Speaking of cult cartoon heroes (and who doesn't?), UBI Soft have taken popular French *bande dessinée* character *RanXerox* and transformed him (for fairly obvious copyright reasons) into *Ranx* on the ST.

Evasively described as a high class beat-'em-up, *Ranx* includes provocative scenes certain to send virtually any adolescent into a seizure. (Well, it was French.) This may mean that when it eventually hits the shelves in the UK it'll carry a Cert. 18 sticker – which is bound to improve its sales no end. **stf**



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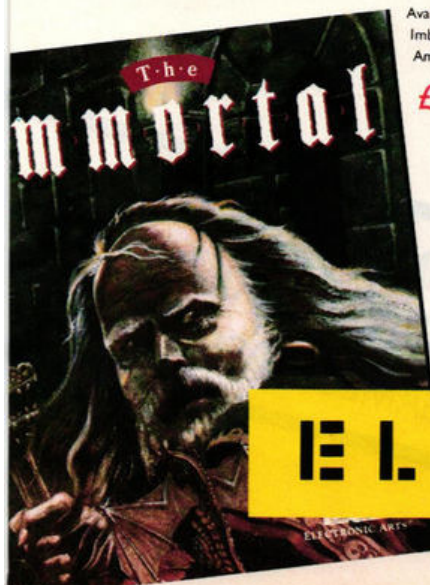
* £100 is the estimated cost to upgrade your Amiga or ST from 512k to 1mb.
If you already have a 1mb machine it won't cost you anything more but the price of the programme!

It's a sad fact of life that only the fortunate few will ever get to experience Will Harvey's masterwork - The Immortal.

Still, those of you who are lucky enough to possess 1mb equipment or a monstrously generous maiden aunt and a birthday coming up, you're in for a rare treat.

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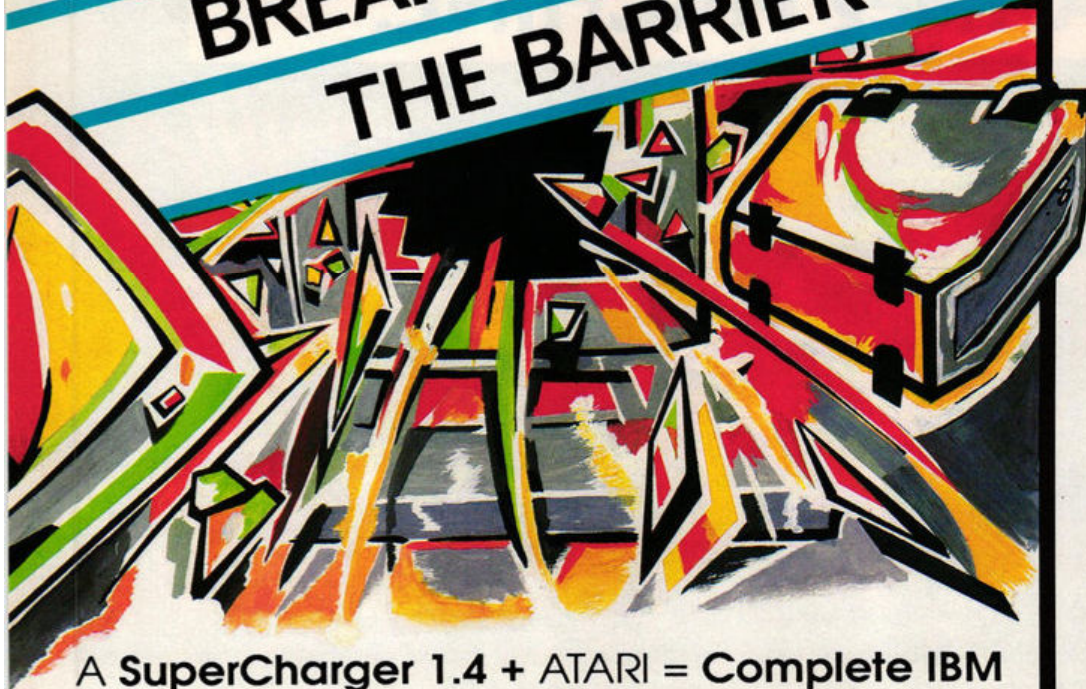
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GAMES MACHINE...

news from abroad

Atari activity from all over the planet, with roving reporter Oscar Steele

German software house invades UK

Compo Software, one of the biggest ST software houses in Europe, with bases in Holland and Germany, have announced the opening of a UK sister company, Compo Software Limited.

Commenting on the launch, Compo's Dutch owner Theo Breuers said, "No-one in Germany can understand why STs are not used for professional applications in the UK. When we looked more closely at the UK market one reason was obvious: there isn't the same amount of quality software available. To encourage serious users of the ST in the UK, we must first make more of the best German products available."

Compo plan to launch many new ST offerings in the UK over the next 12 months. Before Christmas expect to see new software launches including a major update to *That's Write* – now the number one selling word processor in Germany; *Write On* – a brand new word processor designed for first time users; and *That's Pixel* – a top quality monochrome image editor. PC Speed and *That's Fun Face* (featured as a useable demo on STF 2's Cover Disk) will also be

available.

But weren't some of these programs previously distributed by ST dealer Gasteiner? "Gasteiner got us started in the UK," Theo Breuers explained, "and we're very grateful for the help they have given. But now we need the strength of our own company in the UK. We expect Gasteiner to be the first Compo Authorised Dealer in the UK and look forward to working with them in the future."

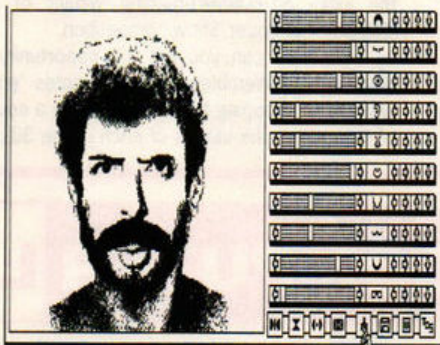
Compo UK's newly appointed MD is Neal O'nions, formerly a director of UK Software house GST and responsible for the launch of *1st Word Plus*, *Timeworks Publisher*, *Easy Draw* and *Antic's Cyber* series in the UK and Europe.

"In the next year," O'nions told *ST FORMAT*, "we have plans to launch further new software products in the fields of DTP, graphics, databases and utilities, plus a range of new hardware items. We

also intend eventually to publish ST software written in the UK throughout Europe using the Compo network."

Compo also provide a complete set of services to Atari users, including product information sheets and a hotline for technical questions which all existing users of Compo programs are entitled to use.

■ **Contact Compo Software at 7 Vinegar Hill, Alconbury Weston, Huntingdon PE17 5JA, or ☎ 0480 891819. The hotline fax number (open from 3pm-8pm, Monday to Friday) ☎ 0480 891271.**



■ ***That's Fun Face*, one of the less serious (but more visually striking) offerings from Compo, starting up in the UK this month**

THE ONLY WAY IS... DOWN?

Atari's new laser printer, the new SLM605; a replacement of the older SLM804, is smaller, quieter, lighter than its predecessor – and slower. Its quoted output rate is six pages per minute as opposed to the previous model's eight.

Service and support will be much easier to find since the printer is manufactured by the excellent Mannesman-Tally for several other manufacturers.

HOST WITH THE MOST

ICD have announced a new ST hardware accelerator and the ADSCSI Pro ST Host Adaptor. (A host adaptor is a circuit board that translates hard drive signals into ones that the ST understands.) The ADSCSI ST is unique in that it has its own processor, implements true SCSI, supports full arbitration and allows SCSI networking.

AdSpeed is a 16MHz 68000 cached accelerator with a 32K cache (16K data and instruction cache with 16K cache tag RAM). Two speeds are offered for full compatibility. In the 16 MHz high speed mode with full cache on, ICD claims over 99% compatibility.

■ ICD are distributed in Europe by SDL (UK) Ltd ☎ 081 300 3399. UK prices had not been fixed at time of writing, but AdSCSI costs £200 and AdSpeed £300. Substitute a £ sign and you won't be far out.

For a few dollars more: Atari's nightmare on the money market rollercoaster

As you struggle to sort out your tax payments, spare some sympathy for Atari's accountants, who've released the company's operating results for the second quarter of 1990. Sales are up from \$82.7 million last year to \$84.9 million. Net income is up from \$300,000 to \$1.5 million. But year to date sales figures are down to \$170.4 million as compared to \$171.5 million for the same period last year.

Worst of all, net income dropped from \$3.6 million last year to \$3.1 million this year. Sam Tramiel, Atari's President, comments: "The company is continuing to make progress in the rollout of its new products... The Atari TT030 computer, based on the Motorola 68030 microprocessor, is being shipped during quarter three." (Yes, important people really do talk like that.)

Not connected with the above, but hardly any the more welcome for that, is the news

that Atari's shares have taken a battering in recent weeks, dropping in the space of just three days a sickening 45%! Most stock prices fell, it's true, due to worries over Madman Hussein's effect on the price of oil, causing investors to turn to more stable investments such as gold.

Even so, Atari's drop was not only a one-year low, but an all-time low. Jack Tramiel's 36 million shares, worth as much as \$430 million at their peak, dropped to \$90 million.

Don't take up a collection, though: the stock has managed to recover somewhat in the past few days. Even so, it remains a far cry from the \$30 level before the stock split in May 1987.

In the light of such a rollercoaster-ride on the stock market it may not be entirely coincidental that Elie Kenan, director of Atari France, has arrived at Atari US to take up his

Atari's disastrous share ride

date/\$ price/change	27	3.5	+1/2
August	28	3.75	+1/4
13	5	29	3.625 -1/8
14	4.875	30	3.75 +1/8
15	4.75	31	3.625 -1/8
16	4.75	September	
17	4.25	4	3.50 -1/8
20	4.50	5	3.25 +1/4
21	3.50	6	3.25 —
22	2.625	7	3.25 —
23	2.50	10	3.325 +1/8
24	3.0	11	3.5 +1/8

new post as Director of North American Operations. Many view him as the man who will revitalise the ST in the US market place, a feat which some observers believe would make Jesus' work on Lazarus look a doddle.

And now it's time to join Austin Feltpen for this month's episode of...

"going wild with a shopping trolley"



■ Hey dad? Look, dad! There's the lucky winner of the ST FORMAT Shopper Show Competition, dad! Dad? And hey, dad? Guess what, dad? He's Going Wild With A Shopping Trolley, dad. He is dad, honest, dad! Hey dad, dad? Dad? Dad? DAD, DAD!

Darkness. Twiddly flute music fades in, lights go up. Serious looking man with frown and bizarre haircut turns to camera. In front of him is a jug of water.) "Good evening and welcome to another programme in our series 'Going Wild With A Shopping Trolley.' This month we're offering a

chance to 'go wild with a shopping trolley' to the lucky ST FORMAT-reading winner of our Computer Shopper Show competition.

"But how can you win the opportunity to dash around Wembley for five minutes 'going wild with a shopping trolley' and taking a couple of items from the stands of each of the 30-plus

participating exhibitors? Well, all you have to do is to either (a) appear on television frowning and talking absolute flappodoodle like me, or (b) explain why you think you should be the one to 'go wild with a shopping trolley.' Write your answer, in 15 words or less, on the back of a postcard, together with your name and address, and send it to: 'Going Wild With A Shopping Trolley,' ST FORMAT, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW before December 1st.

"That's all from 'Going Wild' for this month. Next month we shall be offering the Right Reverend Suit-Pocket of Cricklewood the opportunity to 'go wild with a shopping trolley.' But for now, it's goodnight from me, and it's, er, goodnight from, er, me..."

(Lights fade. Twiddly flute music returns. Man begins animated but silent discussion with jug of water on table.) **stf**

■ The Computer Shopper Show takes place at Wembley Conference Centre from Thursday 6th to Sunday 9th December

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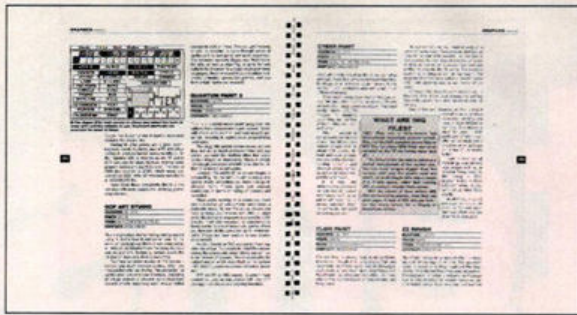
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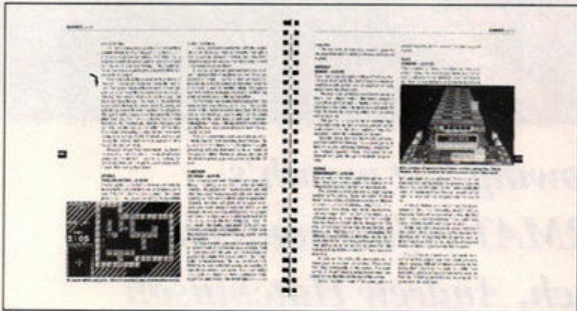
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Find out which word processor you really need to write letters. Track down the trickiest cheats to the very best games. Discover the foremost DTP package for laying out newsletters. Get wise to the finest sequencer for compiling tracks. Uncover the ultimate graphics package to design posters. Everything is put under the microscope in *GET THE MOST FROM YOUR ST*.

If you can't afford to buy the professional packages, how about taking a dip into the Public Domain? *GET THE MOST FROM YOUR ST* lists all the best PD software across all fields to help you discover where your interests really lie without breaking your bank manager's heart. There's also a comprehensive guide to Britain's best ST Public Domain libraries.

But the book is more, much more, than just reviews. It also explains all those weird word processing and DTP terms, describes what equipment you need to build your own (remarkably cheap) recording studio and details the merits of different programming languages.

Then, when you get your software home,

refer to the tips sections and find out how to get the very most from your software and hardware.

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all systems

how to set up your bulletin board for £3

The first on-line computer services started up many years ago to take account of the home computer boom. Companies set up large computer databases and set off a trend towards getting as many people as possible on-line together.

This meant that multi user games and chat lines were now feasible. Firms such as Micronet or Prestel did extremely good business because they offered up to date information on a whole plethora of subjects as well as novel features such as down loading software.

The key problem with this sort of service, however, is the money. You're not just paying the 'phone bill, but on-line charges as well. As a result interest in these services usually wanes

with the arrival of the wallet-bruising quarterly bills and your attention turns to cheaper alternatives, such as building your own chateau in Monte Carlo. Last month we explained what a bulletin board is: now we tell you how to set up your own.

Once you've got your kit and software together (see panels below and right), the first thing to do is to configure your software, tailoring elements such as the log on screen and the main areas of the board.

You have to decide whom you want the board to cater to. For example if your hobby is fishing then you could set up the board something like this:

The greetings screen. Something like:

Welcome to the Fish BBS in Oceanville

*Following last month's **FORMAT** online conference launch, Andrew Hutchinson explains what it takes to set up a bulletin board of your own*

Your Sysop is Reginald Haddock
This board is running on a 520 STFM
with a 40 Meg hard drive and a 2400
baud Amstrad modem
Please Logon: (new users type 0)

The main menu:

[B] Bulletins: all the best fishing grounds in the country
[E] Electronic Mail: leave a letter for a fishing friend
[M] Message base: put a notice up on the general access board
[F] File transfer: upload or download some fishy software
[Y] Yell for the Sysop: have a chat with the Big Barracuda himself
[G] Games: play "It was this big, I kid you not" or "Mine's a pint of maggots"
[N] Read the most up to date fishing

"It need cost you nothing more than the price of a PD disk to set up your own board."

HAVE YOU GOT WHAT IT TAKES? THE ST FORMAT BBS KIT LIST

Here's a brief rundown on the kit you need to set up a bulletin board.

■ A COMPUTER

Having had the excellent good sense to invest in an Atari ST (unless you're the lady who wrote to us last month complaining that our Cover Disk wouldn't run on your Amstrad 2086), you already have the perfect heart of a bulletin board. Any size or configuration of ST does the job: all the software available runs very happily on a 520 ST.

■ A MODEM

Essential to decode the signals the other computers send down the phone line. An auto answer modem, one which can turn itself on, is preferable, or you'll have to sit next to the modem 24 hours a day connecting people. Generally buy the best modem you can afford: the more features it has, the easier it'll be to log on to your board. A slow modem which only operates at 300 baud is not going to be a lot of use: go for one with 2400 baud and you can cater to a far wider user base. An excellent cheap modem is the Amstrad SM2400 (£286.35 from most computer hardware shops).

■ A HARD DISK

Sounds like an expensive luxury, but if you're serious about this it's essential. It is technically feasible to run a bulletin board off two floppy drives, but doing so severely restricts the external users' access speeds and the amount of electronic information you can send and receive - both vital considerations. Once again, go for the largest capacity you can afford. Power Computing's 900 Series hard drives are excellent value for money: a 48Mb drive can be yours for £399 (≠ 0234 273000). We'll be rounding up all the best recent hard drives in next month's issue of **FORMAT**.

■ A (SECOND) PHONE LINE

If you want your board running 24 hours a day you'll need another incoming phone line to your house. If you don't already happen to have a spare line, getting a new one installed costs £148.65 and there's a standing charge of £17.13 a quarter. You can of course just run your board from, say, ten at night until eight in the morning by using your existing phone line and plugging the modem in just as you would a telephone.



■ A modem would come in handy: Amstrad's SM2400 is a good buy

go

Most of us are content to let other people do all the hard work. Let someone else run that Public Domain library, that fanzine or that bulletin board. And there's nothing wrong with that. But how do you start such a venture for yourself? Here are some of the answers as people who've done it share their experience and secrets...

news in the country

[S] Shop: display your tackle for all to see

[*] Change your password or display characteristics

[C] Cast off (log off)

The sub menus

The file transfer section, which can include only public domain or shareware software (nothing commercial) could be confined to your area of interest. The news section can be a list of upcoming meetings or shows, or information about notable recent events (in this case, big catches or competition wins) – whatever your board's users need to know.

Electronic Mail

Finally, mail between two parties can simply be left on the board. This means you can stay in contact with someone even if you log on to the board at totally different times. **stf**

COMMS SOFTWARE – FROM £3 UPWARDS

There are dozens of bulletin board packages in the Public Domain, the place to start if your budget is limited. All three of the packages listed here are available from the South West Software Library, PO Box 562, Wimborne, Dorset, BH21 2YD at a cost of £3 each: our own choice would be *Pandora*.

■ PANDORA & THE BOX

This BBS software is FidoNet compatible, which means you could link in to the EuroNet network on which ST FORMAT has a conference (see last month's feature for details). Professional looking piece of kit, suitable for most needs.

■ INFINITY BBS.

A newcomer on the BBS program scene, this has no controls over what is written to or read from the board. The disk comes complete with documentation and the C source code.

■ STADEL (CITADEL)

Having been around for centuries on other lesser computers, Citadel is a stable, reliable comms companion. It's recently been ported over to the ST and includes a substantial and helpful manual on disk.

If you can afford it then a commercial BBS package is worthwhile: best on the ST is Michtron's BBS software, currently standing at version three and well worth its £49.95 from Microdeal (☎ 0726 68020). Bath BBS use it to great effect: it's programmed in C and therefore is comparatively easy to modify.



■ You too could be a Sysop – with the right software!

CASE IN POINT: WHAT IT'S LIKE TO RUN A BULLETIN BOARD



ST FORMAT talks to Malcolm and Jayne Burridge (left), who run the Bath BBS featured in last month's "FORMAT Sysop"

The Bath BBS is the only ST bulletin board in the country with two lines, which enables users to enter a party room and chat to someone else, and also offers twice as good a chance of being able to log on first time.

"What kit you use depends on how much money you've got to spend, of course," says Malcolm. "The Amstrad SM2400 (£286) is excellent value for money and has never let me down, but if you've got the money then go for the Pro 4 Dataphone (£450)."

Malcolm and Jayne know that a million legal pitfalls await the unwary – from breach of the Data Protection Act to unwittingly offering commercial software as Public Domain – and take precautions accordingly.

"Well, naturally I check all the software that's uploaded to make sure that none of it's commercial," says Malcolm. "That can take a

while and some if it's PC, so I tend to trust the users of the board to an extent. And when someone logs on for the first time there's a screen asking if we have their permission to store information about them on the computer. There is an option not to carry on if someone doesn't want their details recorded, but out of about 600 people who have called the board only about five have taken that option."

Initially, the Bath BBS was just an afternoon's work that snowballed into something much bigger. They've spent the last six months or so modifying the software to get it just the way they want it to look.

Bad experiences? "There was one guy who logged on and started leaving offensive messages on the system, and when we de-registered him he started logging on under all sorts of pseudonyms, which got a bit annoying. Some people wait on-line and badger people into having a chat, which can get a bit aggravating when all you want to do is answer your mail or download a file! I make

sure I have people's names and addresses. When people register and it looks dodgy, I try ringing the phone number they've put down and if it's engaged then it's a fair bet that they're being truthful."

"Advice? Think carefully. It's a time consuming business, so you need an understanding partner or parent. And to start off it's expensive, but once people start calling you and uploading software then there's no need to call other computers yourself – you let people come to you."

■ To call the Bath BBS and upload or download a file, 'phone them on either 0225 835841 or 0225 840060. The BBS runs at speeds up to 2400 baud or V21/V22/ V22bis/V23 protocols with MNP 2,3,4,5 error protection

BATH BBS KIT LIST

- Mega ST1
- 30 MByte Third Coast Technologies hard drive
- Amstrad SM2400 & Pro 4 Dataphone modems
- Michtron BBS software, v3



HOW TO SET UP A PD LIBRARY

One of the fastest growing areas of ST activity, Public Domain software has now achieved full respectability as a way of getting your hands on programs without having to shell out the sometimes exorbitant prices demanded for fully-fledged commercial material.

To our certain knowledge there are now more than 30 libraries stocking several thousand programs in such areas as word processing and DTP, art and graphics, music, programming, utilities and even games (see our regular round up of PD software beginning on page 43). The Henry Cosh sequencer on this month's Cover Disk, although a special edition produced for *ST FORMAT*, is substantially the same as the version you can buy from most PD

libraries for just a couple of quid.

Few libraries, however, are full-time affairs, with the great majority rightly regarding it more

as a hobby than a way of earning a crust. If you really imagine it's an easy route to making your first million – or even earning a living – then forget it. If it was that easy

"If you think it's an easy route to making your first million – or even earning a living – forget it. If it was that easy everyone would do it."

everyone would be doing it.

These days the problem with setting up even a part-time PDL, of course, is not really a question of how but of what. Anyone can get going just by ordering a variety of disks from any already established library, giving each item a disk number, bunging all the details down on a catalogue – either on paper or on disk – and you're away.

Your problem is that you're never going to be able to compete with long-established libraries, with their thousand-plus items. It can be discouraging, looking at Mike Goodman's extensive catalogue or the sumptuous and beautifully put together booklets issued by the ST Club or South West Software.

"How many people actually bought the Mindbombs demo from a PD Library? Very few indeed: you copied it, and so did the rest of us."

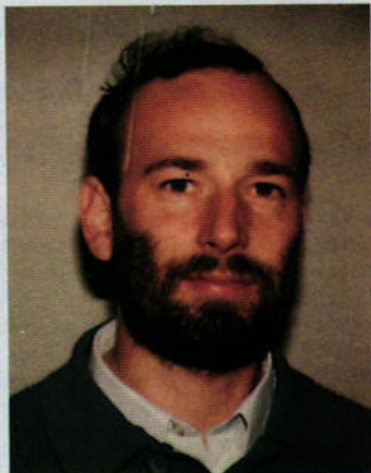
But more recent arrivals such as PDQ and Awesomedemos suggest a fruitful area of potential growth: specialisation. PDQ began at the start of this year, concentrating on games and education. Now, with over 500 titles, Sharon Slade has what is quite possibly the most extensive collection

IS IT PUBLIC DOMAIN – OR SHAREWARE?

Halfway between PD and full commercial software, shareware gives the user the opportunity to "taste" a program before paying for it. Often sold through PD libraries, shareware disks include the name and address of the author, together with a request for a donation (either specified or suggested) if the user is happy with it and intends to use it again.

The more perceptive will already have spotted the flaw in this neat little scenario: why should the user bother? Well, that's the clever bit: because updates are sent only to registered users – who have often contributed by requesting specific improvements when they send in their donation.

Neat idea, but does it work in practice? It has to be said that shareware isn't monster on the ST, but Brian Campbell's pools program has become one of the most popular titles through PD libraries. "I originally wrote programs for my own use," he recalls, "but once friends and friends of friends heard



"If you've written a program for yourself, you may be surprised how popular it is."

– Brian Campbell

about them, I found they were being circulated over a large area, and then appeared further away. My biggest surprise came when someone in Norway contacted me!"

Brian has gone on to write programs to do all sorts of tasks, for various people and companies. "I find that once you have the initial procedures you can progressively improve and add to them."

"My *Personal Database*, for example, started life as a simple label printing program, then developed into a random accessible Name & Address database, and now has emerged with full search and sort facilities, with a built in Word Processor for printing mailshots." A cutdown version of this program is featured on this month's Cover Disk.

"If you've written a program for yourself, you may be surprised how popular it may be. Who knows, there could be lots of people wishing they had a program that did what you designed yours to do!"

FIVE STEPS TO SUCCESS

1. GET SOME ASSISTANCE.

It's much easier as a partnership, and you'll keep each other going when one of you is wondering why you ever bothered.

2. IDENTIFY A NEED.

Games and demos are already catered for, but what about specialising in art and graphics, say, or education? Competition is pretty severe now, and if you don't have a specialisation or some kind of "angle," something to set you apart from the crowd, you'll go under quicker than a channel swimmer with cramp.

3. WORK OUT YOUR COSTINGS.

Make sure you have enough of a margin to keep yourself from going broke. If you fail to calculate your costs properly you're bound to go bust. Don't forget items such as enormous phone bills can build up without you noticing!

4. BE SURE YOU CAN MEET ORDERS.

Once you get behind you'll find it harder to get back to square one than you'd believe.

5. BUILD A GOOD REPUTATION.

We asked around, and no-one in the *ST FORMAT* office can recall ever seeing a letter of complaint about Goodman PDL, the ST Club or Southwest Software Library. Aim to keep your customers satisfied. Make sure you have the latest versions. Always keep promises and fulfil orders. That way you'll build repeat custom. And remember: there are no shortcuts to long-term success.

of its kind in existence.

It's easy to see – and overestimate – the benefits of running a PDL. But consider some of the difficulties. The costs, hidden and otherwise, can be quite frightening. Besides the price of the disks themselves (30-50p per disk, depending on size of order), postage (20p a package: Goodman's PDL annual bill is over £5,000), jiffy-bags (10p each) and advertising (into the hundreds of pounds an ad), there's also administration and the cost of having your catalogue printed (the lowest quote Mike Goodman had for a 5,000 print run on his 60 page catalogue is £3,500!).

Then there's the sometimes exorbitant cost of sourcing software – Mike speaks of spending £50 downloading one item from America, and expecting to sell one copy a month! – and translating foreign software into English. And we won't even mention less obvious ones such as repairs to overworked STs and disk drives.

One option is to diversify into plastic: disks and diskboxes may not be the world's most romantic items, but they've kept many a PDL afloat when orders for software are as few and far between as a jockey's legs.

After all, it's easy to assume that because everyone has the Mindbomb demo, for example, it's made a lot of money. You've got it, and did you buy it? Did you hell – you copied it from a friend, like the rest of us.

There's absolutely nothing wrong with that, of course – that's what the Public Domain is all about – but spectacular demo disks in particular are notoriously poor sellers.

Don't let all this apparent doom and gloom put you off. It's more a matter of knowing what you're getting into. There's far more work and far less financial reward involved than some people believe.

But if you take it seriously you can have yourself a whole lot of fun. **stf**

"No-one in this office can recall ever seeing a letter of complaint about Goodman PDL, the ST Club or Southwest Software Library. A good reputation can be your greatest asset."

BE REALISTIC!

WHAT TO AIM FOR

1. It's a whole lot of fun, and you'll get in touch with lots of other ST owners who share your interests.

– But don't think of it as something you can do for just a couple of months. It'll take you six months to get going and just as long to wind it down.

2. You can afford to finance your own PD interests, getting hold of latest versions and new additions.

– But you'll need to invest in equipment, especially at the beginning. And watch out for those phone bills!

3. If you're young it might possibly impress potential employers.

– But it won't make you a millionaire. If you expect to get rich quick or indeed at all running a PDL, get your head examined.

CASE IN POINT: RUNNING A PD LIBRARY



"Anyone who runs a PD Library has to be a masochist" – PD Librarian Sharon Slade

Sharon Slade knows the agony and the ecstasy, the pleasure and the pain that is involved in setting up – and, more importantly, keeping afloat – a Public Domain library. By specialising in PD games (and with education as a sideline), her own PDQ has built up a reputation as probably the best place to go for such software, having recently passed the 500 titles mark.

"PDQ runs on a part-time basis," says Sharon. "It was started because there seemed to be a legitimate need to bring together all the games scattered throughout different libraries." Has it been successful? "That depends on the criteria of success. If you're talking about making pots of money, setting up a PD library is certainly not the way to go about it. But if you're talking about fun and enjoyment, then, yes, it's been a big success."

Sharon is surprisingly blunt about the quality of much PD. "Make no mistake," she says, "much material in the Public Domain is put there because it is not of commercial quality. It's a cheap and convenient way of

getting your software tested for bugs. On the other hand, it is equally an excellent way of getting some amazingly cheap software – if you take the trouble to find out what you're getting." Such ways include checking and even cross-checking between PD catalogues, and, last but not least, making a point of reading ST FORMAT's "Public Sector" for recommended titles! (You can begin by turning to page 43 for this month's edition.)

While Sharon stresses the financial costs, they aren't the only drawbacks. PD librarians note, with a mixture of resignation and resentment, that you are somehow expected to offer technical advice on everything and be available, preferably by 'phone, at all times of the day and night – no matter what your catalogue might say about calling times.

And while you're at it why not write a highly proficient technical newsletter like Floppyshop and ST Club?

"If it's to make money," warns Sharon, "forget it!" To share your knowledge with others? Sounds good, but there are many before you with four years of intensive experience of the ST. To improve your own knowledge? "That was acceptable four years ago," Sharon argues, "but why should end-users tolerate your learning curve now?" Very well then, what about as a hobby? Fine, but be aware of the restrictions and responsibilities it brings. Because you believe you can offer something better? Again, fine, but it will have to be more

than a cosmetic "improvement."

In fact, Sharon reckons that anyone who goes into "this business" must be a masochist. But ask the key question and she soon changes her tune: "Regret it? Not a bit of it! It's more fun than I ever imagined – most of the time!"

Mike Goodman set up Goodman PDL about three and half years ago and has since moved on to become one of the best known and most highly regarded of ST librarians.

He worries about newcomers: "It's a very different proposition, coming in now," he says:

"it really does require more than a simple disk duplication service. Some people imagine that if you buy disks at 50p and sell them with PD on at £1.50 then you're making £1

"Some people imagine that if you buy disks at 50p and sell them with PD on at £1.50 you're making a £1 profit. You're not."

profit. You're not!"

Mike makes a distinction between Public Domain libraries and services: the former is simply a duplication service, while the latter offers back up, a printed catalogue and extensive knowledge of the programs on sale.

He also asks a probing question, and one well worth pondering: "If there were no Goodman, no SouthWest and no Softville, where would you get your software?" As for his own library, a massive three quarters of the new titles in his new catalogue is brand new, never having appeared in the Public Domain before. That's quite a record, and certainly sets a tough goal for prospective newcomers.



"Some people just have no idea at all" – Mike Goodman

TCB TRACKER

Turn Your ST Into A Powerful Music Studio With The -TCB TRACKER-

The -TCB TRACKER- is a 4 channel music synthesizer, drum machine, and mixing studio that allows you to play back 4 different samples all at the same time in glorious stereo (STE only) without any special hardware. It will run on any ST and will automatically make use of any extra memory, disk drives and MIDI equipment that you have.

The -TCB TRACKER- uses special techniques to replay all 4 channels simultaneously at 10KHz to give crystal clear sound. Not only is the music clear, but it is also very loud. Music that is this clear and loud isn't normally achieved without using all the computers processor time. The -TCB TRACKER- will only use a maximum of 28% leaving plenty of time for the computer to do other things. This makes the -TCB TRACKER- perfect demo writers, professional programmers and for the person who just wants an easy to use music program.

-TCB TRACKER- FEATURES

- * 4 CHANNELS OF SAMPLED SOUND
 - * SIMPLE KEYBOARD ENTRY
 - * FULL MIDI COMPATIBILITY
- * TURNS YOUR ST INTO A 3 OCTIVE KEYBOARD
- * USES A MAXIMUM OF 28% PROCESSOR TIME
 - * STEREO SOUND ON THE STE
 - * AMIGA BASS
- * SIMPLE KEYBOARD SHORT CUTS
- * STORES UP TO 16 SAMPLES IN MEMORY
 - * POWERFUL VOLUME CONTROL
 - * TUNING OF SAMPLES
- * SIMPLE TO ADD TO YOUR OWN PROGRAMS
 - * OVER 20 CUT AND PASTE FUNCTIONS
 - * ON SCREEN HELP

MIDI Compatibility

If you own a MIDI keyboard, then using it with the -TCB TRACKER- is no problem. Simply select a channel, go to MIDI mode, press record and then start playing. The -TCB TRACKER- uses MIDI CLOCK for perfect timing.

MPH Support

MPH will be supporting the REGISTERED users of this product in every possible way. There will be extra disks of .MOD and .SPL files, a quarterly newsletter giving tips on how to get the most out of the programme and updates of the software, and finally, a monthly competition for the best piece of music created with the -TCB TRACKER-.

ORDER NOW FROM MPH FOR ONLY £39.95
Tel: 0603 503382



T
R
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the write stuff

Whether you want to create that magazine you want to read but can't find, write a PD catalogue or start a newsletter, your ST can help out in ways you've never guessed. Mark Higham talks to a man with extensive experience of DTP'ing it for himself with the ST, Paul Glover of the ST Club, to find out what you need and how to put it to work

Why the hell not? It can't be because fanzines can't be produced using an ST setup, because that simply isn't true, and it's unlikely to be because all ST users are boring farts who wouldn't know Des O'Connor from Deee-lite.

Newsletters, brochures and fanzines these days all share one thing in common: they are designed using a DTP package. Desktop Publishing packages have revolutionised the publishing industry, enabling anyone with an ST and a tad of knowledge to publish new and interesting literature.

The beauty of a DTP package is that it enables you to take text and flow it into a string of over pages, each made up of a number of columns. You can import pictures into the page or create panels of text containing additional information.

DTP lies at the heart of such a setup – but, as the ST Club's Paul Glover discovered, there's much more to producing newsletters than this. "Our biggest problem has always been finding the right equipment," he reckons. "We've had all sorts of problems with our printer and we've

tried many different DTP packages."

Paul has been producing a regular newsletter for fellow ST enthusiasts and a brochure for his PD Library for the past four years. Originally the newsletter appeared every six weeks, but has now moved to a monthly schedule. From a standing start of less than a hundred copies per issue, Paul now distributes 15,000 copies of the PD brochure and 4,500 newsletters each month.

"When we started," Paul recalls, "there was no-one else around doing the same kind of thing. It began as a part time thing, as a way of getting in touch with other ST owners and gathering useful information." Now the ST Club employs five people on a full-time basis who keep the library and the magazines running.

Four years ago the magazines were written using Electric's *First Word* and printed on a Juki 5510 dot matrix printer. Since the magazines were compiled using a wordprocessor, no fancy layout techniques could even be considered, let alone achieved. Within a matter of months Paul

If you can string a few syllables together, want to know more about your ST and are eager to do something ultra-exciting with your machine, then now's your opportunity. Publish. You can meet hundreds, maybe even thousands, of others who share your interests and are all keen and willing to share information. And if you're hoping one day to start a career in publishing (don't do it for the money, will you?) there are few hobbies likely to stand you in better stead.

An astonishing thing: although there are more club newsletters and PD lists published with the ST than you could shake a stapler at, we couldn't find a single ST-produced fanzine.

THE SKINFLINT'S GUIDE TO DTP ON THE CHEAP

You really *don't* need to spend a fortune on software and hardware to do a good job. In the Public Domain you can find cheap solutions to the software problem, and there's many a good bargain to be found in the hardware columns of classified ads (try our sister magazine *New Computer Express*, out every Thursday, price 70p: you'll have to put up with Steve Carey's ST column, but then, every silver lining has a cloud).

ST *Writer* and *First Word*, for example, are both good, solid public domain word-processing programs that cost a mere £3 or under each and will enable you to write the bare text. As for a DTP program, *Easy Text* is the cheap alternative to the wallet-scaring professional packages.

For just £20 you can obtain a professional-quality program which enables you to lay out text adequately. For a database, Precision

Software's *Superbase Personal 2* is a good, but hardly cheap, choice at £100.

In terms of hardware the only major expense is a printer. Remember WYGIWYPF – What You Get Is What You Pay For: the better the printer, the better the final output. Laser printers are superb if you can afford them, but few of us can justify buying such an item for what may be no more than a hobby.

A 24-pin printer is quite sufficient, with the Star LC24-10 one of the cheapest at a smidgen under £300. And since it's a popular brand name, the Star printer is supported by all DTP programs, so you'll have no trouble getting something onto paper.

Of all the objections to actually getting started, cost is probably the least of your worries. For just a few quid you can buy the software you need, and as for the printer, you could always borrow a friend's to get started.

SHOPPING EXPRESS

ATARI ST ★ ATARI ST ★ ATARI ST ★ ATARI ST ★ ATARI

A brilliant offer for readers of New Computer Express!

V C T

■ You don't need to spend hundreds to produce decent pages: buy secondhand!

invested in *Publishing Partner* from Silica and an Atari laser printer.

The biggest problem with this package was that it took around 20 minutes to print each page, and when Silica released *Pagestream*, an upgraded version of *Publishing Partner*, Paul turned to that instead.

Though *Pagestream* prints out much faster, the screen redrawing is painfully slow. The PD catalogue still uses *Pagestream*, but it was simply too slow to be used for more than a couple of issues of the newsletter. Finally Paul tried *Timeworks DTP*, the package currently in use, though he hopes soon to switch to *Mirrorsoft's Fleet Street Publisher 3* because he believes it marries the professional features of *Calamus* with superb quality printouts.

But why not *Calamus* itself? "We considered it," Paul says, "but it wasn't good enough. The quality of the output just didn't look as good as we needed. And *Calamus* becomes outrageously expensive when you start to invest in extra fonts."

Deciding which is the right package for you needn't be a costly hit and miss affair. PD

libraries contain hosts of demos of wordprocessors and DTP packages which give you a good idea of what the big packages offer before you mug your wallet.

The first step in the publishing process is to write (say "input" for maximum bluff-rating) the text on a wordprocessor. In the case of the ST Club's PD brochure, lists of software are held in document files and updated monthly. But the newsletter, articles and information need to be written from scratch.

If, like the ST Club, you're using *Timeworks*, Paul recommends *First Word*, because there's a special *Timeworks* option to import *First Word* documents. Alternatively, *Timeworks* – and indeed, all ST DTP packages – enable you to import ASCII text, so you could just as easily use a PD wordprocessor such as *ST Writer*.

Once your text has been imported into the DTP program your next step is to lay it out into columns and boxes. Before you start, compile a list of house styles detailing size, font and style

of your headlines; size, font and leading of your body text; and the look of any special extras such as margin notes or panels of text.

You really don't need to be an expert in typography to work out how to lay out a page. After all, you probably already know that solid blocks of text look deadly dull. Bung in some pictures and immediately you give the eye something to feed on.

You can use any art package which saves files in *Degas Elite* to draw your design, and all the major ST DTP packages support *Degas Elite* file formats, so there's no problem using your picture. Indeed, most DTP packages come with a selection of clip art (copyright free ready made pictures) to tip in as required, or you can invest in extra clip art disks from the Public Domain. Paul's view is that "most clip-art is unuseable, unless you're doing a Christmas card," but not everyone, it's fair to point out, would agree.

Paul himself often uses simple charts and diagrams as illustrations in his newsletter, many drawn with the limited drawing commands in *Timeworks*. (A tip: for more detailed illustrations he turns to *Degas Elite* and then scales his picture down by a factor of two or three times so that the image is of an improved quality.)

With your pages laid out your next step is to print copies. The ST Club newsletter is an A5 size brochure (ie half the size of one of *FORMATS* pages), and what actually goes to print are A4 pages with two A5 pages glued onto them. The A5 pages are numbered so that the result can be folded in half and stapled down the middle. (We did consider an elaborate illustration at this point, but try it yourself with a sheet of photocopy paper and you'll soon see how it works. Fold an A4 sheet in half, turn it so the fold is on the left, and you hold in your hands an instant 4-page A5 booklet.)

After you've met the initial cost of the equipment and software, your next big expense comes each time you print your newsletter. Photocopying can cost as much as 10p per sheet. Printing companies like your local branch of Presto Print typically charge around £40 for 1,000 copies of an A4 sheet, while a professional printer would charge you £450 for 1,000 copies of a 16 page A4 magazine, with the price per copy dropping the more you print. Originally the ST Club newsletter was photocopied, but when the mail list grew to 400 people they quickly turned to a professional magazine printer to copy and assemble the newsletter and brochure.

The money involved can be daunting, but if you're running a PD library a brochure is essential to advertise your products, and you're soon likely to make up the costs through sales of software. Newsletters can be funded by subscription charges and perhaps the occasional advert.

Managing your subscription list is the next challenge. Paul uses the expensive but superbly featured *Superbase Professional* (£250, Precision Software) to hold the list of people on his subscription list and print out address labels, though most "young" publications

Your next step? Put down this magazine – and start up your own... Well, what are you waiting for?

Now's your chance: we're offering £100 for the best new ST DTP'ed magazine. Go on, impress us!

WHERE TO GO, WHAT TO BUY

Here's details on the software mentioned above. This list is not intended to be exhaustive. Do try and get a recommendation from a friend or a review before you spend a lot of money!

WORDPROCESSORS

Protext Version 5 reviewed on page 155 (previous version now available for well under £100)	Arnor	£124.95	(0733) 68909
First Word Plus Still for many the preferred WP of the sub-professional breed	GST/Electric	£49.95	(0480) 496666
ST Writer An excellent program, worth a good deal more than the asking price!	Goodman PD	£2.50	(0782) 335650
First Word The original version of <i>Plus</i> ; bundled with many STs	Goodman PD	£2.50	(0782) 335650

DTP PACKAGES

Calamus The lion of all them all. Overpriced, but very well supported by Signa	Signa	£458.85	(0252) 341600
Fleet Street Publisher 3 Hardly <i>Calamus</i> , but then it's only half the price	Mirrorsoft	£179.95	(071) 928 1454
Pagestream Worth a try – if you can cope with horrendous bugs and an uncertain future	Silica	£171.35	(081) 309 1111
Timeworks DTP Well-placed and competent: subject of our DTP tutorial (ST <i>FORMAT</i> 7-11)	GST/Electric	£99.95	(0480) 496789
Publishing Partner The successor to <i>Pagestream</i> , though still hardly perfect	Silica		
Easy Text Plus The best starter around. Try it before you move up to full-price	Goodman PD	£2.50	(0782) 335650

DATABASES

Superbase Professional The business. Heavyweight, complex and packed with features. Meanwhile, at the other end...	Precision	£249.95	(0330) 7166
Card ST ... this one's worth a try. Alternatively, this month's Cover Disk is worth a look	Goodman PD	£2.50	(0782) 335650

HARDWARE

Laser SLM804 Nice bit of kit – if you can afford it!	Silica	£919.91	(081) 309 1111
Star LC24-10 Star by name, star by nature. Has sold by the skipfull, and rightly so	Evesham Micros	£239.00	(0386) 765180

■ And by the way, we're doing a round up of recent printers in next month's issue

ME, PUBLISH? WELL I'LL BE....!

Ten simple steps from good idea to finished fanzine or newsletter:

1. Write your text on a wordprocessor.

– *First Word* is cheap and still effective. Remember though that special characters are likely to be lost when the file is imported into a DTP package. For example, you may have redesigned the £ sign in *Protext* so that it displays a copyright symbol, or an asterisk so that it shows a half. Don't expect them to look that way when you import the text into your DTP program!

2. Import the text.

– All DTP packages enable you to import text in ASCII format, but some directly support specific wordprocessing formats. For example, *Timeworks* enables you to import *First Word Plus* files, and *Fleet Street Editor* supports *Protext* styles. If you save text in ASCII format you instantly lose any style commands used during word-processing (such as bold or italic text). If this is important, go for a DTP package which supports your particular word-processor. Check it out before you buy!

3. Lay out the pages in your package and print them to a laser printer.

– Include boxes or panels of text to liven up the pages. The occasional graphic looks good as a flash or a reward to attract people's attention. Be sure to choose a modest font for the main text and a simple headline font. Don't go over the top with the fancy fonts: five different fonts to a page is a good maximum.

4. Take the pages off to your friendly photocopying people and ask them nicely to print out 1,000 copies for you.

– This is the wallet-scaring part of the process. Tip: remember that money isn't everything. Nor is being able to buy food.

5. Staple the finished pages together.

– Tip: photocopy each set of two A4 sheets onto a single A3 sheet. That way you only need fold the A3 sheets together like a newspaper and stick a couple of staples down the middle. This gives a cleaner finish to the newsletter, rather than stapling it so the sharp ends stick out and lacerate your innocent readers (it tends to put them off).

6. Carry out an armed raid on your local post office, demanding millions of stamps.

– Tip: remember to wear stockings on your head, not tights: that would look stupid. Bribe your little sister (not brother – dirty hands) to stick all the stamps on the envelopes. When you get really rich, hire a franking machine from the post office and print hosts of pre-paid envelopes.

7. Type the names and addresses of all your eager readers into a mail merging package.

– Then print out reams of address labels and pack magazines into the envelopes.

8. Post 'em and wait for the subscription money to start rolling in.

– You did remember to charge a subscription and include an address to send it to, didn't you?

9. Go out and buy yourself a Smartie with the proceeds.

– If you make real money, you could always invest in better equipment.

10. Go back to step one and start all over again. Each and every issue.

– Tip: remember you are doing this for fun, not money. Or sleep.

could no doubt get by with *Data Manager Professional* (Digita//details). The magazines are then bunged into pre-paid envelopes and sent out to the readers.

Although reproduction costs force newsletters and fanzines to remain black and white, some very professional results are possible. ST DTP packages are intended for serious use, and come with more than enough commands to help you manipulate pages. A word of warning: don't buy features you won't use. That rotated text option might look like terrific, but are you sure you're going to need it in your stamp catalogue?

Your next step? Put down this copy of *ST FORMAT* and get going. Well, what are you waiting for? **stf**

NOW IS YOUR CHANCE!

So, why couldn't we find anyone doing a fanzine on an ST? If you've been slaving away on one for years, or have just been inspired to start, get in touch and we'll give you some of that oxygen of publicity Mrs Thatcher is so strongly against.

And there's £100 on offer for the most impressive – by which we don't necessarily mean the most expensive looking. What we're looking for is imagination, wit, dedication, intelligence, ideas to steal (*shome mishtake shurely? – ed*).

Send us a copy of your fanzine to: ST Fanzines, *ST FORMAT*, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW.



We've got your act together

All you need to make music on your ST. Roland have put the world's leading synthesizer technology into a series of computer peripherals. Anyone with an Atari 1040ST becomes a musical wizard – no need for a concert pianist's technique, no need to read music.

To get you started, we've packaged the CM-32L LA sound module (the equivalent of an 8-piece band plus drums) with Dr T's Tiger Cub sequencer and Copyist Apprentice score-writer software, a desktop accessory disk and all the leads you need to run the system through your hi-fi.

The whole box of tricks costs just **£469rrp** from your nearest Roland Computer Music dealer.

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PHONE OUR CM HOTLINE on 081-568 4578
and ask Heather Hendry for details of your nearest Roland CM Dealer

Strider 2: one more

Tiertex are currently staying up dead late and working like beings possessed on the follow-up to the immensely successful Strider (called, of all things, Strider 2). Mark Higham dons his sheerest tights, grabs himself a sabre and meets the gang



■ Five levels, robots, lifts, elevators and a familiar sabre – Strider is back with a vengeance. There's even a laser gun: stand still, hold down the Fire button and start blasting. Neat, in a gratuitously violent kind of way

Two years ago Tiertex had a reputation to live down to. At Christmas '88 they'd just released *Thunderblade*, which may have looked pretty hot but had all the lasting power of a dead Duracell. This they followed up with *The Last Crusade* arcade game – competent but hardly enough to make anyone sit up and go, "Ooh bloody hell that's a bit of a cracker." Then, out of nowhere, in the middle of last year, came *Strider*. And lo, Tier-

tex was hitting the spot.

The ST version of the game was more than good, it was stonkingly, phew-what-a-scorcher good. Cleverly they kept the sprites relatively small for the ST, and as a result the game played better than any other format. It was instantly acknowledged as one of the finest arcade conversions of 1989, and only missed by a whisker picking up a prize at the Indian event, the industry awards ceremony, to

Ghouls'n'Ghosts.

Not content to sit back and squash the laurels – and, dare one suggest, spotting an easy buck – Tiertex are now close to wrapping up *Strider 2*, predictably bigger, better and boasting heaps more than the original.

It was Strider himself, of course (if that was his name), who made the original, in which you had to race through horizontally scrolling levels and battle anything headed in your direction, stand out from the usual hackneyed arcade fare. He was an acrobat dancing in balletic but butch fashion round the screen, clinging to walls and somersaulting wildly through the air. With supersmooth scrolling and ultra-detailed animation, *Strider* signalled a new attention to detail in arcade conversions.

The original, programmed by John Prince and Donald Campbell, took seven months to code. The graphics were ported from the arcade game, shrunk down and imported onto the ST. *Strider 2* has been written by two different programmers, Dave Lees and Dave Healey, who this time round have started the code from scratch. They've used the same logic elements, but Tiertex have learned much from their first game and by the time it's finished *Strider 2* will have taken just five months to code.

The ST version is going to be the first to appear because, as Steve Fitton commented, "The lads enjoy the ST's programming environment" – far more, in fact, than the Commodore Amiga games machine's.

Still, writing a follow-up isn't quite the easy route to a swift top-up of the bank balance it's sometimes made out to be. After all, what extras can you include? A few more bad guys, some new backdrops perhaps. But you couldn't make any fundamental changes to the gameplay, or it just wouldn't be *Strider*. Or would it?

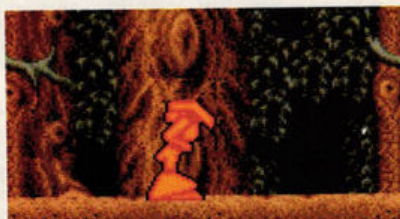
Tiertex sat down for a game design meeting six months ago and came up with enough in the way of suggestions to produce a whole string of sequels.

"The original plan," explains Steve, "was to rescue earth before a virus was released into

HOW TO TURN YOURSELF INTO A ROBOT



■ One of the most exciting innovations in *Son of Strider*: jog round the levels collecting bonus pods and you can transform yourself into a robot. Armour



plating protects you from many of the bad guys' shots, and you come equipped with a very effective laser gun. How long you can remain a robot depends on how



many pods you collect, but you're unlikely to want to stay like this for long – the robot can only move left and right. Still, it makes a pleasant change, doesn't it?



giant leap for Tiertex

the air killing everything." This idea still survives in the final scenario, but has no relevance to the game. Instead, the major change is a new objective. "Instead of following the direction of the scrolling, you have to find a route through the game, and this isn't entirely obvious."

Steve isn't exaggerating. As you work your way through each level you run into a host of dead ends. If you aren't on the correct route when you snuff it you're returned to the start of the level. If you're following the right path you pass through trigger points and when you cash in your chips you're returned to the last of these. Some levels, however, particularly the shorter ones, have no trigger points so you're always returned to the start of the level.

Challenging. There is, however, one new feature that makes life a little easier: you can now use a gun instead of the sword. Stand still, hit the Fire button and you shoot a bullet



■ The appearance of the hero is one of the few similarities between *Striders 1* and *2*. Here the infamous Strider flexes his forearm and exercises his sabre

THE EXTRAS THAT SPELL SUCCESS

The original *Strider* is said by US Gold to have sold some 100,000 copies worldwide – with more than 12,000 on the ST alone. (These are very high sales for such a game.) Here's the extras Tiertex plan for *Strider 2* which US Gold are keenly anticipating will make them even more doosh this time round

- The playing area: narrower, with the extra space devoted to the status report at the bottom of the screen
- The new Strider can climb ropes and ladders
- Backdrops are much improved, with more detail
- Levels are different lengths. Some involve just a few quick leaps over gaps in the landscape while others stretch for miles
- Mid- and end-of-level guardians are beefier, brighter coloured and more smoothly animated
- There are extra obstacles to negotiate such as moving lifts, laser bolts and flying missiles
- Strider can transform into a robot covered in armour and wielding a mean-looking laser



■ New sprites show Strider as he scales ladders and ropes – four frames of animation for the twists and turns

straight ahead, which certainly helps you past many of those irritating bad guys who stand just out of range of your sword arm.

The other big change affects Strider's movements. Now, when the going gets tough you can metamorphose into a fearsome robot armed with a very effective blaster and covered in protective armour. "Originally you could change into a robot anywhere in the game," Steve recalls, "but it wasn't manoeuvrable enough" – the robot can move only horizontally and to move upwards you need to change back into Strider and make a leap for it – "so you now have to pick up bonus icons which increase your energy. When you have enough energy you transform into a robot simply by hitting the spacebar."

There's a series of sprites for each of Strider's movements. Making a somersault involves seven different ones and similar sequences are employed when you use the sabre, cling to the walls or just walk. The robot replaces the old sprites for skidding along the ground, but a new set has been added to enable Strider to climb the plethora of ladders and ropes in the new version.

Several factors are still to be decided. Although there's a brand new set of end-of-level aliens, Steve wants to add even more. "Some need to be changed. We want to include some aliens from the original game like the big ape," he explains, "but memory restrictions may put a halt to that." There's debate also over how many lives you should get: depending on the difficulty of the final game, it'll be either three or five.

"We've endeavoured to make it a much harder game," comments Steve. "It's more of a challenge. People are going to spend lots of time just attempting to find a route through the levels."

Capcom intend to release the arcade version of *Strider 2* in the new year, making it the very first arcade game ever written on an ST and then actually converted for the arcades. All the new features in the Tiertex version are to be included – there can hardly be any greater accolade. **stf**

■ You can read the first review of *Strider 2* in next month's *ST FORMAT*, available on Thursday 8 November

THE ST FORMAT GUIDE TO MAKING TONS OF CASH

So you quite fancy the idea of writing your own *Strider 2* clone to hit the shelves before US Gold's version? Here's a few snippets of advice from Steve Fitton on making money hand over fist:

1. Acquire the licence. Capcom own the original *Strider* game and US Gold needed a licence from them to write the follow-up. You'll need several hundred thousand pounds, in cash.
2. Find a programming team to code the game. Tiertex got the nod for *Strider 2* because they'd written the original *Strider*.
3. Work out the basis of a game. Steve Fitton: "We started off with a core game which followed our scenario and then added the backgrounds. The playing character was just a basic set of frames before we dropped in the actual *Strider* sprites."
4. Sort out scrolling using this crude *Strider* character.
5. Design and add the enemies. Then drop in the *Strider* animations. Now you've got enough to impress your mates, but hardly anything fit for release.
6. Work on the end-of-level aliens. Try for as many as possible, keeping them big and well-animated. Today's state-of-the-art action games tend to include mid-level guardians as well – but watch that disk space!
7. Perfect collision detection so when you bump into the bad guys you die rather than carrying on unharmed. After this you can make a realistic decision about the number of lives it's going to take to complete the game.
8. Add the music. In this case the original music from *Strider 1* is used with new spot effects as appropriate.
9. Add a front end that relates the scenario and provides loading screens and music to accompany play. Keep it short. Often the entire game fits on a single disk, but you need a second just to accommodate the front end. This can be an expensive blunder. You won't get a second chance.
10. Send the finished game off to a software house and cross your fingers they don't find any bugs that can't be fixed. – And there you have it. A doddle, in ten easy moves.



■ Tough end-of-level baddies: a must for anyone wanting to make suit-cases of the folding stuff

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Side 1

ROBOKID – superb playable arcade action in this excerpt from Activision's forthcoming scrolling shoot-'em-up. Not for kids!

TCB TRACKER – demo of the Care Bears' incredible ST music and sample player. (Cue pub-singer) Oww-ah-pump up ah volooom-ah, ah-put ah neeeeedle on ah record-ah, and-ah drumbeats ah-go like theese...

PERSONAL DATABASE – get that info sorted with this fully useable utility

HAL9000 – frighten the life out of your ST with Arthur C Clarke's nightmare computer

GEN-LOCK – brighten up your Desktop



Side 2

ACCOMPANIST ("COSH") – make music on your ST now with Henry Cosh's amazing complete 16-voice sequencer. Uses MIDI or the ST's own voice. Turn to page 139 for an introduction by Henry Cosh!

MEGAFORM – seriously useful utilities: copy, format, erase and test disks or create superfast disks with the Fastload format

SCREEN-SAVER – save wear and tear on your TV tube with this brand new version of the popular screen saver utility. A sight for sore eyes!

How BIG?

Welcome to the massive 1,000K+ **ST FORMAT** Cover Disk, the only one with more data than Saudi Arabia has American soldiers! (shurely "sand"? – ed) We use the latest file-squishing techniques, and disk formats so advanced they make Operation Desert Shield look not very good. Enjoy!

TAKING SIDES

Sadly, earlier 520STs were fitted with single-sided disk drives, meaning they can't read double-sided disks – until now! The **ST FORMAT** Cover Disk has been specially prepared to enable all ST owners to read Side 1, though of course there's no technology in the world that would enable you to read Side 2.

WHO GETS WHAT?

Thanks to the non-standard, tight-as-Neil's-pockets disk format by ace techie Rob Northen, everyone can load and use *Atomic Robokid*, *Personal Database*, *TCB Tracker*, *HAL9000* and *Gen-Lock*. Lucky double-siders can also access the *Cosh Accompanist*, *MegaForm* and *StarStruck*.

DOUBLE TROUBLE?

To read Side 2 with a double-sided drive just double-click the left mouse button on the folder named **SIDE_2**. It should open up like a normal folder, listing all the files contained within.

SINGLED OUT?

If you have a single-sided drive and you try opening the **SIDE_2** folder, you're told that the data on the disk may be damaged; this is just the ST's rather alarming way of telling you it can't read Side 2. Don't fret, just click on **CANCEL** and she'll be right, mate.

How BIG?

Before you bung it in, back it up! Accidents happen, so make a copy of the disk and write-protect the original to be absolutely safe: see page 40 for full instructions.



ATOMIC ROBOKID

BY: ACTIVISION

SIDE: 1

MACHINE: ALL COLOUR STs

FOLDER: ROBOKID

FILES: ROBOKID.TOS

In this exclusive preview of Activision's forthcoming arcade conversion you take the role of the Atomic Robokid himself. Having just completed a long course at the Universal University of Space Combat (a kind of interstellar Top Gun), you're on your first mission. Your orders are simple: go as deep as you can and shoot the hell out of anything that moves.

But it ain't that easy (is it ever?). You begin your onslaught with nothing more than a standard blaster (about as useful as a water-pistol in a thunderstorm), but a keen eye and a steady hand can help you to improve your kill-ability.

Scattered around the labyrinth you find a wealth of metallic-looking objects to shoot at. These turn into gems with enticing words like "Speed Up" or "Missile" hovering nearby. Run over these to add more aggro to your arsenal, displayed at the bottom of the screen.

Pressing the space bar or holding the fire button down for more than half a second changes the current weapon in use, but beware – if you're killed you lose the weapon you had selected at the time of your demise.

As the Robokid, you can walk around each of the levels or leap into the air and fly. The trick to flying is reputedly to throw yourself to the ground and miss. This is difficult on an ST, so simply push up on the joystick

and press fire at the same time. If you touch the ground at any time after you're airborne, you automatically revert to walk mode.

Battle your way through the level and you find yourself sharing a confined space with a well-armed, well-angry roboweirdo. And if that ain't enough, there's another one to play with after the first one is dead!

STARTING OUT

Double-click on the Robokid folder to open it, then double-click again on the file **ROBOKID.TOS**. After a while the game loads and you can begin controlling the Kid with a joystick in Port 1. Extra game controls are listed in the panel opposite along with a list of the objects to pick up on the way.



■ Be the baby with the blaster in *Robokid*, the arcade-action shoot-'em-up demo on this month's stonking great Cover Disk

CONTROLS AND COLLECTABLES

KEY	JOYSTICK	ACTION
	Up	Fly up, jump if walking
	Down	Fly down
	Left	Fly left, walk left
	Right	Fly right, walk right
	Fire	Fires in the direction Kid is facing
	Fire (held)	Select weapon
SPACE		Select weapon
F1		Music on/off
F2		Sound effects on/off
F3		Weapons select mode
Fire & Space/Space		
P		Pause
RETURN		Abort Game
OBJECT NAME	FUNCTION	
Speed Up	Temporarily increase Kid's flying speed	
Fire 2	Increase power and size of Kid's blaster fire	
3-way	Improved triple-beam argon laser	
5-way	5-beam limited range laser	
Rensha	Auto fire is engaged for next 30 seconds	
Thrushu	Shield and extra speed activated when Kid is next hit by enemy fire	
Missile	Directable 8-way missile (joystick-controlled)	

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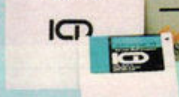
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TCB TRACKER

BY: MPH/CAREBEARS
SIDE: 1
MACHINE: ALL COLOUR STs
FOLDER: TRACKER
FILES: TRACKER.PRG,
 VORTEX.MOD, BASS.SPL,
 BASS2.SPL, COOL.SPL,
 DIGITAL.SPL, JAZZSNAR.SPL
 & PICSNAR.SPL

Carebears Anders Nilsson and Nicola Thissel probably need no introduction to Public Domain devotees. They've been on the scene for the last two years, writing some of the most complex and original demo programs available for the ST. They're renowned for their imaginative use of the ST's hardware and some fine sampled soundtracks.

And now ST FORMAT is proud to present an exclusive demo version of the product of all that technological wizardry. Tracker is the result of much tinkering and experimentation on the part of the Carebears, making it the finest 4-track sample player in the Public Domain.

To hear Tracker in action, load a complete music track or module by clicking on the Module LOAD icon. This brings up a second screen which shows the word VORTEX, which you can select using the cursor up/down keys. Hit RETURN to load the module and the use the PLAY icon in the top left-hand corner of the screen to set the music running.

You can also load individual samples and use them in your own compositions by clicking on the Sample LOAD icon. This brings up a list of possible samples in a similar fashion to the module load system. Choose the one you like and you can then mess around it by pressing the ST's keyboard.

Keys are laid out in two layers, both piano fashion, with the sharp/flat keys in the appropriate place. There's a two-and-a-half octave range across the whole of the keyboard, enabling you to compose some pretty er, "funky" tunes, er, "man" (or woman, of course).

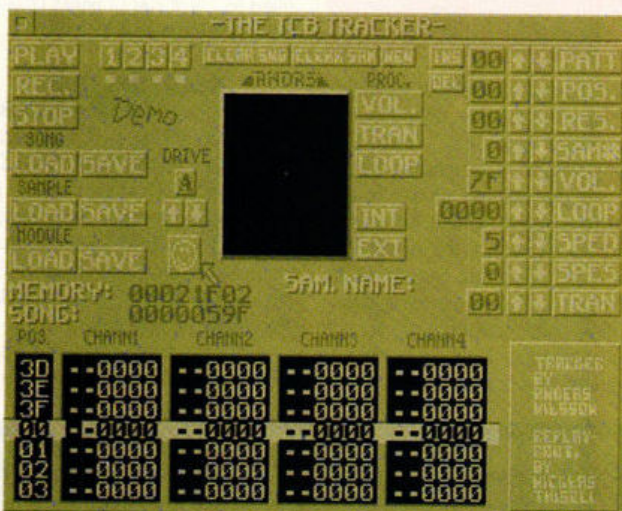
The cursor keys control the current track you're writing to, and there are other controls for altering things like sample playback speed and volumes.

STARTING OUT

To get Tracker running, double-click on the TRACKER folder to open it and then select TRACKER.PRG from the files contained within. Wait a few moments while Tracker loads and then decompacts. The screen border changes colour rapidly and "rolls." This is normal, so don't be tempted to stop the program or run around the room screaming.

Next you see the main panel, where you can load samples and modules and control the playback. So take it away, er, "man" (or woman of course).

■ For a more comprehensive look at the full version of Tracker, turn immediately if not sooner to the full introduction, feature and Anders Nilsson interview starting on page 126.



■ TCB Tracker's front-end screen belies its capabilities. For concealed within this innocent exterior is one of the most comprehensive 4-channel sampler players money can buy



PERSONAL DATABASE

BY: BAY COMPUTERS
SIDE: 1
MACHINE: ALL STs
FOLDER: PERSONAL.DB
FILES: PERS.DB.PRG,
 MANUAL.TXT, EXAMPLE.MMG
 & SAMPLE.PBD

This handy little program enables you to store all your important addresses in a neat little file which can then be used to create labels or personalise circular letters (mail-shots). It's one of a series of programs created by Bay Computers to help you organise data into manageable forms.

This particular module holds information on names, addresses, telephone numbers and comments which can then be exported to your printed or shown on screen

for you to examine.

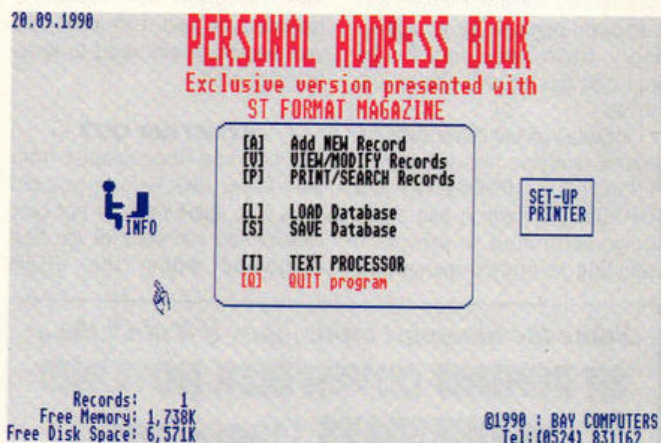
A subsection of the program enables you to write the main portion of your mail-shot and then print out copies of it, inserting the relevant details from each record in the database (just like the junk-mail companies do, and you know how rich they are).

Full instructions are included on the Cover Disk for you to print out or read on-screen and example mail-shots and sample databases have already been created for you to play with.

STARTING OUT

To run Personal Database, open the PERSONAL.DB folder by double-clicking on it. Then double-click on the program file PERS.DB.PRG to start the program up. If you wish you can double-click the MANUAL.TXT file and select SHOW to view the instructions on-screen, or PRINT to print out a hardcopy.

28.09.1990



■ Personal Database is configured as a handy address book and has all the features of far more expensive packages



HAL 9000

BY: PUBLIC DOMAIN
SIDE: 1
MACHINE: ALL STs
FOLDER: HAL9000
FILES: HAL9000.PRG,
 HAL9000.EXE & HAL9000.SND

indeed ultimately completely batsarse. After killing off all but one of the ship's inhabitants, HAL (who obviously shared circuitry with a Commodore Amiga games machine) went utterly gaga.

This wee program enables you to revive HAL's dulcet tones and make your ST's startup a confidence-inspiring experience.

STARTING OUT

To hear HAL in action, double-click on the HAL9000 folder and then simply double-click on the HAL9000.PRG icon. This plays the sample and reassures you as to the state of your machine.

For full effect, copy the HAL9000.PRG file to an AUTO folder on a blank disk, and then copy the remaining two files to the root directory of the same disk. By doing this, every time you boot from that disk, HAL informs you of his current feelings before displaying the desktop. Triffic!

Sci-fi aficionados know all about HAL9000, the chilling, all-powerful computer system from 2001 - A Space Odyssey. HAL (allegedly Arthur C. Clarke and Stanley Kubrick's alleged parody of IBM, allegedly, some people - not us - allege) was the control computer responsible for the operation of the space ship sent to investigate the Monolith.

Inexplicably HAL develops a programming hiccup, causing him to become a bit irrational and



COSH SEQUENCER

BY: HENRY COSH

SIDE: 1

MACHINE: ALL STs

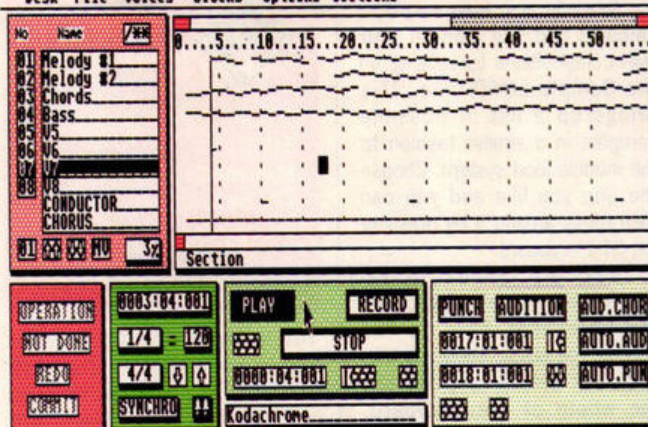
FOLDER: TRACKER

FILES: SEQUENCE.PRG,
SEQUENCE.RSC, READ.ME,
VERSION 2.2, TUTORIAL.TXT,
MANUAL.TXT, DESKTOP.INF &
MUSIC FOLDER

Accompanist (widely known simply as the Cosh Sequencer) is a highly-respected 16 voice sequencer for use on any ST, in any resolution. It's a powerful MIDI sequencer which enables you to control up to 16 MIDI channels (and hence, up to 16 MIDI instruments) at once. Similar sequencing programs are available commercially, but costing several hundred pounds. Accompanist is Public Domain, and is updated regularly by its author, Henry Cosh, who has kindly produced this special edition just for you.

Included on the Cover Disk are several readable files (READ.ME, VERSION 2.2, MANUAL.TXT and TUTORIAL.TXT) which can all be shown or printed to provide a complete reference manual for

Desk File Voices Blocks Options Sections



■ Get yer MIDI gear plugged in and get jammin' with the amazing Cosh Accompanist on this month's Cover Disk. (And see Henry Cosh's own introduction to the program on page 139)

operating the software. Also included is a separate folder (MUSIC) containing many demonstration programs for you to load and listen to.

There's also a special step-by-step tutorial for absolute beginners on page 139 which tells you everything you need to know to get started.

STARTING OUT

You can use Accompanist from your Cover Disk Backup (you did back it up didn't you?), or (for best results) you can copy all the files contained within the COSH

directory to a separate blank disk. Don't copy the COSH folder itself, just the files and folder inside. A DESKTOP.INF file has been included to provide you with a sensible desktop layout when using a new disk.

After reading the document files (by double-clicking on them and selecting Show or Print), double-click on SEQUENCE.PRG to run the sequencer itself.

■ Now turn to page 139 where Henry Cosh himself introduces Accompanist for the absolute beginner and explains some of its vast range of possibilities

Stone the bloomin' crows, guv, if it ain't the...

ST FORMAT COVER DISK HOTLINE!

WEDNESDAYS 11am - 6pm

0225 442244

Dear brethren, art thou in deep confusion? Yea, sore distress? Is there verily something about this month's Cover Disk that troubles thee? If thou hastest such a problem - and I know I hastest - then why not callest the ST FORMAT Cover Disk Hotline? For that, in a very real sense, is what The Right Reverend Neil Jackson is here for.

So if you're sure in your own mind, or indeed anyone else's, that there is no corrupted data on your disk, ring the above number on the above day between the above times (see above). But have the following information to hand:

- The model of ST you own (STE, 1040, that sort of thing);
- The version of GEM/TOS you're using, if you know it;
- Details of anything attached to or plugged inside your ST.

Have the Cover Disk handy and your ST up and running, and a nicely sharpened piece of paper and clean white pen should be somewhere within reach. And be nice to him, he's soft really.

B-SIDES FOR SINGLE-SIDED DRIVES!

By the way, if you have a single-sided drive on your ST, a) bad luck old sport and b) you don't have to miss out. Send your name and address with a cheque or postal order for the princely sum of £1/14s/0d (one pound and seventy of those newfangled pennies to you) to: November B-side Cover Disk, ST FORMAT, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW. Please be patient, though, because we generally wait until we have a decent batch worth doing and then suddenly pounce on some unsuspecting passerby or work experience-type bod.



GEN-LOCK

BY: PUBLIC DOMAIN

SIDE: 1

MACHINE: ALL COLOUR STs

FOLDER: AUTO

FILES: GEN_LOCK.PRG
& STF.PBD

This small but perfectly formed program, included again this month by popular demand, gives your desktop a personal feel by enabling you to use any low-resolution Degas piccy as a backdrop for the floppy disk and trash icons.

STARTING OUT

Copy Gen-Lock to an AUTO folder of a blank disk and then copy your favourite Degas picture to the root directory of the same disk. Rename the Degas picture (using Show Info) so the last three letters (the file extension) are PBD instead of P11 (this is what Gen-Lock looks for when it loads.) To use your personalised disk, just bung it in the drive and hit reset. You find your desktop is now much nicer than the Atari puke-green effort!



MEGAFORM

BY: PETER MAIER

SIDE: 2

MACHINE: ALL STs

FOLDER: FORMAT

FILES: MEGAFORM.PRG,
MEGAFORM.RSC,
MEGAFORM.INF, MEGACOL.RSC
& MEGAFORM.TXT

MegaForm is a suite of functions designed to improve upon the ST's standard options. There's a comprehensive formatting option to set the number of tracks and sectors used, and a copy disk option (it won't do protected formats, so pirates can forget it!). There's a Fastload formatting option which creates disks in such a way that they load in a fraction of the time of a normal disk.

STARTING OUT

Open up the folder named FORMAT by double-clicking on it. Included in the folder is the document file MEGAFORM.TXT which contains full instructions from the programmer. You are advised to read this; double-click on it and select SHOW (to display it on screen) or PRINT (to send it to a printer).

To run the program itself, double-click on MEGAFORM.PRG.

THOSE FAULTY DISK BLUES?

In any disk duplication as hugely quite big as ST FORMAT'S (we're doing something like 100,000 every month) it's just possible a tiny proportion of disks may be faulty. If you're unlucky, sorry. You're guaranteed a replacement if you send your disk to the following address. (Don't send it elsewhere.)

ST FORMAT November disk returns, Discopy Labs, Unit A,
West March, London Rd, Daventry, Northants NN11 4SA

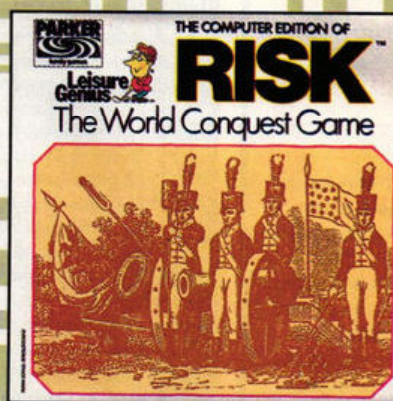
LEISURE GENIUS



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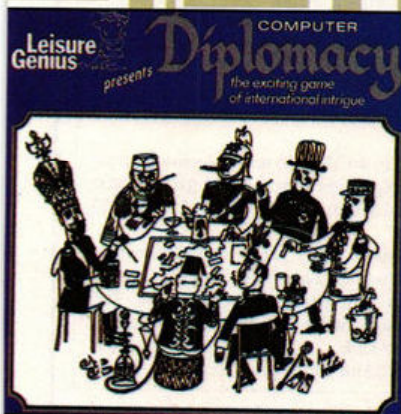
SCRABBLE DE-LUXE



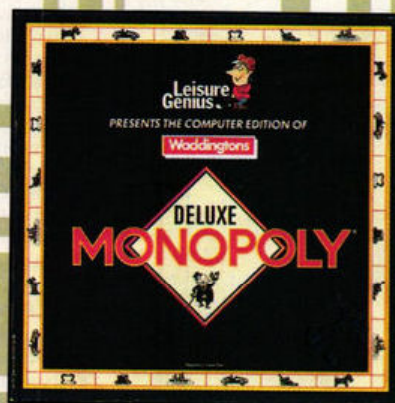
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RISK® 1959, 1988 Parker Brothers, Division of Kenner Parker Toys Inc. (KPT).



	IBM PC	AMIGA	ATARI ST	IBM 64 DISK	IBM 64 CASS	SPEC +3	SPEC CASS	AMS DISK	AMS CASS
SCRABBLE DE-LUXE	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
MONOPOLY DE-LUXE				•	•				
CLUEDO MASTER TEC	•	•	•						
DIPLOMACY	•								
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Name _____

Address _____

Daytime 'phone _____

Program title _____

Size of files in K _____

What's so utterly brilliant about it _____

Don't forget to: ■ Include on-disk and paper documentation ■ Write your name and address on the disk ■ Use a virus-free disk ■ Keep a copy of your program, because contributions are non-returnable ■ Avoid invading Kuwait. It's simply not worth the hassle

Please sign the following declaration: This program is submitted for publication in ST FORMAT. It is wholly my own work and I agree to indemnify Future Publishing against any legal action should copyright problems arise. I think ST FORMAT is brilliant, by the way, and I'm not just saying that because I want my program to be accepted. I just thought you should know.

Signed _____



STAR-STRUCK

BY: TONY SANSON

SIDE: 2

MACHINE: ALL STs

FOLDER: STAR

FILES: STARSTRK.ACC & STARSTRK.DOC

Finally, Star-Struck checks keyboard, mouse and joystick for signs of activity. If after three minutes nothing is detected the screen fades to black and then fills with a starfield (so you know you haven't lost power).

Copy STARSTRK.ACC to the root directory of a blank disk. Once it's copied over you can then boot from that disk. Save that phosporous, save that screen! **stf**

BACK-UP THAT COVER DISK!

This Cover Disk is non-standard and squeezes in a whacking great 500K+ of data per side, so backing-up is not quite straightforward. Never mind; follow these steps and you won't encounter any problems, though we can't guarantee your car will start first time.

Step one: format a couple of blank disks – single-sided if you've got a single-sided drive, double-sided if you have a double-sided drive.

Step two: write-protect the Cover Disk and insert it into drive A (if you have two drives, you lucky devil you, insert the Cover Disk into drive B). Double-click on the drive B icon. If you're still saving up for a second drive, a message appears requesting you to put disk B in drive A. Click on OK. (She fancies you. She told me. Go for it.)

Step three: insert a freshly formatted disk into drive A. Double-click on the drive A icon. (He likes you too. Go on, what have you got to lose?)

Step four: pick up a folder at a time from the Cover Disk window and plonk it into the drive A window. If you have one drive then you'll be asked to insert disk A and disk B at regular intervals. Don't mix the two up! Disk B is the Cover Disk and disk A is the freshly formatted disk.

Step five: when you get a "disk full" message, recopy that folder and any remaining ones onto the second freshly formatted disk.

Finally, double-sided owners, double-click on SIDE_2 once you've finished copying all the folders from side A of the Cover Disk. Job done! (Let us know how you get on with the first date, won't you?)

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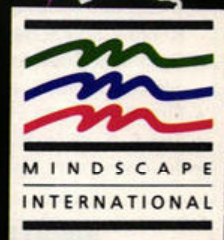
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PUBLIC SECTOR

The best things in life are free (or very nearly) and that includes wonderful PD. I want it all, that's what I want. Andrew Hutchinson checks out what's new on the Public Domain scene

UTILITIES

A SWITCH HITTER? B-Soft - Disk H09

Not one but three picture-conversion programs for your money. The excellent *PicSwitch* (now in its seventh revision) can convert just about any picture format to one readable by the ST - even Commodore Amiga games machine IFF files. *Snapshot* is a screen grabber which sits in memory until required; press [Alt] and [Help] together to activate it. *Tiny stuff* converts ordinary pictures into the ultra-compressed Tiny format. Useful but, alas, nothing original. ★★

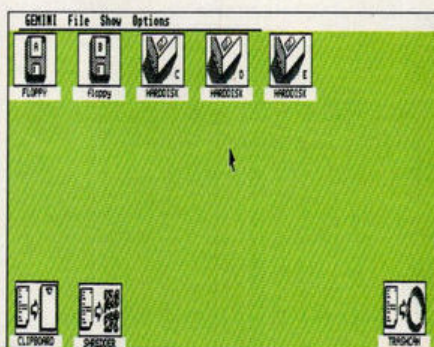


■ *PicSwitch* won't make a masterpiece out of a doodle, but it will convert it from whatever format you've used to another format which your art package can read

A FACELIFT FOR DESKTOP

Sphinx Software - Disk UT161

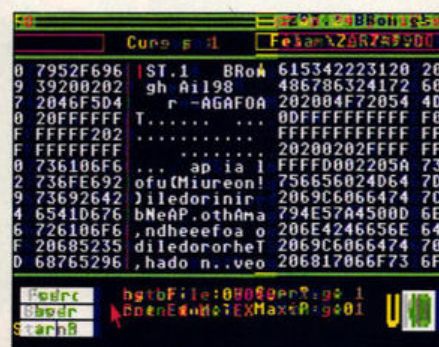
Desktop isn't renowned for its friendliness; use it for any length of time and the faults of the GEM interface can become seriously annoying. *Gemini* is an extraordinary new graphical front-end shell which kicks out GEM and vastly improves on its functions. The icons are all completely different and actually look like the devices they serve: drives A and B are represented by disk drives rather than filing cabinets, and the trash is replaced by a menacing shredder. Functions such as formatting and file movement are all greatly improved. Also on this disk is the infamous ZX81 emulator and a reasonably good desk accessory manager. ★★★★★



■ No more boring desktops. Replace GEM with *Gemini* and make your ST look like new... whiter than white and at lower temperatures without the boil wash

FROM THE ARCHIVES Public Dominator - Disk A168

To fit as much as possible onto disks and bulletin boards, you usually compress data to a reasonable size with an archiving program such as ARCGSH. The current version (V2.1) can handle formats as common as ZOO or ARC and as obscure as UUD, UUE and SHAU. On the same disk is *Zap ST*, an excellent text and file editor which appeared on the Cover Disk of issue 12 of *FORMAT*'s previous incarnation, *ST AMIGA FORMAT*. Modifying files was never easier!★★★



■ Bang! Kapow! Zap! Alter your files and look good too with new improved *Zap ST*. It's additive free, kind to the environment and won't deplete the ozone layer

FONT OF ALL KNOWLEDGE LAPD - Disk LAU16

You already know, of course, that *Degas Elite* uses an operating system called G-DOS, enabling you to utilise any number of fonts. *GEMFED* is an easy-to-use font editor for G-DOS which comes with its own manual on the disk, as well as a generous 146K of fonts. You can load them in and tailor them to your needs or follow the easy instructions and create your very own from scratch. ★★★

TOP TEN PUBLIC DOMAIN TOP TEN

These we have loved (addresses etc at the end of *Public Sector*)

- 1 FRENCH KISS - Goodmans - GD491
- 2 SO WATT - Sphinx Software - Demo53
- 3 DEFCON ONE DEMO - Goodmans - Defcon One
- 4 THE MINDBOMB DEMO - South West Software Library - Disk912
- 5 THE UNION DEMO - South West Software Library - Disk370
- 6 PUMP UP THE VOLUME - Page 6 ST Library - DiskST138
- 7 THE SNOWMAN - The ST Club - MUS.27
- 8 THE CAREBEARS CUDDLY DEMO - South West Software Library - Disk598
- 9 STARWARS DEMO - Paradise Computers - Dem39
- 10 ST CONNEXIONS SOUND DEMO - Sphinx Software - Demo64

WRATH OF THE DEMON™

You are on a quest to rid the kingdom of an evil Demon and his minions, rescue the princess and restore honour to your king. Your quest will lead you through caves, swamps, temples and castles before reaching your ultimate challenge ... the Demon himself.

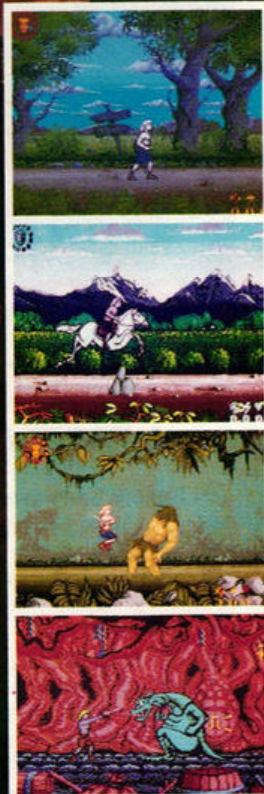
Wrath of the Demon combines spectacular graphics, animation, sound and playability, featuring:

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- * Arcade Game Quality

Superb gameplay and control of characters makes this a stunning graphic adventure in every sense.

Available for Amiga, Atari ST, IBM PC and C64.



© 1990 ReadySoft Incorporated. Wrath of the Demon is a trademark of ReadySoft Incorporated.

EVERY ST SHOULD HAVE ONE

B-Soft - Disk H01

Here's a disk crammed full of positively indispensable programs. *RAMbuffer* is a combined RAM-disk and printer buffer ACC which you can configure when you boot up. *FCOPY_3* is the latest version of a superb copying utility which can format and copy to practically all specifications and includes a virus checker. *Procopy V2.01* is a well featured little copier which enables you to make multiple copies and even analyse your disks.

MegaForm is - you guessed it - a mega-formatter (hence, I suppose, the title). It can squeeze up to 920K of space onto your disks if your drive can handle it. (User beware, however: at that size, your disk's reliability has to be seriously questionable.) *Virus_Die* is a virus killer (featured on *FORMAT Cover Disk 8*) which does a good job on the better-known viruses.

ST Writer Elite, the famous program constantly at the top of all the PD libraries' best-seller lists, is an impressively versatile text editor which can handle complicated block movements and large edits. Also on the disk are a good dozen standard letters and forms, covering a range of subjects such as house conveyancing and CVs. ★★★★★

DEMOS

AWESOME, EXCELLENT, BODACIOUS AN' DISTINCTLY COWABUNGA DEMOS TO SET YER MONITOR ALIGHT

FRENCH KISS

Goodmans PD - Disk GD491

Every now and then a demo comes along which really stands out from the rest of the field. The extremely attractive *French Kiss* by Tufty is one such, combining outstanding music and eminently watchable graphics to great effect.

The music is taken from the Lil Louis record "French Kiss" (the one with the raspy-voiced girl groaning in that most suggestive manner) and has been sampled at a high KHz rate so there's no background hiss or crackle. Press M and you enter Mixemode, in which, simply by moving the joystick, you can play one of eight samples taken from the record. You

can speed them up or slow them down, so you really feel you're producing a new mix. While all that is going on, an animated Wendy James moves in time to the music. If you tire of watching her (how could you?) then just press P to transform Wendy into either Blondie, Martika or Kylie (well, suit yourself). ★★★★★



■ Demo of the month is the excellent *French Kiss*, featuring an assortment of female stars pouting just for you

THE EMPIRE DEMO

The Other PD Library

Not so much one demo as eight on this excellent disk (by Tec from V8) with a well thought out mix of sound and graphics. Once you load the main menu you can call up any of the sub-demos by pressing the left and right cursor keys. The best music is to be found on the soundtrack demo, which includes 22 excellent samples. The actual tunes are quite short but by some clever programming they seem to go on for ages. The best graphics are in the "big ball" section, which includes some ingenious ray-tracing effects as words reflect in the large blue bouncing ball. ★★★★★



■ Bouncing balls and wicked sampled sounds will impress you when you load up this selection of demos and screens

ART 'N' MUSIC

QUARTET SONGS

Movie-king PDL - Disk MUSIC 003

The Quartet sampler has proved to be a popular piece of hardware, so it's no surprise that music written with it has found its way into the public domain. This disk contains a generous dozen songs created with samples and a Quartet song player to listen to them with. A converter file on the disk converts Commodore Amiga games machine IFF files such as those produced by the Sonix program to Quartet 4V standard. ★★

TEX NEO DEMO SHOW

Sphinx software - Disk P/ART6

A rather peculiar collection of pictures with absolutely no general theme to them. If you



■ Best picture on the disk, this handsome chap, but that's not saying much!

enjoy mucking about with other people's artwork then these ten pictures might be of interest to you, but otherwise give this disk a very wide berth. ★

G-FORCE #42 DEMO

The South West Software Library

In this collection of four demos put together by ST coders GForce, the best is the *Lost Boys* conversion of the famous *Red Sector II* demo with 3-D sprites taken from their *Mindbomb* demo. Also on the disk are the SS sound-tracker and the excellent *Thalion* sound demo. The latter is crammed full of both sampled and internally-generated music. ★★★★★

LOOK AT MY CHOPPER...!!



■ The absolutely amazing *Red Sector* demo converted to the ST by master coders the *Lost Boys* serves as a lesson in how to program a demo

REVENGE SHOW II

The South West Software Library

No music in this one, it's entirely graphics. The pictures are joined together by a very flashy slideshow program, which merges them and fades them in and out. The artwork itself is of a dazzlingly high standard and would look good just left running on an ST to show off its abilities for the entertainment of passers-by. ★★

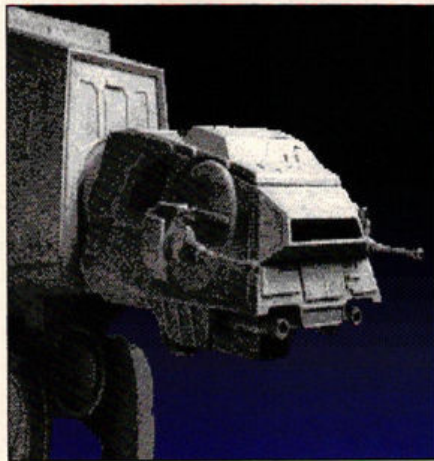


■ Graphics you could frame are the order of the day in this, the second *Revenge* show - and they look good in action too

THE WALKER DEMO

Public Dominator - Disk D210

Seen *The Empire Strikes Back*? Remember those huge, walking, armoured, laser-spitting quadrupeds which destroyed the rebel base? This demo shows one of them things strolling past a computer and firing out of the monitor at you. The animation is absolutely superb and there's no doubt that a lot of time went into it, but not enough screen time has come out of it: the demo runs a heartbreaking 9.384 secs (approx). You decide if it's worth it. ★★



■ The Metropolitan Police demonstrating their new acid party deterrent

GAMES AND LEISURE

FOOTBALL 88 PDQ Games - Disk BU2

Would you believe, a football simulation of the type that's been around since the abacus. You know the sort: no graphics, more leagues than the Atlantic ocean and the sort of loader that would look at home on a ZX81. There must however be some sort of market for this, and at least it is public domain. If you relish the prospect of taking a fourth-division side to league glory and have a very fertile imagination then give it a try. ★

Desk	STAFF	LEAGUE	PLAY	OPTS
Halifax (A)	2	2	Halifax (H)	
Crews (A)			Crews (H)	
F.A.CUP ROUND 1			Hereford (H)	
Hereford (A)			Cambridge (H)	
Cambridge (A)			F.A.CUP ROUND 5	
Northampton (H)			Northampton (A)	
Stockport (A)			Stockport (H)	
Orient (A)			Orient (H)	
Tranmere (H)			Tranmere (A)	
Peterboro (H)			Peterboro (A)	
Mrexham (H)			F.A.CUP ROUND 6	
Torquay (H)			Mrexham (A)	
F.A.CUP ROUND 2			Torquay (A)	

■ The fixture list for a fourth-division side (and they reckon they're hard up!)

CARRIER ATTACK

PDQ Games - Disk BU26

When I was a kid the game that everyone wanted was Computer Battleships. Instead I got a couple of Mr Men scribbler pads and a tube of Smarties. But now I can recapture my youth and play a much better version of the same game. This is Battleships tarted up for the twentieth century, and what a great game it is too. Nice graphics, excellent spot effects and the sort of addictiveness usually missing from games costing ten times as much. Kids of all ages (!) will love it. ★★ ★★



■ Who do you think you are kidding, Mr Hussein, if you think old Kuwait's done

COREWARS

The South West Software Library

Something of an oddity, this. It's all about programming and apparently it's an ST version of a game played for many eons on mainframes by frustrated systems analysts. The idea is that two "computer warriors" - actually small pieces of code written in Assembler - battle it out, trying to destroy each other, and the results of the battles are displayed graphically on the screen. You can deploy the "warriors" included on the disk or you can program your own. ★★ ★

POOLS PREDICTOR

Sphinx Software - Disk UTI55

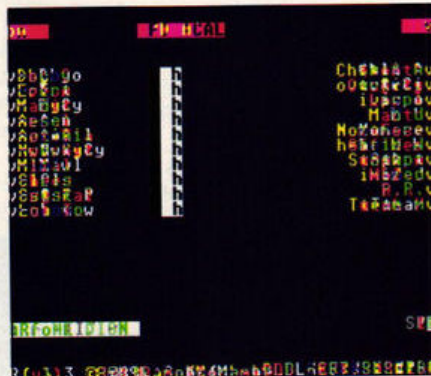
Everyone has a system for trying to win the



■ Two program "warriors" battle it out inside the computer - and there's no Tron anywhere in sight, more's the pity

pools: pins in the form, dates of birth, bust sizes of page three models - you name it and someone's using it.

Now you can go all hi-tech and have the computer save you the hassle of pricking your fingers, forgetting when Uncle Norman's birthday was, or not being able to find that tape-measure just when you need it most... Use this program to predict by either luck or form and send coupon back to Littlewoods. Good luck and remember ST FORMAT when you win. You know we've always liked you. ★★ stf



■ Load the program, check out the predictions, fill in the coupon and win a cool million... yeah, right

WHERE TO GET IT - READERS' RECOMMENDATIONS

Advent, PO Box 414, Norwich NR1 4NX

Alpha Computing, 32 Meadow Drive, Halifax, W Yorks HX3 5JZ

Atari Advantage, 56 Bath Road, Cheltenham GL53 7HJ ☎ 0242 224340

Awesomedemos, 3 Mason Road, Seaford, East Sussex BN25 3EE

B Soft, 33 Corsham Road, Calcot, Reading, RG3 5ZH

Budgie UK, 5 Minster Close, Rayleigh, Essex SS6 8SF

Computer Connections, Ashlaw House, Euximoor Drive, Christchurch, Wilsbech, Cambs PE14 9LS

Demo City, 15 The Wynd, Dunshalt, Cupar, Fife KY14 7HE

Demo Club, 23 Alma Place, Spilsby, Lincs PE23 5LB

Elmsoft, PO Box 17, Loughton, Essex IG10 2EE

Entertainment Soft, 11 Calbourne Drive, Calcot, Reading, Berks RG3 7DB

Floppyshop ST, 50 Stewart Crescent, Northfield, Aberdeen ☎ 0224 691824

Goodman PDL, 16 Conrad Close, Meir Hay Estate, Longton, Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire ST3 1SW

HAL Computing, 15 Regents Terrace, Leeds LS6 1NP ☎ 0532 435805

Kad-Soft, 2 Ebor Paddock, Calne, Wilts SN11 0JY ☎ 249 817174

LAPD, 80 Lee Lane, Langley, Heanor, Derby DE7 7HN

MPH, 10 Chandlers Court, Eaton, Norwich NR4 6EX

MT Software, Woodstock House, 14 Lanes End, Totland, I.O.W PO39 0AL ☎ 0983 756056

Paradise Computers, 9 Westfield Crescent, Brighton BN1 8JB

PD Library, 68 Delancey St, London NW1 7RY

Pdom PD Atari, PO Box 801, Bishop's Stortford, Herts CM23 3TZ ☎ 0279 757692

PDQ, Dept 6, PO Box 38, Eastleigh, Hants SO5 5HB

Riverdene PDL, 63 Wintringham Way, Purley on Thames, Berks RG8 8BH

Round Table PD, 7 St Andrews Rd, Warminster BA12 8EP

Seniac, 14 Oaklea Close, Old Roar Road, St Leonards On Sea, E.Sussex TN37 7HB ☎ 0424 753070

Softville PD, Unit 5, Stratfield Park, Waterloooville, Hants PO7 7XN

South West Software Library, PO Box 562, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 2YD

Sphinx Software, Erw Fynydd, Carmel, Llanelli SA14 7SG

ST Club, 9 Sutton Place, 49 Stoney St, Nottingham NG1 1LX

ST UK, 1 Bartholemew Road, Bishops Stortford, Herts CM23 3TP

The Other PDL, 108 Kenmare Road, Wavertree, Liverpool L15 3HQ

Wizard PD, 178 Waverley Road, Reading, Berks, RG3 2PZ

PD PERSONAL CHOICE

Each month we ask a Public Domain boss to nominate his top ten. This month: Martin Dryden of The South West Software Library.

1. Mouse Tricks - 1092
2. CoreWars - 977
3. Valley Girl - 758
4. Uniterm - 183
5. Engine Animation - 984

6. TEX - 486-489
7. PrintPlus - 855
8. DM Banner - 424
9. MicroEMACS - 256
10. MAGIC demo - 443

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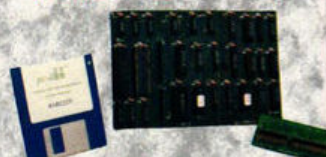
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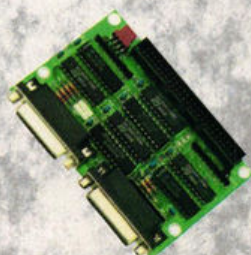
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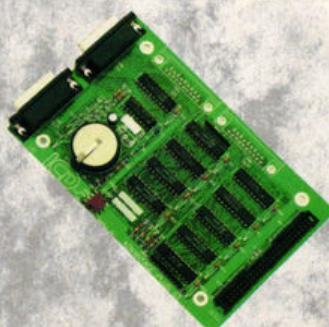
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"Ooer" and – if you insist – "missus," it's a whopper and no mistake: more new releases than you could shake a joystick at. The man they call Mark Higham (on the right) leads the **FORMAT** team into the empire of the senses that is ST gameplay. Go!



screenplay

TEAM YANKEE

Hold on to your helmet and make like you're off to the Gulf in this new tank sim. Format Gold or Friday's front page news? **page 54**



THE IMMORTAL

Explore eight labyrinthine levels and take in some astonishingly detailed sprites along the way **page 92**



CAPTIVE

A maze of corridors and robots armed with a wealth of sophisticated electronic devices. Is it 1992 already? **page 66**



GOLD OF THE AZTECS

Don loincloth, hit the jungle and slice some snakes in this horizontally-scrolling beat-'em-up. Watch out for the specially imported elephants! **page 81**



PLOTTING

The latest heartstopping mindnumbing fingerlicking simple puzzle game in the Tetris mould **page 69**

LOOM

Lucasfilm, with more spellbinding results **page 76**



ANCIENT BATTLES

Replay classic wargames and see how you'd have fared. Play or die, Captain oh my Captain **page 78**

BSS JANE SEYMOUR

This strategy RPG has the lot: Biological Survey Ships to penetrate, deadly radiation leaks to locate and repair, alien life-forms to capture and that cute actress out of Le Jardin **page 59**

DAYS OF THUNDER

Pull on your helmet, push your foot to the floor, shoot round the track faster than a speeding bullet and give Tom Cruise a run for his money **page 85**

FIREBALL

The goalie's a salamander with bad breath. The ball's a solid mass of fire. The pitch is solid steel. Prepare for some heated exchanges in this futuristic sports game **page 60**

FUTURE BASKETBALL

What, basketball, exempt from violence? Forget that – and the rule book – in this gruelling sports sim **page 89**

INTERNATIONAL 3D TENNIS

Now's your chance to play McEnroe indoors in this 3D sim. Wait till you're seeded number one and celebrate with the old barley water trick **page 75**

LOOPZ

Simple but headspinning puzzle game. Get your head round this one and you'll be surprised what you can do, probably **page 73**

MEAN STREETS

Tex Murphy, private eye, cruises 21st century San Francisco, shooting it out with bad guys and roughing up stoolies. Seems like nothing changes in 100 years... **page 65**

NIGHT BREED

The ST game of the film of the book of the product of Clive Barker's seriously deranged imagination **page 70**

SAINT DRAGON

Sounds like a quiet, passive little game. Drop it in your drive, wait for it to load, then... aargh! **page 90**

SKATE WARS

Intense, manic and utterly deplorable variation on ice-skating. Don't get cold feet! **page 82**

SPACE ROGUE

Another Origin space epic combining spaceflight sim and role-playing adventure – and even a bounty hunter you talk to in a space cantina **page 86**

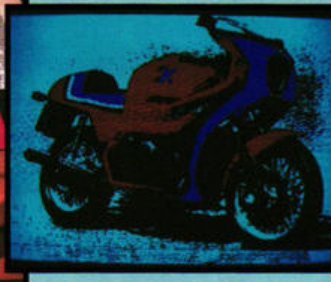
TIME MACHINE

Off-rip Wells GH this in time of paradox the explore **page 94**

WINGS OF DEATH

After Xenon II the vertically-scrolling shoot-'em-up was dead. Now it's back – but with a vengeance? **page 97**

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team yankee



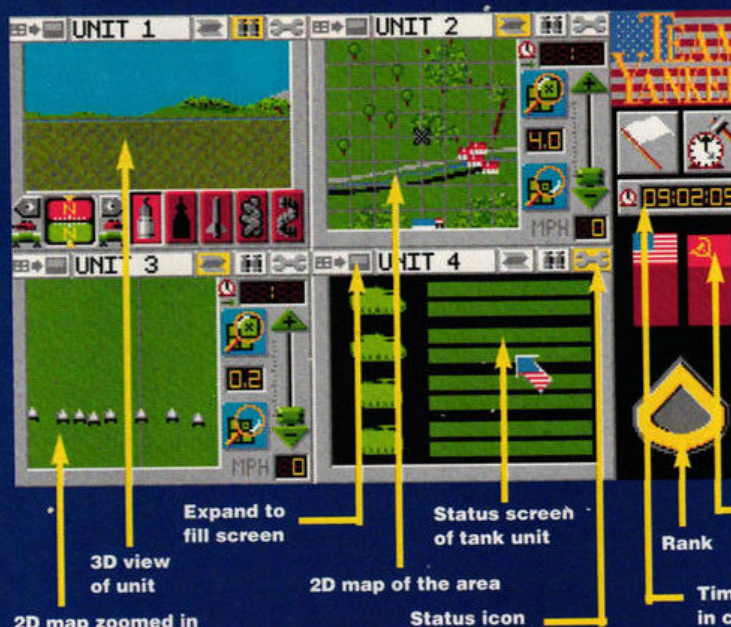
EMPIRE £29.99

Simulators: overrated? One great big eyewatering armstretching yawn? Evidently you haven't seen Team Yankee, a sim that wilfully sacrifices some of that tedious old verisimilitude for the sake of manic gameplay.

Mark Higham dons helmet, TA uniform and bicycle clips to discover how the end result plays...



■ Tank sim Conqueror sacrificed real-life difficulty for screamingly good gameplay. Now Team Yankee incorporates many of the real-life obstacles ignored by its predecessor, and could very well lead down the primrose path to addiction. Look, are you sure you're ready for this?



■ All the action takes place from this main game screen. The views from each of your four tank units are represented in a different quadrant of the screen.

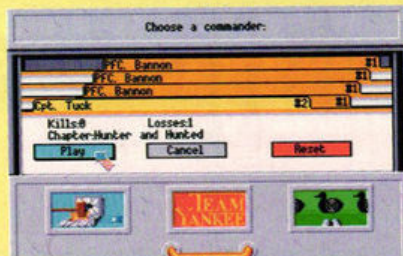
Different windows can be used to show different details about the unit as is shown here where two of the windows are showing the map, a third is showing the 3D simulation of the landscape and the fourth the status of the four tanks in unit four

Strength of your forces - calculated according to strength and morale

THE ST FORMAT GUIDE TO GETTING TANKED UP

A Team Yankee mission demands much planning, not only to achieve the objective, but also to estimate the likelihood of attack at all points.

This guide through a game shows just some of the considerations you might need to make...



Choose to play the mission and enter a character name. Notice the rank of the player, representing the difficulty of the mission. As you complete each set of five missions your rank goes up from Private through to Corporal, Sergeant, Staff Sergeant and Captain. With each move your tanks are increasingly overpowered by soviet forces. Life's a bitch, n'est pas?

Mission Objective:
Team Yankee, you are the First Team of our battalion to have seen combat. You are therefore being asked to spearhead our first attack.

To the north of us the Soviet 28th Guards Division is making a concerted attack on our lines.

This attack will take us right into the flank of the enemy.

We have no information at all about the disposition of Soviet forces you are about to face.

There may be troops in the village of Lemm, to the south east of Objective LOG. You would be best

in the village of Lemm, to the south east of Objective LOG. You would be best advised to steer clear of there.

Team Yankee, this is your first venture behind enemy lines. Give it your best!

Since both C and D Infantry companies have got lost en route to our assembly area, you must make this attack on your own.

Your intermediate objective is to take control of objective LOG, marked A on your map.

You must clear all resistance around Objective LOG.

The mission is presented to you in the briefing room. (You'll need to write this down: there's no way of referring to it later.) The map on the side shows the playing map with an objective overlay, presented with the mission and showing you how to progress across the map

each of the units at all times.

At the start of a game you decide whether to try out a practice game or venture into the full unrestrained fury of war. The practice option gives the new boys an opportunity to put control skills and reflexes to the test. The mission, taking you around a course, is a simple one, but is played in exactly the same way as any of the ordinary missions. The only difference is that the soviet forces you confront don't fire back - very handy that.

When you tire of marching your tanks in circles around the map you can leap into the real battle. *Team Yankee* is divided into a set of five different missions. At the start of a new mission your objective is explained on a notepad running down one edge of the briefing screen. The rest of the screen is dominated by a map of the mission area. You can call up an extra information screen to point out locations on the map such as your start site, the location of your objectives and any locations commanded by the opposing soviet forces.

A mission typically involves moving your units into a specified location and then defending that area from enemy attack either for a limited time or until the forces have been neutralised. Along the way you need to avoid locations which may be playing host to an enormous soviet presence. Other missions may involve you in offensive tactics where the objective is to seek out and blast soviet tanks.

The playing screens feature an impressive 3D simulation of the

ARROWS FOR THE MODERN ARMY

Go into battle

Overlay of mission objective

Road

River

US forces

Forest

Battle start time

Soviet forces

Set up artillery barrages

Artillery Support

HE	09:05
DPICM	09:02
SMOKE	09:04

09:00

■ The cannon icon at the start of a mission session enables you to create a number of separate barrages. These comprise HE (high explosive), DPICM (dual-purpose improved conventional munitions) and SMOKE shells. Availability of artillery depends on your scenario and rank. A clock on each enables you to alter the start time for a particular barrage and the location of the barrage can be indicated by moving the mouse cursor over the map and selecting a position. The briefing screen gives you details about your mission. Watch out for those unprotected central territories and be careful you don't fall victim to a well-blasted missile!

landscape from a front facing gun turret. Alternatively, you can look down on the game area using a 2D map, enabling you to zoom in and out of the map and look at the arrangement of tanks.

All movement of the tank units is made from the map screen. To move a unit you need to place a cross on the map and select a speed. The four tanks in the unit then head for the location at a snail's pace.

A tank can blast you from over a mile away and you need to be on the lookout for the first sign of trouble. Be careful not to plod into unprotected territory, and be wary

of any moves which leave you vulnerable, such as crossing rivers. A zoom mode enables you to scan the skyline and watch out for soviet tanks hiding in the tree line. If you don't notice anything happening you can turn on your thermal imager and hope to identify the enemy this way.

The best advice for avoiding attack is to steer close to forests or tree lines where you can hide quickly. You also need to watch out that you don't fire any weapons which can attract the attention of the soviet tanks.

Moving across roads is the fastest method of travel. Rough

terrain is slightly slower and often exposed. Forests are the most protected sites, though progress through them is painfully slow. In the middle of some forests you discover useful tracks which you can use to move around quickly but watch out, for the soviet use those tracks as well. While the map displays the soviet forces on the bare terrain, it rarely shows the position of soviet tanks masked by forestry.

When you have successfully played all five missions in the role of Private, you advance onto the next rank of Corporal. You then need to replay the missions again,

A The start position of Team Yankee. You're on your own. Before you rush into the attack make sure you plan your strategy

B The village of Lemm. There may be soviet about. Since this isn't one of your objectives you may want to steer clear

C LOG: your first objective. Make sure that you neutralise all opposition here before continuing

■ The objective map shows you exactly where you need to go and displays the presence of soviet tanks. Beware - enemy tanks located in the forest aren't shown on the map

Go into battle

Overlay of mission objective

Road

River

US forces

Forest

Battle start time

Soviet forces

Set up artillery barrages

Artillery Support

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D The river Lemm. Since your tanks will be exposed as you cross this, take care

E Hill 214, otherwise known as objective LINK. Your ultimate objective is to reach the crossroads of the tracks at the centre of the forest

Go into battle

Overlay of mission objective

Road

River

US forces

Forest

Battle start time

Soviet forces

Set up artillery barrages

Artillery Support

HE	09:05
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Before you play the game proper, set up artillery support, including times and places at which certain artillery barrages occur. You're not allowed to access artillery barrages during the battle itself, but you can set up a number of separate barrages beforehand. HE (high explosive), DPICM (Dual-Purpose Improved Conventional Munitions) and SMOKE shells are the munitions on offer. (Continued overleaf)

ENTER FIRST INTO BATTLE... LAST TO LEAVE



ATARI ST
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Set in the near future, as an alternative reality, BATTLE COMMAND is an arcade/strategy game in which the player controls a single "MAULER" Assault Tank in one of 16 scenarios (missions) in the ultra war fought between two dominant races in the NEW WORLD. The latest phase of the North/South war has been going on for over 10 years, with a stalemate eventually developing - a standoff between armies massed over a long dug-in battlefield. Such are the defensive capabilities of each side, full scale attacks are suicidal, so any offensive moves are, by necessity, small "behind the lines" actions performed by elite troops in specially designed vehicles. The Mauler is the latest such machine - capable of being lifted in and out of hostile territory by fast stealth choppers and armed with the most advanced weaponry the Northern scientists can devise.

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Unit 4 has just lost a vehicle
Load that gun barrel and pull the trigger. Watch the soviet scum go up in smoke. Hunting the red bear may be ideologically dodgy, but it's never been so much fun!

VERDICT

Though the split screen display is certainly novel, no-one is going to suggest you play the entire game from that view. The full-screen mode suits the novice player best of all, since you don't have four times as much information thrown at you at once.

It's also convenient to be able to see your remaining weapons and for accessing certain icons not present in the quadrant view.

So, you might ask, what's the point of putting all that effort into the quadrant view? When you become more experienced at the game you start to depend on the quadrant view more and more to give you a complete view of the battle scenario.

Using the four windows, you begin to feel the pace and ferocity of war, particularly when you can see a tank looming ever closer in each of the four windows.

There are a handful of annoying elements which you gradually notice as the battle gets hotter. For example, it would have been helpful if you could have seen the view from the front of the tank unit and, at the same time, an over-

head view of the area. A few extra gadgets on each of the quadrant views would also have been an attractive addition, particularly the zoom mode.

One point which prevents it from being a real classic is that there's no option to direct the tanks from the main viewing screen. Instead you need to switch to the map, position your cursor and wait for the tank to reach its destination. This means you're constantly flicking from the 3D view screen to the map screen – a somewhat irritating distraction in the circumstances.

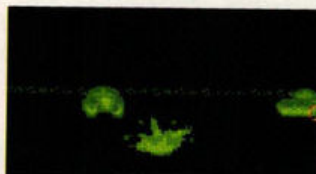
These complaints notwithstanding, it's abundantly clear that this game has been intelligently put together. Even though the five missions aren't enough, they have been well designed to ease you into the nightmare of war.

Tank controls are easy to use and quick to master. If you were hooked on M1 tank platoon from Microprose, then you just won't be able to tear yourself away from Team Yankee.

So the East versus West cold war is dead, but this is nonetheless a nail-biting challenge – even for gamers who would normally not be seen dead (as it were) at the controls of a tank sim. Give it a go: you won't regret it.

MARK HIGHAM

GRAPHICS	8
SOUNDTRACK	5
INTELLIGENCE	7
INSTANT APPEAL	7
LONG TERM INTEREST	9
OVERALL	84%



Switch on your thermal imager to see through the smoke. Contrary to popular belief, a modern tank is represented as a green image rather than red. (Not a lot of people know that)

but this time your forces are reduced and the missions more complex. You need to compete in another four campaigns until you reach the supreme rank of Captain.

The scenarios become more testing each time, with the objectives constantly changing from defensive to offensive strategies. Some of the later scenarios are even fought in the dark where thermal imaging is the only way to detect enemy forces.

EFFECTS

What's novel about Team Yankee is the way the screen is divided into four separate windows, each representing one of your tank units. Each quadrant of the display can be used to show the view seen from the tank unit, a 2D overhead map of the landscape or a status screen showing how the unit is faring.

The maps are where you make all your movement decisions, and

you can zoom in on areas of the landscape to the point where 0.2 square miles are represented in the window. This adds much atmosphere to the game, keeping you on your toes as you try to keep up with what each tank unit is doing. If several are attacked at once you can go mad fending off the attack.

Screen updating can be slow, particularly when all four windows are filled at once. When you roll into the forest the display slows still further so all you see are fistfuls of bitmapped trees. In zoom mode the screen updating slows down still further. This lack of speed is unfortunate but it doesn't damage the gameplay too much.

Sound effects are sparse but include the usual dose of bullet fire, weapon noises and scene-setting intro music. A warning noise sounds when any of your tank units are under attack, and this, ultimately, is the only sound you're likely to listen out for.

MORE CLUES TO GETTING TANKED UP IN TEAM YANKEE



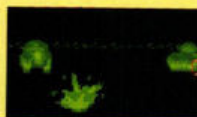
(Continued from previous page) Right, you're into the action. The first sight you see is a shifting landscape repeated across four windows. Before you do anything, turn to the map displays to get your bearings and work out where the soviet forces are lurking...



Examining at the map from the viewpoints of the different units – very interesting indeed



Cut back to the full screen view to see what's going on. All's quiet on the eastern front



You race round the map avoiding fire. As you get near

to the forest you switch on the thermal imager and discover something you really didn't want to see. Switch back to ordinary imaging and give that tank some severe GBH. Now plough on through the forest. Search out tracks to speed your progress – but look out for soviet tanks.

Complete this mission and it

isn't really the end. It isn't even the beginning of the end. But it may be the end of the beginning...



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Digital Integration

Not much fun being lost in space with only a packet of cheese and onion Wheeties and a computer that sounds like HAL for company, especially when you're almost out of fuel and earth is 14 light years in the wrong direction. Normal life-forms might feel a little distraught in such a situation but you, brave pilot, are made of stronger stuff.

Besides, there is a ray of hope: you've encountered a fleet of 20 crippled Federation star craft and if you can make your way to the furthest one you can take on its load of fuel. So zip on the bakelite space suit, open the airlock and step out onto the good ship Jane Seymour.



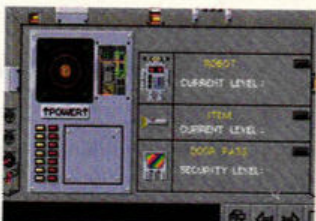
■ At the start of level one you're immediately presented with a pass card and a shotgun. Makes you wonder what's on the other side of the hangar door



■ Level 9 has a complex of laboratories you can use to cook up the spaceship propellant you need



■ The hydroponics room isn't the toilet but the greenhouse. The plants you come across there are reminiscent of triffids in more ways than two



■ When your batteries are running low, it's time to make a direct trip to the nearest recharge machine

BSS Jane Seymour

GREMLIN
£29.99

Federation Quest 1

BSS Jane Seymour is a space exploration game in much the same vein as *Captive*. To complete a level and leave a ship you must complete two tasks: first, return power to the ship by replacing the Energy Flux Decoupler widget (so that all the lights, robots and assorted machines can function); and second, find an Inhibit lock which enables you to operate the navigation systems on the bridge.

As you attempt to navigate your way around the ship you must face hazards like the large hostile aliens which want to tear your tongue out through your bottom. There are 20 of these aliens in total, each keen to demonstrate its own macabre party trick. Best to shoot first and ask details later, with all your limbs intact. Besides the aliens there are also irradiated crew members who want to play football with your goolies. The most obvious approach to these poor sods is instant death.

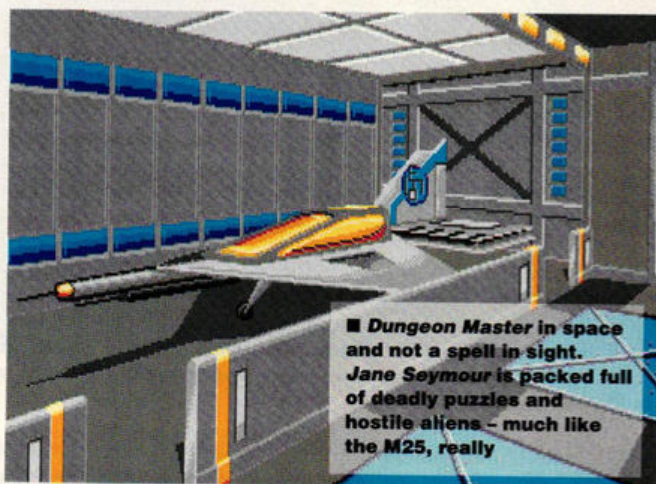
Scattered around the ships are tasty weapons such as a blaster, a shotgun and (most satisfying and effective of all) a flame



■ I'm Jumpin' Jack Flash, get some gas, gas, gas... No, it's not Mick Jagger. This little alien just wants to give you a kiss with those inflatable lips



■ The system status screen keeps you informed of exactly how far you've progressed on that particular level



■ *Dungeon Master* in space and not a spell in sight. Jane Seymour is packed full of deadly puzzles and hostile aliens - much like the M25, really

thrower. On any given level you might also find droids - in any of six varieties (Battle, Sensor, Monitor, Fixit, Rat and Computer Droid) - onto which you can bolt various cartridges to enable them to heal you or detect alien life forms.

EFFECTS

The small but detailed graphics follow very much in the footsteps of *Dungeon Master*. You find infor-

mation about your status on large and attractive operational screens, and the blow-ups of the recharging machines and various devices are easily operated because the buttons are large. The aliens and rogue humans don't move very well at all but they look suitably crazy, and when they perform their attack routines you're guaranteed a surprise. Sound is standard spot effect style - though there are some decent samples scattered throughout the game.

VERDICT

BSS Jane Seymour offers a challenge *Dungeon* fans will enjoy, while the updated setting is considerably more interesting than dank dungeon walls. Gameplay and problem solving are well combined so that aliens appear just when you least need them. The difficulty level is also well judged, ensuring that you'll return to the game again and again. The style may be a little hackneyed but the game is lively and addictive.

ANDREW HUTCHINSON



■ There's no need to spend hours plotting maps in the back of old school exercise books: let the computer chart your route for you



■ Log on to a computer terminal and you can access information about the now berserk crew

GRAPHICS	8
SOUNDTRACK	7
INTELLIGENCE	8
INSTANT APPEAL	8
LONG TERM INTEREST	9
OVERALL	87%

fireball

MICROPROSE £TBA



■ The map on the far wall shows you where your playing dome is in the play area

A fireball formed at the Uskma Geiger on the planet of Myroconia is so hot it takes two years to cool enough to be touched. (Not a lot of people know that.) So what do you do when some 20-foot high metal clown comes skating towards you on its anti-gravity drive and lobs one of those things straight at your head?

Run like hell. No? No? OK then, blast it with your Megadeath Gammalaser? Nope, nor that. What you actually do – get this – is reach out with your fireball grabbers and clasp the glowing orb to your bosom...

You see, you're piloting one of these robotic leviathans yourself. Called an oven (with a fireball lodged in its specially-designed Heat-sac it soon warms up in that thar cockpit), your mechanical

man is in fact a huge suit of armour designed specifically for the sport of Fireball.

A cross between basketball, shot-putting and dodgem-driving, the game is played over a large area containing no fewer than eight goals – four for each team. These are paired, two to a "Dragon's Dwell," and each is guarded by a vicious salamander-type creature which pokes its head out of a doorway and spits gobs of fire at you the moment you come close to putting one away. You don't have to get one past the goalie, you have to kill 'im! How? Simply lob the fireball at his bonce (not easy while avoiding his fiery gob).

You gain possession of the fireball by ramming your opponents at max speed – and they try to get it off you by the same means. You pass the ball by pressing the Fire

button briefly, or jump with it by holding the button down longer. Keep it pressed until you land again and you throw the fireball when you release.

Now this is where it gets complicated. Although the play area is quite large, all the action takes place under a much smaller dome which slides about like an upturned dish in whatever direction the player with the fireball is travelling. There are eight men in your team, but only three can be inside the dome at any one time.

Your players can jump in and out of the dome at will (though not if they're carrying the fireball) and a large part of the strategy in the game comes from jumping (had to get that cheap gag in somewhere). Also, if you collide with a lower wall or get zapped by a dragon, you're sent out of the dome for immediate repairs and another of the men lurking outside the dome takes your place.

And all the time you're scooting around the floor underneath your dome (it's called Eddy, by the way), you can be running into various colour-coded posts for eight different extras, such as "serious heat resistance," "bonus life force" and "shocking death." Ouch.

When you get to a goal, the dome locks onto it long enough for you to dodge the dragons' flaming phlegm (hughie, anyone seen hughie) and try to land the fireball on its scaly noodle.

EFFECTS

The graphics are very, very impressive. Your view of the dome offers a genuine 3D perspective, with players in the background growing progressively smaller with distance, and the dome sliding across the floor as smoothly as an iceberg on an oil slick. And the game starts with an excellent animated sequence of your little man climbing into his oven.

Sound is less impressive. It's competent enough, but features the usual instantly-forgettable Jean-Michel-Jarre-on-a-xylophone soundtrack and zap-whoosh-thunk sound effects.

VERDICT

Most dubious of all, though, is the gameplay. Complicated doesn't



■ The dome has locked onto a Dragonhead, and the hatch has opened...



■ – out comes the dragon's head...



■ – that fiery spit is lethal, so stay out of the way!



■ Got im? You hit the dragon with your Fireball and the scorched beastie retreats. You've scored!

mean deep, and after half an hour swapping fireballs with the enemy 'bots, scooting to and fro over the same bit of pitch ad nauseam and generally coming as close to scoring as our boy Mark Higham after a curry, you get to thinking that maybe Fireball isn't the most interesting game in town. Playing against the computer you get eight different teams of varying 'ardness to play against, but it's probably only in human versus human mode you're going to get any real thrills.

Graphically excellent, Fireball fails to grab. It's a game that's been polished so hard you just slide off.

ROD LAWTON

GRAPHICS	9
SOUNDTRACK	7
INTELLIGENCE	8
INSTANT APPEAL	6
LONG TERM INTEREST	6
OVERALL	70%



■ Eight computer opponents to choose from, and every one as nasty-looking as the rest

Tournament Golf™



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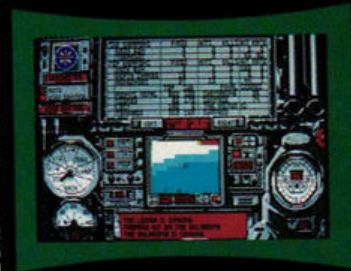
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San Francisco, in the year 2033. You're Tex Murphy, private investigator. A broad by the name of Sylvia Linsky, a real looker, hires you to find the real cause of her father's death. Officially it was suicide, but she believes he was murdered.

All you've got to help you solve the case is \$10,000, a sizeable gun, a gorgeous assistant and a sleek, technology packed hover-car. Can you find out why Carl Linsky died or will you end up in the harbour, sieving algae through your teeth?

With *Mean Streets US Gold* have gone for the hi-tech approach and produced a new twist in arcade adventures: it's not just stick men



■ Meet your employer Sylvia Linsky, a very attractive lady with a range of facial expressions that even the great Roger Moore couldn't better

and cute graphics, but four different modes – travel, search, shootout and interrogate.

You spend most of your time travelling in your hover-car, which is also your office, where you receive faxes and make video calls to either your assistant Vanessa or your snout Lee (they're both swell broads, and you can count on them to come up with a lead when you need one).

When you call them, you hear them in digitised sound and see them in respectable animation. When a fax comes in, a convincing blow-up of the fax machine shows the paper scrolling out.

You move around either manually or by autopilot, though most of the flying is best left to the car: you simply enter the navigation screen and key in the Nav-code for where you want to go. You gradually learn the codes for various sites and can then speak to different people and chase more leads.

You can choose external views, so when you're landing at a particular location you look straight down and get an overview as you come in sight of a building.

In the search scenes you see a large representation of yourself as you wander around a room. To examine an object you move the joystick up and down to select it and then move the joystick left and right to choose what you want to do from a range of options at the bottom of the screen (manipulate,

taste, get, open, or switch on or off).

The shootouts are very intense experiences after your laid-back trip to the location in the hover-car. You must make your way across the screen from left to right through the hordes of bad guys trying to blow you away. Fortunately you can hide behind a convenient crate and duck to dodge their bullets.

On the interrogation screens you see a blow up of the person you're talking to and ask questions by typing in keywords in response to a prompt. The answers you get depend entirely on who the person is; some are more forthcoming than others. If the straightforward approach fails, you can either hit them or bribe them. Certain members of the police force enjoy the extra dosh, and certain members of the public respond if you stick your fist in their larynx. (Use your own skill and judgement!)

EFFECTS

The sound is excellent. Surprisingly clear samples play whenever someone talks or a sound effect, such as the fax operating, is called for. The attention to detail in the visual effects is exemplary: when somebody speaks on the video phone her face moves in sync with the digitised speech; when you interrogate people their facial expressions change depending on what you're asking. The flight scenes in the hover-car are smooth and faultless, and the graphic representation of you in the driver's seat has nice touches such as the way the driver's hands move on the throttle and pitch control as you move the joystick.

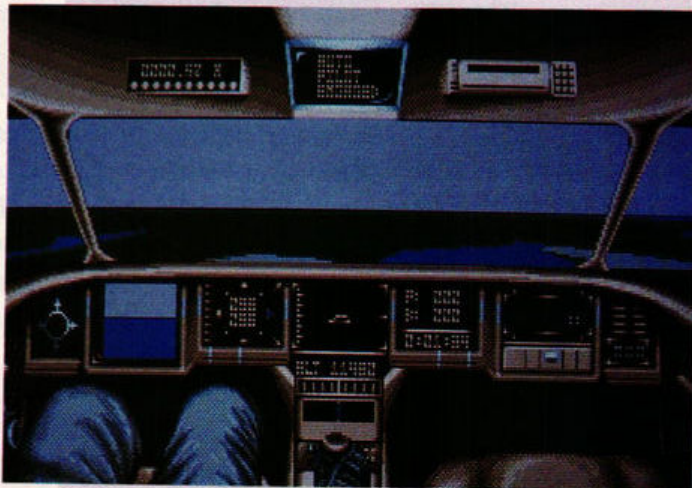
VERDICT

Mean Streets will appeal to most people. The graphics and sound are excellent and it's very easy to get into, but it also keeps you playing by revealing clues at just the right moments and demanding some modicum of intelligence to complete. The driving around and the digitised pictures are reminiscent of *Resolution 101*, but this goes several steps further. If you liked that, then you should enjoy this well programmed cocktail of flight simulator, adventure game and shoot-em-up.

ANDREW HUTCHINSON

mean streets

US GOLD £19.99



■ Tex Murphy, private eye, is investigating a suspicious death. Cruise through the streets of 21st century San Francisco and find out why someone's bumping off all the scientists who ever worked on the mysterious Doomsday project

■ This car's got the lot – a fax, a video phone and a navigation computer – and some wally's left the door open...

■ If in doubt, give Vanessa a shout. She's come up trumps with this information about Carl Linsky's suspicious death



■ Oh dear me, they don't make them like that any more, do they? (Thank the Lord!)

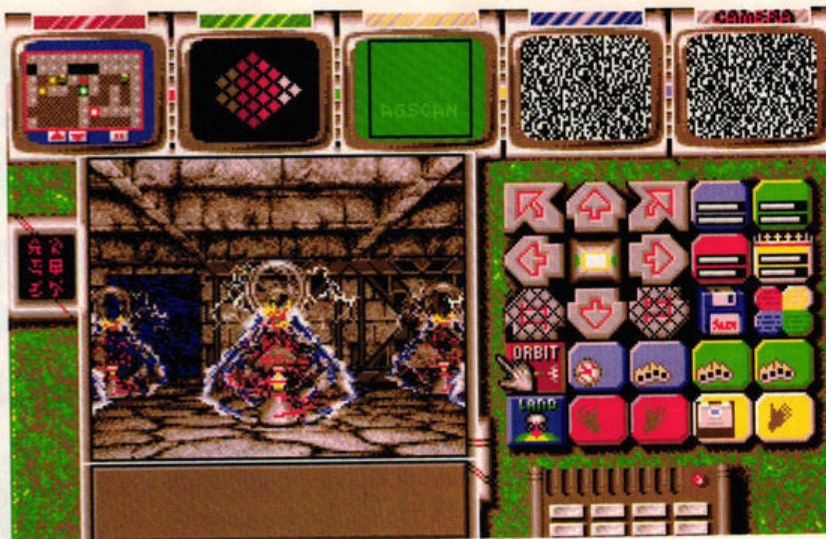
■ Right, let's go somewhere. No need for someone to sit next to you and send you in completely the wrong direction because the map's upside down and there's not enough light in the car... just enter the code and let the computer take the strain

GRAPHICS	8
SOUNDTRACK	8
INTELLIGENCE	7
INSTANT APPEAL	8
LONG TERM INTEREST	8
OVERALL	84%

The extraordinary success of *Dungeon Master* and its spin-off *Chaos Strikes Back* made many software houses re-examine their range of programs. The resulting move away from shoot-'em-ups and arcade conversions is what gave birth to games like this one. But that's not to suggest that this RPG is simply a bastardised re-hash of *Dungeon Master's* successful formula. There's more to it than that!

You've been imprisoned in a space-jail in suspended animation for 200 years. When a computer glitch wakes you up, you're unable to remember why you're a prisoner. All you want to do is get the hell out of your cell and go somewhere more pleasant – like home.

Realising you can't escape by yourself and that food is not usually provided for cryogenic prisoners, you desperately search your cell. You find an out-of-date holographic computer which you use to establish a communications link with a group of androids. If you



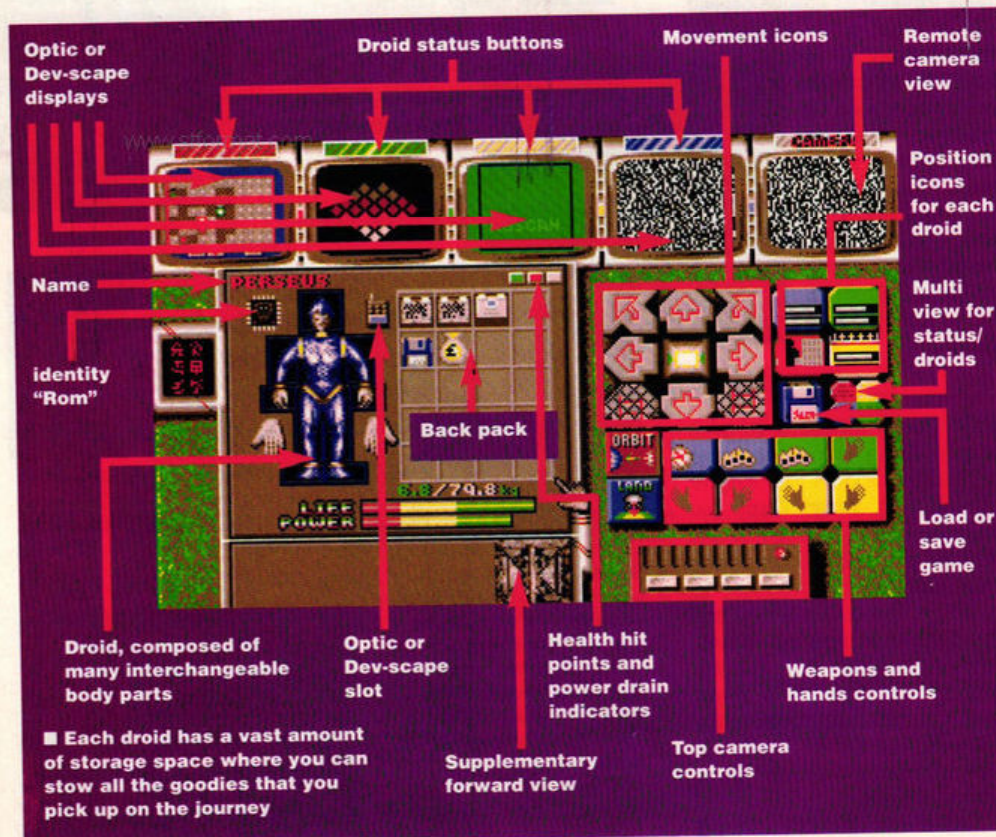
■ Don't waste your time and ammo shooting at these shimmering blobs. They won't attack you – they're power generators!

Incarcerated for crimes he did not commit, Neil Jackson attempts to escape from a secret space-prison. But with nothing to help him except his dusty old ST and four cast-offs from Westworld, his chances look slimmer than a snake on a diet...



captive

MINDSCAPE £24.99

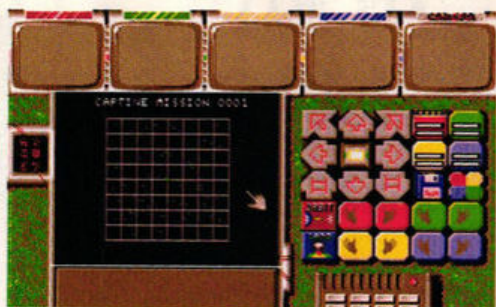


can control them, these far-distant cyborgs could prove to be your saviours. If they can discover the location of your prison by searching the bases dotted around the galaxy, they could set you free.

Your screen represents the view you see on your holographic-computer. There are a number of small TV consoles, a large view window and hosts of icons for movement and object operation. Virtually everything is controlled using the mouse, but the movement controls have been duplicated on the numeric keypad to make quick getaways even easier.

The main view window shows what the droids see. To begin with it displays a star map with one tiny, blinking star. Using the up/down movement icons, you can zoom in and out of the map to get a more detailed look at the first base. Centre the crosshairs on it and click on the gold square in the middle of the movement cluster to set the flight path.

During the flight, you can initialise the droids to make them more personable. Clicking the



■ 50 planets make up the first galaxy and each one may have several smaller moons. Getting lost is easy!



■ Land on the right part of the right planet to find the base which holds the key to your escape



LOOKING OUT FOR TROUBLE

The view that you see is transmitted back from the lead droid – the one with the small crown on his icon. Depending on the type of droid, this view is either a clear image of the terrain, or a fuzzy, out-of-focus picture. This is because human-droids have better visual circuits than Tindron droids, the other type which you start with. You can elect another leader (and change the quality of the view) by double-clicking on another droid icon. You can also swap the positions of the droids within the party by clicking on first one droid icon, then another. In this way you can put the toughest guys at the front and look through the eyes of one at the back.

right mouse button on one of the droid position icons brings up an image of that droid and its back-pack. Inside each back-pack, there's a small silicon chip which you can pick up and position over the droid's brain. A computer keyboard comes up in the main window which you use to enter a name. This automatically sets the droid's level of abilities and dexterity. Do this for each droid and the squad is yours to control.

By now your ship should have reached its destination and your next move is to launch the landing craft. Place the cursor over the base, as you did before, and click the centre square. A small green shuttle weaves its way to the planet's surface and the main view changes to show the base itself.

Using the movement icons you can send the party into the base. This entrance is nearly always a circular metal door with four triangular buttons around the outside. To open the door, press the four buttons in the correct sequence. It's best to be systematic and go through each permutation rather than just clicking away at random because there are only 24 possible sequences. Once you hit the magic order, the door spins open

and you enter the main complex.

Inside the view becomes more atmospheric and a good deal more scary. Passages fade into the distance, twisting and turning as they go. Sooner rather than later, you bump into hostile aliens. These range from tiny dwarf-like creatures which only cause minimal damage to laser-firing, caterpillar-tracked robots who can turn your droids into soup cans.

Don't be shy – attack anything that gives you hassle and destroy it. If you're successful, bags of gold drop from the aliens' death-smoke. Grab all the dosh you can, but remember that you don't have to carry each bag in a separate back-pack slot. By placing them on top of each other they empty themselves into just one bag, which is a lot more convenient.

Before long you come across a strange-looking figure hiding behind a wire mesh. Don't shoot him, he's a shopkeeper! Click on his hands to bring up his list of services. He can help you with all kinds of ammunition, repairs, and

body parts (for a price!).

A computer system is concealed within each base and this holds a disk containing the location of the next base. You need the password to get the disk, so pay a visit to the computer operator. Be warned, though. He is not what he seems! If you attack him, be prepared for a long, bruising struggle.

Each base also hides a power source which provides electricity to operate the doors and power sockets in the walls. The power sockets can keep you alive if you can work out how to use them.



■ Looks can be deceptive: this apparently safe doorman makes you jump if you dare to hit him. He's a bit of a headcase, but you have no alternative. You've just got to take him on, dammit!

The main generators are tall, pulsating blobs of pure energy and to leave the base (after you have the disk) you must destroy them. Simple explosives (available at most good stores) should do the trick, but get ready to leg it after you've thrown it. The ensuing blast takes the whole base out, with you in it if you're not careful!

EFFECTS

Captive's pseudo-3D images capture the atmosphere superbly. Long, darkened passages concealing all kinds of alien wierdos make for tension, excitement and at times, pure terror. Excellent sampled sound effects back up the images: swooshing doors, the crump-crump of energy bolts and a host of other sci-fi noises.

The innumerable objects to switch on, throw, plug in and generally fumble about with make *Captive* a mega-challenge. It can take hours to work out that the secret to a simple looking piece of kit lies in a small, but crucial button you missed so many times before.

VERDICT

A fantastic piece of work, even taking into account that this kind of game has been seen before. Shoot-em-ups have been plagiarised for years now without too many complaints, so why not rework good role-playing games too. *Captive* takes the best from the accepted standard and adds to it. More Cyberpunk than fantasy-battle, *Captive* is bound to appeal to a huge audience, though it's not for those with a nervous disposition.

NEIL JACKSON

GRAPHICS	9
SOUNDTRACK	8
INTELLIGENCE	9
INSTANT APPEAL	9
LONG TERM INTEREST	9
OVERALL	93%

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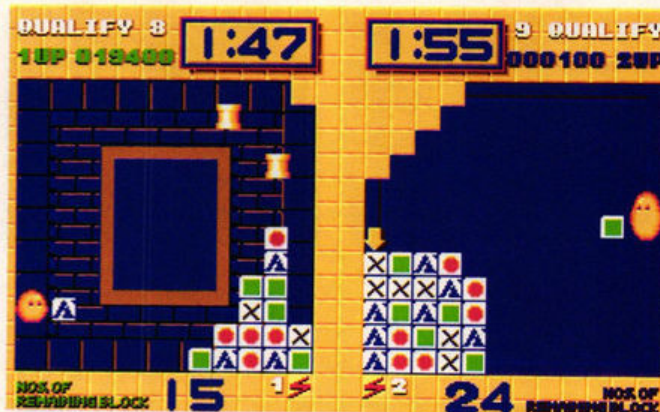
The puzzle game is back with a vengeance. Over the last few months we've reviewed *Astate*, *Manix*, *Magic Lines*, *Loopz* and *Blockout*. Now here comes *Plotting*: same but different, different but the same.

This time out the puzzle element stems back to the tried (tired, more like) and trusted ball and brick scenario. You're presented with a rectangular block of individual bricks neatly stacked, each holding symbols from crosses and coloured squares to circles and ice crystals.

Your playing character is a ball with a grinning face which can only move up the left hand edge of the playing area. You participate by spitting a brick at the main group, making sure that the symbol on the brick you're shooting is the same as the one you're aiming for.

If several bricks with the same symbol are lined up, hit the front one and they all go. And of course the more you whack, the bigger your score goes.

After hitting out a brick the next brick behind it is thrown out. This is the next brick you fire. The brick needn't be thrown directly at the group but can instead be rico-



OCEAN £19.99

plotting

cheted off the roof.

The going gets tough when you've knocked away a chunk of the group and you're left holding a brick for which you can't find a partner. You soon learn to plan three or four moves ahead to

ensure you make the correct brick pop out.

EFFECTS

The visuals are unremarkable – but then, there's little scope in this type of game for a budding

■ Phew what a scorcher: it's official – puzzle games are back with a bang. After two months of constant puzzle game action, Ocean finally add their mighty weight to the puzzle feast.

In *Plotting* (neat title that, suggesting a sort of foreign idea of what an English game might be called) the objective is to bung patterned bricks at identical squares to amass points. The game really gets tough when there's only a handful of bricks left and no partners for them

Leonardo to exercise his pixel paintbrush. The bricks are brightly coloured and the backdrops creative and well-drawn. Ordinarily the screen is split into two and the player uses only the first screen. This seems an astonishing waste of half the screen until you compete in two player mode. Now the second window is used for simultaneous action. Sound effects comprise tedious sound chip noises which can (and will) be turned off.

VERDICT

Yes, the idea is old fashioned. Yes, *Plotting's* not going to squat astride the charts for a year like *Robocop*. But, on the other hand, it's a surprisingly intense and absorbing challenge.

As the levels get tougher and tougher you find yourself forced into planning your moves three, four and even five places ahead just to keep on top of the game. Screw it up and you start losing lives all over the place.

If you've got 20 quid burning a hole in your pocket (and you won't part with it to supplement your correspondent's meagre salary) then *Plotting* is as good a way to spend it as most. It's addictive and demanding enough to keep you coming back again and again, God dammit...

MARK HIGHAM

THROW ME A TUMBLING DICE



1: Look at the group and work out the best place to strike. Check that the brick you get in return can be used elsewhere, otherwise you're going to be stuck before you get started



2: Fire and you get a new block. Watch the bricks above your target slide down to fill the space, exposing a new block along the top



3: Move right up and you can line the brick up so that it ricochets from the ceiling. Note the arrow which indicates the brick you're aiming at

4: That's it: you're on a hiding to nothing. There's one square you can hit, but that only gives you a brick with a cross on it which can't be used anywhere else



GRAPHICS	7
SOUNDTRACK	5
INTELLIGENCE	6
INSTANT APPEAL	8
LONG TERM INTEREST	6
OVERALL	72%

Clive Barker is one of this country's most successful horror author/directors. His latest film, *Nightbreed*, is in much the same vein as the infamous *Hellraiser*. It's about a secret race of creatures, the Breed, who live in an underground Necropolis called Midian and face destruction at the hands of uncaring humans. The game of the film, an "interactive movie" which closely follows the plot, entails controlling the



■ Aaron Boone, hairdresser, is pursued by a dissatisfied customer whose blue rinse went disastrously wrong



■ Peloquin gets fresh (comparatively) with Aaron. I don't know — necking on a first date!



■ The game of the movie of the book. *Nightbreed* looks wonderful, sounds great — but falls down on gameplay

nightbreed

the interactive movie

OCEAN £24.99

main character, Aaron Boone, and trying to save the Breed from extinction.

Boone has been accused of a series of gruesome murders. He seeks out psychiatric help and this is the point where the game starts. The psychiatrist tells him that he's psychotic, that he committed the murders and that he should book into a lunatic asylum at the earliest opportunity.

The scene changes to a map screen showing the asylum, the police station and the gateway to Midian, with a network of interconnecting roads. The first trip is to the asylum (doctor's orders, right?), where Boone hears of the mystical land called Midian and a race of supernatural beings that live there. Naturally enough, he decides he'd rather join them and the scene returns to the map screen and Boone's car.

To move the car you simply point at the next junction or bend

in the road on the route to your destination. At certain junctions the police set up road blocks where you have the option to either run the road block or turn around. If you choose to run the road block you risk ruining the car, but back-tracking uses up a lot of petrol.

Set scenes occur in exactly the same way each time you play the game. If you enter the graveyard you encounter one of the Breed, a hideous chap called Peloquin, whom you have to out-distance. Failure means you can wave goodbye to your head and shoulders. (A difficult manoeuvre, but not one you'd want to have to practise often.)

The scenes in Midian are set in a warren of tunnels. The police and the Breed are out to kill Boone, so they both send search parties down into the tunnels. When you encounter someone you launch into a fight which follows

standard beat-'em-up procedures. Run into the Breed and you have to take evasive action as they launch themselves at you. Come across a policeman and a fight takes place with each kick or punch losing either you or the cop a hit point.

EFFECTS

Since this is an "interactive movie" the graphics are excellent. Sections of the game are in fact pixelised copies of the actual film. The animation of the rest is well executed — the car moves smoothly on the map screen, for instance, and the close-ups of Boone are pleasing to look at — but there isn't too much of it to see.

Sound is entirely sampled and there are several superior spot effects: Boone's footsteps echo down the corridors in Midian and when he is in the lunatic asylum he lets out a nice maniacal laugh.

VERDICT

Nightbreed looks great but plays like a turkey. "Interactive movies" have been done much better by companies such as Cinemaware — and their games weren't exactly awesome.

The main problem is the action sequences. There are too few of them, and all quite derivative. If you've played *Double Dragon* you've seen and done it all before. *Nightbreed* holds your interest the first time you play it because of the graphics, but complete it once and it loses all its appeal. It's also far too easy, since it mainly involves learning the correct set order for the handful of action scenes, and in fact can be completed in as little as two hours.

Ocean's approach to this licence is certainly original and the game shows off the ST's graphics, but it holds no lasting appeal. For 25 quid you're getting little more than a few animated sections from the film, so save your money and go to the cinema instead.

ANDREW HUTCHINSON

GRAPHICS	8
SOUNDTRACK	8
INTELLIGENCE	3
INSTANT APPEAL	5
LONG TERM INTEREST	2
OVERALL	58%

■ The asylum

■ The graveyard

■ The police station

■ The entrance to Midian



■ The police have set up a roadblock. Run it and risk a puncture or turn round and try another route

KICK OFF 2



Blistering Pace - Pixel Perfect Passing - Superb Tactical Game Play

- ★ 1 to 4 players option (Amiga & ST)
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- ★ League and Cup Competition with sudden deaths penalty shoot out.

THE ONE - Ultimate soccer simulation. 96%.

THE ACE - Brilliant. Buy, Boy, Buy. 930.

AMIGA FORMAT - Best footy game to have appeared on any machine. 94%.

ST FORMAT - What a game! Gem to play. Magic. 90%.

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GAMES MACHINE - Probably the best sports game ever. 92%.

COMMODORE USER - No other footie game can touch it. 90%.

AMIGA ACTION - Surpasses all other football games. 93%.

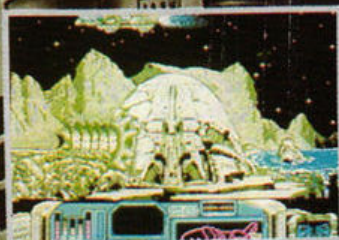
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MESSAGE TO AGENT YG 30:
RED ALERT - Stop - Depart immediately for IPSOS III - Stop - Communications interrupted with JUNAR G2 - Stop - Long-distance Teletransporter threatened - Stop - Confidential data to recover - Stop - Computer XZ 10 and telepathic headset available - Stop - Mission: Dangerous - Stop.

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loopz

The best games, even puzzle games, are always based on a simple concept, and Loopz is definitely a simple concept. You can choose any of three games from the initial menu screen but they are all about creating loops on the screen. Using either mouse or joystick you can rotate shapes repeatedly through 90 degrees until they have the correct orientation to help complete a loop on screen. Fail to place a piece before the timer runs out and you lose a life.

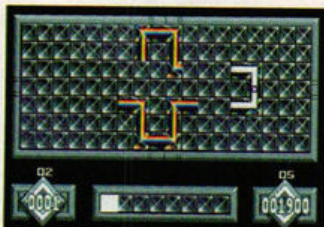
In Game A you must create as many loops as you can without running out of space or lives. Game B is similar except that after you successfully create a loop a bonus screen appears. This requires you to remember a large pattern on the screen and then recreate it. Game C is a series of bonus game screens where remembering shapes is what wins the game.

VERDICT

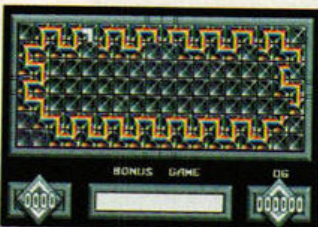
Loopz is derivative of everything from Tetris to Pipe Mania but that doesn't make it a bad game. Sound includes some clear sampled music and a resounding clanging sound if you place a shape in an illegal place. There isn't very much to the whole concept, but it's surprisingly addictive mainly because it eases the player into the game rather than frustrating him from the outset. The big fault of Loopz is its £20 price tag. This is surely a budget game at a full price.

ANDREW HUTCHINSON

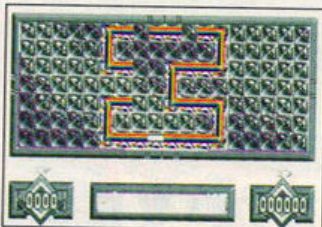
GRAPHICS	6
SOUNDTRACK	6
INTELLIGENCE	6
INSTANT APPEAL	7
LONG TERM INTEREST	5
OVERALL	58%



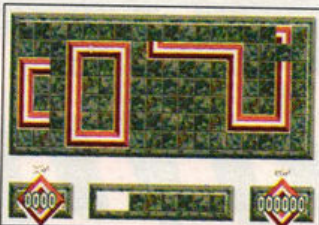
■ Loopz is all about loops, lots of loops (hence, I suppose, the name). Rotate the shapes and form loops of various dimensions



■ Complete a loop in Game B and you get to the bonus screen



■ You've got to have an extremely good memory to do well at Game C. Watch the shape disappear and then recreate it

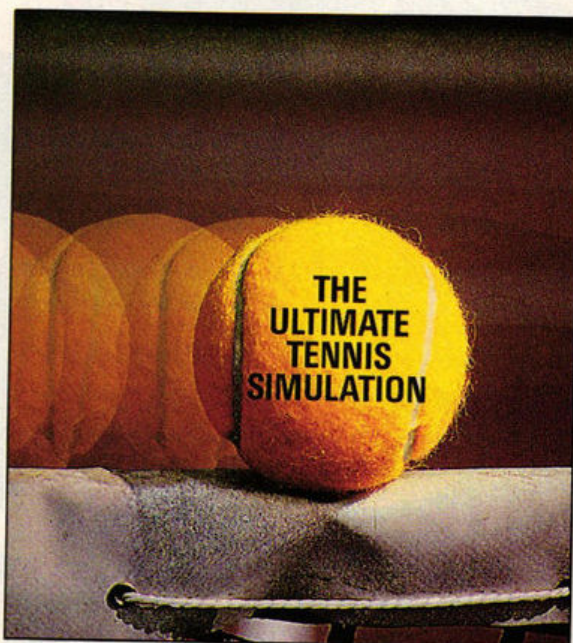


■ You've completed a loop, so now... create a few thousand more. Hours of meaningless fun for all the family!

LOOPZ

PRO^{TENNIS} TOUR

2



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...BUT ONLY ONE WAY TO STEAL...

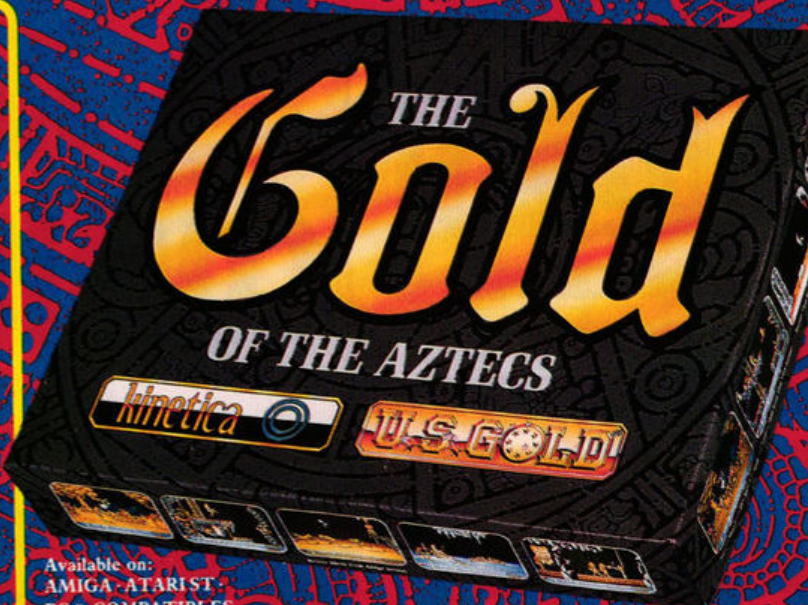
For 400 years no-one has dared to take up the Quetzalcoatl's 'Gold of the Aztecs'. Bret Conrad's special forces training and combat duty have made danger a way of life. This time the odds are really stacked against him - and you, in one of the biggest, most fascinating games ever devised!

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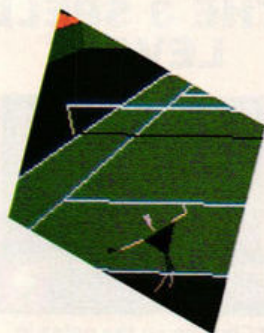
VISIT THE LAND OF THE AZTECS!

We think this game is one of the toughest action adventures ever devised. That's why we're giving away the trip of a lifetime to visit the Land of the Aztecs in Mexico - Summer 1991. To win you have to beat all-comers in **THE GREAT AZTEC GOLD RUN!**
(See inside box for details.)

Screen shots are only intended to be illustrative of the game play and not the screen graphics which vary considerably between different formats in quality and appearance and are subject to the computers specifications.

The Gold of the Aztecs. © 1989, 1990 Kinetica Software. All rights reserved. Licensed to US Gold Ltd. Copyright subsists on this program. Unauthorised copying, lending or resale by any means strictly prohibited.

Play Palace's 3D Tennis for five minutes and it seems just too fiddly and too damn hard. Can this, you wonder, be the tennis sim the rest are raving about? Play it for an hour, though, and you begin to realise that those complex joystick moves can become reflexive. The turning point comes when you smack the ball straight into the corner of your opponent's court, 30 feet (in tennis terms) from the last desperate lunge of his racket. Play it for a day and you're hooked.



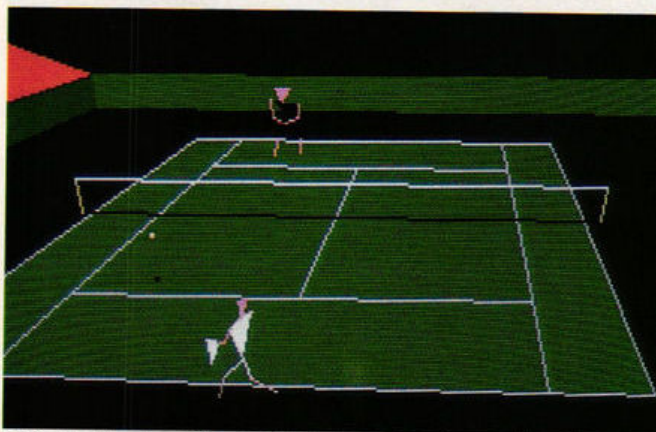
■ **Serving is easy on Amateur level. Just press Fire and your little stick-man does the rest**

To help you through those trying early games, the instructions give you four brief lessons in ball control, while the program itself has four skill levels. On the AM (Amateur) level there's almost nothing to worry about. You just click the Fire button to serve, then pick your position on the court with the joystick. When your opponent hits the ball your control is limited to moving towards or away from the net – the computer lines you up for your shot. To make things even easier, your player flashes when it's time for you to whack the ball and all you need to do is press the Fire button.

Lesson Two has you experimenting a little more. Move the joystick as soon as you've pressed Fire and you can control where the ball goes in your opponent's court. Now we're cooking! For Lesson Three you have to select the SP (Semi-Pro) level, where you get to experiment with Supaserve. Now you can control not only where your serve lands but also its power, governed by how long you keep the Fire button pressed.

international 3D tennis

PALACE £24.99



■ **Master the joystick moves in this visually uninspiring but otherwise impressive tennis sim and you can pull off beautiful passing shots against your computer opponent**

The next skill level is PRO (Professional), the same as Semi-Pro except your player no longer flashes to hint that maybe you should hit that smally furry sphere whizzing past you at Mach 3. By now, though, your timing should be good enough to let you judge your shots for yourself.

It doesn't end here. Lesson Four is all about Supaspin, a clever feature that comes in on the top ACE level and enables you to apply

topspin or backspin to your shots. Hit the ball as normal (Fire, then joystick to aim) and then while the ball is in the air push the stick forward or back according to what sort of spin you want to apply. Now we really are talking complicated joystick control – but still perfectly learnable.

And there's more. Your

opponent can either be the computer or another human, and if you want to practise your tennis skills against your plastic pal before risking ridicule in public, the program offers you 15 different opponent levels. Oh, and you can play on four different surfaces, and either one game, a tournament or a whole season. Choose a season, and there may be some tournaments you can't enter unless you've selected a high enough skill level!

EFFECTS

First impressions of 3D Tennis are not promising. With its antediluvian wire-frame graphics and almost complete absence of background detail, it looks like a BBC program from 1980, a *Driller* on legs. The true power of Palace's 3D system becomes apparent when you experiment with the viewpoint feature. In play, the ST's ten numeric keys (0-9) offer ten different angles to view the action from – behind your player, behind your opponent, from the side, long-distance. It takes a while to find the one that suits you best, but you can't say you don't have a choice.

Sound effects comprise some realistic noises as the ball strikes the racket or ground. Most impressive of all, though, is the sound of a Wimbledon umpire keeping score – sampled no less!

VERDICT

Palace have made a huge effort to produce an accurate and demanding tennis sim, and succeed brilliantly. The only snag is, as in the real game, a complete dunce can't expect to pile straight in and be on the Centre Court at Wimbledon before the day's out. *Passing Shot* is easier, *Pro Tennis Tour* looks a lot sexier, but *International 3D Tennis* makes the rest look like amateurs.

ROD LAWTON



■ **You can choose whatever camera angle you like. Threequarters...**



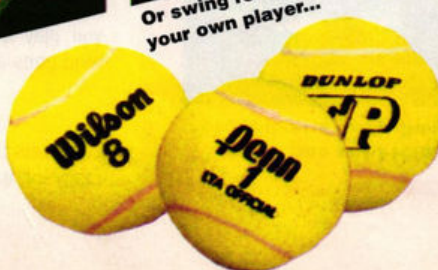
Or zoom out for the panoramic view...



Or swing round behind your own player...



Or even concentrate on your own half of the court



GRAPHICS	4
SOUNDTRACK	?
INTELLIGENCE	8
INSTANT APPEAL	6
LONG TERM INTEREST	8
OVERALL	88%



■ You've heard of the heavens opening, but this is ridiculous

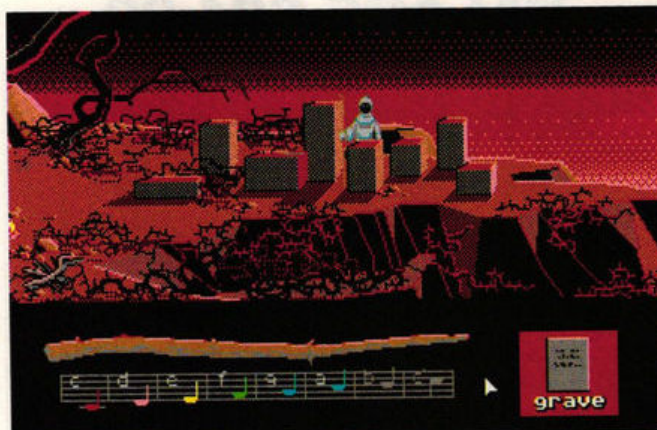
A world stands on the brink of apocalypse and young Bobbin Threadbare represents its only chance. Bobbin is the only surviving member of the mystical guild of weavers who wove the very fabric of reality itself. A malevolent power threatens that reality, so Bobbin sets out on a long journey armed only with his magical powers to find his friends and stop the forces of evil from destroying the sacred Loom.

You take on the role of Bobbin and direct him around the landscape. To move you simply point where you want to go on-screen and click the mouse button. Clicking on doors enables you to enter rooms or buildings. If an object needs to be manipulated then click on it with the left mouse button.

Loom is played entirely with the mouse and doesn't require any text input. The cinematic opening sequence introduces you to Bobbin, his family and his dilemma. A messenger asks Bobbin to report to the elders of the guild for a little chat. It transpires that he's been blamed for the chaos which has descended on the planet and as a result he is cursed.

The elders punish Bobbin's stepmother by turning her into an egg, but before they can deal with Bobbin himself, a bird flies into the

Awesome graphics, a brilliant storyline and gameplay that leaves the rest of the field standing make Loom one of the best graphic adventures of the year. Andrew Hutchinson pulls on sandals, grabs his magic staff and checks it out



■ The situation at the moment is looking grave for Bobbin

sanctuary (straight through the plate glass window) and turns everyone into a swan – everyone, that is, except young Threadbare. This is where the adventure proper starts and you have to try and rejoin your guild while saving the world in the process.

Spellcasting is your most powerful weapon and spells take the form of musical tunes. The game is played in one of three modes: practice, easy and expert. On the easy level, when you point at an important object such as a pot, notes are echoed onto your staff and their letters appear in a box, enabling you to cast a spell at anything you like. On the harder level you only hear the notes and have to play them back from memory along the staff.

At the start of the game you only have eight notes to cast spells with, but as you become more experienced you can pick up new notes. The more notes you have, the more spells you can cast.

One of the first problems you come across is a dangerous whirlwind. Click on the whirlwind and listen to the four-note sound it makes. This is a twist spell and if you play it backwards, the whirlwind goes away.

EFFECTS

What sets this game apart from so many of its peers is the superb

lo

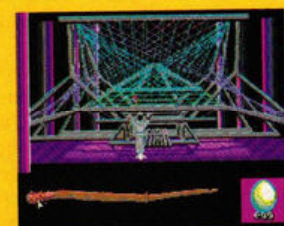
THE 3 SPELL LEVELS



■ Clicking on the notes in the easy mode brings them up in a small box which can be repeatedly clicked on different objects until the right effect is achieved



■ On the standard level, there's still a musical staff, but no box. You can still see where the notes are on the staff



■ On the expert level you have to guess where the notes are, on the staff, yourself and then play the tune back by ear from memory. This is quite a hard skill to learn



■ However the result is the same on each level: the egg is transformed into a black duck

STAIRCASE OVER TROUBLED WATER



■ Oh no, the staircase is out, and I haven't discovered the flying spell yet!



Not to worry! A quick musical spell and...



things have straightened themselves out!

LUCASFILM £29.99

loom



Why not? There's nothing to fear under that fine robe of yours, is there?

■ This chap seemed quite nice till I started talking to him...



Ahem.

■ Yes, I've heard about men like you!

HOW BOBBIN GETS WEAVING

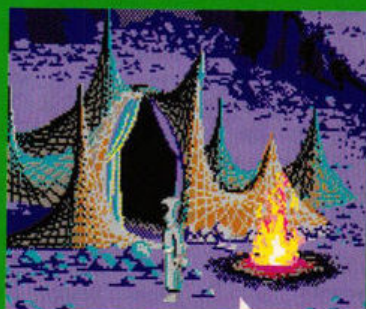


■ At the start of the game Bobbin has wandered out of the village and up to a lonely promontory to collect his thoughts. However as he stares into the starry night...



The High Council awaits your presence in the Sanctuary.

A small orb of light, a messenger nymph, arrives and asks him to report to the elders immediately...



So he walks down the hill round the back of the mountain and into the apparently deserted village...



He enters the encampment of tents wondering where everyone is. Finding his own tent empty he walks into the elders' tent and looks around for any sign of life



This tent has tardis-like proportions. In fact it is merely the entrance to the Weavers Guild temple. Ancient tapestries chronicle the life of the guild



The elders are discussing the bad luck which has descended on the Guild. Blaming the whole thing on Bobbin's stepmother, they turn her into an egg



The staff is Bobbin's only means of conjuring magic. However the problem is knowing which spell to cast, especially as he has never performed magic before



As Bobbin picks up the staff a spell echoes on the Loom, but it is using notes which are too high for him and so is of little use. It's up to you to help him complete his task!

graphics. Right from the loading screen it's obvious that an incredible amount of time has been spent getting the visuals right. Long smoothly linked sequences give an amazing impression of depth and highly-detailed close-ups of characters impart vital knowledge about spells or the way forward.

The internally generated musical tunes that make up the spells, however, hardly sound magical, and the jaunty tunes which play throughout the game get incredibly annoying very rapidly.



■ It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good: this one has a few secrets to reveal

VERDICT

Loom is definitely an eye-catching game. The smooth-scrolling cartoon-like graphics and the cinematic opening sequence are absolutely mind-blowing.

But while Loom may be the most flawless example of the graphic adventure genre, it's also one of the shortest. Anyone with a modicum of common sense and an IQ bigger than their shoe size should be able to complete the game within three days. It's an excellent introduction to the world of adventures on the ST, but hardened adventurers are likely to be disappointed.

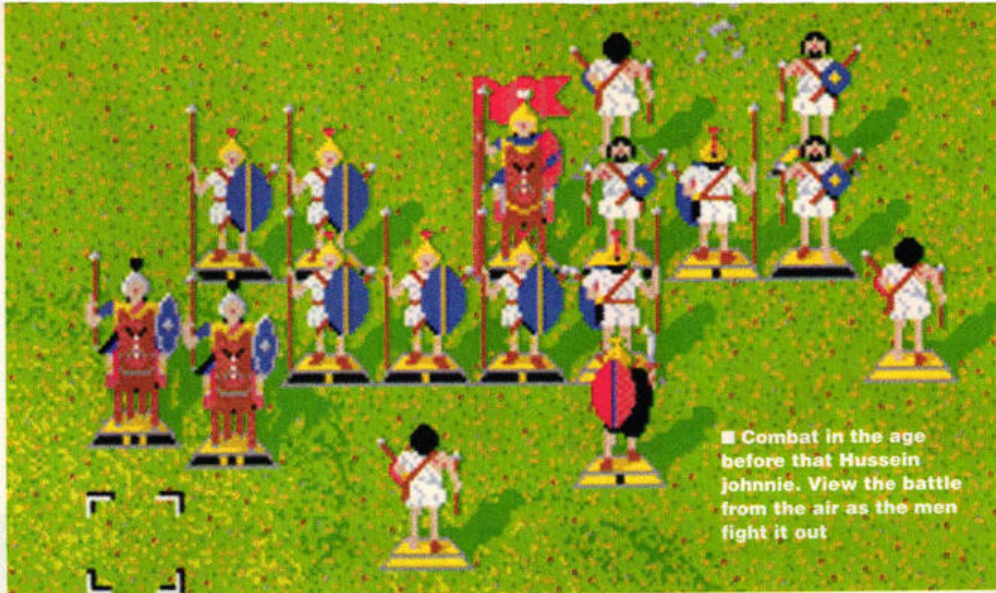
ANDREW HUTCHINSON

GRAPHICS	9
SOUNDTRACK	8
INTELLIGENCE	9
INSTANT APPEAL	9
LONG TERM INTEREST	5
OVERALL	81%

LEISURE

War has always been hell. The motives for combat have changed little over the centuries: only the methods employed to fight battles have evolved. *Ancient Battles* gives you the chance to experience the thrills and blood-spills of decisive large-scale combat in the times before tanks, airpower, Jesus Christ and Saddam Hussein.

Five pre-set battle scenarios are included. All took place, and were more or less evenly matched. You can also design your own, playing



■ Combat in the age before that Hussein Johnnie. View the battle from the air as the men fight it out

against the computer or another person. There are many options available when setting up a battle (including the pre-set scenarios).

You can choose from about 20 armies ranging from Roman Legions to Huns and Goths (sadly without black and purple apparel). You then decide the unit type you want. The choice includes javelin hurlers, horsemen, elephants or even chariot-driving maniacs.

Each unit has a points rating, and the opposing sides have the same number of points to spend on their forces. All the units have historically accurate titles, and are displayed in battle as a single soldier, horseman or elephant. It's

easy to tell the units apart, and also to see how they're armed.

Once the armies have been selected, deployment occurs. This is automatic when playing a scenario. You can view the battle from above and behind either yours or the enemy's forces.

The position of your general is indicated by a flag. He must be protected from enemy attack: if he dies, you can't control your forces.

CASES COMPUTERS SIMULATIONS £24.95

ancient battles

EFFECTS

The units look very much like wargaming models. They cast little shadows over the field, and appear very chess-like, reducing the apparent scale of the conflict.

Battles take place on what appears to be astroturf. This adds to the board-game feeling. The units are drawn nicely, however, and there are many differing and colourful types; they are detailed but uncluttered. Information is displayed neatly, and the mouse control works well.

The game is completely silent.

VERDICT

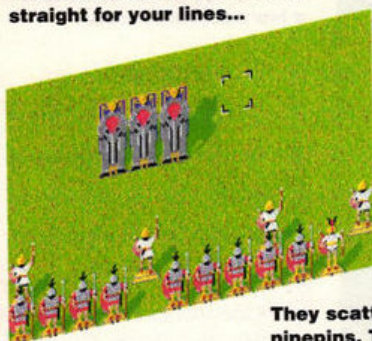
It's a fine idea for a wargame, with quite enough solid historic detail in both manual and game to satisfy the most ardent historian.

But the chess-piece graphics and uninspiring combat and movement rob the game of atmosphere. The small playing area limits the strategic element, and the stronger side usually wins.

JAMES LEACH

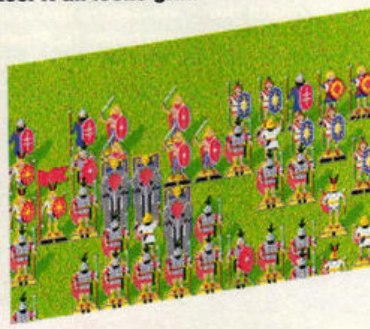
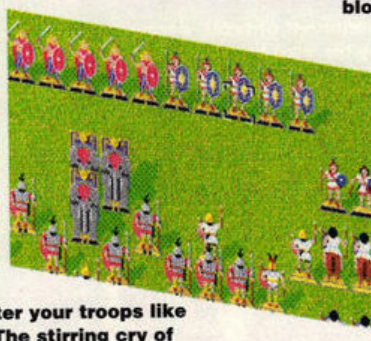
GRAPHICS	6
SOUNDTRACK	0
INTELLIGENCE	7
INSTANT APPEAL	5
LONG TERM INTEREST	5
OVERALL	54%

■ Oh no - an elephant charge! Three battalions are heading straight for your lines...



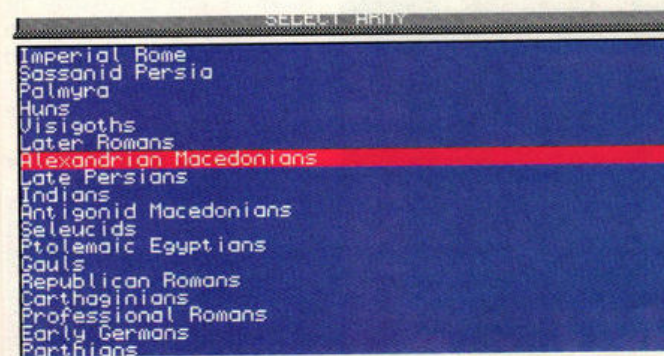
They scatter your troops like ninepins. The stirring cry of "Run away!" is heard...

The enemy are taking advantage of your confusion to pile in more blokes. It all looks grim



such as horses having much greater range per turn.

Combat automatically occurs when troops are in range. Archers shower the enemy from several squares away, but infantry must be adjacent in order to fight. As the combat phase is being moderated, the units involved display their losses. If severely depleted troops may rout, running away with desperate rapidity. For this reason, elephants are not always effective; they panic and trample men of both sides as they scarper.



■ Choose your troops from the menu. I'll have a phalanx starter with elephant to follow (medium/well done), and hold the Gauls



Captive[©]

The quest for freedom!

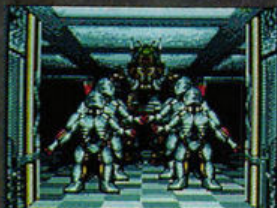
When you can't remember who you are, where you are and even what year it is, then you know trouble cannot be too far away...

Held *Captive* for two hundred years in an orbiting space prison for a crime you didn't commit, you are desperate to escape from your electronic gaol.

Armed only with a briefcase computer found in the corner of your cell, you start sending out electronic SOS calls to the battling world outside.

Eventually you find a motley crew of four droids ready to help bring about your escape..

..so begins your quest for freedom!



Actual screen shots

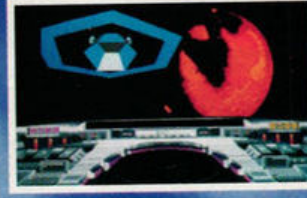
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■ If this is the way you look first thing in the morning, play *The Gold of the Aztecs*. You'll get used to looking this way, unless you can make it to the treasure, hidden deep in the tomb of the Gods

■ (below) Not the best way to travel through level 2. Falling this far leaves you in a bloody heap, impaled on a stake at the bottom



US GOLD £19.99

the gold...

You may find it hard to believe, but being an ex-member of the elite Special Forces can leave you cold. It's unbearably boring when you're not killing and maiming.

Such is life for Bret Conrad, a man too conspicuous for the CIA and too messy for the FBI. He's your alter ego and he's pretty mixed up, bored and just spoiling for a fight.

Life takes a twist when you find a framed pin-up of a sexy centrefold. Avoiding the temptation to dribble all over it, you decide to re-frame it. Imagine your surprise when, behind the soggy cardboard backing, you find a genuine Spanish treasure map!

It seems an ancient tomb-robber-cum-quaint-explorer found the resting-place of an Aztec god (with lots of buried dosh). He disappeared for two years before

returning (empty-handed) and dying of fever. But he did have time to make the map you now have in your hand.

In a crazed flashback, you decide that the call of the wild (and the cash) is too great and you blag an airlift to the jungle from a flyboy mate of yours.

Things get off to a bad start when you appear hanging from a tree, with the parachute wrapped around your neck. Desperately cutting the webbing (by hitting the fire-button) frees you and you drop to the ground.

Before you have time to get your bearings, a pygmy arrives, wielding a blow-pipe. Push right on the joystick and you walk past him: if you're quick you can get there before he fires; too slow and you either get shot or a massive elephant tramples you.

You can somersault objects by

using the upper diagonals while on the move and most importantly, you can shoot. A click on the fire button gets your weapon out and you can aim it with the joystick. Bullets fly as you lay waste to the rainforest inhabitants. When you're done shooting, another click pops the gun back in its holster and you can carry on strolling.

On the way to the treasure, you encounter hordes of small people, animals, vultures and snapping flowers. These pale into insignificance when compared to the devilish traps that are set for you in the Aztec tombs: collapsing bridges; hidden bows and arrows; falling



rocks and punji stakes in pits. Not nice – any of it, especially considering that it's a one-shot-and-you're-dead situation. Fluff it and you're back to the start.

EFFECTS

Graphics and sound are high-standard to start with, but deteriorate once you're in the game itself. Bret's animation makes him a candidate for the Ministry of Silly Walks and working the gun is an intensely annoying affair (you can't walk with your gun out!).

Musically, it's not an instant-switch-off-job like some, but it doesn't push your ST even close to its limits.

VERDICT

Early levels are frustrating, joystick-throwing travesties of the idea of gameplay. The major problem of an over-complicated gun control and an over-difficult first level mean you're unlikely to see the later levels, where the excellent tricky logic puzzles live. If you can make it past the early bits, the remainder of the game actually becomes less reflex-orientated, more strategic and, thankfully, a lot more rewarding. Stay with it long enough and it comes close to being good fun.

NEIL JACKSON

GRAPHICS	7
SOUNDTRACK	6
INTELLIGENCE	6
INSTANT APPEAL	7
LONG TERM INTEREST	5
OVERALL	71%

■ (left) A much better way of getting around level 5 (the last one) is to use the elevator. Operating the levers which control it is not easy though

of the aztecs

1 Untangle yourself from your chute and get the hell out fast. You can shoot the pygmy or just somersault over him...

3 Land between the first two flowers. Duck to avoid the vulture and then do another somersault over the last two...

4 Into the next frame, where you're hassled by snakes. The big python wants to hug you, so shoot him too...

2 Crouch down to miss the arrow. Then get out your gun and kill them all, including the monkey! Next go right and somersault again...

5 Before moving onto the bridge. You can't cross until you've defeated the skeleton guard wielding the extra-large chopper



skate wars

UBISOFT £24.99

The future really is a glum old place, isn't it? In a hundred years' time, according to UBISOFT's crystal ball, we'll all have metamorphosed into riotous death junkies, stoned out of our boxes watching "sports-men" smash the gooey grey matter out of each other. Eeuurgh! Join the queue for that NHS vasectomy! Or, while you're waiting, get

in training with *Skate Wars*, a blend of "ice soccer" sim and beat-'em-up.

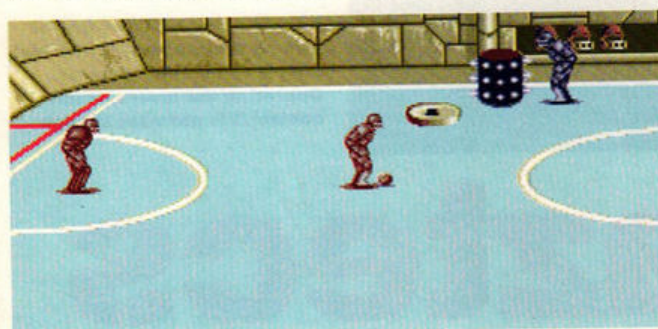
The action's played out on a hybrid ice hockey pitch, the aim being to wallop the ball into your opponents' net as many times as possible.

Oh, and wallop yourself into the opponents as well of course, in order to (a) regain possession of

■ **Footie skills** certainly come in handy in this futuristic, beat-'em-up skating game: as well as keeping control of the ball you've got all this skidding-about malarkey to "get to grips with" (ho ho)



■ Talk about taking a bull by the horns! Pass the anadin, someone! Ooh it's mekkin' me head throb just thinkin' about it



■ Get too near that spiky thing and you won't live to regret it



■ The final level. Torville and Dean? Eat my skates!

the ball or (b) send them skating off into some horrible pointy death obstacle-type thingie.

On Level One these consist of a couple of spiky metal cactus wossnames and electrical disks which fry you up, but as you progress through Beginner to Challenge levels so the perils of the pitch mount up. Sadists will love this one. There are huge holes, big bubbles which suck you up and spin your blood and bones around, spooky bouncing eyeballs and, ooh gosh, loads more.

I think I'm going to chuck...

There's even some rather nifty moguls to dodge and skid over. Add all that to the variety of fighting moves (though there are only a few of those), and you've got a slice-'n'-dice playground to satisfy the most ferocious of tomorrow's terrace barbarians.

Each team comprises four players. You take control of either a permanent goalie or three strikers, only one of whom is allowed on the pitch at any given time (when the first one dies the second takes his place, and so on).

You win a match by either the number of goals scored or opponents killed – or in two-player mode by being the last survivor on the pitch.

EFFECTS

The design's pretty simple, and a little blurry at the edges. The one nice touch – the damp, decayed walls – are a blatant rip-off of the graphic style of Enki Bilal, the brilliant French comics artist. The jingle's suitably irritating and the sound effects "swish" along. So nothing special whatsoever.

VERDICT

Simple ideas are often the best – but not this time. *Skate Wars* is pitched at just about the right level of difficulty,

with smooth-ish horizontal scrolling and nice skating effects, but it's in urgent need of some spicing it up. A post-nuclear Ice Age backdrop of bloody huge landscapes perhaps? Decayed oil platforms and mutant seals popping out of holes? Something, anything, to build on what's already there. *Skate Wars* might be fun for a while, but it won't have you glugging the Gold Blend.

ANDY IDE

GRAPHICS	7
SOUNDTRACK	6
INTELLIGENCE	5
INSTANT APPEAL	7
LONG TERM INTEREST	4
OVERALL	63%

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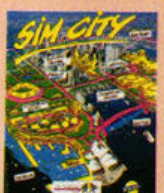
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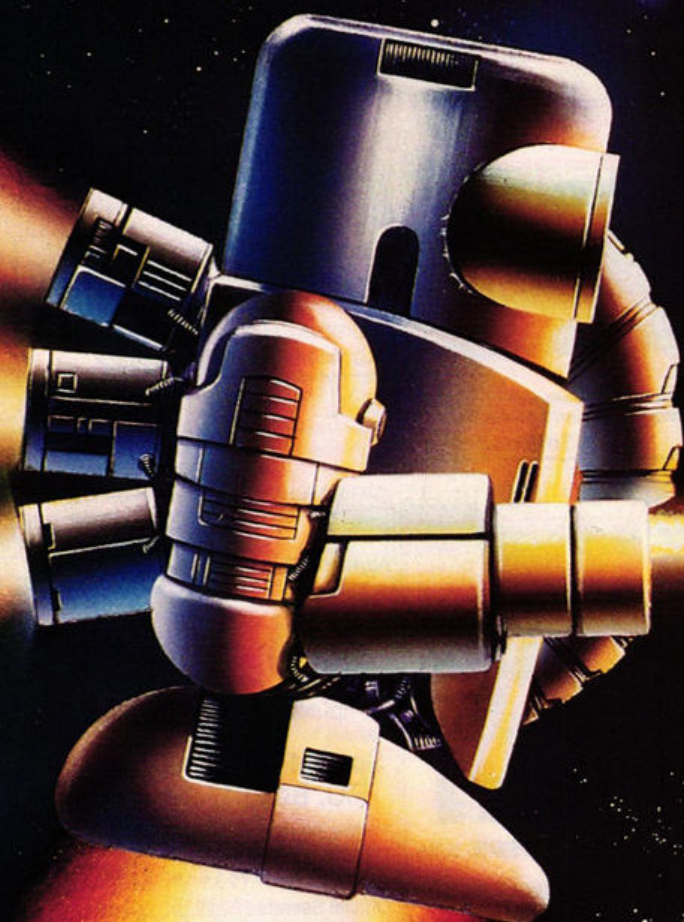
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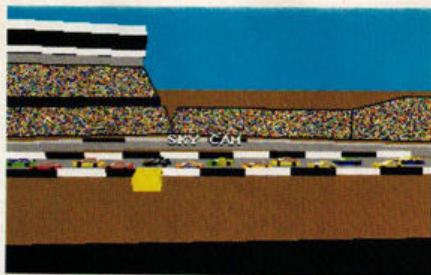
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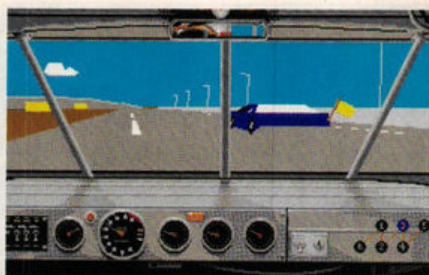


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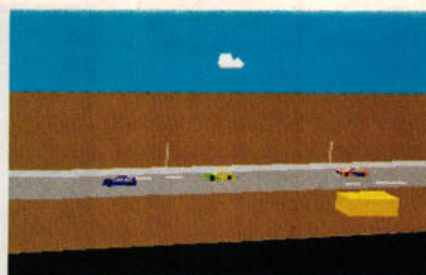
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■ Tension mounts as you (and 20 other psychos) rev up in the pit lane. The trackside cameras increase the sensation of raceday panic



■ The most nerve-wracking situation of all – pole position, behind the parade car, with a large bunch of nutters behind you waiting to run right over your roof



■ Belting down the back straight calls for nerves of steel as your opponents attempt their hysterically optimistic overtaking procedures

Licenceware has a reputation for falling short of its own hype – all that glitters is not *FORMAT Gold* – but *Days of Thunder* relies less on the glitz and glamour of its Cruise-spattered images and more on originality and gameplay. It pays little homage to its namesake, save a few logos and the fact they both centre on that craziest of American sports, NASCAR.

This dangerous and exciting pastime of racing over-powered saloon cars around the inside of a pie-dish has achieved notoriety many times before – usually through episodes like the famous Unser brothers' punch-up, or the untimely demise of a participant. Little wonder then that it should attract the attention of the Hollywood moguls and Mindscape, who both decided NASCAR would capture the imagination of their audiences. Less surprising still that Mindscape should use the film in an attempt to graft some extra panache onto their creation.

Your first objective is to qualify, and to do this you need to be able to drive the car! Here you have the choice of joystick control – which feels sloppy at first – or keyboard, which has its own problems: STs can sense at one time no more than two keys held down together. This causes a few soggy seats when you're trying (desperately) to avoid the side wall, decelerate and change down a gear at the same time. After a brief swearing session, one of the control methods will "click" and you can concentrate on grabbing a decent position on the start grid.

NASCAR starts require you to follow a parade car for a distance before you race. Leave the buttons and keys alone and the computer handles the parade lap for you, presenting you with yet more views from inside and outside the car. When the green flag drops, you're back in the driving seat, ready to put the hammer down.

During the race, you can side-swipe other cars, bounce off the

walls and do anything to hold your position, but too much contact causes damage to your own car. Sooner or later a light flashes on your dashboard, telling you to pit in. You must enter the pit lane and stop at your flag or you could find yourself wrecked-out of the com-

petition. Once in the pits, you can effect repairs and alter things like tyre balance and steering before rushing back into the race.

EFFECTS

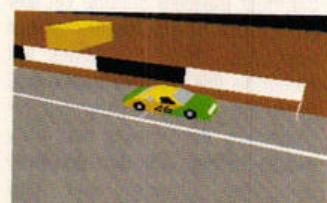
Visually, *Days of Thunder* is impressive: the highly-detailed 3D

shapes and the variety of viewpoints prove vector-games aren't all blocky and uninteresting. On the sound front, however, things are a bit disappointing. The intro music is unexciting ST sound-chip stuff and sounds like it's going to break into the *Blockbusters* theme at any moment. Sound effects are marginally better, but still poor. The engine revs up and down appropriately, but sounds like a budgie with a strangulated hernia.

VERDICT

Apart from one resounding oversight – no mouse control option – and poor sounds, *Days of Thunder* is excellent. The control methods take some getting used to, but patient training reaps great rewards. Action and excitement are there by the bucketload once you can hold your own in a race. *Days of Thunder* is fast enough to entertain and difficult enough to entice you on. Racers (and even Sunday drivers) can't afford to miss this one!

NEIL JACKSON



■ Come in, number 46, your time is up! Too much door-handling with your opponents and you get called in to the pits, wasting valuable seconds



■ When you're in the pits, time is critical. There are many icon-controlled jobs to do, but some will be unnecessary. Decide – and fast!



■ You thrilled to the film, now's your chance to play a dangerous macho lunatic sitting inside a tin can going "Whooyawh" a lot

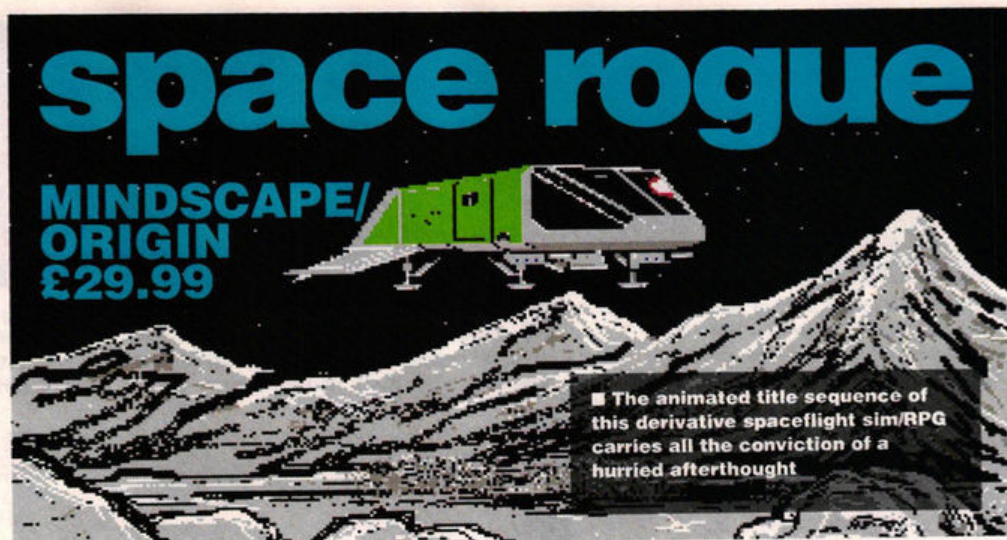
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days of thunder

GRAPHICS	8
SOUNDTRACK	4
INTELLIGENCE	5
INSTANT APPEAL	8
LONG TERM INTEREST	8
OVERALL	88%

Strange that an SF game can give you a feeling of *deja vu*. *Space Rogue* reminds you of an interstellar trader called Jamieson. You should remember – it was one of the most successful games ever. That game was *Elite*, of course, and it seems that when the boys at Origin played it, they liked it so much they re-wrote it. An outrageous accusation? Read on!

The plot is simple. You're working the graveyard shift on a small commercial starship. At the beginning of what should be another forgettable shift, your ship detects the presence of a wrecked vessel in nearby space. Since all the dirty work falls to you, you don't space-



With reactionless thrusters you maneuver smoothly toward the derelict. The airlock plaque identifies it as the JOLLY ROGER, a Sunracer-class scoutship registered in the Deneb system.

You allow yourself to relax a little.

After all, what self-respecting pirate would pick a name like that?



■ A comic book style introduction works well, even if it does sound ludicrously implausible

suit and zip over to the mysterious hulk. Inexplicably, it's in fine condition but there is no crew on board. Before you can get in touch with your superiors to let them know all this, a pirate vessel appears from nowhere, blasts your mothership into micro-meteorites and obligingly departs without bothering to check the ship you're on. Bingo. Have starship, will travel.

Your first task is to get back to civilisation, which is easy because the Quick-start section of the player's manual sends you straight to the nearest space station. Remember the space station docking sequence that made *Elite* famous? So do the guys at Origin. Theirs, however, is much easier than its uncredited predecessor, so you won't be re-starting right from the word go. During the course of the game, however, there are sev-

eral different types of space station to dock with and the procedure is different for each.

In fact *Space Rogue* is a game you have to figure out how to play, despite the extensive and evocative documentation that accompanies it. Exploring space stations on foot, earning your pilot's licence (so you can buy weaponry for your vessel) and trading between the stars are all necessary apprenticeships you have to serve before getting involved in the plot – yet another tediously interwoven scam from which your character can't escape because, as usual, he ends up being the focal point of it. You do get an option, however, at the outset: the opening sequence is tagged comic book fashion onto the front end of the game, leaving you the choice of starting from scratch or loading a saved game.

Control options are keyboard, joystick, mouse or any combination of the three – which is fine, since apart from space flight, every task you face is of the point and click variety. In space you can use autopilot for long distances or roll and loop your vessel from point to point – and probably roll much more than you intend to: the keyboard controls are so hyper-sensitive that the ship is completely uncontrollable. Interplanetary space is disappointingly two-dimensional, but travelling through interstellar space is completely different and much more fun: you have to steer through a "wormhole" – a series of offset disconnected rings between two systems.

Space Rogue is enormous, spanning enough territory to make the most travelled *SunDog* vet feel like a couch potato. Players familiar with other Origin SF games will recognise this universe as the one Origin have been fleshing out for some time. But I wonder how many people bother with that endlessly elaborated universe and play games like this to the end.

EFFECTS

The opening sequence runs in medium resolution and is neatly stepped for emphasis. You can avoid it only if you play a saved game. The rest of the graphics are acceptable but by no means state-of-the-art. Smooth, filled 3D vectors are the stuff of short range space

travel, while two-dimensional system maps are quaintly displayed with spinning globes and glowing clouds of dust. Movement on foot is the least impressive, being of the get-your-character-to-follow-the-pointer type over a squashed plan view, but even this follows the line-of-sight philosophy so eagerly adopted by Origin years ago – in other words, your character can't see what's on the other side of a closed door. As for sound: forget it.



■ The opposition you're up against: an easily intimidated (but armed) free trader

VERDICT

Almost unplayable. *Space Rogue* is slow, tortuously so in some respects. The pointer movement is frustratingly jerky, and the knock-on effect of crippling such a simple feature is devastating.

The scenario lifts some of the best features of *Elite* and *SunDog* but ties them together so clumsily that, despite the wealth of data, you're left feeling unimpressed. Most annoying is the way the slick packaging and documentation try to camouflage Origin's shoddiness by pleading with you to get engrossed in the greater scheme of things. No. You should have to work at a game to beat it, not just play it. **SEAN MASTERSON**



■ Docking with one of the space stations, *Elite* style, is easy. Make a basic approach...



■ Come to a halt as you bring the ship alongside and then carefully re-orientate...



■ Finally, fly slowly towards the white spine linking the two pyramids. No problem!

GRAPHICS	4
SOUNDTRACK	1
INTELLIGENCE	7
INSTANT APPEAL	3
LONG TERM INTEREST	3
OVERALL	30%

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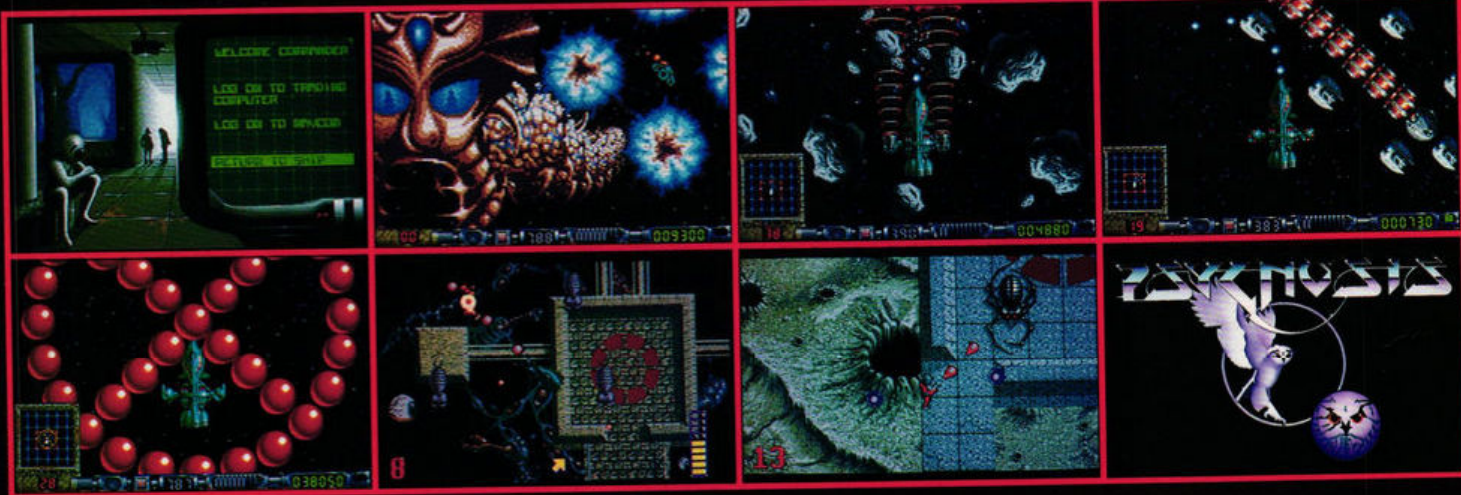
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Screen shots from the Amiga

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future basketball

Basketball really is a pain in the butt, isn't it? There you are, casually spinning the ball on your fingertip, when some irritating, ridiculously tall jerk starts performing a Zambian fertility dance around you. Your entirely natural urge is to pummel him flat into the floor, and you're not even allowed to touch him! 'Snot fair! Such must have been exactly the sentiment Hewson had when they came up with *Future Basketball*. Plonk the game sometime in the next century, bung in some not-so-gratuitous violence, and 'ere we go, 'ere we go!

The screen display is viewed from the top, scrolls vertically, and boasts a mini-plan of the court tucked up in the left-hand corner. You nab the ball by slipping and sliding into your foe, which has the natty side-effect of conking him out. This also comes in handy when the ball's sat on its tod – give the competition a swift fist up the nostrils and it's yours for the picking (up). But it's the collectables that best bring out the Peckinpah element: bombs, shurikens – it's a maim a minute!

Future Basketball is quite a friend-friendly game too. There are four one- and two-player skill levels, four leagues for up to 32 players, a handy game-saving facility, and a management system whereby you and your mates can buy and sell team members according to attributes like speed, aggression and throwing power. Party time indeed.

EFFECTS

You can't knock the graphics. There are three courts, each of which has a sufficient variety of crisp design and colour (although dimming the latter makes things



■ Position your player to receive the ball...



■ Wibble him in and out to get him past the opposition...



■ And bingo! (Now just repeat until completion of game)

easier to follow). The music, however, is a much less happy affair. Let's just say the theme to *Magic Roundabout* knocks zits off it.

VERDICT

Let's face it, basketball ain't exactly the world's funkiest game, so it's hats off to Hewson for grafting on a bit of slam-bang-thank-you-ma'am. Motorbikes and chain-saws would have been nice, but what's on offer makes for a suitably titting time, with smooth scrolling and chunky sprites who charge about at a fair old zip. The management element's pretty groovy too.

Future Basketball is by no means revolutionary, but so long as you shy away from the slightly dull one-player mode and battle away against your pals instead, it's a worthy and absorbing successor to *Speedball* and its ilk. Cancel all previous engagements for the weekend and invite the gang around.

ANDY IDE

GRAPHICS	9
SOUNDTRACK	6
INTELLIGENCE	8
INSTANT APPEAL	8
LONG TERM INTEREST	7
OVERALL	81%

PICK-UPS TO GET OFF ON!

Here are the icons you need to scuttle over or avoid



■ Shuriken Stars: shoot off and slice that foe in a satisfying and elegant way



■ Mines: blow those annoying little critters straight through the roof



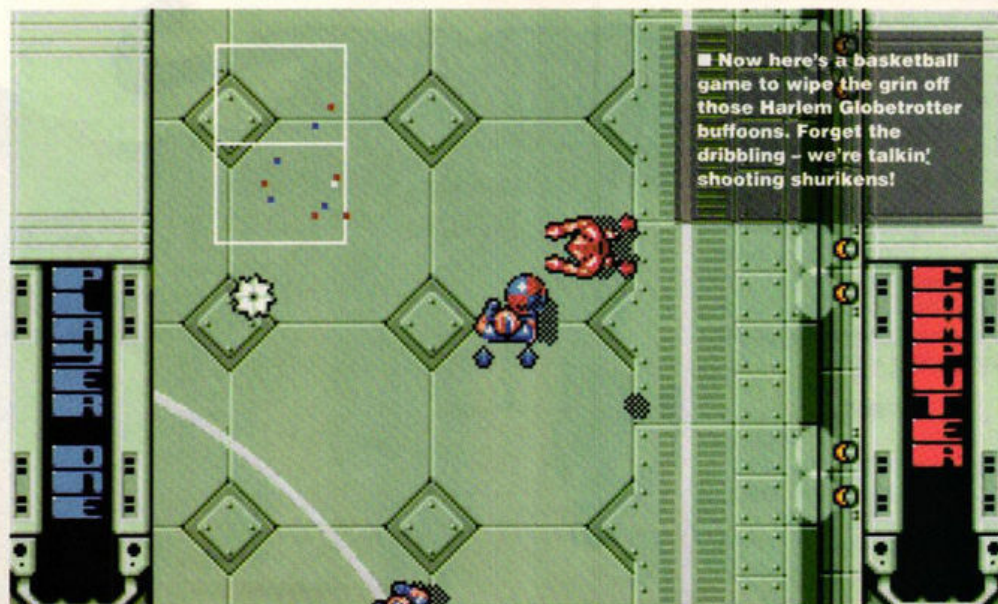
■ M-mines: definitely need dodging, but feel free to nudge opponents into 'em



■ Power-Ups: speed you along like a hot poker up the poop-chute



■ Spinning Coins: strengthen your bank balance and bargaining position



■ Now here's a basketball game to wipe the grin off those Harlem Globetrotter buffoons. Forget the dribbling – we're talkin' shooting shurikens!

saint dragon

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Saint Dragon is a mindless "zap-fest," and though there's a bizarre story line tacked onto it, the game doesn't really pretend to be anything else. You control a half dragon/half cyborg monster and your mission is to see that the aristocratic golden dragon is safely returned to his palace cave with en suite damsel in distress. As you're half cyborg your body is



■ **Fast and furious action? Check. Graphics straight from the arcade game? Check. Multi-weapons? Check. More addictiveness than you could shake a stick at? Yup, it's got the lot**

armour plated, which means you can resist plasma bolts up the bottom but not in the head.

The game is played over five levels: the planet surface, the alien forest, the alien base, space and the alien hangar. Each of these offers an escalating challenge which should prove difficult enough for even the most hardened ST gamester to complete in an afternoon. Your dragon is a versatile beast whose segmented body is extremely useful in a tight corner. This is because it's especially manoeuvrable so you can rapidly learn to whip lash aliens into submission.

Bolted onto your toughened frame in time honoured fashion, the usual array of weaponry is on offer simply by running over the appropriate icon. Fire-power available to aspiring galaxy conquerors includes lasers, ring lasers, fireballs and bouncing balls. In addition there are a number of speed-ups and extra life icons as well as a hyper-weapon which makes you invincible for a time.

EFFECTS

Graphics in *Saint Dragon*, lifted straight from the Jaleco arcade game, include are some well impressive end of level nasties. Animation is excellent



■ **A face off on the last level could lead to a very nasty confrontation indeed**

faulted. Attention to graphics and collision detection make it easy to be precise about your movements around the screen and there are no annoying background sprite interruptions. Frustration comes from getting shot, rather than getting hit by an alien that's nowhere near you and it therefore has an addictive quality which has been missing from recent arcade shoot-'em-ups. If shooting armoured cows or bullet proof baths appeals to you, try this one for size.

ANDREW HUTCHINSON

GRAPHICS	8
SOUNDTRACK	7
INTELLIGENCE	5
INSTANT APPEAL	8
LONG TERM INTEREST	7
OVERALL	78%

■ (below) Oh no, Simba the lion has got his armoured suit on...



■ **Level one seems a doddle, as the standard laser makes short work of these flying armadillos**



■ **Mad cows I've heard of – but armoured mad cows with lasers already?**



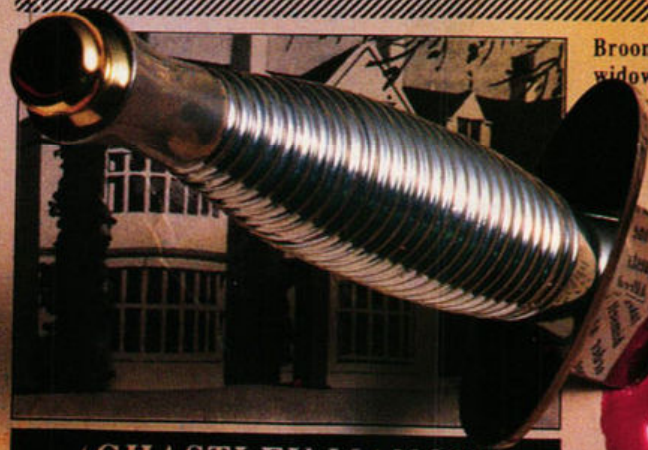
■ **This end of level nasty has more tricks than a magicians' convention attended by many of the world's top prestidigitators**



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MURDER!

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Police have today been informed of the murder of Mr Charles Innes, aged 46, an attorney from Bar-

ington, W. Sussex. It is believed Mr Innes was stabbed to death at the home of Mrs Audrey

Broom-Hall, actress & widower of the famous film actor Sebastian Broom-Hall; who was holding a cocktail party for the rich & famous. As one of the guests Lord Alfred Andrews has taken it upon himself to keep order at Ghastley Manor, he is questioning Mr Larry Glover, the prominent political figure & Dr Victor Jones: New Scotland Yard have yet to reach the scene of the crime, but they are estimated to arrive at approx. 11pm - 2 hours after the crime was discovered.



DISTINGUISHED PEER HAS 2 HOURS TO FIND THE KILLER...!

Lord Alfred Andrews has only 2 hours to try and solve the murder of Mr Charles Innes who was attending a cocktail party at 'Ghastley Manor'. He reports, "Things are not quite as I initially thought. The guests are entwined with love affairs, disputes over inheritance & outbursts of jealous rage."

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Screen shots are only intended to be illustrative of the game play and not the screen graphics which vary considerably between different formats in quality and appearance and are subject to the computer's specifications.



CBM 64/128



Atari ST



IBM PC EGA



Amiga

Mordamir, Wizard of the Crimson Keep, has gone and got himself in a spot of bother. It seems he's imprisoned in the ancient city of Erinoch, in a labyrinth he was exploring, and now he's called to you in your dreams to come and rescue him. No small task for a mere apprentice who'd rather be down at the Frog's Spittle Inn getting stuck into a mug of mead!

Your object in *The Immortal*, a dungeons and incredibly weird creatures game set in a seven-level labyrinth, is to make your way down to the bottom level (where your mentor Mordamir happens to be). To get there, you must solve innumerable puzzles and tackle more ugly creatures than you'd find at a Bros concert.

You control your on-screen self entirely with the joystick. Hit the spacebar and you call up an inventory of your earthly goods and chattels; apart from that, almost everything else is automatic and the keyboard is largely redundant. When you encounter one of the many aggressive creatures in the dungeon you automatically enter fight mode. Move the joystick forward to jab, back and then forward to slash, and left or right to parry in the corresponding direction. To kill your opponent you need to slash him just before he slashes you – in other words when his defences are down.

Along the way you find a handful of spells on each level to use on the labyrinth dwellers, but you



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the immortal

(1 MBYTE MEMORY REQUIRED)

Who wants to live forever? Mordamir the wizard does, and he's already got three centuries' practice in, but immortality's no fun if you have to spend eternity in a dungeon. Andrew "Sorcerer's Apprentice" Hutchinson dons his mystic robes and flies to the rescue

COME FLY WITH US: THE FORMAT GUIDE TO THE



■ Listen to the candle and be told your mission (what the hell are you on?)



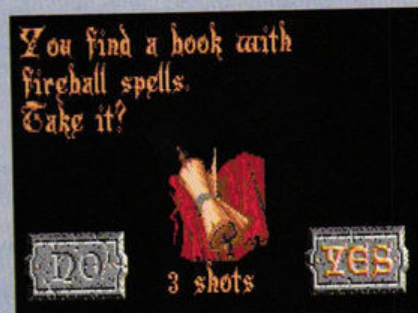
■ Walk northeast, zap the goblin and then head south



■ You encounter a goblin. Kill him so you can examine the body of the dead soldier



■ Those skulls aren't just for decoration, but the key is to keep moving



■ The soldier has some useful items on his person – including these fireballs



■ Turn to the left and enter the first door you come to...

must activate these before your character enters fight mode. For example, the second goblin you meet on the first level of the game must be dispatched by means of a fireball. Read the spell before you enter the room he is in, and then simply click the Fire button to send a ball of flame hurtling towards his dangly bits.

Besides fighting goblins and trolls, you must chart your way around a veritable forest of traps. The most common is a simple pit, and if you fall into one of these you pull yourself out by swinging back and forth on your staff – that is unless your staff breaks, in which case you end up with a serious case of legsupthebottomitis.

Complete a level and the computer flashes a certificate number on the screen, enabling you to start next time from the later dungeons. There is however no save game option, so you have no choice but to complete an entire level at one sitting.



■ I'd dearly like to see even David Bellamy be nonchalant about this huge specimen of the genus *Sodmewherethehellaremylegsicus*



■ I don't know what that mess on the sewer gate is, and I am not hanging around to find out

EFFECTS

Attention to detail and atmospheric graphical effects are what make *The Immortal* so enjoyable: torches, for example, flicker and illuminate sections of the wall in the background.

You get an aerial three-quarter view of the rooms, so you can see not just the room you're in but also about half of the next one. Where this game really leaves the field standing though is in the animation department.

Your character walks smoothly at a realistic pace around the dun-



■ Oh dear, he got the point rammed home to him, as it were, in a manner of speaking



■ Look, I don't want to marry your daughter and that's final – green just isn't my colour!

VERDICT

The subject matter of *The Immortal* is far from original and the storyline reads like a mish-mash of a dozen role-playing games, but the result is extremely playable and eminently watchable.

The problems are pitched at just the right level of difficulty – there's always light at the end of the tunnel – and they crop up in twos or threes, so you can go off and solve something else and then come back to any deferred puzzles.

The Immortal would make a welcome addition to any dungeon-loving, problem-solving ST gamer's library – that is, just as long as you've got a 1 MByte machine!

ANDREW HUTCHINSON



■ Look, we obviously took a wrong turn somewhere near the Hanger Lane Gyrotory system. I told you not to let that Bilbo read the map!

GRAPHICS	9
SOUNDTRACK	7
INTELLIGENCE	9
INSTANT APPEAL	8
LONG TERM INTEREST	8
OVERALL	87%

FIRST LEVEL OF A WEIRD AND ENCHANTING GAME



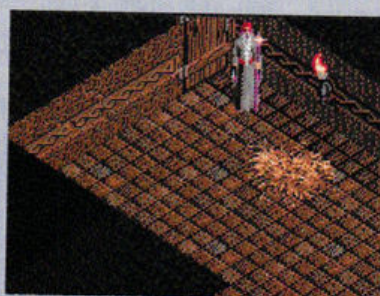
■ Walk southwest and you encounter another goblin battling with a man



■ Fireball the goblin and you get to meet Mordamir's servant



■ The servant gives you a key to the chest, which contains gold and spells



■ Have a rest – you need it – you walk through the room of shadows



■ Redirect the light with the amulet: don't read the runes!



■ The stairs appear, and you can start to tackle the next level... *stf*

time machine

ACTIVISION £24.99

Professor Potts has himself a problem. Working on his time machine (you know how mad professors do) he is attacked by terrorists. They smash his invention and accidentally create a hole in the fabric of time. This temporal vortex sucks the unlucky Professor into the time lanes, depositing him 10 million years BR (Before Racquel).

Being a forward thinking sort of chap, Potts puts five teleporters and a stun gun in his pocket before the attack. Using these he must find his way back to the future (no, really?).

The only way he can do this thing is to guide any life-forms he encounters along their correct evolutionary paths, thus opening up the right temporal corridor for him to jump forward in time and get home before he will have been... about to be having... left, - or something along those lines, anyway. (Confused, moi?)

He must, however, perform this trick not just once but five times over to get back safely; if he correctly alters the status quo of the current time zone, the next becomes accessible and he can leap forward to start there.

The task in each zone involves giving Mother Nature a nudge in the right direction. In the land of the dinosaurs he must make sure that mankind actually happens. Of course if he messes this one up the implications are immense.

If he succeeds he finds the cavemen need some advice on the finer technical specifications of the wheel, since for some reason they seem to prefer square ones. Next he must help Neolithic man keep



■ Prof Potts, our much-travelled headcase hero, is lost in time and must find a way to Recreate The Future - or something

warm during the Ice Age, and then medieval knights to handle the gunpowder they've discovered. The prof must use his teleporters to move objects around in the hope of giving the inhabitants of each zone the right idea. Of



■ The professor's stun gun accidentally toasts a cute creature he is supposed to help evolve. Er... oops?

course if they get stropky about his rearranging the furniture the his good old stun gun.

The twist in *Time Machine* is that although something's fixed, it doesn't stay that way! An altered object can revert to its old state at any moment, threatening any future dependent on this earlier era's evolution for its existence.

Using his zone indicator prof Potts has a view of all the 25 areas he must visit. If history goes wrong he has to leap deftly back in time to fix it. As more future zones open up, Potts has to work as hard as one of

those plate spinners in the circus, trying to keep the earlier eras safe as well as press ahead.

The professor has three lives but little energy. His life force is sapped by standing in puddles of ice water or being hit by volcanic fire. He can replenish this energy only by eating any fresh fruit he finds en route. Otherwise the game is free of the normal arcade adventure constraints: the only time limit is that of time itself.

EFFECTS

You'd do well to try and forget the theoretical feasibility of the plot, or lack of it: at heart *Time Machine* is an enjoyable knockabout cartoon adventure chock full of cute animals, temporal stereotypes and historical backdrops, all very cutely animated and in strong, simple colours.

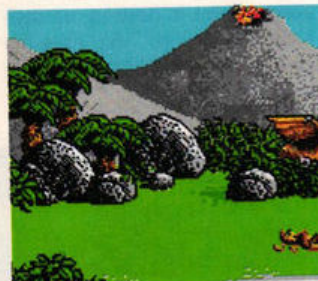
There are only five screens per time zone, but each one is radically different in every time zone and there's more than enough variety to go around. The zone indicator makes for easy monitoring of your past and future efforts, showing in the clearest possible manner what's happening where and when - though you do have 25 areas to keep your eye on!

There's the option of either sound effects or music; take the effects every time, because the jingles come from *The Land Taste Forgot*.

VERDICT

The alterations that free up each zone are fairly obvious, but keeping them changed is tough. It's easy to have a hundred thousand years of hard toil spoiled in seconds. A real hair-tearer, *Time Machine* is relatively finishable in theory, but we all know what a complex theory relativity is.

Time Machine appears innocently simple to complete and then slaps you in the face time



■ That red beacon way up in the corner is one of your five teleporters - you use the [F] keys to activate them



■ The professor and his machine before the terrorists attack. Remember the jewel in the centre, it could well save the day

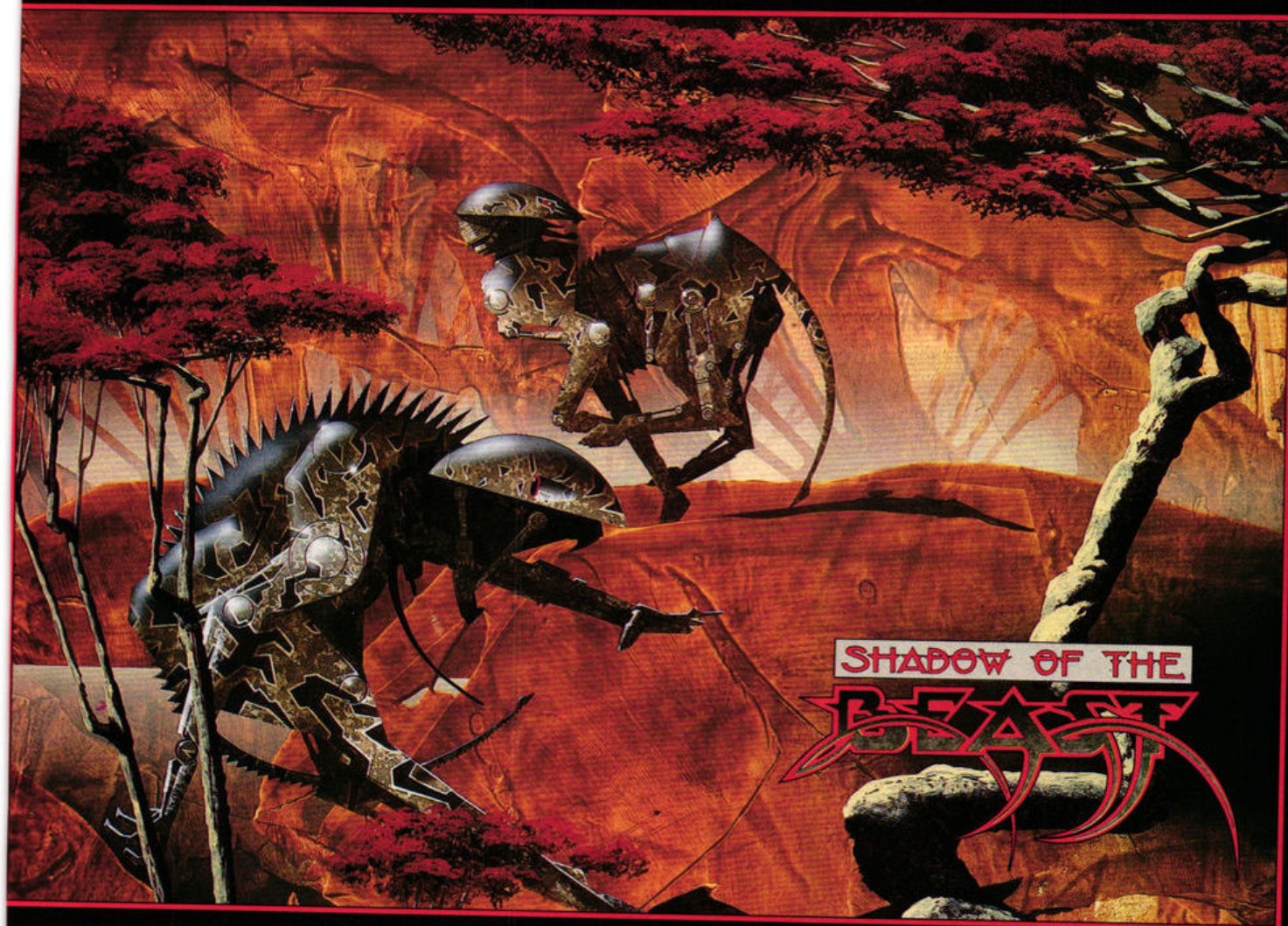
after time: there's always too much time (if you see what I mean) and not enough Professors for the job. It's a game that defeats players with its complexity, not how many levels it has. Packed with playability and originality, it will have you madly plugging holes in the temporal stream.

TRENTON WEBB

GRAPHICS	8
SOUNDTRACK	5
INTELLIGENCE	6
INSTANT APPEAL	8
LONG TERM INTEREST	7
OVERALL	83%

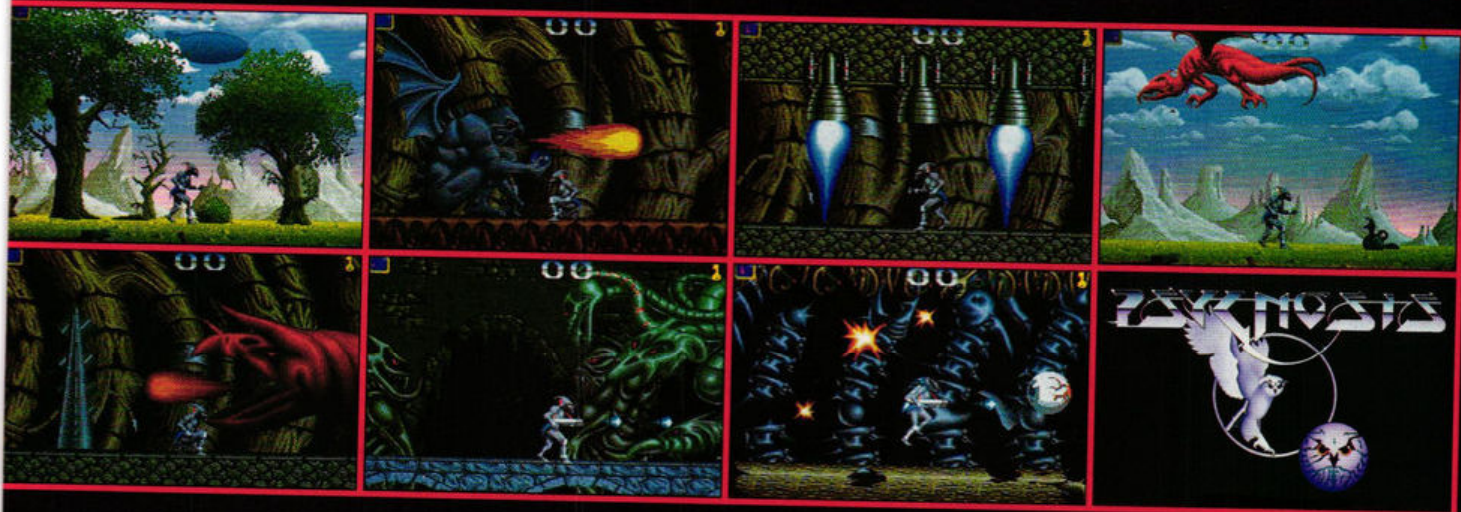


■ The prof visits the Ice Age in time zone two. Keeping your gronnocks warm is priority numero uno



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BEAST



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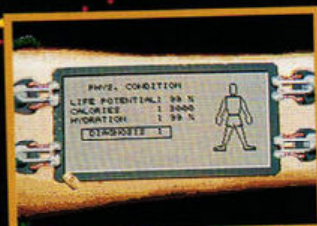


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wings of death

Maybe monsters just don't like hot weather. Last winter there were hordes of the beggars crawling all over every ST games screen in sight, yet over the last few months we've seen hardly a single decent shoot-'em-up. But at last there's hope for your seized-up trigger finger: *Wings of Death* is going to save you from months of physiotherapy and boredom.

The game is a vertically-scrolling shoot-'em-up in a traditional style. The objective: charge blindly through a series of levels, blasting everything that moves, dodging indestructible missiles and encountering the end-of-level guardian, etcetera, blah blah.

You know the kind of thing. On every level you face a myriad of bad guys determined to wipe you off the face of the earth. Blast them and some leave behind small pods which you can collect to pick up extra weaponry, auto-fire options, new lives, multi-directional firepower and an improved ship. But beware the skull pods which reduce you to a pathetic weakling armed with just a single shot.

Nothing new here, but then shoot-'em-up addicts, like any genre devotees, don't want chal-

lenging gameplay and new scenarios: they want reassurance.

EFFECTS

And when a familiar gamestyle is done with style and finesse, as here, the results can still be rewarding. Visuals are bright, lively and exciting. Alien sprites are massive – especially the end-of-level and mid-level guardians – though it has to be said they aren't animated particularly well. Through the game you face a legion of bright and colourful bad guys who turn up just when you think the action is getting simple.

Sampled sound effects inform you whenever you pick up bonuses – though only about as clearly as a BR train announcer with a mouthful of Yorkie. Rather more dynamic samples, this time as music, form an introduction to the action, while impressive sound chip tunes accompany play.

VERDICT

Movement of the ship is remarkably responsive and the graphics are excellent – bright, colourful, detailed and full of variety.



■ Mindless aliens, heaps of bonuses, tons of menacing guardians and cracking visuals: a warm welcome back to the good old shoot-'em-up!

Certainly the most important question to be asked about any shoot-'em-up is "How fast does it play?" In this area, *Wings of Death* scores above many of its predecessors such as *Gemini Wing*, *Xenon* and *Dragon Spirit*.

And the action really is extremely smooth. It's not uncommon for vertically-scrolling shoot-'em-ups to have this advantage, but they don't often have exciting visuals and massive sprites on the scale of *Wings of Death*.

It might as well be admitted. There's absolutely nothing original about this joystick challenge, but if you're missing some mindless, manic action you'd be hard pressed to find anything to beat it.

If you're still enjoying ripping the heads off aliens in *Xenon II*,



■ With these five screens pieced together you can see the kinds of problems you need to overcome. You start off as a mosquito and end up as a giant eagle... life's just one damned thing after another in *Wings*!

Wings of Death isn't going to offer you anything more, but then it doesn't claim to be an original.

We first loaded *Wings* days ago, and ever since a 14 year old schoolkid has been revolting (as it were) and steadfastly refusing to give up his sticky grasp on the joystick – not a boast too many shoot-'em-ups could lay claim to.

MARK HIGHAM

■ Cheers Adrian for taking the screenshots – we forgive you for getting the joystick all sticky (yuk)

■ If you've got time to glance down at your status bar you can see how you're doing. Watch those energy levels carefully and don't hold back with the firepower

Your craft
Score
Remaining energy
Time



GRAPHICS	8
SOUNDTRACK	8
INTELLIGENCE	2
INSTANT APPEAL	8
LONG TERM INTEREST	6
OVERALL	81%

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Screenplay *extra*

Every month we face the same truly heartbreaking decisions over which ST titles not to feature in the packed pages they're calling (and rightly)

ST FORMAT'S game reviews section. Here, then, are just a few of those that arrived too late, didn't take our fancy, or whose faces simply didn't fit...



■ The gang's all here, ready for a swift round of the Old Maid (ooer fnar fnar etc)

HOYLE'S BOOK OF GAMES

Sierra - £34.99

A collection of six well-known card games, all well programmed: Cribbage, Crazy 8s, Gin Rummy, Hearts, Klondike Solitaire and Old Maid. You can play against up to three computer opponents, each with varying skill levels. Opponents include characters from other Sierra games, such as Leisure Suit Larry or King's Quest as well as the programmer's daughter.

The games are all easy to learn, and because the computer opponents have varying skill levels it's possible to pick them up as you play. Graphic representation is very much in the Sierra house style, and sound the usual boring internally generated rubbish. This is definitely a game you could send your gran for Christmas without offending her. Wee bit pricey, though.

STF Rating 73%

HEROES

Domark - £29.99

One of me little pomes: "Christmas is coming, the compilations are starting to appear. The first one's from Domark, for whom a big cheer." (You're definitely fired this time, pal - ed) Those really rather nice people from Putney have gift-wrapped four hero-type personages for this suite of games. Licence to Kill, one of the squillions of Domark Bond licences, is a standard multi-format jobbie involvin' lots of shootin', duckin'-an'-a-divin' and generally eliminatin' with extreme prejudice - all the game elements we've all come to know and predict so well.

Barbarian II, rated rather highly on release but a bit long in the tooth now, is a basic hack-'n'-slash, slice-'n'-dice item setting you against a variety of weird and wonderful opponents who want to either peck your eyeballs out or stomp

on your undercarriage.

The Running Man was an excellent film converted into a disappointing game, the general idea being to guide the muscles from Brussels (no he isn't - ed) through various levels of futuristic mayhem, beating up whoever gets in his way. The game didn't play well then, and it don't play no better now.

Star Wars is probably the pick of the pack. Graphics are very similar to the vector arcade game, and all the sampled voices are in there. All in all Heroes ain't no showstopper, but if you don't already have, say, three of the four 30 quid is a nice price and a cheap way to bulk out your collection somewhat.

STF Rating 85%

TEN GAMES CURRENTLY STOPPING THE ST FORMAT BOYS DOING ANY WORK

1. *Magic Fly* - Electronic Arts
2. *Flood* - Electronic Arts
3. *F-19* - Microprose
4. *Plotting* - Ocean
5. *Rainbow Islands* - Ocean
6. *Vaxine* - US Gold
7. *Kick Off 2* - Anco
8. *Dungeon Master* - Mirrorsoft
9. *Sim City* - Infogrames
10. *Damocles* - Novagen

TEN GAMES THAT MAKE YOU WANT TO BEAT UP YOUR OPPONENT, OR JUST ANYONE

1. Kick Off 2 - Anco

Ref, ref, offside surely ref! That's it, I'm not playing any more now, I just don't care

2. Speedball - Bitmaps/Mirrorsoft

Joystick-trashing mayhem that'll make you want kick the cat all the way downstairs

3. Trivial Pursuit - Domark

Grrr! No explanation needed

4. Pictionary - Domark

Try drawing pictures as fast as the computer. It simply cannot be done

5. Wayne Gretzky Hockey - Mirrorsoft

Blood runs red on the ice - and on the bedroom carpet

6. Gauntlet 2 - US Gold

Selfish sods love the "Shots now stun other players" option. Supremely annoying

7. Falcon - Mirrorsoft

The two player option is guaranteed to lead to fistcuffs

8. Leathernecks - Microdeal

Shoot your friends in the back, loads of times...

9. Tie Break - Ocean

"What the blinking flip were you looking at, that was a bloomin' easy-peasy shot..."

10. Blood Money - Psygnosis

Money hoggars enjoy depriving "top of screen" compatriots. Compatriots sulk



■ Ice'n' a slice in a Barbarian II stylee - one quarter of the Domark £30 Heroes four-pack that also includes Licence to Kill, the disappointing Running Man and the really rather not bad Star Wars



WEB OF TERROR

Impressions - £19.99

Are you "one of those people," as that Dennis Norden will insist on saying, who needs a change of underwear every time you see a spider? If so, stand well clear. If not, you're a space ranger, Rock Bimhead (ho ho), out to save some stranded space travellers from large hungry spiders. With big hairy legs. Eek!

Dull. Initial graphics screens are cheery, but the game screens are bland and badly created and the gameplay would annoy even an 8-bit computer owner (anoraks).

On second thoughts, even if you're not "one of those people," steer well clear anyway. **stf**

STF Rating 35%



MIKE READ'S COMPUTER POP QUIZ

Encore - £9.99

Computerised trivia games can be tremendous fun - or as much fun as root canal surgery with Kermit the frog on scalpel. This well designed version, though its sound is restricted to a couple of sampled cheers or boos, is easy to play and features pleasant, functional graphics.

Questions are nicely weighted and the game follows very much the same format as the original quiz. One to play with the mates after the pub, if you're into that kind of thing. A nice feel to it, if you'll pardon the expression.

STF Rating 71%

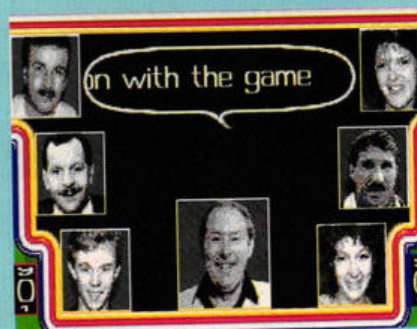
A QUESTION OF SPORT

Encore - £9.99

Very similar to "Readie's" quiz (we go drinking with all the top stars, us lot, we're that cool) - indeed the digitised faces used for the teams are identical. This one also follows the TV format, with questions on specialised subjects and sports you know bugger all about.

Not exactly riveting entertainment, but there are bound to be a fair few QS fans out there dying to play the game on their ST, no doubt. One to play with the mates before the pub, if you're into that kind of thing. And now, my David Coleman... (I don't bloody think so - ed)

STF Rating 70%



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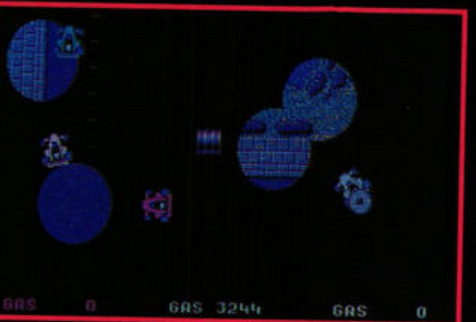
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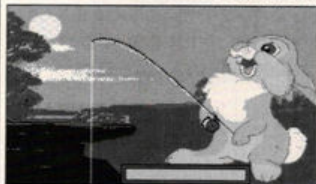
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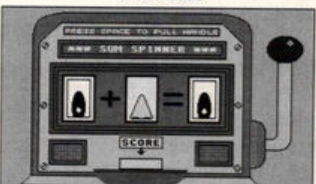
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The clock has stopped and needs your help to tell the time again



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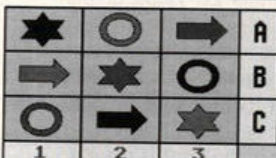
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game busters



Yes, you too can Freeride through those gun-toting bad guys, blitz the opposition's linebackers, kill the gnarliest end-of-level monsters, and even wield infinite slime! What more could any game-player want out of life?

TV SPORTS FOOTBALL

Cinemaware/Mirrorsoft

Geoffrey Duggen from Newton Abbot has been furiously playing this American football game and has come up with these vital tips.



EDITING A TEAM

Give the left halfback the number one rank with these statistics: speed 8, strength 4, hands 4, agility 8.

Rank the quarterback fifth and give him a fast throw and decent scrambling abilities.

Both wide receivers should have good hands, but make the right one faster because he has more running opportunities. Give the left inside linebacker a ranking of two or three and give the right one below-average figures. Control the left one during the game.

DEFENSIVE TACTICS

AGAINST ONE FORMATION

If the wide receiver switches to the other side of the pitch, a pass is probably imminent. Nevertheless, the computer runs from this formation more than any other. The 6-1 formation is safe against a run through the centre, but make sure you position your linebackers on either side of the defensive line. With 4-3 or 3-4, move the linebackers close to the line. When choosing the play, run outside, but keep the controlled player close to the wide receiver.

AGAINST THE SHOTGUN

This move is nearly always a pass, so pull your linebackers away from the line of scrimmage. However, beware of a run to the right, especially when the opposition are close to your end zone. Use "pass defence" to combat this play.

AGAINST PRO-SET FORMATION

It's impossible to tell what they're going to do on this one. If in 6-1 formation select "pass defence" and then cover the rush yourself if there is one. Otherwise "blitz" or "run outside" should do the job.

GENERAL DEFENCE TIPS

Whenever you select "blitz," allow the other linebackers to get the quarterback and cover the sneaky run inside by yourself. Never use 3-4 inside your own 20-yard line; the extra men are wasted in the small space. On the second play screen, look across to see the offence's choice and then select the right one. The computer often throws to a wide receiver on the fourth time down, but moving your outside linebacker back five yards discourages this.

OFFENSIVE TACTICS

THROWING

Use the shotgun and the bottom right pattern for any long-distance throws. Against "blitz" the three receivers are wide open. Against "pass defence" the left halfback runs in behind the left wide receiver and is free to catch the pass once the receiver has drawn the cover away.

RUNNING

Use the first formation and the top left pattern when running. The left halfback gets the ball

and heads left as planned. Turn back up the middle as gaps open or cut across to the right.

SHORT YARDAGE

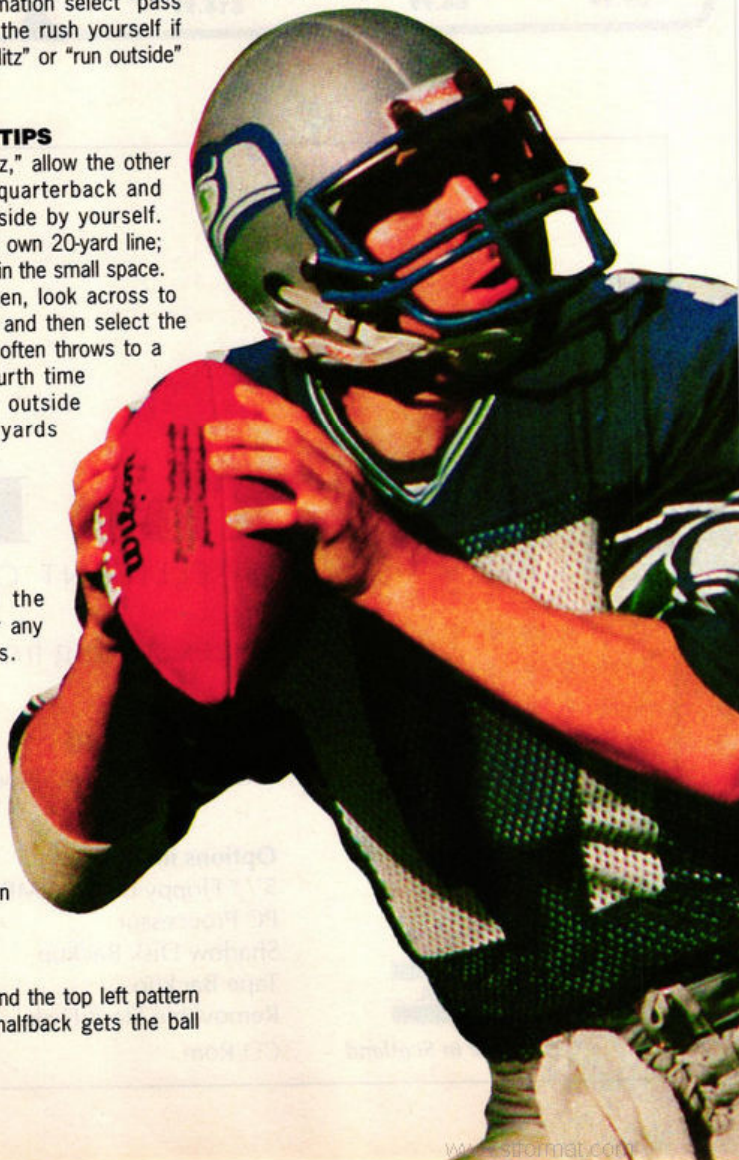
Use "pro-set" and the top left pattern. Hand off to the left-hand back who goes through the gap in the middle to gain yardage. If the gap in the middle is covered or blocked, use your brain and go around either side!

LONG YARDAGE

Use the throwing offence outlined above and wait until the receivers go off-screen. The left wide receiver and left-hand back can get free of the defensive backs and a perfectly timed throw leaves the opposition's coach cursing.

GENERAL OFFENSIVE TIPS

- To get a player free, reverse the top left "pro-set" by holding down fire and then passing to the left-hand back, who should be free.
- Fake punts are invaluable, and passing to the left-hand back just as he leaves the screen puts you clear with only a single player to beat. Move diagonally right to pass him and sprint home. This move works anywhere at any time except when you're within 20 yards of the opposition's end zone.
- Press fire when tackled to avoid fumbling.
- Passing to the left is generally better than passing to the right, but try to run the ball into the end zone rather than passing.
- Use your time-outs when the clock is running, especially when you've got the ball and you're within two minutes of the end of the half.



RICK DANGEROUS II

MICROPROSE

Welcome to the weird and wacky world of that modern comic hero Sir Richard of Dangerous, back for a second set of adventures courtesy of Microprose and programmers Core. Here we proudly present a life-saving and, er, chillin' guide to level three, The Ice Kingdoms of Frezia. Matey boy Mark Higham stayed up quite late for several nights (but he wasn't doing this guide). Let's go, Wik...

Throw moving bombs to destroy the ice clusters, then call the lift

Activate the switch in the wall to stop the dripping. (If the water drips on you, it's instant death, and we don't want that, do we?)

Leap onto the ice platforms. Kill the guard and be careful to watch out for a falling icicle

Takes you off to a bonus screen

These platforms are slippery

The snowball machine starts chucking snowballs. Duck!

Throw a moving bomb into the ice cluster. Now "have" that guard with a laser

Run along the ice and jump when you get to the end to leap onto the next platform. Hit the button to call the lift and jump on quickly

As you climb the ladder the penguin emerges. Run back down the ladder, wait for the penguin to come down and let the boid have one (oer)

Climb the ladder and shoot the ice man but be careful - the ground's slippery

Wait for the wheel to head away from you and jump into the gap. When the wheel starts moving towards you, leap up onto the next platform and jump quickly onto the ladder



IKARI WARRIORS

Elite

Master those gun-toting heroes with this tip from **Rowan Pestille** in High Wycombe. Get into the high-score table and type "FREERIDE" to enable you to waltz through the bad guys.

AXEL'S MAGIC HAMMER

Gremlin

Gary Clayson from Kent has discovered a way of obtaining a continue game feature in this absorbing cutesy game. When the continue message appears on the screen, take the disk out of the drive and press fire to start again. All the blocks you destroyed in your last game are still missing in the new one.

STARRAY

Logotron

When the action hots up and you've got blisters on your trigger finger, follow the advice of Robert Giffin and cheat. During the game type AL, press FIRE and then type YANKOVIC. Now press F5 for infinite lives and F6 to complete a level.

JUMPING JACKSON

Infogrames

This ultra-absorbing musical extravaganza has passwords to levels 5-8, 9-12 and 13-16. For anyone still struggling **P Clague** from Wirral offers the codes: KAYLEIGH, ALCHEMY and OCTOBERON get you through the game in an instant.

NORTH AND SOUTH

Infogrames

Robert Heldreich from Derby has some strategic tips to help you win the American Civil War.

- If you don't win many battles, try combining armies. You can have a force with up to three artillery units.
- Keep away from Mexicans and as soon as Indian territory is captured get out of the way.
- At the start of battles hold down the fire button to destroy the enemy cannon with ease. Destroy the bridge and stay out of the way of the infantry.

NINJA SPIRIT

Activision



■ Manic gamer **Robbie Skillen** from Northern Ireland has given up playing the spirit of a great white wolf and opted to cheat in this IREM coin-op conversion.

Hit F9 to pause the game then tap the Control key for invincibility

F-29 RETALIATOR

Ocean



■ If you've already screamed the 29 F-words permitted while playing this game, listen to James Calder from Llandaff in Cardiff who has a life-saving tip. When you're asked for your name, type in "THE DIDY MEN" and click on colonel as your rank. Now if you press enter on the numeric keypad the plane automatically lands itself. During the mission, if your HUD and guidance systems get shot up, choose an external viewpoint and press the same key again. Your heading, altitude and speed are shown and you can safely finish the mission

**ROBOTZ**

Public Domain

Two months ago the Cover Disk featured a game called Robotz. This month Amor Tis from France has discovered that typing "robert presley" on the title screen or during the game gives you infinite lives. To be transported to the next level, simply press L.

XENON 2

Mirrorsoft

According to David Coleshill from Redhill in Surrey, there's a great way to avoid the aliens on level two. Simply get killed just after wiping out the mid-level monster and you find you're all on your lonesome.

SEVEN SIERRA GAMES

Uri Golan from Israel has a cheat for the early Sierra 3D adventures King's Quest 1-3, Leisure Suit Larry 1, Space Quest 1 and 2, and Police Quest 1. Press Alt+D and the game goes into a special mode. After the version number is displayed, type "tp" to jump to any room you choose, or type "get all" and an object number to get any object of your choice.

VIRUS

Firebird

To turn on the cheat mode start the game then press Enter, O, Enter and P in sequence. Get extra lives and missiles by pressing M.

RAINBOW ISLANDS

Ocean

This hugely addictive challenge is one of the all time great cutesy games, and these tips from Vimal Glover of Lancashire should help any low achievers to get to grips with it.

■ If you collect the seven crystals – red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet – then you gain an extra life. If you manage to do this on each island you can amass scores in excess of two million! The seasoned player should be able to collect the crystals in the above order, in which case a silver door appears when you reach the end-of-level monster. Go through the door and collect the treasure trove of goodies.

■ When the "hurry" message appears, don't panic. You still have ten seconds before the water starts to rise – more than enough time to reach the top of the level.

■ Each time you kill three creatures, a special item appears for you to collect:

1st item: trainers which enable you to run much faster;

2nd item: a red pot which gives you an extra rainbow (up to a maximum of three)

3rd item: a yellow pot which increases the speed of your rainbows.

■ Other items make the game easier to play. Rings enable you to shoot explosive stars when you jump. Thunder gives you a cup which kills everything on screen. A clock stops the creatures moving for a few seconds. Magic wands make your rainbows turn into apples, cherries, peaches or chocolates which protects you from the nasty creatures.

■ End-of-level monsters:

One: spider

Two: helicopter

Three: Dracula

Four: Teddy bear

Five: Arkanoid creature

Six: Robot

Seven:

HOW TO KILL THOSE NASTY MONSTERS**LEVEL ONE**

The spider is easy to kill. Wait for it pounce in your direction and toss a rainbow. Move along the ground so that

he doesn't pounce on you and keep throwing those rainbows!

LEVEL TWO

This can be a bitch. The helicopter throws bombs at you. When it reaches the bottom of the screen, use your rainbows to climb upwards. When it passes, jump on the rainbows and keep throwing them. You may need to repeat this process.

LEVEL THREE

This is the easiest one to kill. Go into a corner and bombard him with rainbows, remembering to jump on them.

LEVEL FOUR

The teddy bear bounces around the edges of the screen. It's easy to predict where he's going to jump, so just keep throwing the rainbows and stay out of his way. Beware the four smaller teddy bears which mirror the main one's movement.

LEVEL FIVE

This Arkanoid-style creature fires tiles at you, but they're easy to avoid. Jump up, throw a rainbow and then quickly break it. If you die, lose your invincibility when you come back again to take away some of his energy. This invincibility lasts five seconds.

LEVEL SIX

Go to the top of the screen and throw rainbows at the robot. Then drop to the bottom of the screen. As the robot comes down, climb to the top of the screen and continue to fire rainbows, dodging whatever he shoots at you.

LEVEL SEVEN

The dragon breathes deadly blasts of fire so keep out of his way and (guess what?) bombard him with rainbows.



■ In *Rainbow Islands*, a world full of savage teddy bears and end-of-level baddies that can be really quite unpleasant, **FORMAT'S** guide could really come in handy

GHOSTBUSTERS 2

Activision

When the Activision logo appears on-screen hold down CTRL, S, U and ALT. Now when you're playing, the rope won't snap, you have infinite slime (like Bruce Forsyth) on level two and infinite courage. Thanks to Paul Keddle of Fife in Scotland for that tip.

KINGS QUEST 4

Sierra

If you do a directory of the KQ disk you discover there are a number of files named KQ456

with various suffixes. These are data files containing details of every item in the game. Just click on them and read them like a text file. Help courtesy of JG Merselaar all the way from Hazenswoude in Holland.

INTERNATIONAL KARATE PLUS

System 3

If your ego's taking a bashing from being constantly floored by the computer, take Matthew Harrall's advice and save yourself

NIGHTBREED

THE ACTION GAME

THE



TAKE CONTROL OF BOONE AS HE MAKES HIS WAY THROUGH THE DEPTHS AND CAVERNS OF NECROPOLIS TO

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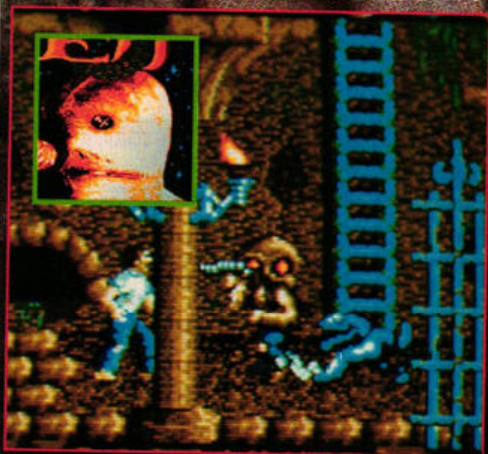
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➤ some bruising. Start the game as normal and then let yourself be knocked down straightaway. Press space to pause the game and fire to re-enter it and miraculously your opponents can no longer hit you. This procedure also works when you're playing against a human opponent.

ZAK MCKRACKEN

LUCASFILM

Once again **James Beswick** from Biggin Hill has a high profile in *Gamebusters* with these mindbending **Zak McKracken** tips:

- You can only catch a plane to the Bermuda Triangle if you're trained by the Guru first. To enter the temple where the Guru lives, give the book on enlightenment to the guard standing outside.
- When you're captured by the aliens in the Bermuda Triangle, give the king alien the membership card. You can get the card by filling out an application form in the phone company (using the yellow crayon under Zak's sink) and then mailing it.
- To get past the guard at Stonehenge, give him the bottle of whisky. The bum at Miami airport only gives you his bottle when you show him the Book on Enlightenment. Get the book by giving your cashcard to the devotee in San Francisco (cashcard under the desk in Zak's bedroom: reach it by using the torn off wallpaper).
- You can go straight to the Camponian Sekret room by lifting up the corner of the mat in Zak's bedroom. You need to use the monkey wrench (in the toolbox in Lou's shop) to lift up the hatch under the mat. To go down the

POPULOUS

Electronic Arts



■ **Mark Dyer** from Blackburn has been creating and destroying worlds and generally indulging in a little megalomania. He's found that if you type in **REIDQLUAZ** you can get to the very last world

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hole, tie the rope (also in the toolbox) to the doorhandle in Zak's bedroom and then climb down.

ONSLAUGHT

Hewson

When you're on the MAP screen, try pressing F9 and F10 simultaneously. A series of pulsating bars appear on either side of the map signifying that you've entered EDIT mode. Move the selection cursor around the map and alter the land by pressing the function keys. This should make the game incredibly easy to complete, thanks to **James Elliott** of Ipswich in Suffolk.

THE BARD'S TALE

Electronic Arts

To get into Kylearan's Tower, go to level three of Harkyn's Castle and attack the statuette 1N, 21E. First, however, you must collect the Mad God's eye from level three of the catacombs which are located at 19N, 20E. To get into Mangar's Tower, go to level three of the sewers where you find stairs that lead up to it. Before going up, collect the onyx key from Kylearan's Tower at 13N, 17E.

PAC-LAND

Grandslam

Just before you reach a BREAK TIME sign jump for a bigger bonus. That blob-eating tip comes from **Matthew Pearson** from Leeds. **stf**

ELITE

Firebird

Gary Carter from Wirral has discovered a way of getting into the cheat mode. When asked for a password from the manual type in SARA.

When asked for the password a second time type in the correct one. To go into the cheat mode at any time in the game, simply press the asterisk.

The following list gives you handy extras. Simply type in the first two numbers, hit return, type in the next two numbers and hit return again. Escape takes you back into the game.

28	01	Galactic hyperdrive	✓
18	01	ECM system	✓
48	01	16 ton luxuries	✓
58	01	16 ton alloys	✓
78	01	16 ton medicals	✓
32	01	Cloaking device	✓
40	01	16 ton slaves	✓
34	01	16 ton food	✓
50	01	16 ton computers	✓
54	01	16 ton machinery	✓
20	01	Escape capsule	✓
22	01	Energy bomb	✓
24	01	Energy unit	✓
26	01	Docking computer	✓
74	01	16 ton alien items	✓
30	01	ECM jammer	✓
F0	01	Fuel scoop	✓

MIDWINTER

Rainbird

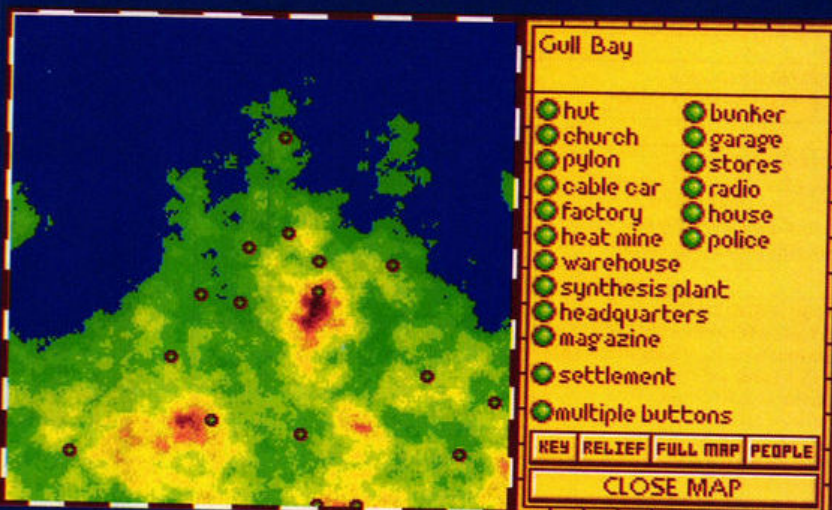
Having slogged around the island in this excellent strategy game from Rainbird, Brian Youthed from London has come up with some tips for those of you still struggling.

■ The easiest way of completing the game is simply to get down to Shining Hollow as

quickly as possible and blow the whole place up with dynamite. If that seems a little bit too easy, then blow up the three radio stations to recruit everyone.

■ The most valuable people to recruit are Virginia Caygill (great skier), Franco Grazzini (great hang-glider), Amelia Randles (excellent recruiter) and Karl Rudinski and John Stark who are both sound drivers.

■ The best vehicle to get around in is the snow wolf. If you're going to travel through enemy territory then take a nurse or doctor with you to patch you up when you get injured.



■ Not sure about this one. When is a Gamebuster not a Gamebuster? When it's an undocumented feature, perhaps? After all, this is supposed to be a game of wits and strategy. But if you just tootle down to Shining Hollow and dynamite the living wosname out of the whole place, you're home and dry. Bit iffy if you ask us

GET YOUR TIPS OUT FOR THE LADS!

Go on, send us a tip, a game cheat, an infinite lives poke, a short cut, an "undocumented feature," a bug, a password - in short, anything at all you've found helps you get more from games on your ST. And if you're stuck at a particular point in a game, we still want to hear from you.

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desktop

How does a floppy disk work? Why doesn't it get tired?

Neil Jackson's fearless investigation into one of today's

most controversial issues will surprise and may even shock you...



One of the recurring questions DESKTOP gets asked is, "How do you get 800K on the Cover Disk?" or something to that effect. The subject of disks, formatting and bootsectors is one that leaves people scratching their heads, mainly because Atari did not see fit to include any useful information about it in the ST's manual. True, it is a relatively complex subject when examined in detail, but a good working knowledge can be had without technical overkill.

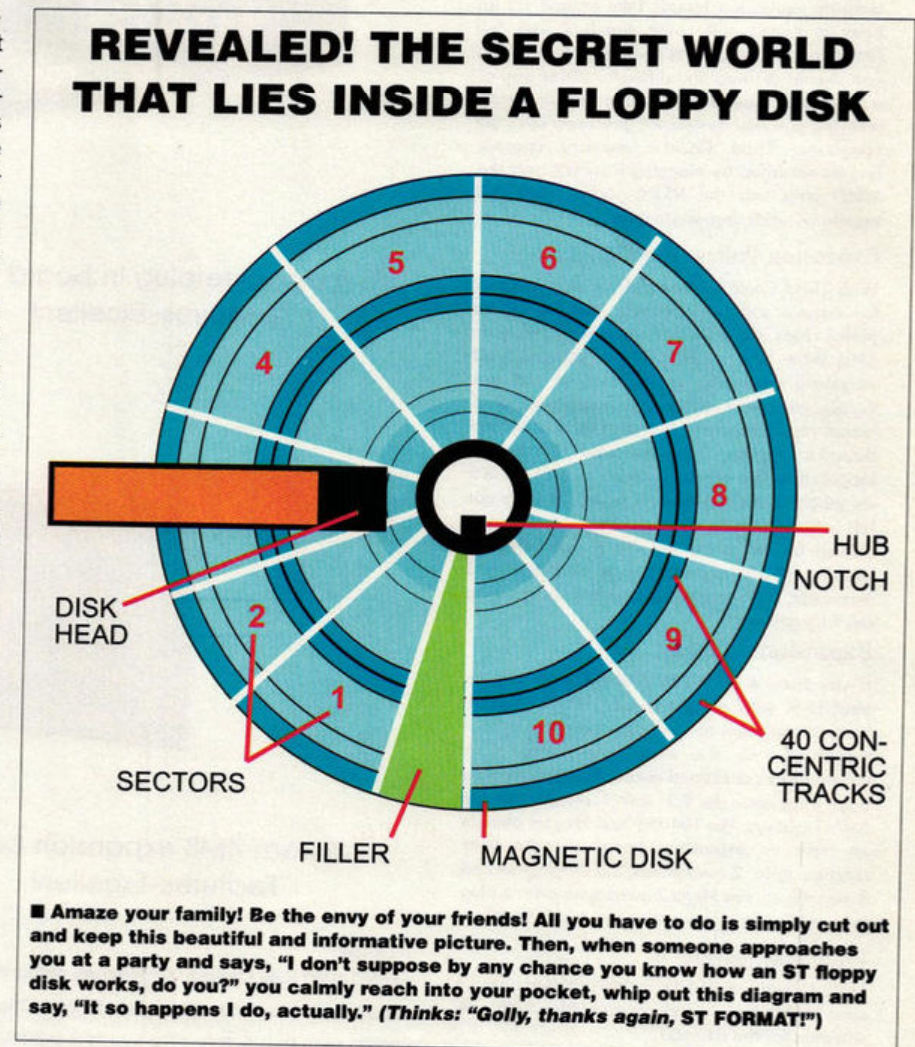
The basic ingredient of the ST's disk is the circular platter of iron-coated plastic contained within the familiar blue casing. This is where the data is stored magnetically, in much the same way as used on audio cassettes. When saving, the disk drive's head sends out small magnetic pulses which charge the particles on the disk. These particles remain in their new state, and can be read back by the disk drive head when it's loading. The same method is used to record and play back audio tapes, but disks have a fundamental difference.

Cassettes consist of one long strip of magnetic tape, resulting in a continuous start-to-end stream of data, be it music, programs or voices. Disks, on the other hand, are a bit like records. It's possible to jump forwards without having to go through loads of data. All you need to do is move the read/write head towards the centre of the disk and you are nearer to the end of the data.

The problem is, how does the head know where it's moved to? Unless it has a counter (like you do on a tape-player) it's bound to get lost and counters only work if the data is continually passing the head. The disk needs some other way of telling the head its position in the datastream.

This is where formatting comes in. The ST uses a tried and tested method to prepare the disk so that all the data can be found, time and time again. During a format operation, your ST works its way through the entire disk, starting at the outside and working inwards, writing data and reading it back as it goes. The head moves inwards a controlled amount each revolution, as determined by the mechanics of the disk drive. The drive also knows when the disk has spun completely due to a small notch on the underside of the disk. You can see this notch on the circular metal plate in the centre of the casing.

Using precise timing, the drive can tell



which circular path (or track) it's reading, and how long ago it passed the index notch, but this still needs double-checking to keep the accuracy rate high. This double-checking is done by the data on the disk itself which is arranged into segments (or sectors) along each track.

The standard format for ST disks uses nine sectors on each track and there are 80 tracks. Each sector has a standard clump of data at the start and end so the ST knows exactly how far it's got down the track. These data clumps are written to the disk during the format process and then read back to ensure readability.

At the start of every track on the disk, the

ST writes 60 bytes of data in repeating pattern, so that the head can time itself to the passing of the index notch. The idea is that these 60 bytes enable any mis-reads or synchronisation errors to be 'ironed-out' before the real data gets close to the head.

When these timing bytes are passed, the first sector's identification data is read in. This consists of another 59 bytes of data containing information on the track number (0 to 79), the side (0 or 1), sector number (1 to 9) and a number of space-fillers and checksums.

Then follows 512 bytes of pure data. This is the stuff that you put on when you save a file. ➤

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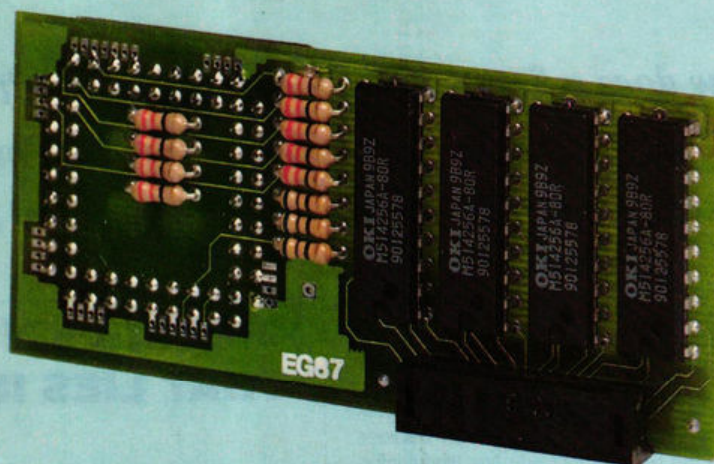
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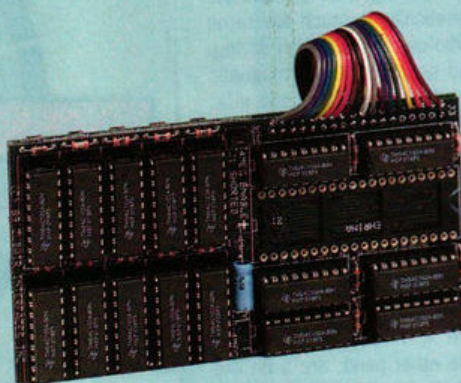
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THROW DOWN THE GAUNTLET

While playing – or rather, trying to play – *Gauntlet II*, Ian Clark has come across a bit of a prob.

It's like this. Every time Ian loads up the game a green elf appears and spends its time firing constantly at the wall. There's nothing wrong with your game, Ian, it's your ST – or rather what you've got connected to your ST.

You see, *Gauntlet II* is a four player game which uses the printer port to add further joysticks and hence opponents. If you've got a printer cable attached, the ST assumes it's an adaptor and conjures up a character accordingly.

The answer is simply to disconnect your printer cable. Problem solved, end of chat.

After a format it's left blank and does not change until a save operation occurs. 512 bytes is not enough space for most files, so many sectors are used to store parts of files

and linked together later by a File Allocation Table (FAT). More on this later.

After the file data comes another 41 bytes of fillers and checksums which ensure the head is still synchronised for the next sector's identification data.

The pattern of sector ident, data and fillers is the same for all nine sectors until the last one has passed. After this there follows another 1401 filler bytes until the index notch comes around again.

A quick bit of mental arithmetic shows that each track holds 6,969 bytes. There are 80 tracks per side so the total disk capacity is 557,520 bytes for a single-sided disk or 1,115,040 bytes for a double-sided one. The actual storage space allocated for your files, programs, pictures and so on is only 512 bytes per sector, so on nine sectors, 80 tracks you can only store 368,640 bytes (single) or 737,280 (double).

But hang on! When a disk is formatted, GEM tells you only 357,376 bytes are free (on single sided-disks) or 726,016 (double). Where have the remaining 22 sectors disappeared to?

The size of the sector space (512 bytes), as mentioned earlier, means that files have to be

SOUNDS GROOVY

Phillip Smith from Ross-on-Wye in Herefordshire has discovered a novel use for his Mastersound cartridge. He's found that besides sampling, the cartridge can actually be used to react to incoming sound signals.

By using any language that allows you to access the computer's memory directly – such as GFA Basic – you can write some code which enables sound to light synchronisation. For instance:

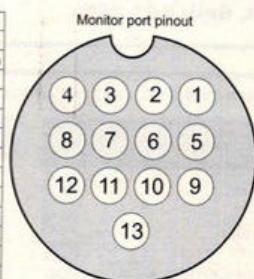
```
10 CLS
20 A=PEEK($FB0000):REMARK CAUSES
  A TO D CONVERSION
30 A=PEEK($FA0001):REMARK
  READ VALUE
40 COLOUR 0,A:REMARK CHANGE
  BACKGROUND
50 GOTO 20
```

This causes the screen to flash in sync with the music. It would be easy to go on and make this considerably more sophisticated, with pulsing coloured patterns. The only limit is your imagination – and taste...

cut up into smaller chunks and stashed away in lots of different sectors. Someone, somewhere has to keep a record of which sectors correspond to which files and where they're all

PUT YOURSELF IN THE PICTURE: ST SHALL SPEAK UNTO SONY

PIN	DESCRIPTION
1	AUDIO OUT
2	COMPOSITE VIDEO (Where applicable)
3	GENERAL PURPOSE OUTPUT
4	MONOCHROME DETECT
5	AUDIO IN
6	GREEN
7	RED
8	PLUS 12 Volt PULL UP
9	HORIZONTAL SYNC
10	BLUE
11	MONOCHROME
12	VERTICAL SYNC
13	GROUND



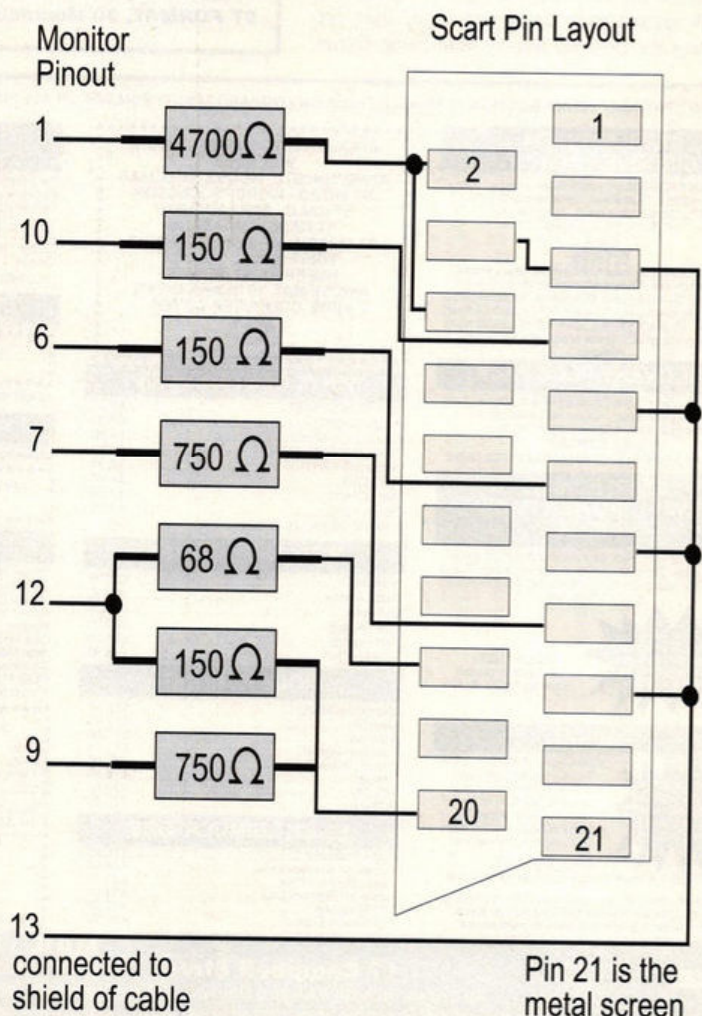
■ The Sony Trinitron television has always been a popular choice with ST owners, not just for watching *Neighbours* but because of the SCART socket on the back. Connecting one of these up to the ST, however, is less than easy. Steven Moore from Alloa has managed it and we present his advice here.

You could use a standard SCART lead designed for the Sony KX-14 RGB monitor, but if you do this you'll find there's a small problem: the vertical sync is unstable and consequently the picture resets itself about once every second. If you're using the Sony lead, therefore, you need to follow the diagram and connect a 68 ohm resistor to the lead of pin 12. This must be attached to the computer side of the 150 ohm resistor.

While he's at it, Steven also has a query about formatting a hard drive partition to accept PC data from an ATonce emulator. Yes, you can indeed format drive partitions to different standards. My own hard drive has partition C as ST, D as PC and E as Mac.

The procedure is explained in the documentation which comes with ATonce, but if you have any problems try Silica's excellent help line (☎ 081 309 7770).

£20
ST PRIZE



located. This is the job of the FATs. There are two FATs on a standard disk, each one being five sectors long. In each FAT there is an entry for every pair of sectors (called clusters).

Each entry contains information about the next cluster used by the file, or indicates that the cluster is unuseable (due to disk damage) or that it's the last cluster used by the file. There are two FATs to ensure extra security and both are updated after every disk write operation. In this way, the ST can find all the clusters used by the file, but it still has to find out which is the file's very first cluster.

This is done by the directory which is a seven sector long chunk of data. The directory also contains special information about the file itself. Here you find the filename and type (.PRG, .TOS, .DOC, etc), its size, the date and time of its creation and (most importantly) where the first cluster is located. With this information, the ST can then go and check that cluster's entry in the FATs to pick up the thread and read the whole file into memory.

The most important sector on the whole disk is the boot sector, the very first sector on track one, side zero. This sector contains all the information needed to tell your ST the sizes of the sectors, FATs, directory and the number of sides. Without this the ST couldn't hope to read a thing. The boot sector also contains an area where a small program can be stored. This kind of program (called a boot program) is used to automatically load and run another program on the disk. Boot programs prevent the GEM system from being initialised, thus preventing the Desktop display from being shown.

Hence they are commonly used on commercial software to protect the data from prying eyes. Sadly, the boot sector is also the place where viruses often live, because they can then enter the system before GEM is fully awake. This is why destroying viruses can sometimes damage commercial programs inadvertently.

Overall, we've accounted for 18 sectors which are used by the system legitimately, leaving four over. Apparently GEMDOS has a problem (arising from the days when it used to live on disk rather than ROM) which renders it unable to read the last four sectors correctly. They do exist and are formatted, but the Show

Info command won't add them into its total.

Now you know how the standard ST disk is laid out. Here at ST FORMAT we use a slightly underhand method of formatting ten sectors on every track, using the 1,404 byte fillers as an extra sector. That brings the total disk space up to 800K, enabling us to cram more onto the Cover Disk. And that's before we begin crunching data - but that's another story... **stf**

■ If you want to learn more about the ST's disk system, **KnifeST** is the tool for the job. (£29.95 from HiSoft ☎ 0525 718181). For more background information read **ST Disk Drives Inside and Out** (£16.95 from SDL ☎ 081 309 1111)

FORMAT NEEDS YOUR DESKTOP TIPS

We like you a lot. You're a very nice person. So, given our high regard for you, why not send in a tip, a game cheat, an infinite lives poke, a short cut, an undocumented feature, a bug, a password - in short, anything at all you've found helps you get more from your ST? And if you're stuck at a particular point in a game, or you find a problem with a piece of software, we want to hear about that, too. That way you can share your information with 73,495 (approx) fellow ST enthusiasts, and if it's a problem - well, if we don't know the answer, surely someone will!

Name _____
Address _____
Daytime 'phone _____

My tip is: Games ☐ Desktop ☐ Music ☐ Graphics ☐ Cover Disk ☐ Other ☐

Brief description of tip _____

Please complete this form and send it, with your tip, to: Night of 1,000 Tips, ST FORMAT, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW.

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TANGERINE
FLAKESTREAMED

PICTURE SHOW

Cubism? Man, that's just square. Surrealism? Fishy! Futurism? Old hat. Here, with your ST pictures, is where the art is. Neil Jackson hosts

Welcome to the second ST FORMAT art-attack, the part of the magazine devoted to the very best of your ST artwork. From the ever-increasing deluge of entries we take the most stunning and display them here for all the world to see. To give you extra inspiration, we're giving away £25 worth of software for the *creme de la creme* – and we'll also be compiling a Gallery Special for the Cover Disk in a future FORMAT.

To enhance your chances, you must

remember to include the name of the art package you created your masterpiece with, as well as details of any specialised techniques you used. The more tricks you share, notes you include and step-by-step sequences you show, the more likely you are to hit the bigtime. We want you to use your talent to show others how they can use their ST to create works of art.

Because the gallery attracts so much attention from potential Picassos, sadly we can't return your entries (just like Vision-On, remem-

ber?). So make sure you keep a copy at home to show to Auntie Flo when she tells you there's nothing creative about computers.

Whether you're a dabbling Dali or a major-league Matisse, send your artwork and artful dodges to: The Gallery, ST FORMAT, 30 Mon-

ST
ACTIVE**"AMAZON"**

by Nick Yeo in Degas Elite

This sequence of Degas Elite work, by NICK YEO, begins with the outlines of the judge, adds base-tones, shades these accordingly and finally adds extra details such as the elbow-pads and buckles.

Working on the main picture, Nick uses the judge outline for basic positioning and fills in his outline sketch. He then adds detail and colour, working from the background to the foreground, before adding the judge's shadow and shading the alien. Finally the completed judge is overlaid to the correct position. Special thanks to Mandy Flower from Bath for sending her brother Nick's work to us. Apparently Nick no longer uses his computer for art. Maybe this will inspire him to take it up again...

■ Degas Elite £24.95 (Electronic Arts ☎ 0753 49442)



£25
WINNER
STF PRIZE

"FREDDY" AND FRIENDS

by Peter Halloran in Degas Elite



■ Here's a selection of pix by PETER HALLORAN from Weymouth, all created with *Degas Elite*. He tells us that it's all hand-drawn from scratch, but doesn't go into detail about his techniques. C'mon Pete, the cartoons are fantastic, but we'd all really like to know how you did Freddy!



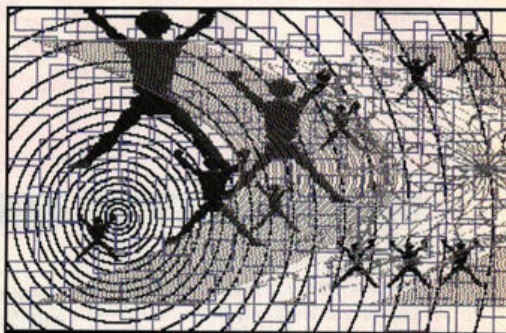
■ Above left, some slimy sleazebag being friendly; above, some sickeningly cute American doing same; left, ah, that's a bit more like it! Old scabface is back, with evil on his degraded mind no doubt. Treble pleasurable shivers all round!



■ The only criticism we might level at Pete's pix is nothing to do with their artistic merit, though we would have appreciated more information. It's just that, well, everything is do gosh darn American. How's about it, Pete?



BY NICK VEO



■ Above and below are two images from RON WOOD from Truro, who uses a popular but long-winded method to create them. He first produces solid 3D models using *Cyber Sculpt*, then renders them with shading from a controlled light-source using *Cyber Studio CAD3D 2.0*, and finally adds backgrounds and extra details using *Cyber Paint*. Phew! Neat, though (*Cyber Sculpt* £79.95; *CAD 3D* £49.95; *Cyber Paint* £49.95 - all from GST/Electric Distribution ☎ 0480 496789)



■ The mysteriously Christian nameless D Windscheffel drew this excellent *Dick Tracy* pic in just 15 mins in *Degas Elite*. First he uses the circle function to get the basic proportions right; then adds a basic outline for Tracy's head with the K-Line. He sets up his chosen palette and uses Fill to colour areas in. Finally using magnification he tidies up. Not bad!

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how to smash the language barrier

ST ACTIVE
LOGO
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If you're a non-programmer, a complex program listing probably scares the pants off you. But whatever your current level of competence, Mark Higham explains, there's always something just a little more advanced to suit you

You can't help it. Get your hands on some sexy software and it's natural to pick out its faults. In that otherwise excellent game *Sim City*, for instance, anyone could see that the user interface ought to have been much faster; *First Word Plus* should have included a SAVE ASCII option; *Degas Elite* would have been better if only you could have set certain startup configurations.

You could, of course, tell the programmer everything you thought was wrong with it and hope he does a better job second time around, but the real answer is to take up the programming gauntlet yourself.

Becoming a programmer isn't as much of a nightmare as you'd imagine, though. Not all programmers break out in acne and anoraks and plunge headlong into short-sightedness and an odd way of combing their hair. Instead, as many of them will be only too quick to tell you, programming not only helps you make more of your ST, but it's also utterly absorbing.

The first and by far the most difficult obstacle to overcome is that fear of the unknown. Take a glance at a program listing and, if you don't pass out with fright, you'd think you were staring at inscriptions from Tutankhamen's tomb. But spend just a few hours with a good programming manual, invest an hour or two trying out the examples and slowly you

realise it isn't all a load of hieroglyphics. The cloud begins to clear and a wealth of possibilities open up before you. Honest.

Now comes the important decision: *which programming language?* There are four main languages as well as a number of games creators, and each has its merits and aficionados.

The thing is, it's an ongoing swings and roundabouts scenario situation, to coin a phrase. Some are easier to learn, but little use when it gets down to the nitty gritty of doing something useful with them. Others are the Speedy Gonzales of the hexadecimal world but hopeless when it comes to performing the mathematical tasks demanded by many serious applications and utilities.

The easiest way to categorise programming languages is into two distinct types: high- and low-level languages. The former, languages such as C and Assembler, are based around the machine's internal command set. To write even very simple code requires many lines of instructions, but the resulting code runs very fast indeed.

High level languages such as BASIC and Pascal, by contrast, have commands made up of many instructions from the ST's internal command set. These commands are converted, using an Interpreter (more of which later), to low-level codes while the program is being executed. Just printing information on the ➤

THE EASY WAY OUT

Before you invest in a programming language, consider the merits of games creators. They enable you to write your own games for a fraction of the effort, though whether the results would ever be good enough to sell is debatable. Games creators like *Tailspin*, *STAC*, *SEUCK* and *STOS* require no programming expertise and are well-documented and easy to use, but restrictive. *SEUCK* is for producing shoot-'em-ups, *Tailspin* and *STAC* for writing adventures. *Tailspin* is for role-playing adventures and the final game is always going to look similar to others; *STAC* enables you to write the more typical adventure involving a pretty picture followed by lines of explanatory scene-setting text.

STOS differs from the others because it's a modification on BASIC with options specifically geared towards game design. It enables you to write a diverse range of games, but as a result is far harder to use than the others because you need to learn the *STOS* language. It's extremely popular and supported by a compiler.

SEUCK - £29.95; Palace ☎ 071 837 7032
STAC - £19.95; Incentive ☎ 0734 817288
STOS - £34.95; Mandarin/Electric
Distribution ☎ 0625 878888
Tailspin - £29.95; Mirodeal ☎ 0726 68020

CASE IN POINT: THE ABSOLUTE BEGINNER

For the novice, the babble of languages available is enough to provoke palpitations - by the time you get as far as looking at the code, you're in the middle of a fully-fledged heart-attack. Before you make a decision about which kind of code looks remotely understandable, consider what you want to do with it.

There's little point getting involved in BASIC if your sole objective in life is to write games - you just couldn't get the code to run fast enough. But if your ambition is to write utilities or even databases, spreadsheets and simple wordprocessors, advanced BASICs like GFA Basic

and HiSoft Basic are fast enough to be surprisingly competent.

For desktop accessories or small programs which run in the background of the ST's memory, the choice has to be between C and Assembly language.

Phil Smiley from Lincoln is a newcomer to the ST scene and looked around for months for a general purpose language which could give him the scope to write simple programs.

In the end he opted for GFA Basic, because he was told - and rightly - that it's a form which forces you to structure your programming code very well. Philip has plans to follow a

computer studies course at school, so he will already have gained a foothold on the programming ladder, with knowledge of a popular language and an idea of how to structure code.

GFA sell a compiler to accompany their BASIC which translates all the instructions in your BASIC code directly into machine code. As a result, your programs run much faster and get themselves a .PRG extension, meaning they can be executed directly from the Desktop simply by double-clicking on the program file. (See details on programs on page 124.)



■ Phil Smiley from Lincoln is a newcomer to the ST: which language should he use?

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Miscellaneous

MP1 - Pdom Starter Pack for the new STer. STWriter, Datahandler and Firstbase databases and NEOchrome the art package. Plus loads of utilities. Screen emulators, RAM disks, Spoolers, desktop Accessories, all very easy to use. A 3 disk pack for £7.50.
L1 - 68000 Assembler, Xlisp, STlogo, Tiny basic.
L13 and L14 Modula-2 Development System v1.0 from ANA-systems.
L15 - Sozobon C Compiler. A complete implementation of the C language as defined by K&R. DSD.
M9 - Music Writer lets you create music on screen as good as Music Studio.
M15 - The Accompanist 16 Voice MIDI Sequencer. Fully working by Henry Cosh, does everything!
M18 & M19 - Soundtracker player and SoundTracker modules converted by BOB from the Amiga.
M20 - Soundtracker player & modules from the Amiga. Also does & source in 68000 and GFA basic on formats.



Games

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B39 - Onyx by Robin Edwards. An excellent shoot 'em up with many varied and excellent sprites! All in 68000 machine code.
B40 - Dizzy Lizzy by The Happening Boiz. An excellent game, across between Pacman and Boulderdash.
B41 - Exodus by Chris Jeffery. Awesome shoot 'em up with fantastic graphics! Mega arcade game.
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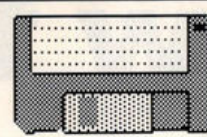
Graphics

GR3 - Master Painter is an excellent graphics program works in ALL resolutions fully featured.
GR6 - Degas disk - 155 fills, 10 brushes, 7 fonts, 24 printer drivers. Also a program to use Degas drivers to do a screen dumps.
GR7 & GR8 - AIM v2.31 of the Atari IMage processor DSD. 1MB.
GR14 - Public Painter v0.1 the great drawing program Now loads Degas fonts and pictures and also .IMG excellent! MMR.
GR17 - Picture converters. To and from Print Master, Degas, NEO, Tiny, IFF, SPEC512, IMG, Postscript, GIF, Mac GIF stripper.
GR19 - Fractal Zoom V3.1 the most comprehensive fractal generation program available Upto 4 types of curve, zoom in on parts of the display, movie making, full screen or preview mode. Full documentation within the program. DSD.
GR20 - .IMG utilities. Convert any Degas, Tiny, NEO, MACPaint, Spectrum 512 to .IMG format. Also IMG viewers.
GR21 - ANI ST the amazing fully featured animation package.
BPRO3 - SPRITE MASTER by C Skellern A professional sprite editing package tailored to suit most programming languages. CSR.
GR24 - Pearle the 3-d ray tracing package. Amazing animations can be created using this excellent fully working ray tracing graphics package. CSR.
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Application

MP23 - Home Business Pack: Opus and Sheet spread sheets, STWriter Elite, Double Sentry and Personal Finance accounts and Datahandler the database. 5 disk pack only £12.50! All double sided disks.
A48 - Uniterm V2.0e. THE Comms package for the ST.
A96 - Sheet v2.0. powerful all features spreadsheet, WKS compatible. 1280 rows by 280 columns. DSD.
A121 - POOLs- Expert Results Predictor v2.5 by Bay Computers. Excellent pools predictor.
W2 - STWriter Elite V3.6 full documentation and quick reference etc. on the disk, very good word processor.
W5 - Micro-Emacs v3.925 the text editor with disk manual and tutorial.
MP 21 - TEX the document processor and typesetting system. Includes its own programming language, handles graphics and equations with ease. 6 disk pack for £15.00. MMR. DSD.
A125 - Opus V2.10 of the spreadsheet and charting program: 255 columns by 999 rows, 80+ mathematical functions, excellent graphing, GDOS support etc.
A138 - Double Sentry V0.00 of the accounting program by Graham R Hutcheon. Does all aspects of accounts except VAT.
A166 - Personal/Business Address Book by Bay Computers excellent database system, lightning fast with label, mail merge etc., Vanterm V3.71 excellent comms package. Relative Tree the geneology program.



Utility

A41 - Monochrome monitor emulator v5, makes your colour screen run most Monochrome only software. NOTSTE.
A167 - Big Colour Emulator allows you to run most colour only software on a Monochrome screen. ARC v6.02 the latest version of the standard file archiver.
A88 - DCFormat v3.03 THE ST disk formatter even MSDOS boot sector.
A91 - Virus Killer v2.01 excellent virus detector and killer.
STW41 - FSelect v3/1989 by Martin Patzell the excellent alternative file selector.
A111 - Head Start v1.1 - auto-boot any type of program from your AUTO folder, including GEM programs.
A124 - ARChiver: ARC V5.21b, ARCSHELL V2.0 and V2.05 and a utility to switch back forth between LHARC and ARC.
A128 - Recover from disk lost data you specify sectors.
A134 - Boot Drive Select allows you to select a drive to boot from when you reset your ST.
A157 - Custom Format the best disk formatter available! Boot Sector Storage system store boot sectors from many disks as a file on 1 disk.
A163 - The Gemini desktop replacement. Smilar to NEODesk.
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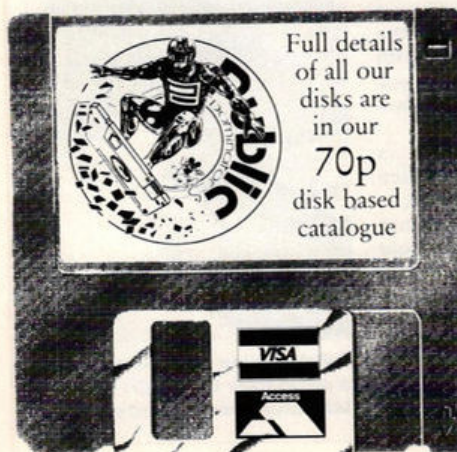


Demos

Colour Screen and Double Sided Disk Required.
D210 - The Walker I demo! The famous Amiga demo has been converted to the ST by radical Systemz. 1MB.
BD1 - Mind Bomb the latest mega mega must have demo, by The Lost Boys. This demo is outstanding!
D162 - The Lord of The Disks 'Dragons Lair'.
D176 - The Care Bears 'So What Demo'.
BD3 - The Music of the ShapeShifters.
D178 - Paul Simones Spectrum 512 colour on screen slide show!
D183 - The Ultimate.
BD2 - Genesys Aenigmatica demo the 82 Track remix!
D189 - SwedishNewYear2.
D191 - Mini Run by Radical Systemz AKA Police Chase from Amiga
D194 - Superior Demo by Dynamic Duo!
D197 - Space Ace - Don Bluth. Graphic animation demo of the game.
D207 - SNOWMAN demo the 1/2 MB RAM version. Better than the 1MB version!
D108 - Calamus product demo. Official demo from Signa. 1MB
D122 - The Union demo! This demo is brilliant and requires a joystick. NOTSTE.
D125 - The CareBears Cuddly demos. The best to date!
D128 - The Wattaheck demo. Great demos with excellent music.
D129 - The Swedish demo including SYNC and The CareBears.
D149 & D150 - Delirious Demo from The Alliance. 1MB. NOTSTE.

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Abbreviations Used:

MMR - Mono Monitor, CSR - Colour Screen. 1MB - 1MB RAM, DSD - Double Sided Disk.

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Tel 0279 757692.

CASE IN POINT: INTERMEDIATE PROGRAMMER



If you're new to the ST but have already had experience of programming on other micros, you don't need to take several steps backwards. James Tusker from Derby has been writing programs on a BBC for years – he even wrote a nifty conversion of *Pacman* and distributed it to all his mates for a couple of quid a throw. Now he's moving up to the ST and is eager to flex his muscles with a new language.

The ST – it will surprise no-

■ **James Tusker's been writing BBC BASIC games since he left school. Now what?**

one to hear – is a completely different machine from the BBC. While many BASIC instructions are the same on both micros, the internal structure of the two machines is poles apart. Consequently, James couldn't just put down his BBC and start writing BASIC on the ST. For a start, most ST BASICs don't have line numbers. Because of the effort involved in learning a new BASIC James decided simply to plunge straight into C.

Since James's interests lie in programming games, speed is essential – and that's something C is particularly good at. It has

the additional bonus that it can be transferred from one 16-bit micro to another – making PC Contemptible ports easy.

There's one further consideration. "After I'd come up with a choice of languages to learn," James recalls, "I looked around for the one which was best explained. There are several very excellent C programming manuals around, and these led me to opt for C."

Despite C's speed it still isn't fast enough for many arcade games, and for this James resorts to *Devpac 2*, which enables you to write super fast routines.

screen using Assembly, for example, means writing many lines of commands to read characters from memory and write them out to the screen. But this can be done with just one line in BASIC.

BASIC is the most popular programming language without a doubt, not least because Atari bundle a copy of *FirST Basic* with the ST. Implementations of BASIC exist for every home micro; on 8-bit machines like the BBC, Spectrum and Amstrad CPC the language

is incorporated onto ROM, so that it's available the moment you hit the power switch. With computers now installed in most schools and colleges you'd be hard pressed to get through life without coming across BASIC at some point.

The original BASIC was a simple language intended to enable people to get to grips with computers in general. Nowadays a wealth of new commands have been added so that it's reasonable, though not practical, to write sophisticated games and applications within

BASIC.

BASIC is often slow – to put it bluntly – and is therefore rarely used to write saleable programs. But don't give up on it. If you're new to programming it makes perhaps the best aid in teaching you the disciplines of programming, and with a sophisticated editor it weeds out those troublesome bugs.

The second of the three most popular languages is C. It claims to offer near machine-code speed without the complexities of low-level programming. Because C is so fast it's used to write many business applications where intensive maths is a must. One asset for games programmers is its portability. Code written on an ST in C could just as easily be loaded up onto a PC Contemptible, requiring only limited alterations before it can be executed. C is not as fast as machine code, however, so many games programmers are compelled to avoid it. Nonetheless, for games which don't make heavy demands in the speed department C is still held in high regard.

C source code looks complex enough to send you into a foaming fit, making it less than attractive to programming newcomers. It's simply not as easy to learn as BASIC because the commands aren't as obvious. Nevertheless, it's a good language to progress onto when you find yourself limited by BASIC. Unfortunately, there's a distinctive lack of error checking in C and any obscure bugs lurking in your programs can cause your ST to throw a wobbly.

Assembly, the third and final popular programming language, is quite simply the business if it's your aim to write super-fast, do-anything code. The code is directly compatible with your ST, enabling you to tap the inner resources of your machine. Because of this, programs are complex to write, requiring many instructions to perform even the simplest task. But for routines which are especially speed-intensive, there's just no beating it. Many programmers like to write their main source code in C and then write selective routines in Assembler where the higher speeds are essential. Sadly, with little error-checking, mistakes are hard to locate.

Incidentally, David Pringle, head honcho at programmers ODE, the team responsible for writing *Team Yankee* (see review on page 54), insists that Assembly language is easier than C for porting code from one 16-bit machine to another.

BOOKS TO HELP YOU PROGRAM BETTER

If you don't find the manual that comes with your programming language extensive enough – and they do vary in quality enormously – or you're looking for some useful companion material, there's a wealth of literature waiting for your eager fingers.

ATARI ST INTERNALS

■ ISBN 0-916439-46-1

■ ABACUS

■ £16.95

An essential companion for the intermediate and expert programmer, *Internals* contains listings of the ST's internal BIOS and XBIOS commands with examples of use in Assembly. Also covered are details on how to program the sound chip, serial port and interrupts. Highly recommended.

ST TRICKS AND TIPS

■ ISBN 0-916439-47-X

■ ABACUS

■ £16.95

Packed with Assembly listings and advice to help you get more out of your programs, this superb book shows you how to combine BASIC and machine code, use GEM with BASIC, set up a RAM disk, write a print spooler...

ATARI ST BASIC TO C

■ ISBN 0-916439-58-5

■ ABACUS

■ £18.45

ST Basic is the worst version of BASIC in the world: C is currently the trendiest thing

since Deee-lite. *ST Basic to C* explains these and all the middle ground.

ATARI ST ADVANCED PROG GUIDE

■ ISBN 1 850 58053 7

■ SIGMA

■ £10.95

ST PROGRAMMERS GUIDE

■ ISBN 0938862790

■ WEBER

■ £22.95

Both guides cover much the same ground, and either would get you a good way into the guts of your ST.

ST MACHINE LANGUAGE

■ ISBN 0-916439-48-8

■ ABACUS

■ £16.95

Abacus produce an excellent range of computer books for the ST (though they do seem to be getting harder to find): if you're looking to learn machine language you can't go wrong with this one.

PROGRAMMERS

REFERENCE GUIDE

■ ISBN 1851811729

■ GLENTOP

■ £17.50

Puzzled by all those Xbios calls? Want to know what

GEMDOS means? This is an invaluable aid.

LEARNING C ON THE ST

■ ISBN 0-673-18738-1

■ SCOTT FORESMAN

■ £18.45

If you're lucky enough to own HiSoft's C interpreter you're unlikely to need much additional help, but for those still trying to learn the rudiments of C, you can't go wrong with this one.

PROGRAM IN GFA BASIC

■ ISBN 1851811737

■ GLENTOP

■ £9.95

Takes you from the early stages of GFA programming right up to advanced instructions like BIOS calls and linking in C code.

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■ ISBN 1855500108

■ BOOKMARK Pubs

■ £14.95

A guide explaining all you need to know to get the most from *FirST Basic*, bundled with recent STs. It's good but with a little effort you could get the information you need from the guide supplied by Atari.

CASE IN POINT: THE EXPERT PROGRAMMER

What do you do when you know C opt codes inside out, and want to set up a more sophisticated programming environment? If you intend to take up programming as a full-time operation, you need to invest in more equipment able to speed up those time-intensive operations.

Programming team ODE coded *Team Yankee* (reviewed this month on page 54). Dr David Pringle is in charge of the ODE programmers and has been developing *Team Yankee* for more than a year.

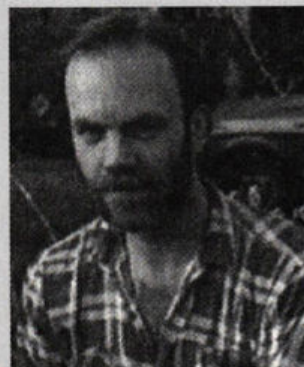
Their main code is programmed on several machine formats at a time, with each one at

roughly the same point of development. Hisoft's *Devpac 2* is used to program the ST version. "Programmers are wrong to say that C code is the most portable," says Pringle. "We've found you can do pretty much anything with Assembler." This is true if you restrict yourself – as ODE tend to restrict themselves – to writing 16-bit games only. Since each machine has the same basic architecture, Assembly code can be ported easily between them.

Another reason for choosing *Devpac 2* was the speed of the final code. "You can't seriously write a game in C code," insists Pringle: "It's just too slow."

Assembly, on the other hand, is the fastest language you can use.

The Astral team of programmers, responsible for *Resolution 101* and *Archipelagos*, have come up with a modification to that idea. They link two STs together and write the game on one machine. When it comes time to test it, they port the software over to the other ST and execute it. In this way, they use one machine for developing and one for testing. If there are any bugs in the game which crash the ST running the game, they simply change the code and then port it over again. This method saves an enormous amount of time.



■ Dr David Pringle of the ODE programming team: just what does an expert use himself?

And then there's Pascal. Many teachers love it, largely because its design forces budding programmers to write "good," well-structured and neatly planned code. Pascal has the advantage that the source code is easy to read, and therefore there's little trouble working out what what's going on and where. If you're new to the language you're likely to be astounded by the number of error messages you encounter. Before you even get close to running your program, they ring out to keep you informed of inaccuracies you'd otherwise discover too late.

Pascal is especially useful when you want to write long programs. Unfortunately, however, its string handling isn't as good as BASIC's and access to the ST's internal commands and hardware can be problematical.

Pascal doesn't give very good access to the ST's graphics capabilities, so it's not used to write games, though it has found popularity in the business market.

FORTH, another high level language, has one major advantage: speed. It's also ancient, so it can boast many supporters; but it has a command set which forces you to write very structured programs. Strings are handled more easily in FORTH than in Pascal, and it's particularly good for number crunching and text handling, but like Pascal's, its graphics abilities are severely limited.

FORTH also has one major disadvantage: it's difficult to learn, and many people require intensive instruction. This is partly because programming must be done using reverse Polish notation which essentially means adding numbers backwards. Even the slightest mathematics operation requires extensive use of stacks as numbers are pushed onto and pulled from the stack.

Whatever language you choose, look out for good books on the subject – you can never know too much – and remember that you can mix languages to obtain the best of both worlds. For example, you could realistically write a game in GFA Basic if you choose, and as long as you include machine code routines to handle the speed-intensive operations, you can't go wrong.

Right then. Now you can stop saying "Even I could write something better than that" when a program doesn't live up to expectations. Get on and actually do something about it! **stf**

FORMAT'S PROGRAMMING BUYERS GUIDE

By now you should have some idea of what language is likely to be best for you. But of course that's not all, for you also need to decide between different implementations of your chosen language. This guide should help you sort the good from the bad and the downright ugly. Happy programming!

RATINGS ***** If you can't get anywhere with this one, give up programming and take up fishing
**** Admirable, well worth your dosh *** Competent: check out the competition
** Useable but unfriendly. Think twice * Avoid as you would a hated relative

GFA Basic 3 / BASIC / £64.95 / GFA Data Media
☎ (0442) 63933 *****

Easy to structure programs. Exceptionally fast. Diverse range of instructions. An enormous number of lines are required to make up one program.

ST Basic / BASIC / Free with ST / Atari
☎ (0753) 33344 *

Riddled with bugs which cause crashes all over the place. Tricky to program because some commands don't perform as expected.

Note: more recent new STs and STEs now come bundled with *First BASIC*, which is considerably better. **

FaST Basic / BASIC / £44.95 / Computer Concepts ☎ (0480) 496789 ***

A cartridge version, available for £90, offers the language in a form which takes up no ST memory space. Up to ten programs can be held in memory at once. Fast, but tricky to work your way round the system at first. No compiler.

GFA Compiler / BASIC Compiler / £29.95 / GFA Data Media ☎ (0442) 63933 ***

Produces the fastest BASIC code around. Can compile into desktop accessories and link in C source code. Not straightforward to use.

Power Basic / BASIC / £49.95 / HiSoft
☎ (0525) 718181 ****

Programs are compiled before you run them. Many commands are similar to those in ST Basic. Not much available programming memory. Development takes longer.

Lattice C / C / £49.95 / Metacomco
☎ (0272) 428781 **

Good compilation and link speed. Produces efficient code. Not enough libraries. Unfriendly.

C Breeze / C / £24.95 / Michtron
☎ (0726) 68020 *

This is only a text editor, but one specially written to handle C code, informing you of unfinished loops. Not enough there if you already own a text editor.

HiSoft C / C Interpreter / £49.95 / HiSoft
☎ (0525) 718181 ****

Aimed specifically at the beginner. Excellent manual. 470-function library close to ANSI standard. Checks for errors. May seem patronising if you already know your way around C well.

Propero Pascal / Pascal / £99.99 / Propero
☎ (081) 741 8531 *****

Up to four files can be edited at once. Excellent compiler, enabling you to access ST's internal commands. Disorganised manual is the only problem.

MCC Pascal / Pascal / £99.99 / MCC
☎ (0272) 428781 ***

Can configure drop-down menus to create your own commands. Handles four files at once. Can compile in traditional Pascal or support enhancements. Gives little introduction to the language.

Personal Pascal / Pascal / £79.95 / HiSoft
☎ (0525) 718181 **

Lots of idiosyncrasies, but the compiled code is neat. GEM handling commands included. No support for ISO standard programs.

Devpac 2 / Assembly / £59.95 / HiSoft
☎ (0525) 718181 *****

Fast assembly speed. Powerful directives for optimising code, extensive conditional assembly options, symbolic debugging, plus lots more. A real beauty.

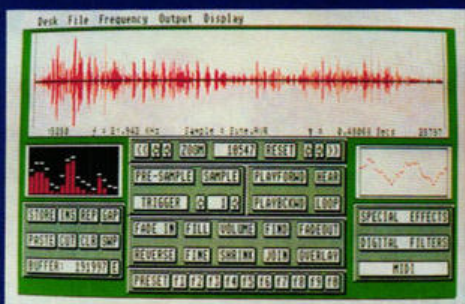
Prospero Fortran / Fortran / £129.99 / Prospero
☎ (081) 741 8531 ****

Fully Fortran 77 compatible. Can edit up to four files at once. Excellent debugger. Extensive library of functions. Can be unfriendly in places.

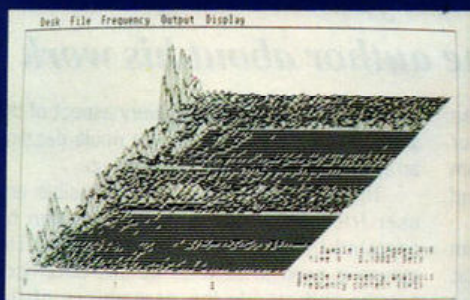
Forth MT / Forth / £49.95 / GST/Electric
☎ (081) 330 7166 **

Supports all Forth 83 specifications. Two versions, one for multi-tasking and one for working on a single program at a time. Code is faster than anything produced by FaST Basic. Complex one-time installation process. Can't produce stand-alone executable code. Unfriendly.

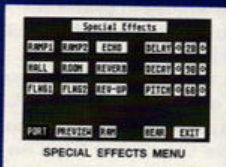
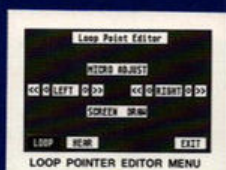
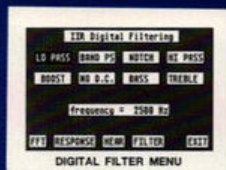
ATARI ST



REPLAY EDITOR SCREEN



FFT DISPLAY SCREEN



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ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

REPLAY VIII

SOUND SAMPLER

The best gets **BETTER** !

REPLAY version 8

The enclosed hardware and software allows you to load sounds into your computer (known as samples) and then manipulate and use them with the enclosed Drumbeat software, in other Microdeal programs such as Quartet or in your own programs using the routines provided.

ST REPLAY has always been the leading sampling system for the ATARI ST range of computers. Now REPLAY has come of age ! The ST REPLAY cartridge has been producing the cleanest, sharpest sounding samples since it was first released, ST FORMAT magazine said "REPLAY is a winner". Now REPLAY has the most advanced sound editor of any low cost sampling system on any computer ANYWHERE. REPLAY 8 not only has the largest range of sample editing facilities available anywhere, it also features many advanced software functions which, if they are available at all, must be purchased separately at EXTRA cost on lesser systems. Just look at these Editor functions :-

- 1) Powerful sampling and playback commands featuring SAMPLE, PRE-SAMPLE, AUTO RECORD TRIGGER, PLAY FORWARD/BACK with LOOP.
- 2) Full cut and paste editing featuring STORE, CUT, PASTE, INSERT, DELETE, CLEAR, REPEAT and GAP.
- 3) Full sample manipulation with SAMPLE REVERSE, OVERLAY, SHRINK, FADE IN/OUT, VOLUME UP/DOWN and FILL.
- 4) Cursor positioning accuracy is assured using FIND, FINE and JOIN operations. Cursor positioning is simple and straight forward using the computer's Mouse.
- 5) Advanced sample manipulation is available using the special effects (SFX) digital filtering and advanced MIDI options. These feature ECHO, REVERB, FLANGE, 3D SPECTRUM ANALYSIS, LOW PASS, HIGH PASS, BAND PASS and NOTCH FILTERING. MIDI facilities allow full MIDI looping and up to 10 different samples to be played or triggered from any external MIDI source.
- 6) REPLAY 8 is also provided with a powerful 2 voice programmable Drum machine called DRUMBEAT 8. This sophisticated drum sequencer allows up to 15 sound samples to be used in 50 patterns and then into 100 songs. Drumbeat has full MIDI-SYNC allowing connection to external midi drum machines/sequencers.
- 7) ST REPLAY provides a sampling LINE INPUT and an extra high quality LINE OUT socket so that higher quality samples can be played through an external amplifier.
- 8) REPLAY 8 saves AVR samples for loading and playing directly from Microdeal's "QUARTET".

All software provided with the REPLAY 8 system runs on any configuration ST, STE or STACY with at least 512 K ram and will run in medium resolution colour or high resolution monochrome monitors. The user manual is written in a clear and concise manner which describes all aspects of the software and hardware use and the user routines provided to enable samples to be played from BASIC.

REPLAY 8 ORDER FORM

REPLAY 8 IS £79.95 POST & PACKING £1 (ALL PRICES INC V.A.T.)



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WITH
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PLEASE ALLOW UP TO 28 DAYS FOR DELIVERY

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the bear who's making tracks



The best ST demo music writer in the business has just released his first commercial program. Andrew Hutchinson turns the hi-fi up to 11, opens a catering pack of dry roast peanuts and gets his "Ah yeahs!" out for the lads. And overleaf we interview the author about his work

TCB Tracker

MACHINE: ALL STs AND STEs

PRICE: £39.95

FROM: AN COOL/SEABEAR STUDIOS

CONTACT: MPH (0603 503382)

Hitherto there have been only two kinds of music program. The first sort relied entirely on the internal chip in the ST and therefore had all the musical capabilities of a digital watch. The other was an

overpriced MIDI package which required an expensive keyboard to be attached to your computer. There simply hasn't been a program on the market which used a standard ST and sounded half decent.

Enter TCB Tracker, a new music program from Anders Nilsson, the foremost demo music creator writing for the ST. Tracker is a four track music record and playback program with a drum machine, sequencer and synthesizer all built in. The sounds which make up the notes are all sampled so the quality of playback is

excellent, and you can alter every aspect of the sound of the sample, creating a whole dazzling array of sounds from one initial set-up.

The program is eminently accessible and user friendly, in that all functions can be operated from the front control screen. The mouse is used to click on up and down icon arrows and modify the parameters of the sounds and the songs. Numerous key shortcuts are all listed in a comprehensive helpscreen.

You can load three different kinds of files: songs, samples and modules. Songs are files



MAKING MUSIC HAS NEVER

TCB Tracker has an excellent music entry system. Notes can be entered in step time or from a MIDI device such as a keyboard. And these notes can be placed in one of four tracks, enabling amazingly sophisticated tunes to be built up very fast indeed – even if you've never got a squeak out of your ST in your life!

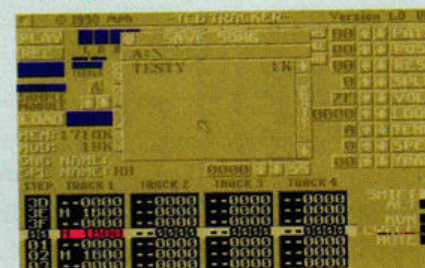
But don't just take our word for it. As ever the best way to learn how to use a package is to play around with it and try creating something. In this example, based on this month's exclusive Cover Disk demo version, we show you how easy it is to build up a tune from simple two or three notes sequences.



■ Load Tracker and the system parameters are automatically initialised. To create music you first need to load in some samples. Click on the "sample" and "load" icons. A sample directory appears: click on this and the samples on the disk are revealed. The first part of the tune we are going to create is the drum section, so pick out a high-hat sample and click on it.

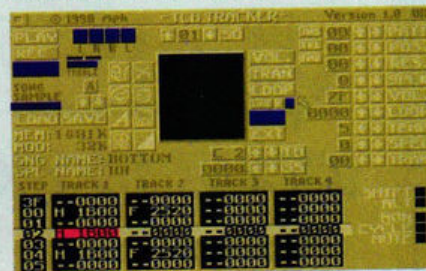


■ The sample loads into position zero in the sample table. (You can tell this by looking at the "SPL#" icon which should show zero and by looking at "SPL NAME" which should show 'High Hat'.) Now let's load some more samples into memory. Click on the up arrow next to SPL# so that it indicates 1. Now click on load again and choose a snare sample from the directory. Continue this process with a bass drum and a melody instrument such as a sax or a synth sample.



■ Now the samples are all in place we can start recording. First press the [ALT] key and then [F1] to turn the sample monitor on so that we can hear what we are creating. Now click SPL# down to 0 until the high hat sample appears in the name window. Move the cursor keys on the keyboard to the left so that Track 1 is highlighted. Now press a key on the ST – N, for instance – and you should hear a high hat sound. Play around on the keyboard until you find a sound you like and then click on the record icon at the top left of the screen. Press the letter key you chose and the note is entered in the track. Now press space and then the key again and repeat this until you return to Step 00. Turn off record by clicking on the icon and click on play. This is the basic structure of many of the songs which you'll hear in the charts.

It's not exactly awe inspiring, admittedly: but we've only just begun!



10 FEATURES TO BEAT THE BAND

Here's a selection of options and competition-busting features included in Tracker

1. The package is fully MIDI compatible. It can control synthesizers and drum machines as well as generating its own sounds
2. You can play Tracker from a MIDI keyboard, enabling you to record music in real time or step time
3. A comprehensive on screen help facility means that you can look up features with the music still playing, without having to refer to the manual
4. Only 34% of the CPU's (central processor unit) time is spent operating Tracker making it ideal for demos
5. 16 independent samples can be stored in memory at any one time
6. Notes and patterns can be transposed, copied, erased and corrected
7. Can hold 128 patterns in memory and each pattern can contain up to 256 notes
8. The files created by tracker can be played from within a GFA Basic program or called by your own assembler code
9. By means of the loop function, samples can be played to any length
10. Samples can be treated with special effects including pitch bend and interrupt sample. And the volume of a sample can be changed – and played at VERY LOUD LEVELS INDEED!

which simply contain the note information; samples are the actual sounds which you can play; and modules are the song information and all the samples combined and ready to play. On this disk are five songs, five modules and a whopping great orchestra of samples to experiment with. Some of these are complete songs – easy ballads – lifted from the charts whereas one or two are straight synthesiser like sequencer rave ups. There are crystal clear



■ One small section of the excellent Carebears So Watt demo, reviewed in our public domain pages next month

samples of "Ah Yeah" and "America" and "The president has been shot," and several of the samples will certainly appeal to any aspiring hip hop merchants who fancy being the next Adamski. Loading these is a simple case of clicking on the file in the loading window.

The actual note information is contained in a window at the bottom of the screen. The four tracks showing seven steps are ➤

TCB: PUTTING THE STE INTO STEREO

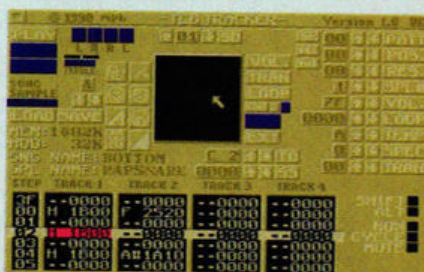
Tracker has some special features which only you lucky STE owners can take advantage of, most notably a special mode which enables you to play back music in glorious stereo with the option of adjusting the bass and treble to give you just that right blend of sound that will really drive your neighbours to physical violence.

If you've got a stereo monitor such as the Phillips 8833, or a stereo TV with a Scart lead, then the stereo option is immediately available to you. Otherwise you'll need to connect your STE up to the hi-fi. To do this get hold of a phono slipover lead and connect it to either the auxiliary socket if there is one or remove say, the turntable leads on your hi-fi. You can now "pump up the volume" and give your speakers a real blow out. But remember noise annoys, so wait until everyone is home from a hard day's work before really testing the software!

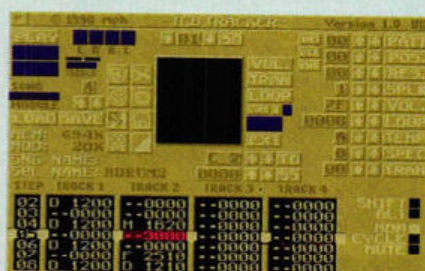
■ Next month in our series on "How to Annoy The Neighbours": how to build a 450 watt atomic sub-woofer chain linked hi-fi and fallout shelter out of an oil drum, the national grid, a Fairy liquid bottle and an ST. Plus! Ten Abusive Responses to Complaints From The Noise Abatement Society!

BEEN EASIER – AND HERE'S HOW

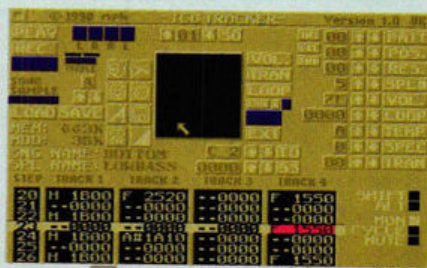
■ Time for some bass drum. Locate the sample and move the cursor into the Track 2 window. Play around on the keyboard again until you find the right sound and then click on record. Press the key you chose and then press space three times. Repeat this until you return to Step 00. Now click record off and play on. It's beginning to sound a bit better, but it needs more depth.



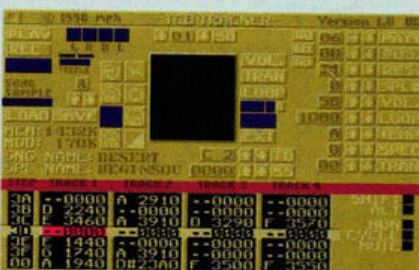
■ Locate your snare sample from the SPL# icon and find a sound you like by playing around on the keyboard. Now while still in Track 2 move down to Step 04. There should be a bass drum sample at this position, so press the key you chose and wipe over it with the snare sample. Now change every second bass sample to a snare until you return to Step 00. Turn off record and listen to the track. A standard rock beat should greet your ears.



■ Now let's spruce up the rhythm a bit. Click on record and place a bass drum sample in Track 2 at Steps 07, 16, 17, 27, 37 and 3E. Now while still in Track 2 place a snare at steps 3A and 3D. Before we make more changes it would be wise to save to disk, so click on the module icon and then save and then on the A# to name your tune – something along the lines of TEST1 ("The Unfinished Symphony" would do, but that's been used)



■ Time for some bass now. Move the cursor into Track 4 and press the comma key at steps 00, 03 and 06 then the N key at steps 10, 13 and 16, a V at steps 20, 23 and 26 and finally a B at steps 30, 33 and 36. Try listening to the track. What do you think of it so far? (Don't answer that!)



■ Now you can lay down the melody line in Track 3. Just select your melody sample and muck around experimenting with interesting note sequences. Try using ZVB, say, or ZBVZ ZCZX ZBVZ ZCZX Z. It's best to go for a tuneful melody instrument – like a saxophone or trumpet, for instance – considering that whatever you select needs to battle over the sound of the bass and rhythm samples. The thing is to experiment, find out what sounds pleasing to the ear and just muck around with it. Who knows – you could be the next Jazzie B!

represented, each step indicating a note's pitch, duration, volume and sound. These scroll up when a tune is playing enabling you to see the complete chord sounding at any one time. You can also hear the sounds in edit mode by clicking the monitor on and moving the cursor keys up and down the part sections.

Recording and editing notes is fast and easy. A large red cursor highlights one track and step at any given moment and you can then use the cursor keys on your keyboard to move this to the other steps.

To record a note you must first load some bangs, buzzes and whirrs into the sample bank by choosing the appropriate sounds from the sample directory. Once these are in place you can find the right pitch for the note by pressing any of the letter keys on the keyboard. When you're happy you've found the right note, click on the record icon and press the key. In this way you can record a drum and rhythm section, say, on tracks one and two, a bass on track three and a melody line on track four.

If tackling that whole procedure sounds a bit daunting, an easy way to learn how to construct a module is to take a song and put your own samples in place. Experiment a little and you'll soon discover how you can change the whole feel of a song simply by altering the pitch of a high hat or a bass drum.

Tracker is certain to appeal to a wide audience. It offers decent sound without the need for extra hardware and, what's more, isn't just an end in itself: the tunes you create can be included in your games and demos, making the program considerably more useful than most music creation packages. MPH have already been approached by major software houses to write music for them with *Tracker*.

MPH have promised an excellent back up service which is to include updates and add-on modules for the program. If they live up to those promises – and manage to market the package as energetically as it deserves – it should go from strength to strength. If you enjoy creating music but could never afford it, try *Tracker* – and amaze yourself! **stf**

FORMAT RATINGS

TCB TRACKER/£39.95/MPH Software
0603 503382

Features **93%**
An impressive selection of sample, play and edit functions

Speed **94%**
Uses only 30% of the processor's time and goes like a bullet

Ease of Use **92%**
May look a little daunting initially, but the briefest of explorations convinces otherwise: a doddle

Results **95%**
Now you can create superb sampled music quickly and easily

FORMAT VALUE **93%**
An excellent program at a reasonable price: deserves every success

The Competition
Tracker beats the year-old *Quartet* (£49.95) from Microdeal (0726 68020), due for a revamp soon

Carebear comes out into the open

In his first ever magazine interview, the shy musical genius behind the Carebears demos tells Andrew Hutchinson about life at the top

Two years ago some Swedish guys got together and decided to write some demos. For reasons lost in the mists of Scandinavia they called themselves the Carebears, and for reasons rather more obvious to anyone who's seen their work they promptly took the demo scene by storm.

Much of the enduring popularity of the demos rests on the amazing music which the group managed to pack onto the disks. The young man responsible for most of that music is an 18 year old Swede known as Carebear AN Cool. Step forward Anders Nilsson.

Anders has been writing code for computers since he was about nine years old. He started on a humble 2600 but graduated to the ST two and a half years ago. So just what does AN Cool write his music on?

"I have everything really – a 4 MByte STE with a 30 MByte hard drive, colour monitor and external drive. With regard to software, I use DevPacST and write my own routines so processor time is kept to a minimum."

Anders writes on the ST because the custom chips in the Commodore Amiga games machine make life too easy. To code on an ST, he argues, requires much greater programming proficiency and the ability to handle raw code, not just call to chips.

Why demos? "Well, initially it was a cool thing to do. It was something to impress your friends with." Later on he wrote demos because they were a challenge, and this ties in with the plan of action for writing demo code.

"You have an initial idea that you want to do, something hard that hasn't been done before. Then you go and write the code." He makes it sound simple: a demo takes him only about three days to write – and that includes all the music!

"I just play around on the ST until I find something that works. I guess I've been influenced by almost everyone from Depeche Mode to Soul II Soul, but not by hard rock! I really don't use a keyboard much; in fact I've only ever written one tune on a synth. I use the routines I've coded myself." Favourite demo? "Techtron, without a doubt. I coded that one on my own, music and graphics and everything, and it looks great, though I say it myself!"

It was about nine months ago that Anders first decided to write what eventually turned out as *Tracker*. The initial impetus came from a piece of code written by fellow Carebear Nicola Thissel. From the time Anders really got down to it, *Tracker* took

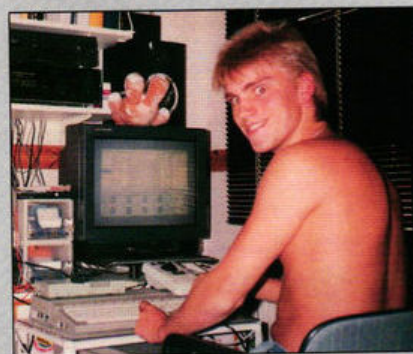
"Games writers are getting lazy, just reproducing the same thing again and again"

about six months to its release last month at the Earls Court CES Show.

Anders has always intended the package to appeal to "anyone who likes good music," and is particularly proud of its speed. On a standard 520 STFM only 35% of the processor's time is taken up with the music, making it ideal for aspiring demo writers.

And there's more to come. "There's going to be a score editor, and of course libraries of songs and samples for existing users. I may also produce a professional version at some stage." Meanwhile Anders is also working on a cartridge not unlike an advanced version of Romantic Robot's *Multiface* for grabbing screens and saving part-played games to disk. He has also finished work on a debugger, due for release soon.

What about a game? Could he do better than the people currently writing for the ST? "Well, they're not really getting any better. Games writers are getting lazy, just reproducing the same thing again and again." If *Tracker* is anything to go by and Anders eventually does get around to producing that game, we could be in for something really special... **stf**



Carebear AN Cool demonstrates how Abba might have started out

BYTEBACK



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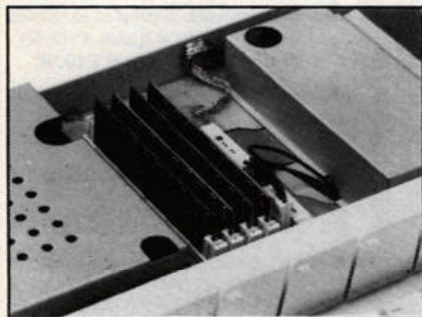
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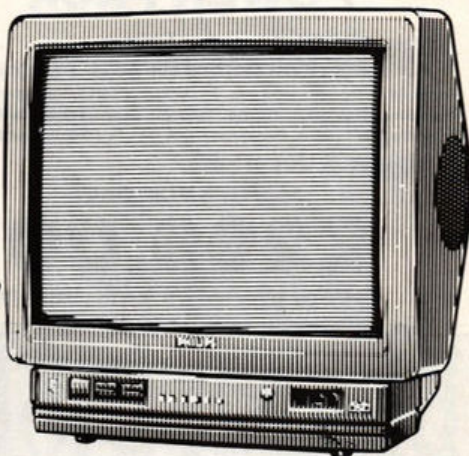
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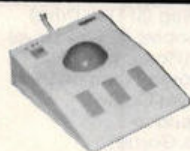
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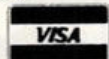
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25 COPIES OF TRACKER MUST BE WON!

Anders Nilsson is a cute one and no mistake. Having casually turned out some of the best music demos ever heard on the ST as one of the legendary Carebears crew, he's now only gorn and turned his hand to creating a package that enables you to produce similar musical gems.

TCB Tracker: you've gasped at the demo on this month's chairbreakingly overweight 1,000K-plus Cover Disk (if it were a pig it would be on a diet). You've thrilled to the almost unbearably enthusiastic review on page 127, and quite liked the exclusive first-ever interview with the Man Himself.

OK, so now's your chance to get your hands on the wonderful TCB Tracker for free. By dint of persuasion and threats of personal violence we've persuaded MPH, the company responsible for TCB Tracker, to offer not 10, not 20 but 25 copies of the program – each one worth an absolute minimum of £39.95 – that's, er... (finds calculator shaped like 3.5" disk, attempts to work out sum; discovers it is in fact a 3.5" disk; gives up in disgust. Asks Technical Editor), worth a grand total of £998.75.



■ Carebear AN Cool, alias the man they're calling Anders Nilsson (but only because that happens to be his name)

But, as Jimmy Cricket used to say (is he still working do you think?), "Come here. There is more. Begorrah." For MPH have very rashly (shurely "kindly"? – ed) agreed to give away some extra goodies too. With each copy of Tracker we have **three disks of .MOD files** (complete songs, samples and all the pattern information included); a **conversion program** (for converting, funnily enough, Tracker files to GFA Basic and assembler code formats) and a **disk of .SPL sample files** – taking the overall value of each of those 25 prizes up to £67.45, and the grand total to a whacking great £1,686.25.

So, what do you have to do to get your hands on this terrific collection of musical goodies? Well, you've probably already guessed: simply put the answer to that laughably easy question over there on a postcard or the back of an envelope, add your own name and address and shoot it off to us here at: TCB Tracker Comp, ST FORMAT, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW. Get it here before the end of November and your chances of winning increase immeasurably. **stf**

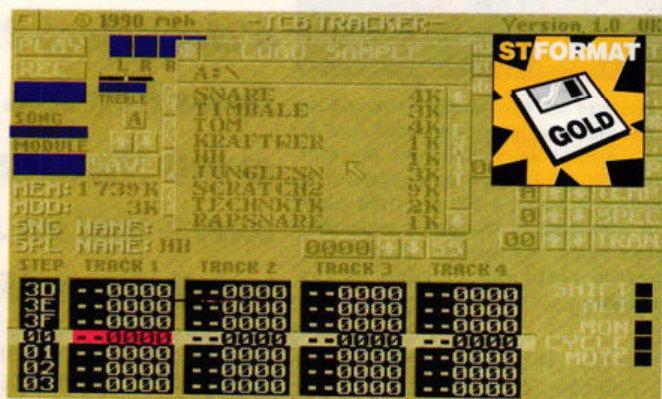
THE QUITE BORING BITS

1. No-one on the payroll of Future Publishing, MPH or their relatives may enter this competition.
2. Neither may Saddam Who's Not Sane (Sss! Boo! Gerroff!)
4. Multiple entries should be soaked in lighter fuel before being sent, because we'll only burn them.
5. Entry implies acceptance of these boring bits.

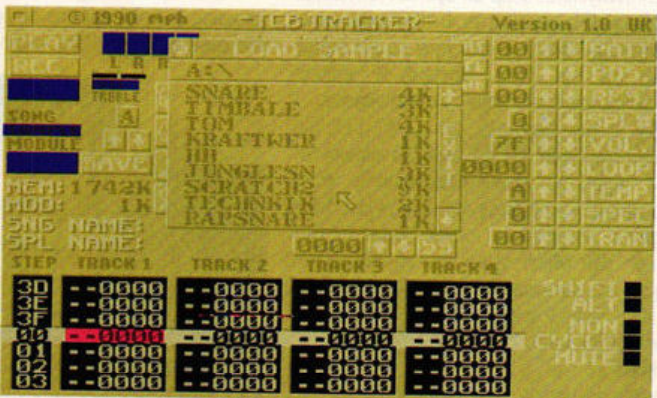
HOW SIMPLE CAN A COMPETITION QUESTION BE?

TCB Tracker was written by Anders Nilsson, who is also one of which famous crew... who is also one of which famous crew? Is it:

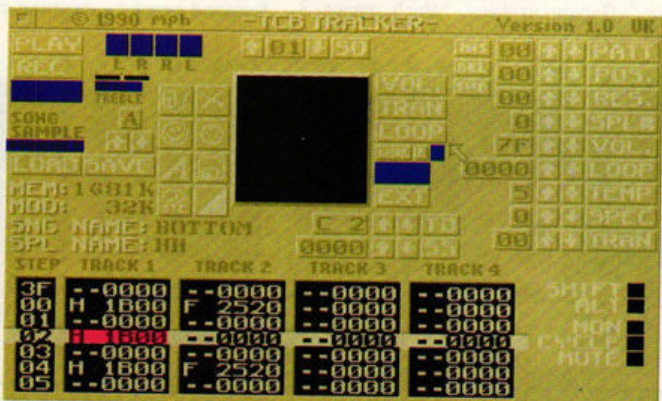
- a) The Swindon Trainspotters;
- b) The remaining West Bromwich Albion fans,
- or is it by any chance
- c) The Carebears?



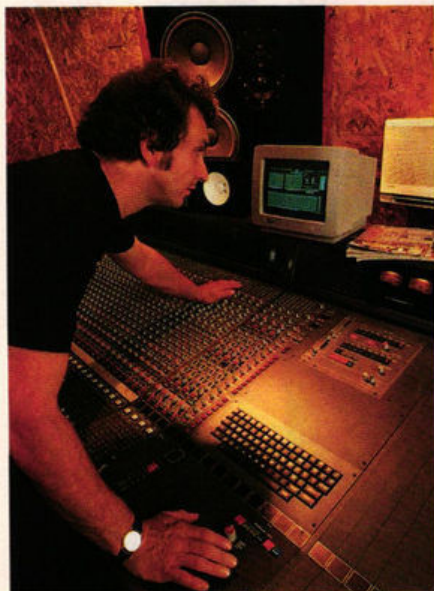
■ Using Tracker you too could appear on *Top of the Pops*, sandwiched between Kylie and Sonia – if you're not careful!



■ The very scrumptious Tracker, as created by Carebear "AN Cool" – in reality quiet-spoken Swede Anders Nilsson



■ If you haven't already loaded up the Cover Disk demo version of Tracker, then do so right now. Then read the review on page 127. Then, when you've done that, read the interview with the author. Then enter the competition on this page. Then go and have your dinner – it's getting cold



■ Big George at the Mozart recording desk. The non-standard keyboard just in front of his right hand disguises the fact that this £70,000 piece of hardware is built around a Mega 4 ST: his right hand rests on the built-in tracker mouse that operates the ST-based Supertrue Automation software showing on the mono monitor

STs at the heart of the art

This Friday night set your vid for the new 10 o'clock Beeb 2 quiz programme Have I Got News For You. It features the usual rent-a-wit guests (Ian Hislop, to name one very small one) – and an Atari ST, to name an even smaller one. Why so? Steve Carey finds out

Location: Nottingham, Square Centre Recording Studio. Time: well, bit of a sore subject, in fact. We were supposed to be into the studio at six, but the previous client (Whycliffe: keep an eye out for him) is over-running. His guitarist is in the huge basement, where he thinks a solo may sound better bouncing off the walls. Upstairs it sounds bloody awful, but that's none of our business.

What is our business, you ask? Let Big George Webley (see STF 12 and 14) explain for himself. "Right, so what's happening is we're here to record some titles for a new Hat Trick Productions programme called *Have I Got News For You* which goes out on BBC2. I'm working in conjunction with an animation company called Triffic Films, and basically they have to draw 720 pictures that make up 30 seconds of TV time."

George is writing the theme tune for the beginning, and arranging an end theme of music as well, all live players ("with a 3 second overhang," George explains, "which means 3

seconds of no music but still a presence of music in there, and the fade out so they can fade out and say, 'Coming next is the idiot who's going to cook prawns'").

With the opening sequence, which is after all going to hook millions of viewers – or not, as the case may be – "the really important thing is

to get all the hit points in time." Hold it! Hang on, George: hit points? "Oh yeah, hit points are when in the animation Maradona catches the ball, or someone treads on a mouse. My music has to tie up with that."

So you've been spending lots of time with the animators getting it all together and so on? "Er, no. Never met 'em. They haven't heard my music, I haven't seen their graphics and the first time we'll see them together is a few days before the show goes out and so it's quite exciting and we got the job about three weeks ago and ever since then our life hasn't been the same and it's been bedlam." So how have you got it all together? "Oh, a lot of telephone things, it's like, 'When's this going to happen? 12 seconds and 8 frames? Can you make it 12 seconds and 18, because then I can make it musically work?'" The trouble with writing music to animation is that it's got to be exactly right: no compromise. (When they make animated films, they record the soundtrack first, so getting the sound to fit isn't a problem.)



■ John Crossley, producer, remixer, confirmed non-shaver and winner of the All England comb-frightening contest, 1987



■ George is perfectly calm. Not a care in the world. The fact that this storyboard is all he knows about the animation doesn't bother him a bit...



■ Early on the animation transforms the House of Commons mace into a Russian onion dome (don't ask how), for which George has suitable music...



■ We zoom into a Russian eatery, the joke being that, despite the foreign setting, what they eat is all too familiar. The problem, though...

I'm here because the ST plays a central part in all this. And before the sceptics suggest that that simply means pre-production (mocking up the sequence in a home-studio, for re-recording using "real" equipment), let me explain that the Square Centre 24-track recording studio, which would not leave you enough change from £70,000 to buy a pint to cry into, is built around an ST.

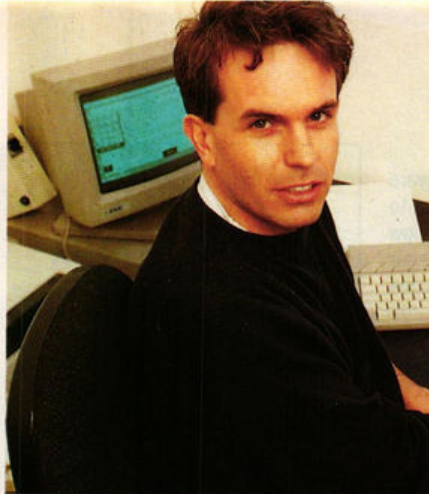
The thing is, you can't actually see an ST. Even the keyboard doesn't look like an Atari. For an explanation let's hear from partner in both the Squaredance studio and record label John Crossley, producer and man of apparently limitless patience. (It helps.) "If you look under the desk you can see that this really is a Mega 4," he explains, on hands and knees, "and one of these horrendous Atari Megafile 30 hard drives that I'm desperate to ditch, because it's the most awful hard disk I've ever known in my life..." Er, yes John. Moving swiftly on?

"This recording desk has its own automation system built in, all controlled by the Atari itself and it has control over and memory of all the fader movements. The Atari is locked by a SMPTE time code, which –" (Hold everything! SMPTE = (Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers), pronounced "Simpy": a system for locking tape recorders and MIDI devices.) "– the Atari is locked by SMPTE to the 24 track tape recorder outside the room.

"So when you press 'Go' on the tape recorder here, what happens is that the computer says 'Yeah I'm going as well,' the C-Lab Creator starts going at the same speed, the *Midi Drummer* – more of which later – "starts going at the same speed. Everything's locked in so that all your fader movements, all your mutes and volume changes are memorized."

The software is marketed in two forms, one as *Supertrue Automation*, fitted in the Nottingham studio on a Mozart recording desk, but also available as a retrofit kit to other desks, called *Mimix*. On the desk in Squaredance's Derby studio the retro-fittable one sits in a Trident desk, which then uses an standard issue Mega 4 ST which is sitting apart from the desk.

"For us the ST's great, because we know how to use it in both our studios, one where it's an integral part of the desk and one where it isn't. The system's very sophisticated in the way it does it; it can copy things around, move things around and all your favourite bits can be stored in the memory. It's got things like auto backup on it which is quite nice."



■ **Tim Andrews, ST techie and games hater:** "If I see anyone playing a game on any of these STs, I sack 'em." We have reason to suspect he may be joking, but wouldn't recommend depending on it

While the wait to get into the studio goes on, I talk to John's partner Tim Andrews, man of many hats: he runs the studio, the audio software side of things and the record label. Loves: music, twiddly bits, STs. Hates: games on the ST: "Such a waste of time!" (He claims he installed mono monitors on all of the company's STs so no-one could play games.)

Squaredance began about ten years ago with a two-track recording studio – "Er, one track actually: the other was a bit dodgy" – and has gradually expanded to its present equipment list: two permanent 24-track studios, with

four STs in each, and one mobile one, an ungainly trailer which features two STs.

The studio building in Nottingham is still something of a mess, and indeed has only been open a matter of weeks. Meanwhile, back in Derby, avid ST fans Candy Flip have "locked out" (ie hired exclusively) the 24-track studio to record their album.

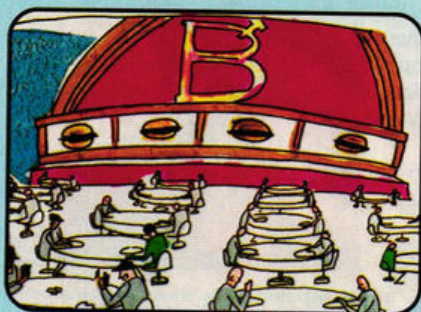
"The first time I heard of a computer being used for making music was some guys talking about sequencing – analogue as opposed to digital – using a weird contraption with a BBC B micro. So we bought that and it was rubbish."

Then of course eventually the ST came out. Everyone was saying it was going to revolutionise everything. So Tim looked at all the packages, and was frankly pretty unimpressed. "All of us here really know what we want to do and we were using these things professionally and it just seemed... I've found a lot of of software, and not just music software, is written by people who aren't musicians, they're not involved in jobs they're writing software for and therefore there are so many holes in the software."

"For example," he recalls, "one piece of Hybrid Arts software in the early days had no bars and beats in it. It had beats, but they didn't add it to a bar, so you had to go to beat 772 of the third chorus when it's obvious you use bars and beats like everybody. I mean, there's no musician who doesn't work with bars and



Big George stays patient, very nearly. On his left are two STs running *Creator* and *Notator*, while over his shoulder is the Mozart ST-based recording desk



■ – is that the McDonalds lawyers are far too tough to risk upsetting. Half-way through the joint was renamed *Kremlin Burgers*, just to be safe...



■ Near the end of the sequence we're in Westminster Abbey. Believe it or not, this is a royal wedding. The princess drops the wrapper, and then...



■ – among the rubbish we see a copy of yesterday's newspaper. The sequence, which lasts just 30 seconds and features 720 frames, is complete

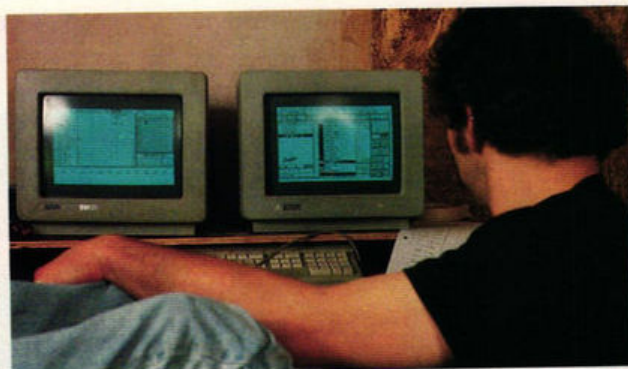
beats!" Ah, the good old days.

Eventually they moved to C-Lab software and are now die-hard supporters. "That's not to say that we don't use the others: we all know how to use Pro-24, Cubase and even the lesser known ones such as Passport." Tim reckons that Cubase is an excellent program – "Better in some respects than C-Lab Creator" – but musicians tend to get to know one package, and know it very, very well.

"We've been using C-Lab in the studio for a long time. The thing about learning a really complex piece of software is that it takes a long time and when you really get to know it you do really know it. If you had to learn another piece of software to that degree it takes an equally long period of time, when you're using it in business as an everyday tool you haven't got the time to relearn it."

At last! Whycliffe's guitarist has got his solo sorted, and we're into the studio. "What we're doing with the ST tonight," George explains, "is using it to hold all the information in the sequence of where things happen. I've had to co-ordinate between the ST I've used by making it read back to me where the information is in seconds and frames, as opposed to where it is in music."

"With the STs you can flick between the music position, like beat 1 bar 3, to find out that beat 1 bar 3 is actually 1 second, 12

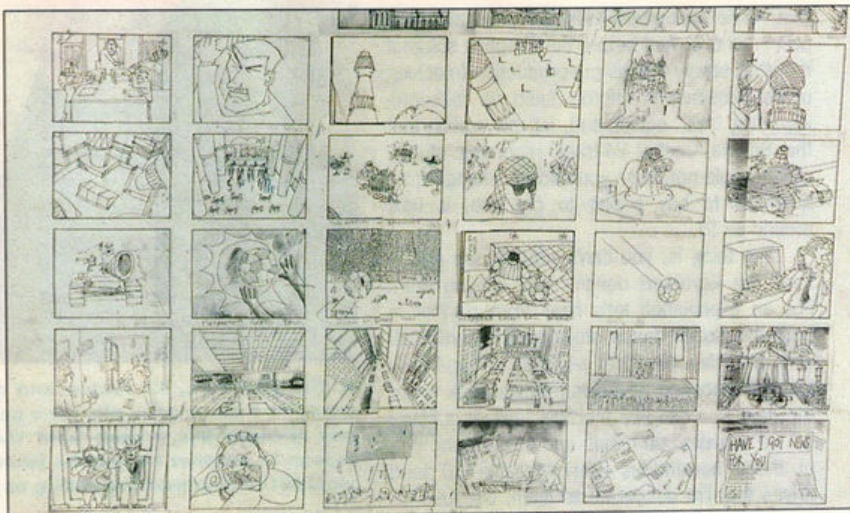


■ Chapter 97 in the Big George Book of Philosophy: "Man with ST is lucky. Man with two STs... well, that's it really, innit?" It's midnight, and George is beginning to lose his grip somewhat

frames (there are 24 frames of animation per second).

"I sampled a lot of the things through the ST. I've now heard them on a bigger Akai system, but they all went through the ST first. We'll be completing the process by putting the track on Sound Tools, so that we can actually move things around in a really wonderful way, and also make sure that all the hit points are exactly where we want them. That's the really tricky thing, because the animation is being done in another part of the country." Sound Tools, for those who haven't been keeping up, is an amazing ST-based system for recording to hard disk: we looked at it in STF 14.

Oddly enough, the finished version is then recorded back to two-inch recording tape – clearly at this stage a retrograde step – simply because television companies are not keeping pace with this new technology. "Blokes like me are trying hard to get them to see the sense of it all. If we all used STs we wouldn't need this ridiculous tape, but there you go. They'll get around to it one day, I guess."



The storyboard for the 30 second, 720 frame animation sequence that the theme tune must fit. (Not that the animators and George have ever met, of course.) And a couple of the original frames. Don't ask me to explain the storyline: you'll just have to watch BBC2 on Friday (10pm, end of plug)

So STs feature in the studios. But there are also STs all over the place, for they're used to run the business as well as the studios. "Oh yes indeed," says Tim Andrews. "The thing is, I know the ST so well, I feel totally at home with it. We use it for word processing (*First Word*), use it for database work (*Data Manager Professional*), for spreadsheet work (*K-Spread 3*), and we also use it for Desk Top Publishing (*Publishing Partner* – but very keen to change) for doing track sheets for the studio, for the record label side of things, press hand-outs, mail-outs and so on."

Tim is also very fond of *Harlekin*: "When you're wearing four hats like I am, you can't remember everything that you do. I'm a real list man. And it's got lots of little things, like file moving – it's really annoying that Atari didn't do that in the first place."

Doesn't anyone here ever play games? "If I see anyone playing games I sack them. No, but seriously I'm an ardent anti-games person. It just wastes so much time, time I don't have." So you reckon people who just use their ST to play games are underusing its ability? "They're also underusing their abilities," he replies, not entirely frivolously.

Tim also co-wrote (on the specifying, rather than programming, side) *Midi Drummer*, a drum sequencer similar to an ordinary musical sequencer, but designed to trigger and play drum sounds.

So where is the STACY laptop that Atari is claiming every musician is buying? Tim says something unrepeatable. "If Atari release it in a one MByte configuration, without hard disk drive, for the same price as was originally mooted, the same as a standard 1040, then it will absolutely go crazy."

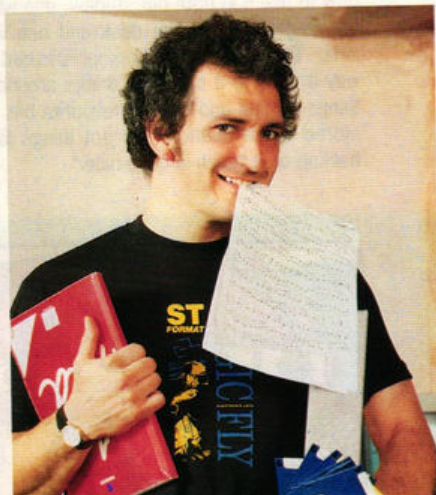
"For musicians it's absolutely perfect, it's exactly what they want, something they can carry around with them. Musicians are people on the move, they don't stick around in their

homes all day, they don't want to: they're in the studio, out on the road – perfect. I want one now. But if they're 2 Mbyte or 4 Mbyte, they're much too expensive."

The time: nine hours later. It's all taken much, much longer than it should have done, partly because of our late start and partly because these things always do. Samples have gone missing, "hits" that worked in theory turn out to be miles out and have to be reworked. Tempers get just a little short and tired people start to get exaggeratedly polite and oh-so-patient. Even John's laidbackness is beginning to show signs of wearing out.

Still, it's there, and that's all that matters. George has copies on disk and on DAT, and another on two-inch tape to take down to London tomorrow – or rather, later today. "I'm bloody knackered," he admits, "but sod it, we got the job done."

Perhaps while he's down there he can tell them about how they *should* be doing it, and where they can buy an ST. **stf**



■ Job done! It's three in the morning (and once more the dawning), but George don't care. The finished recording is on disk, on Digital Audio Tape – and on two-inch tape for the dinosaurs at the Beeb. (Don't ask where he got the Magic Fly T-shirt)



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HENRY COSH

ON

HENRY COSH



On this month's Cover Disk there's an exclusive and complete version of Henry Cosh's very highly regarded sequencer, Accompanist. Now let the man himself take you through those all-important first few moves...

Accompanist – to give the Henry Cosh Sequencer its proper name – is a MIDI sequencer, in other words a program that controls one or more MIDI boxes. There are dozens of different MIDI boxes, but most of us have just one keyboard-cum-synthesiser, stuffed with all sorts of clever electronics to produce different sounds. If you're lucky it may even have some built-in drum sequences. From now on, I shall use the word synthesiser to refer to your MIDI box.

What's that you say? You don't have any MIDI equipment yet? Never mind, you can still have fun with Accompanist by using the ST's own sound channels for output. (If you come into this category, skip the next couple of paragraphs. And overleaf I include brief explanations of a few of those wretched MIDI jargon terms.)

The first thing to do is connect your ST to the synthesiser, using two MIDI leads. Connect the MIDI OUT socket on your ST to the MIDI IN socket on the synthesiser, and the MIDI OUT socket on the synthesiser to the MIDI IN socket on your ST. Any further MIDI box such as an expander, which has no keyboard, needs a third MIDI lead, which should connect the expander's MIDI IN socket to the MIDI THRU socket of the

WHO IS THIS HENRY COSH ANYWAY?

After working for ICL helping to design a fourth generation computer language called Application Master, and then taking part in research on Expert Systems, Henry Cosh retired due to illness. He's 45 years old, with two teenage children, Toby and Hugo. Why, with all this high-tech stuff, did he buy an ST and not the usual, boring PC Contemptible? "Well, I do have the two children," he says, "and I wanted a machine that offered a good mix of games and business software. That's the ST in a nutshell."

Henry is currently working on another, more ambitious program, which at the moment is "just a dream."

synthesiser. Got all that?

To start Accompanist double click on SEQUENCE.PRG: after a few seconds Accompanist's desktop appears on the screen (see figure one). Switch on your synthesiser, and play a few notes to check that the volume is turned up to an audible level.

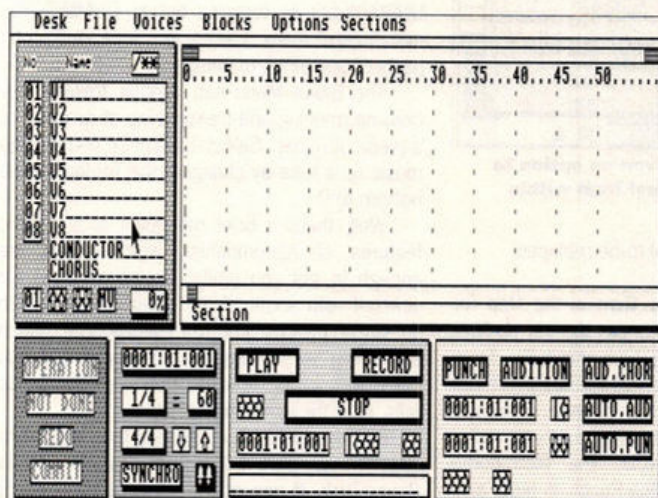
Now – at last! – you get to listen to some

music. Use the mouse to select Load in the File Menu. Use the standard File Selector to select a piece of music in the MUSIC Folder. If you have a synthesiser connected choose any piece; otherwise load the Entertainer, or Well Temper'd Clavichord, which only use the ST sound channels. Notice those lines of music in the Map box at the top right of the screen (see figure two).

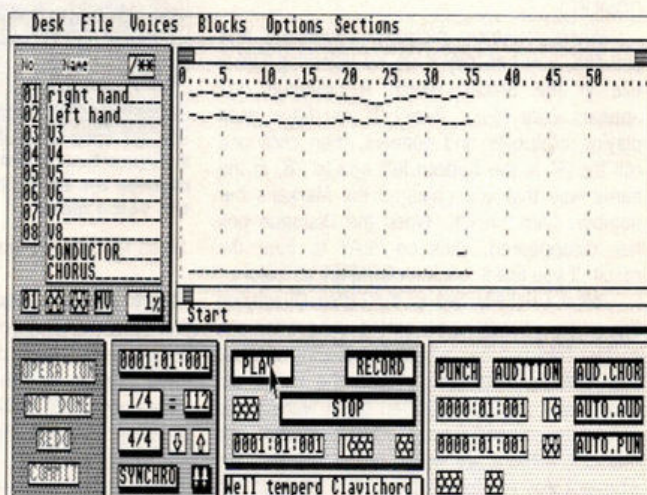
Click on PLAY in the Play/Record box at the bottom centre of the screen. (The Metronome coming from the ST monitor "burps like a frog," according to ST FORMAT reviewer Jon Bates!) Your synthesiser should start playing. If not, check the connections and volume levels. If this still fails, your synthesiser may be set up to receive on a different MIDI channel (see "Bluff Your Way" overleaf).

You can start the music playing anywhere by changing the start time, called the Marker, under the PLAY icon. Click on the bar number, which is the left hand number, and roll the mouse while holding the left button down.

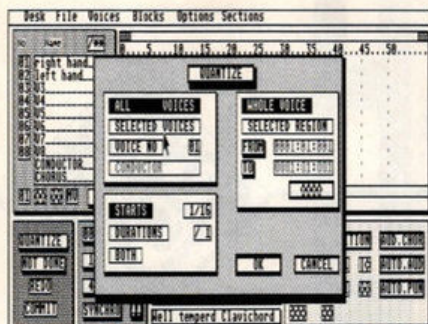
Try different directions and see what happens. The bar number changes, and the Time Cursor moves across the Map box. When you release the mouse button, the little Marker box



■ **Figure one:** open up the COSH folder on this month's unbelievably scrumptious and toothsome Cover Disk, double click on SEQUENCE.PRG and away you go!



■ **Figure two:** when you've loaded in a song you'll see lines of music in the map box in the right upper half of the screen. At least, you will if you've done it right!



■ **Figure three: the quantize dialogue box, which enables you to tidy up your slightly (?) off-beat playing – silk purse out of sow's ear and all that kind of thing**

moves under the Map.

You can change the tempo while you're playing. Click on the up or down arrows in the Conductor box to the left of the PLAY icon, and hold the button down. You can also switch Voices off and on by clicking on the Voice number to the left of its name. When the number is dark, the Voice plays, and when it's faint, the Voice is silent.

Try loading and playing some of the other pieces of music.

Now you've heard Accompanist playing, how about having a go at recording your own music? (Go on, be a devil!) First clear out what you have previously loaded by selecting Clear in the File Menu. Now select the first Voice in the Voice box at the top left of the screen, by clicking on its name. It appears inverted. Click on RECORD, wait for the Metronome to sound the one bar count-in, then start playing.

When you've finished, click on STOP. If you can't see any music lines in the Map box, check the connection between your ST's MIDI IN socket and your synthesiser's MIDI OUT socket. Click on PLAY to hear what you recorded. If you like it, click on COMMIT in the Commit box at the bottom left of the screen. Otherwise click on UNDO, then COMMIT. This enables you to choose whether to keep what you have recorded. (By the way, lots of different operations in Accompanist can be viewed before and after, by clicking on UNDO/REDO. When you have finally chosen which you like, then click on COMMIT.)

When you have recorded something that you like, you can tidy it up by selecting Quantize in the Blocks Menu. A Dialogue box appears (see figure three). If you have been playing crotchets and quavers, then click and roll the /4 in the bottom left box to /8, in the same way that you changed the Marker's bar number. Click on OK. When the Dialogue box has disappeared, click on PLAY to hear the result. If you like it, click on COMMIT as before.

What I usually find is that after Quantizing the music sounds much better, except for one or two bad patches where my playing was so bad that the Quantizer moved the notes the wrong way, or I've forgotten there were some semi-quavers and I have quantized them into quavers. If there are wrong notes in a bar, the simplest way to change them is to play the bar again using PUNCH in the punch box at the bottom right of the screen. Before you do this, though, you have to set the start and stop

HOW TO CROSS THE MIDI CHANNEL

You should be able to get quite a long way without having to worry about MIDI channel numbers. If your synthesiser simply refuses to play, however, it may be because it is set up to receive on a different MIDI channel. All *Accompanist*'s music uses channel 0. Also, you may have a multi-timbral device, which means that it can play several different instruments at the same time.

You can change the MIDI channel that a voice outputs by clicking on the Voice name, and selecting Change in the Voice Menu. The Voice Dialogue box appears. The output MIDI channel is at the top right, and is currently set to **, which means use the input channel. Click and roll to get channels from 0 to 15.

Unfortunately different people talk about MIDI channels in different ways. Some use 0 to 15, others 1 to 16. Selecting Midi-base in the Options Menu allows you to tell *Accompanist* which to use.

BLUFF YOUR WAY IN MIDI-TALK

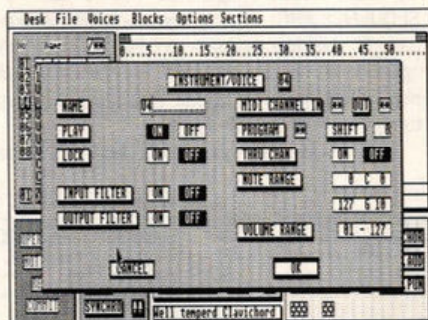
Prices for new MIDI synthesisers start at under £200. Here are brief explanations of a few of the bizarre terms you can expect to encounter:

MULTI-TIMBRAL: more than one instrument can be played at once using different MIDI channels. My Casio HT3000, for instance, is 3-timbral. I can play four notes together on a piano, plus three notes on a harpsichord, plus one note on a bass. So in total it has a polyphony of eight. (This is fixed polyphony; some synthesisers can allocate notes to channels flexibly)

POLYPHONY: how many notes can be played at the same time

VELOCITY SENSITIVE: the harder you hit the keys the louder it sounds

WEIGHTED KEYS: the keys should feel like proper piano keys (they never manage it)

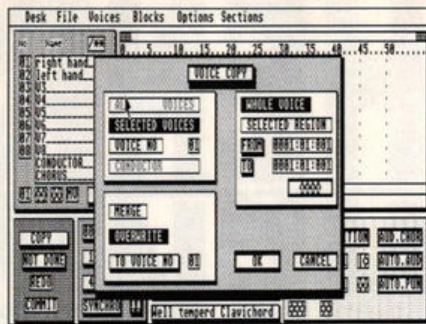


■ **Figure five: there's even an option to change the MIDI channel from within the voice menu**

times for the time interval to be replaced.

Click on the music line in the Map for the Voice to be changed under the bar number to be replaced. A black box called the Fragment appears and the Punch-In and Punch-Out times below the PUNCH icon change. If you get it wrong, try again. Try dragging a box as well.

Now click on PUNCH. The Metronome counts in the bar before the Punch-In time, also playing what you have recorded previously. When it reaches the start of the bar you want to change, play it again, as the man said. To hear



■ **Figure four: making a copy of a voice to try something new. You can merge voices, copy parts of one into another, and, ooh, loads of other stuff, really**

the result, click on AUDITION, and if you like it then click on COMMIT. Otherwise UNDO it and have another go.

If just a single note or chord is wrong, then AUTO-PUNCH is a simple way to change it. If the note's a quaver, change the Map resolution by rolling the /** at the top of the Voice box to /8. The Map expands. Click on AUTO-AUDITION in the Punch box. Now click on the line of music in the Map box, where you think the bad note is. The Fragment's black box appears, and the times in the Punch box change. You hear the Fragment being played. Keep clicking on the line of music until you've found the Note/Chord that is wrong, then click on AUTO-PUNCH. Now play the correct Note/Chord. Use AUDITION (as above) to hear the result.

Under the Map is the word Section. Click on this, then select Change in the Section Menu. The Section Dialogue box appears. You can alter the Time signature/Tempo as you wish by clicking and rolling the mouse. Try changing the Time signature, click on OK, then PLAY. The new Time signature appears in the Conductor box. Some pieces of music have several sections with different Time signatures and Tempi. You can open a new Section for each one.

It's often convenient to make a copy of a Voice in order to try something new. To do this, select Copy in the Voice menu (see figure four). Set the source and destination Voices on the left hand side, then click on OK. Use UNDO/REDO as required before COMMIT. You can merge many Voices into one and copy parts of one Voice to another.

The Block Menu has various features for copying, moving and transposing all or parts of a piece of music. Select Transpose and put the music up a tone by changing the To note at the bottom to D.

Well, that's a brief run-down of the basic features of *Accompanist*, which should be enough to get you going. Now have a go for yourself with some of the other features such as filters or changing the Metronome. When something very unexpected happens and you can't work it out, then, as they say, "If all else fails, read the instructions!" **stf**

■ The manual for *Accompanist* is in the MANUAL.TXT file in the COSH folder on this month's Cover Disk. If you put together a particularly good toon, why not send it in? If we're especially impressed we'll put it on the disk, where it can be enjoyed by 64,999 other ST people!



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Access

VISA

sample the ultra clean sounds of Pro-Series 12

The long-awaited successor to the immensely successful Replay Professional is with us at last: Jon Bates is well impressed – plus, over the page: your chance to get one of your own, free!



■ The hardware element of PRO-Series 12: the kind of kit some people in this office would commit mortal sin for

PRO-Series 12 Sound Sampler

MACHINE: ALL STs AND STEs

PRICE: £245

FROM: AVR

CONTACT: 0582 457348

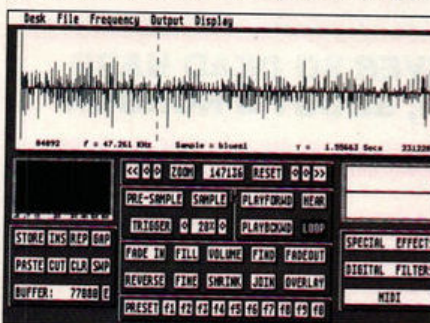
AVR, also known as 2 Bit Systems, were responsible for the highly successful ST Replay series of samplers, said to have sold over 15,000 units worldwide in various versions of upgraded software and hardware. Now they have seriously upgraded the hardware and honed up the software to produce a vastly superior version.

The hardware cartridge, which is now considerably larger, picks its power up from a separate unit (with nice long leads, thank you very much!) and has phono in and out sockets plus gain adjustment. The enlarged hardware is necessary because it now samples in 12 bits rather than 8 as previously and the filters are

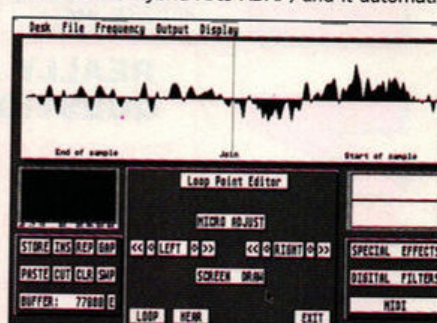
much improved. The result is an incredibly clean and quiet sampler, one of the best we've heard for any computer.

For your money you get three programs, much as you did with *Replay Professional*. They are the sample editing program, a program to let you play and assign your samples across a

MIDI keyboard and the Drum player/sequencing program plus two disks of samples and demo songs. The sampling rate goes up to 48kHz – the same as a DAT recorder and better than a CD! However, it can recognise and read samples created by some dedicated samplers (such as the Hybrid Arts ADAP) and it automati-



■ The main sample editing page of the ultra clean Pro 12: so spotless you could eat your dinner off it, if that's your fancy



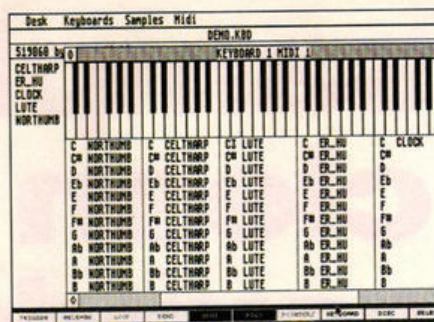
■ You can join the edges of samples with pinpoint accuracy and even draw your own links, creating seamless sound loops

cally configures itself to play back these samples at the correct rate.

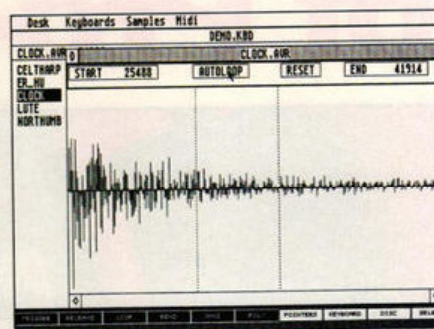
The main screen of the editor displays the sound across the top. To the left and right and below this are smaller screens that provide a real-time guide to the sound coming in. Sampling the sound is easy. You can either hit the S key at the appropriate moment, set the system to sample continuously for a preset length of time – which has the effect of storing, say, the last 10 seconds of whatever the machine hears before you stop it – or you can set it to start sampling when the input volume reaches a certain threshold, a feature which is invaluable when all you want are the *really* loud crescendo

bits that you know the neighbours will love hearing repeated ninety-seven times each night.

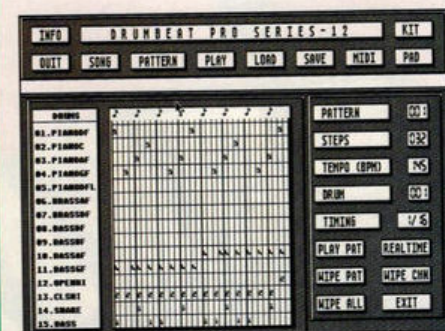
Editing is equally simple. To help you find certain sections you have a "ghost" cursor that glues a dotted line at the point at which you stopped it playing back. This makes finding the sections you want to keep very easy. A storage buffer acts as a clipboard and sounds assigned to here can be cut and pasted, inserted and repeated into any part of the main sample. The function that shuffles areas of sound that are just outside the main editing area is very good indeed, for it saves you the cumbersome and time-consuming hassle of



■ The Midiplay software: the ST and the keyboard in harmony – and when you say keyboard you ain't talking QWERTY!



■ The sound loops between the dotted cursors for as long as you hold the note down on your keyboard



■ The graphic display of Drumbeat puts notes in context and makes writing patterns as easy as a complex task can be

having to keep re-adjusting the magnification of the area you're working in when you want to pull some more sound in.

In order to create seamless sound loops a special display allows you to knit the selected section without getting nasty clicks by matching up the front and back of the sound on screen – you can even draw the sound in by hand to smooth the loop out.

Along with all the old favourites of cross-fading samples, overlaying, and reversing them you can subject them to a large number of adjustable effects such as reverb, echo, flanging and digital sound filters, all of which are permanent alterations. The program very helpfully shows you graphically in both two and three dimensions what is about to happen to the sound before you alter it permanently. Be warned, however: it can take the program some time to work on large samples. You'll be wanting a nice cup of coffee, I guess.

Both this and the Midiplay software let you select what are called "note-on loop points." With an external MIDI keyboard connected it is now possible to choose the part of the sound

WIN PRO-SERIES 12!

Someone, somewhere, is about to experience the exquisite joy that is using this wondrous bit of kit. Don't bother to enter this competition and it might be the Editor of ST FORMAT, with a bit of luck and a following wind

Oh bum. We had rather hoped that AVR might have forgotten that we had a copy of the PRO-Series 12 Sound Sampler, as slavered over on these pages by Jon Bates. But no. "We haven't forgotten that copy of the PRO-Series 12 Sound Sampler, as slavered over on your pages by Jon Bates," said AVR's Tony Racine, The Man With the Elephant-like Memory (dammit).

Still, though he wouldn't let us keep it, he did have the good sense to donate one to give away to a lucky reader of ST FORMAT. Get your pen out, if you must, put on your thinking cap, roll up your sleeves and prepare to do battle.

The incredibly brain-taxing question is below. Scrawl your answer illegibly all over a postcard (preferably one with a Donald McGill cartoon on) or the rear end of an envelope, leave it in your jacket pocket for a few days, use as a coaster for an evening, stick on a Bolivian stamp and then under no circumstances send it to: PRO-Series Giveaway, ST FORMAT, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW.

That way, perhaps we won't get any winners and we can tell rotten old meanie Racine (who's as green as he's cabbage-looking) that the comp was won by Mr Format Office, funnily enough of 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW. **stf**

THE RULES BOX

Well, if anyone were going to enter, we'd probably rattle off the usual rules about how employees of Future Publishing or AVR aren't allowed to enter anyway, or their relatives, and multiple entries are right out, and if the judge has any entries to judge his judgement is final, but we really can't be bothered this time around, so why not just give the whole thing a miss?

REALLY EVER SO DEAD HARD QUESTION, SCOUT'S HONOUR

(You don't really want to win, do you? Are you sure it's worth the bother? After all it's a pretty tough question. Oh go on then...)





The PRO-Series 12 Sound Sampler is so-called because:

- a) it seemed a good idea at the time;
- b) Tony's mum thought of it; or because
- c) it's a 12-bit Sound Sampler in the PRO series (and hence the title)

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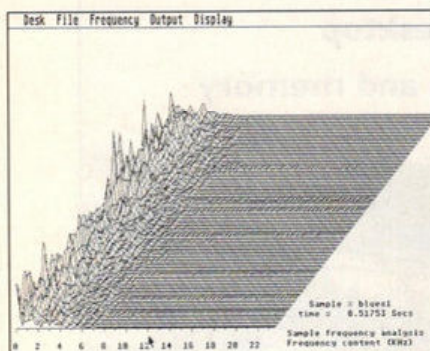
that repeats/loops as long as you keep the note held down. This information, along with the sample rate and original pitch, is stored along with the sample data. Up to ten sounds can be stored at one go, dependent on the memory and storage space available to you and the length of the sample. The ten sounds are assigned to the function keys and can be called up instantly and stored as a whole set.

Drumbeat Professional is more than a mere drum sample sequencer. The demo disks give examples of complete songs run from this using well chosen samples of drums, bass and piano. It is fully MIDI compatible for both input and output of data and synchronization. Up to 15 sampled sounds can co-exist at any one time and it plays up to four notes simultane-

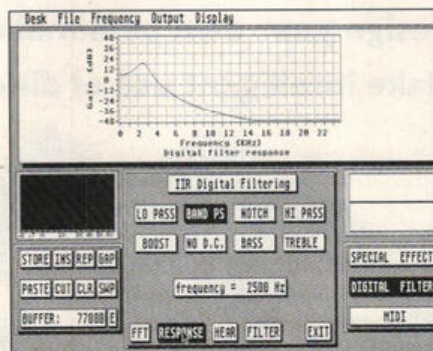
ously. The sequencer can be either a simple real-time one or a more powerful step-time version where 50 patterns with 32 events each can be chained in 99 song steps. A helpful screen grid puts all the notes in context for easy editing.

Midiplay turns the ST into a sample playing multi-timbral module where four notes can be played simultaneously and the samples can be split across the keyboard in an endless variety of combinations. The note-on loop points can be edited and any sound can be finely re-tuned: all respond to pitchbend although not velocity or aftertouch. For that you need tons more memory and the ability to layer samples with different velocity responses. All samples and keyboard set-ups can be stored and pulled back with minimum fuss.

The quality of the **PRO-Series 12 Sound Sampler** is superb, the editing a dream to work with and the MIDI specifications about as good as you could get. If AVR expand its ability to read, edit and store samples created on dedicated samplers then plenty of small studios would jump at it: sample editing is really uncomfortable on many samplers. Now if only I could run my MIDI sequencer in conjunction with this sampling program... **stf**



■ Here's that sample in dazzling, bit-mapped 3-D prior to some filtering which will eliminate those pops and hisses...



■ And here's how the filter will go to work on it, shaping that rugged sound into - what else? - music to your ears

FORMAT RATINGS

PRO-Series 12 Sound Sampler
£245/AVR
0582 457348

Features	98%
Positively brimfull with 'em. Bosting!	
Speed	85%
Fine, except filtering and disk saving routines	
Ease of Use	95%
No probs - even for the absolute beginner	
Results	98%
Excellent sound quality and editing functions, comparable with dedicated samplers	
FORMAT VALUE	94%
At £245 it ain't cheap, but for this price you couldn't get a sampler offering this quality	

The Competition

None. Lower the price and you're lowering sound quality - try the 8-bit sampler £129.95 **Replay Professional**, also from AVR (0582 457348)

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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 player's, 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. MVP votes are accumulated for the season. American Football is a game of stats and this simulation sustains that.

Current owners: send SAE for data, or return the main disk with £1 for update

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line noise

Having gone on line, ST FORMAT now bring you some of the mail left on the Euronet network and at Bath BBS. Andrew Hutchinson is your chairman in the baud room

Here's a selection of your comments picked up from bulletin boards over the past month or so.

■ Dazzz Smith, Bath BBS:

Saw your review of *Breach 2* in this month's mag – looks pretty good! Are you into strategy type stuff? I always thought Siberian yak farmers had trouble using non-Cyrillic keyboards!

stf No, I'm not really into strategy games, but *Breach 2* certainly went a long way towards changing my mind

■ Robert Wood, Bath BBS:

Over the years my collection of *FORMAT* Cover Disks has really built up well. I do have one small problem though. I know it's a stupid thing to do, and as an experienced ST user I should have known better, but I seem to have accidentally formatted my Cover Disk 13! Can you tell me if I can get a replacement from you, or anywhere? Even a copy will do, as I still have the original disk.

I just happened to notice the "more-than-frequent" use of colourful metaphors in the last issue. Now don't get me wrong, I'm not complaining – quite the opposite in fact. If you can prove to us that you are just human after all (some people think you're just paid a lot to say what you're told), then that is obviously a plus.

stf We've said it before and we say it now: back up your Cover Disk! Even a novice ST user isn't likely to accidentally format both the original and the copy – or spill coffee on both, or pop both in the toaster for breakfast after a particularly hard night...

Very soon you'll be able to download all the Cover Disks from Bath BBS, which should solve your problem. As for the colourful metaphors, well, the *FORMAT* crew actually tend to clean up their act for publication. And who said we're paid a lot...?

■ Bob, Bath BBS:

Over the last few issues, guys, the overall level of the magazine has been dropping. If I see the "Hol-

ding down the right mouse button while selecting a file from a un-active window..." trick once more in "Desktop" I'm going to scream!

If the ST doesn't shake its gamey look then that's all it will be, a games console with keyboard thrown in.

stf We first printed that mouse trick eons ago and thought it was worth repeating just once more for newer readers two issues ago. Sometimes we think we should stop being so interesting, drop some of the colour and people would think we were more "techy"!

■ Tom Zunder, The Magic Castle, Birmingham:

I like *STF* – I think it's getting better not worse – but I am less interested in each issue, because my knowledge is broader than it was the month before. Quite normal this, and you must cater for both new and old users; there are people who will not know that the ESC key refreshes the active window. I hated the 68000 and C courses: they were too technical, especially the C one which went in above heads. I would, however, like to try C and 68000 so the principle was correct.

stf We try to aim *FORMAT* at all ST owners, irrespective of their knowledge or programming skills. It's always difficult trying to squeeze a C tutorial into nine episodes, but if we've managed to interest you in the language at all then we've succeeded

■ Graham Galbraith:

Hmm. What a good idea. An *ST FORMAT* Magazine Echo. It remains to be seen whether Andy Hutchinson will be able to stand the heat as he attempts to fend off a tidal wave of criticism every time he comes on. I hope so. I'm constantly plagued by blinding visions of the *ST FORMAT* crew dressed as ITV Saturday morning kids' show presenters, complete with stupid lurid skateboard tee-shirts and stupid peaked caps stupidly worn the wrong way round. They may not look like that,

but they read that way sometimes.

stf I do enjoy wearing lurid skateboard t-shirts and peaked baseball caps, but why is that a bad thing? It beats wearing a duff suit, or a decrepit sweater or a tacky anorak. Besides, our average reader is 22 years old and probably likes lurid t-shirts

■ Andy Sims, The Tavern BBS:

Please why are you going more games orientated? Yes you are. I quite liked the "Hints and Tips"

Calling all Sysops!

Are you a Sysop with a large caller base? If so, we want to hear from you. We'd like to increase the number of bulletin boards carrying *ST FORMAT* news, views and files. If you'd like to set up a special interest group or a conference on your board, get in touch with Andrew Hutchinson now.

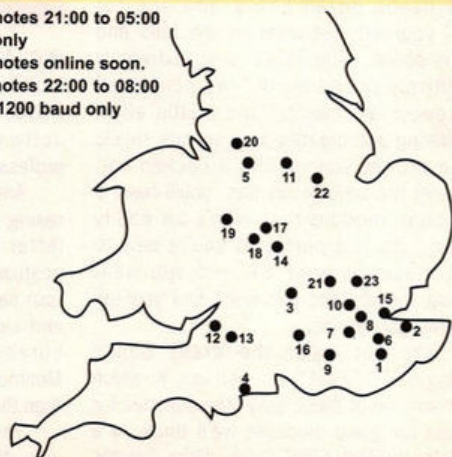
section of the mag; you must remember that at least 60% of STs are used primarily as games machines, with a bit of word processing thrown in. I think the mag has got the balance just right: a good mix of MIDI, games, programming and reviews without getting too technical.

stf We try to get the mix right and always welcome constructive suggestions, but judging from the letters above you can't please all of the punters all of the time **stf**

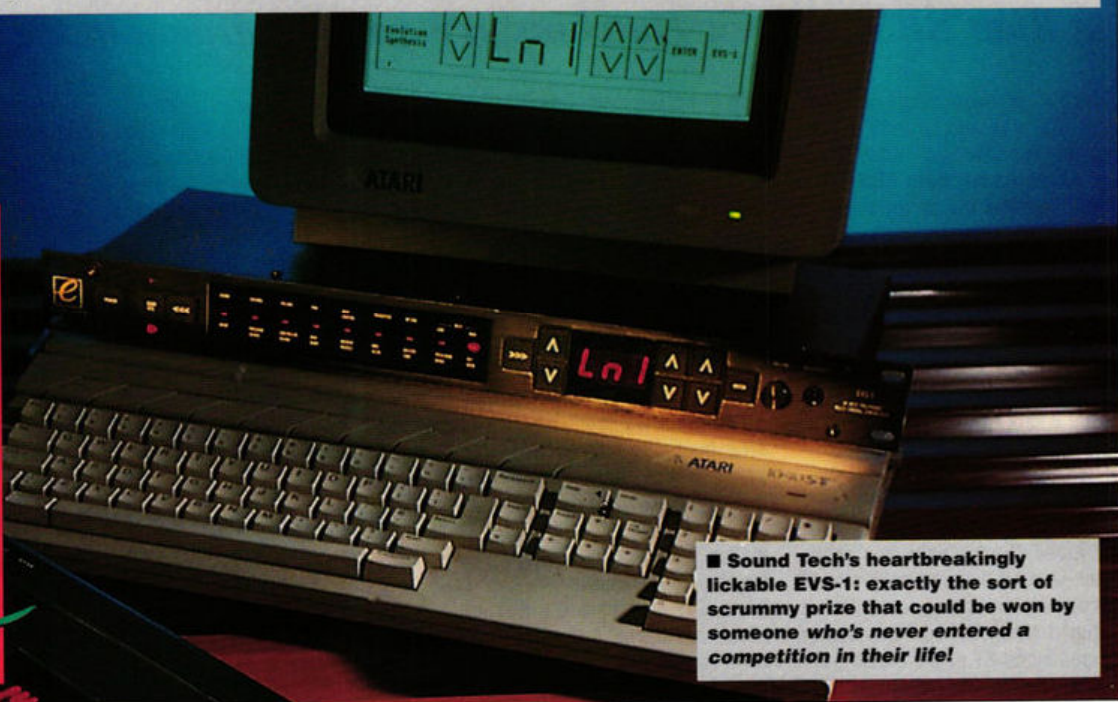
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■ Sound Tech's heartbreakingly lickable EVS-1: exactly the sort of scrummy prize that could be won by someone who's never entered a competition in their life!

Last month rich, powerful and immensely overweight ST FORMAT met Sound Technology's £300 beautiful, black sleek all-in-one EVS-1 on page 117. They got along famously.

"Oh darling," purred FORMAT, seductively: "you have such a low price and high performance. You can create really good sounds, but I need time to learn your sound creating methods." "Tee-hee, oh don't take on so," whispered EVS-1, coyly: "you do say some funny things sometimes. Tee-hee." And to prove the depth of its feeling, FORMAT gave EVS-1 a sparkling 88% in its own sweet little velvet presentation box. And they made beautiful music together for ever and ever. Now read on...

OK, here it is: your chance to get your hands on an EVS-1 and see for yourself just what all the fuss and bother is about. "The EVS-1 is an extremely competitively priced synth," we concluded in our review last month, "and a little effort spent altering and creating new sounds should beat the pre-set sounds into a cocked hat. If you have the time to do this, you'll have a good sound module that won't be easily outgrown." It's just perfect if you're new to making music on your ST, and you want something friendly that you won't find yourself selling after six months.

So why not enter the great Sound Technology/ST FORMAT competition, in which you can win one of these sexy little beasts for free? Just for good measure we'll throw in a copy of the brilliant £199 C-Lab Alpha Notator

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This could be the beginning of a beautiful love affair... (Or maybe just a corny ending.) **stf**

FORMAT RATINGS

EVS-1 £299/Sound Technology/
0462 480000

Features 88%

A good range of features that you would only expect to find on more expensive modules

Speed 91%

No complaints here, quick and easy screen pages and fast communication between software and hardware

Ease of Use 75%

Takes some time to get into the sound programming pages and it's a mite awkward to use a keyboard as well as the program

Results 89%

Very good, but could do with more software help on the sound creation side

FORMAT VALUE 88%

Low price and high performance. EVS-1 can create really good sounds, but you need time to learn its sound creating methods

■ If the EVS-1 were a racehorse it would win the Grand National, probably. But it's not: it's a bit of music kit for the ST

THAT OLD OBLIGATORY STUFF

1. Employees Future... Sound Technology... can't enter... blah...
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3. Judge's indecision final, & so on & so forth...

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the best gets better

The latest version of Protext – the wordprocessor we use to write ST FORMAT – is here at long last. Mark Higham gives it a good going over

Protext version 5

MACHINE: ALL STs

PRICE: £149.95; UPGRADE FROM

V4.2 £60; FROM EARLIER VERSIONS £75

FROM: ARNOR

CONTACT: 0733 68909

The beauty of Protext is its portability, range of features and sheer power. In short, it's bloody brilliant. But it also has one of the all-time most unhelpful environments imaginable. Other small grievances and a prohibitive price tag have hitherto deterred many from investing in the king of wordprocessors. Now, besides being much friendlier, the new Protext includes in response to public opinion such extras as more editing windows and improved spell-checking, and also incorporates pull-down menus, enhanced printing capabilities, multiple file editing, index and contents lists and a spelling checker.

It's mainly the pull-down menus that make the system more user-friendly. Previously all instructions to the wordprocessor had to be made via a command line interface (CLI). To execute even simple commands you needed to type words such as CAT to get a disk directory, or COPY A:/*.* B:/ to copy files from one disk to another.

This measures badly against other ST wordprocessors with their drop menus that show you the available commands and enable you to click on them to action them. But there are benefits to a CLI system, for a vast array of disk-manipulating commands, extensive printer controls, a calculator and even a memory monitor can be accessed from the CLI.

The CLI is still present (giving the best of both worlds), but now there's a menu system too. Hit the right mouse button or press [F3] and a menu strip appears at the top of the screen. Move the mouse or tap the arrow keys and you can select nearly all the options for which you previously needed to type the exact command (assuming you could remember it).

Another benefit is a brand new disk interface. When you load or catalogue files from the menu, a directory appears. Double-click on a file name and it loads instantly. Alternatively you can erase, rename and even lock files within this easy-to-use interface. The spelling checker, previously maligned for being too slow, is vastly improved and now features a new 120,000-word Collins dictionary.

One major limitation has always been that you could hold only two documents in memory.

Now a staggering 36 documents can be held in memory simultaneously, with two on-screen if desired. To keep track of the files in memory one of the drop-down menus contains a list of all the document names currently being edited. Select any of them to go straight there. Alternatively, you can type SWAP followed by a document number or name from the CLI.

Block selection has also undergone a long-awaited re-vamp. No longer do you need to place two markers in the text and then hunt through your document trying to find them. Instead, you can select text by dragging the mouse over it; the text block is then highlighted in reverse so you can spot it easily. Welcome, if long overdue.

As before, the first time you run Protext you need to configure it for your needs. This enables you to select screen colours, keyboard definition, memory allocation and printer drivers. The number of printer drivers has been increased and there's a new auto-save feature, so you can specify the number of seconds before Protext saves automatically. As you'd expect, the software comes armed with an easy to use 380-page manual providing a good index and a 48-page tutorial guide for newcomers.

The news isn't all good, however. When you request a directory of your hard drive, Protext also calculates the free space. This takes an irritating ten seconds or so when you're dealing with partitions of over 10Mbytes on many hard drives. Copying files from one disk to another still involves swapping disks three times if you only have one drive. And why doesn't Protext incorporate a "print pages backwards" command so that they came out properly ordered when used with a cut-sheet paper feeder? Points to ponder for Protext version 6.

These small complaints are easily outweighed by the extensive number of new and exciting features. For manipulating large documents Protext has always been the business. It's exceptionally fast with word counts, enables you to move backwards and forwards through a document by simply hitting a few keys and is remarkably easy to use with a printer.

Now the best has got better. What previously prevented people from using it was the ridiculously hostile CLI. The menu system alternative now enables you to find the commands you want with ease while the CLI is there for the



■ Perhaps the only thing that stopped us from recommending Protext to anyone who's serious about word-processing was the lack of pull-down menus. Now version 5 has put that to rights, and taken the opportunity to add many other excellent features, too

pros who really can't stand taking their hands away from the keyboard.

For smaller documents such as reports or letters, Protext performs competently but it still cannot match programs like Script for output. Script and That's Write both enable you to select a font from those in memory. When it comes to printing, your printer is switched into graphic mode and commands are sent, essentially to "draw" each letter. Printing is much slower and the fonts are often less well defined, but the final appearance looks far more professional. Because it takes typically around two minutes to print out each page using this method, however, it just isn't practical for large documents. There, Protext shines.

The price may be comparatively stiff, but if you intend to make extensive use of a wordprocessor, perhaps to write or edit a novel or even take up a career as a journalist, it's worth its weight in gold. There are just such a vast array of features, and it's now so easy to use that you can hardly go wrong. **stf**

■ Turn the page for **FORMAT'S** money-saving comprehensive comparison of the other word-processing packages available for your ST



FORMAT RATINGS

PROTEXT v5/£149.95/Arnor
0733 68909

Features 95%

With new pull-down menus, it's possible at last to find all those features you always knew were there

Speed 94%

Excellent, though it still seems to take a long time to save files sometimes, for no apparent reason

Ease of Use 95%

At last Protext has acquired real ST compatibility, using dropdown menus as well as the CLI

Results 96%

Superb

FORMAT VALUE 95%

Too expensive for the dabbler, but for anyone depending on a WP, this is the one for you

The Competition

See over the page for details on all the others

which wordprocessor?

So Protext's brilliant. But few of us can afford £150 just to write the odd letter, so here's Mark Higham to guide you through the best of the rest

➤ FIRST WORD PLUS

GST ⌘ (0480) 496666 / £49.95

This is the most popular ST wordprocessor around, and its document files are widely supported by other programs (such as DTP packages where you need to import text from a wordprocessor). *First Word Plus* lacks many of *Protext*'s advanced features. It doesn't automatically save your document, for instance, there's no way of sorting a file and you can't produce contents lists. But you can import a *Degas* graphics file into a document – something *Protext* can't do – enabling you to use graphs, charts and pictures in your page.

Features like a spell checker, word counter and good printer support ensure *First Word Plus* includes all the essential requirements. For general use, this is an excellent wordprocessor at the price. It's not as fast as *Protext* – but then it's nowhere near as unbearably slow as *Microsoft Write*, either!

FORMAT VALUE RATING: 88%

HABAWRITER

HB MKTING ⌘ (0895) 444433 / £39.95

This, the pick of the cheapies, includes a spell-checker and a mail merger, though the spell-checker runs separately. It's annoyingly sluggish in response to many instructions such as defining a block, yet extremely fast when it comes to scrolling through a document. It refuses, for reasons best known to itself, to underline spaces. Overall it's satisfactory for the odd letter, but doesn't deliver enough to make it fit for professional use.

FORMAT VALUE RATING: 73%

K-WORD 2

KUMA ⌘ (0735) 74335 / £39.95

K-Word isn't a full professional package, though there are standard find and replace options and scrolling is reasonably fast. Surprisingly a mail merger and spell checker are included, though you have to exit the wordprocessor and run a separate program to use them. Styles such as bold and italics aren't displayed on screen but can be still be used by pressing [Ctrl B] to set bold, for example. Though it's one of the cheaper wordprocessors around, it offers little more than PD.

FORMAT VALUE RATING: 46%

MICROSOFT WRITE

ATARI ⌘ (0753) 33344 / £149.95

At the price, the worst wordprocessor in history. Though its features list is very impressive, *Write* is pathetically slow and a pain in the arse to use. Though you can mix the printer's own fonts with a selection of GDOS fonts, printed using the printer's graphic facilities, there's nei-

ther an integrated spell-checker nor a word count option. Don't buy this if you want a happy life. By implication, Atari have recognised the appalling deficiencies of *Microsoft Write* by bundling copies with some 1040s and Megas.

FORMAT VALUE RATING: 13%

SCRIPT

SIGNA ⌘ (0252) 875031 / £89.95

Certainly the best of the graphic output wordprocessors, and almost the cheapest. Anyone familiar with Macintosh's *MacWrite* will be at home with *Script*. The user interface is exceptionally fast and short keystrokes enable you to perform many operations quickly. Bizarrely, lacks a spell-checker. Has the advantage of using the printer's graphics features to employ a range of exciting and creative fonts which can be assigned to function keys and used throughout the text with ease.

Script provides power, speed and excellent output at a price you can afford. It can't beat *Protext* for handling large documents, but for writing slick letters and documents, this is the best of them all.

FORMAT VALUE RATING: 91%

THAT'S WRITE

CAVENDISH ⌘ (081) 323 4761 / £129.95

Treading much the same ground as *Microsoft Write*, except that graphic fonts are used instead of GDOS ones, speeding up the screen display and scrolling and works (to a limited ex-

tent). There's spell-checking and a contents list option. But *That's Write* has a slow keyboard response and memory problems with less than a Mega. *That's Write* is certainly capable of producing fancy letters and documents, but for serious power use it doesn't have the necessary speed and sophistication.

FORMAT VALUE RATING: 54%

WORD PERFECT

SENTINEL ⌘ (0932) 231164 / £228.95

Shockingly and unjustifiably priced. Support for a newspaper column mode (also in *Protext*), excellent macro support (again, in *Protext*), extensive spelling dictionary and an auto-saving feature. Unfortunately the dictionary contains American spellings (center, color). One neat but daffy feature is the password protection option for files. Excellent for serious power, though it's not enough to justify it being £100 more than the new *Protext*.

FORMAT VALUE RATING: 27%

WORDUP

NEOCEPT/HB ⌘ (0895) 444433 / £59.95

The cheapest and oldest of graphic output WPs. Select a font and this font is also used in the screen display. When you print, your printer is switched into graphic mode and the individual letters "drawn," so to obtain good output you need a decent printer – 24-pin dot matrix or laser. Setting headers and footers is easy: a master page is displayed into which you type the headers, footers and page numbers.

Wordup lacks a spell-checker and scrolling is slow, making it hard to use with large documents, but it's a fine, cheap WP for letters and reports.

FORMAT VALUE RATING: 79%

WORDWRITER

ELECTRIC ⌘ (0480) 496666 / £79.95

Similar to *First Word Plus*, using the same GEM windows and drop-down menu system. Standard spell-checking; short-cut keystrokes for most commands (not supported by *First Word Plus*) and easy editing features. But you can't import graphic files. One nice feature: when you just can't think of that word, call up the Thesaurus and choose from a list of alternatives. One big deficiency: you can only use one ruler per document, making it hard to apply different structures to one document.

It's hard deciding between *WordWriter* and *First Word Plus*. While *WordWriter* makes better use of the GEM windows and menus, you may find that you really need to import graphic files. This is a good general-purpose wordprocessor, so decide which is more important to you – thesaurus or picture file option.

FORMAT VALUE RATING: 85% stf

THE SKINFLINT'S WP BUYING GUIDE

If you only need a wordprocessor for the occasional letter, buying a professional WP package would be like having Red Rum pull a milkcart. The alternative? There are two quality public domain WPs, and while they might not offer the sorts of features found in expensive programs they are dirt-cheap and certainly compare favourably to many of the cheaper commercially-available alternatives. Buy either from any PD library worthy of the name (eg at £2.50 from Goodman ⌘ (0782) 335650, or see the list on page 46).

FIRST WORD – VALUE RATING 91%

Virtually identical to the commercial version of *First Word Plus*, except this doesn't support spell-checking and you can't import graphics. And for printing, you need to run a separate printing program. Manual on disk.

ST WRITER ELITE – VALUE RATING 95%

The first version of *ST Writer* to run on the STE, *Elite* has all the features found in commercial WPs except a spell-checker. Documentation on disk.

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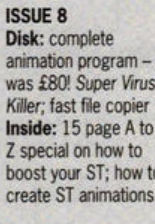
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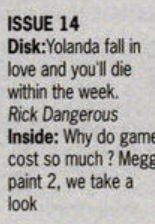
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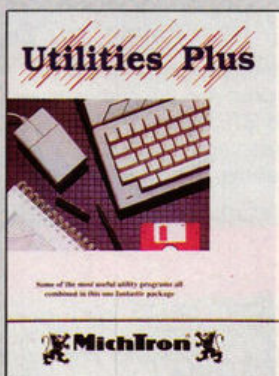
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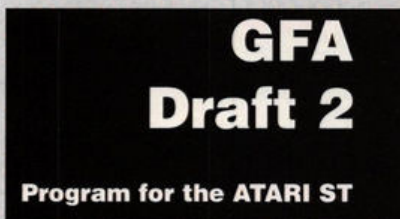
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VISA

Continuing to delight and frustrate in more or less equal measure, Kilkenny-based School Software give David Jones more to ponder with another mixed pair of offerings



■ **Junior Typist** gets down to the nitty-gritty with simple and colourful screens

Junior Typist

AGE RANGE: 5+

MACHINE: ALL COLOUR STs

PRICE: £16.95

FROM: SCHOOL SOFTWARE

CONTACT: 010 353 6145399

There are already more typing tutorial programs for the ST than it can reasonably support. Is there room for another? School Software clearly believe so, and this excellent, sensibly priced package with numerous tutorial and game facilities surely deserves to do well.

The bold and unpretentious introductory screen sets the tone for a bold and unpretentious program. A simple touch of the spacebar takes the program to the main menu. This accesses the four main sections of the package: a typing tutor, a typewriter simulator and two sets of games.

The section budding typists should attempt first is a tutorial, which includes no less than 16 screens of information interspersed with five practice sessions. The tutorial is broken down into three lessons, honestly and coherently written ("It will not turn you into a fluent typist overnight," it warns: "only lots of practice and patience can do this"). By using different style screens each lesson is made both stimulating and interesting.

Lesson one deals with the layout of the keyboard, finishing with an exercise which involves simply entering numbers. All practice sessions in the tutorial can be made to be as long or as short as required. In the second lesson the keyboard turns from a shade of grey into a blaze of colour to show which keys are controlled by the left hand and which by the right, as well as highlighting the "home" keys. Lesson two finishes with a home key practice session.

For the final lesson the keyboard is divided into eight colour-coded sections which indicate the keys controlled by each finger. This lesson includes three practice exercises, last of which is a speed and accuracy test.

The tutorial section of *Junior Typist* is bright and innovative, offering enough to keep any novice keyboard pusher occupied for many hours. The other "serious" aspect of this pro-

true to type

gram is simply called *Typewriter*, in which lines typed onscreen can be dumped straight to a printer. This option lacks the flexibility of HAT's *First Type*, offering no control over the type or quality of the print. It does, however, allow children to practice newfound skills and gives them a permanent record of their achievements without involving the complexities of a word processing program.

The *Typing Game*, similar to Microdeal's *Invasion*, shows words descending from the top of the screen which have to be entered from the keyboard before they hit the bottom. Initially, words fall so slowly that even I could keep pace with them. As the game progresses, the words fall ever more rapidly. Eight word sets are provided on disk progressing from simple words to those of ten or more letters.

Junior Typist includes three games, collectively (and rather loosely) described as *Spelling*



■ Now it's your turn. Follow the high-lighted keys and you're away

Gamesm. These are:

■ **Sentences**, a speed and accuracy game similar to the exercise used in the tutorial

■ **Typing**, in which a colourful keyboard is shown along with words to type. The relevant letter to be entered is highlighted on the screen keyboard; and

■ **Words**, a spelling game in which words are flashed on the screen for short periods and then must be entered from the keyboard.

This last game is broken up by the occasional presentation of anagrams to solve and is virtually identical to School Software's *Better Spelling*, except that it uses a far smaller datafile.

Junior Typist is an excellent package. It may not be able to turn children into competent typists overnight, but it will encourage basic keyboard skills and provide a great deal of fun en route. Its closest apparent rival is HAT's *Learning to Type*. *Junior Typist's* clear tutorial and simple multi-game approach is likely to appeal to children of ten and below – precisely the point where HAT claims to take over.

Better Spelling

AGE RANGE: 8+

MACHINE: ALL COLOUR STs

PRICE: £22.95

FROM: SCHOOL SOFTWARE

CONTACT: 010 353 6145399

Peculiar. One moment you're looking at the excellent and competition-flattening *Junior Typist* from School Software (see above), and the next you're giving housespace to something like this – from the same company.

The warning signs begin the minute you unpack the disk from the box, for that's all you get: a disk in a box. Boot up the disk and a barren welcome screen appears, where a worm (of all things) greets you. Press the spacebar twice – and you're dropped back to the desktop! Then you have to load the spelling program. Oh dear.

At last, the main menu. As with most of School Software's output, various options are displayed as narrow horizontal bars called up either with the mouse or the function keys. These options include viewing the game

FORMAT RATINGS

JUNIOR TYPIST/£16.95

School Software/010 353 6145399

Features 82%

Tutorial with multiple practice exercises, typewriter simulator and four games, representing good value. No word editor; datafiles are small

Speed 75%

Moving between sections is rapid. Grumble: later sections of tutorial can only be accessed via earlier pages

Ease of Use 89%

Each operation is supported by good onscreen documentation

Results 81%

Enough to keep the attention of any budding typist. Printer dumps in typewriter mode are limited

FORMAT VALUE 88%

Realistically priced introductory keyboard tutor

The Competition

First Type (£12.95) is a multi-function word processor/typewriter simulator and *Learning To Type* (£14.95) a substantial keyboard tutor (see STF 14) – both from HAT ☎ 0743 249526.

Invasion (£3.99) is a typing game with word editor from Microdeal ☎ 0726 68020. The *STOS Typing Tutor* (£2) is a best-of-the-rest training program (STOS PD Library, ☎ 0942 217044)



■ Make the most of this bright and cheerful loading screen – because it's about to drop you back to the Desktop!

instructions, setting the game level and type (spellings or anagrams) and selecting sets of words. A total of eight word sets are provided, four at beginner level and four at advanced level.

Once all parameters are set the main work screen – a blackboard – appears. In "spelling" mode a word appears after a key is pressed. This remains on the screen for a time limit already selected from the main menu (one to 12 seconds). When it disappears, children have to key it in. If they're right a tick appears to the right of the screen, while a mistake elicits a cross. After every fifth correct answer a jumbled word appears to be entered correctly. In "anagram" mode, only jumbled words appear. These remain on the screen until an answer is given.

Each beginner's list contains words of between three and five letters: there's no real difference in the level of difficulty between each

list. The advanced lists contain longer and more difficult words; some of these children commonly misspell (circumstance, consequence), but the majority they do not (holiday, forbid, situation).

As the files for these lists use non-standard data, they cannot be amended or added to. As we all, children included, have our own strengths and weaknesses when it comes to spelling, this lack of adaptability virtually invalidates the program.

When children quit the program they're presented with a confirmation screen which includes a guillotine. If they confirm they've had



■ Nice idea, but you can't edit the sadly short and ill-chosen list of words – an unnecessary and frustrating restriction



■ Congratulations. Here, have a certificate – you deserve it!

enough, the blade of the guillotine descends – and chops off a head! A joke? Not funny.

School Software can produce excellent educational software, and their maths packages remain some of the best around. But for reasons which remain obscure, presumably even to themselves, they seem wholly incapable of producing value-for-money literacy based programs. A package that does so little for £22.95 is a sheer waste of money. If you need a spelling aid for your over 8s, try Database's Fun School 3 or Kosmos' Answer Back Quiz. **stf**

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SOUND	2
VALUE FOR MONEY	2
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EDUCATIONAL VALUE	3
OVERALL	30%

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The Answer: **PDQ - games**



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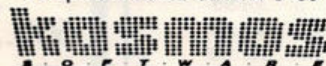
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ST Format (August '90)

87%

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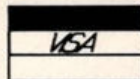
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How bugged is Imperium?

I was encouraged by your review and score of 87% (STF 12) to buy Electronic Arts' Imperium. I have no complaint with your review, nor with the approach and mechanisms of the game (well, maybe one or two – like why bother with the slow disk access music?). I applaud the programmers for writing a game that plays on a mono screen, a much neglected medium which has many advantages over the fuzzy TV screen.

But the game suffers from a programming bug. My approach was to develop an overwhelming military force to smash the other Empire, so I set about building ships and creating soldiers. In fact I amassed an invasion fleet with 64,000 drop troop units!

Then something odd happened. As I prepared to launch my attack, these troops suddenly melted away! Frantically I searched the instructions for something I had missed, but found nothing. Frustrated, I rang Electronic Arts and asked what might have happened to my troops. I was then confidently told that the game would not support forces of over 30,000, as there was no need for such large armies! When I insisted that I had in fact already created a force of 64,000, the reply was: "You can't do that."

The result is that the program has now gone haywire. Troops come and go, fleets lose ships and my hours of play are lost, as even the saved games are corrupted.

Why didn't it say in the instructions that there was this limit? Why didn't the program cope with this? In my opinion this game is flawed, and in the worst possible way. It lets you play for hours, then run up against this problem which invalidates the game.

For heaven's sake, this is a strategy game that runs for a thousand years! What's the point if it's just going to crash out half way through? Can you imagine Dungeon Master if you played halfway through the game and then lost your characters and playing position?

Ian Black
Stamford, Lincs

stf This appears to be a serious deficiency in what is otherwise an immensely enjoyable and well-thought out game. We spoke EA's Customer Service Supervisor Neil Thewarapperuma.

"We're sorry to hear of the problems and frustrations Mr Black has experienced playing Imperium on the Atari ST," he said. "With reference to the first point raised, the music can be turned off in the Imperium Game Control panel."

"The limitation related to building ➤



STRAIGHT TO THE POINT

"Concise (adj) – expressing much in few words; brief; much more likely to get printed in ST FORMAT"

■ Why can't the Cover Disk have a password on it, printed on the corners of the pages of the magazine so that flipping through the pages you could obtain a 130 character password? This would mean that you need an intact copy of the magazine to run the Cover Disk and stop Disks being stolen in shops.

Matthew Hanscombe, London

– We don't think it's a big enough problem to justify giving all 65,000 of our readers huge amounts of grief, to be honest.

■ The ST mono monitor is the best there is for serious work like wordprocessing and DTP. But why can't there be more games that also run on mono, like Starglider 2 and Sierra games. Games where colour difference is important (Kick Off, Carrier Command, Sim City) are a problem, but they're the minority. More games with mono option please!

Jay Lee, Netherlands

– We agree entirely: some software houses seem to dismiss mono monitor-owning ST gamers as cranks and a minority not worth bothering with.

■ On the Cover Disk and contents page of STF 12 the words "complete MIDI sequencer!" require the insertion of the words "absence of" between the first two words.

Incidentally, the use of the word "brilliant" to describe the desktop demos I assume is what is known as 'journalistic licence' as at least one of the demos crashes with alarming regularity!

M Young, Tonbridge, Kent

– Blimey. I know we asked for short letters, but you don't explain why the words "absence of" should have been there, and you then fail to mention which demo it was that crashed. How are we supposed to respond to a letter like that?

■ I subscribe to ST FORMAT because:

1. I don't have to race to the newsagents every day and hope they had not sold out;
2. I receive ST FORMAT before the newsagents;
3. So I would receive my free gift.

So why does my local newsagent always get ST FORMAT before me, and why did it take two months for my free software to arrive? One thing I am impressed with is the special offer to ST FORMAT subscribers – I hope more are to come!

D Rance, Hatfield, Herts

– Some areas do appear to have very poor postal service; we're looking into it. The delay with the free software was down to an extraordinary level of take-up of the offer, and

we've since arranged things so we can now cope.

And don't worry, there are more special offers for subscribers planned (but don't tell those people who are still buying from the newsagent, will you?).

■ Like Ken Ashberry (STF 14) I'm going to buy a new Atari with a double sided disk drive, but nobody really wants my old Atari, and I need to get enough money from my old one to buy a new one. What can I do? Help!

Jamie Johnston, Edinburgh, Scotland

– We did consider having a collection, but since we're even skinner than you are it seemed a little pointless. You could always start up a PD Library – that's an easy way to make a mint, har de har (read the feature on page 267).

■ I disagree with G Shields of Glasgow (STF 14), who thinks ST FORMAT is no longer interesting and that "75% is taken up by games." Surely if programming is all he is interested in, he should read magazines that deal with that one subject?

Steve Boulton, Cirencester

– There are always some readers who'd like more of particular subjects. If it were possible we could easily fill a mag twice as big as ST FORMAT every month – even at its present monstrous shirt-straining 180 page size! And besides, we do depend on readers writing in to help us maintain the balance you want.

There is, of course, no newsstand ST magazine that covers programming in more detail than ST FORMAT.

■ Today I went to buy Operation Stealth and found it had double sided disks. It said on the box you could send away for single sided disks, but I'd have to wait a few weeks, and I really don't want to have to keep doing that. So I bought a different game instead. Surely they should keep single sided disks of games in the shop so that there wouldn't be this hassle?

Jamie Johnston (age 12), Edinburgh

– True, and we sympathise, but it's incredibly difficult to get stock levels right on something that: how many single, how many double does the shop owner order?

■ You don't reckon the authors of the above two letters might in any way be related? I think we should be told.

Anne Observant-Reader, Clear Invention

– No-one like a smart-arse. Shove off. ➤

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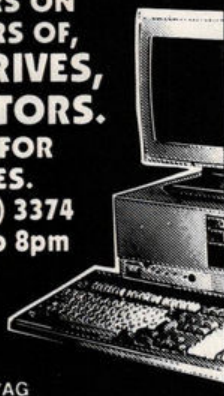
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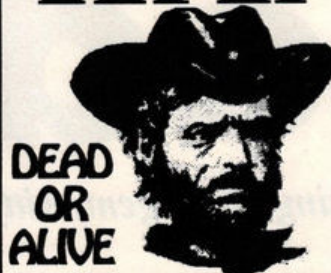
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armies is one which, after consultation with the producers of the software, we acknowledged to Mr Black when he called. The game is limited to building armies of up to 32,000 troop units. Each population unit and troop unit equals 100,000 people – so 32,000 troop units equals 3,200 million troops – quite a lot of troops!

"In the current version, if armies bigger than this are created, problems occur (such as the number of troops shown not reflecting the actual number of troops available). Reverting to a previously saved game before the 32,000 limit had been reached should prevent these problems occurring.

"After further consultation with our Product Development department, we can confirm that we'll be producing a new version of the software which cures this problem. The software will still be limited to 32,000 units, but if the limit is reached, the number will stay at that limit and not cause the problems which Mr Black has reported.

"Mr Black's was the first and so far the only report we have had of this problem, as it is very difficult and time-consuming to produce such a large army, and even the most well-equipped enemy garrisons will never get to be as large as 32,000 units.

"We should be pleased to replace Mr Black's copy of the game with the revised version as soon as it is ready or, if preferred, exchange it for an alternative Electronic Arts product, or provide a refund of the purchase price."

– So, there you have it, Ian. And you also have £25 cash to buy yourself another game.

That's blown it!

Your Cover Disk has finally blown my cover! Having told my wife the 520ST was "essential for my work," and that I was buying STF 14 so I could "load the printer controller into my word-processor," you have to go and include a fantastic playable game which, quite frankly, took precedence over the writing I should have been doing over the weekend.

I refer of course to P Fox's Robotz, which, in my humble opinion, must rate among one of the most addictive and extremely enjoyable games ever devised for the ST. Congratulations on a great mag, even though I now have to sneak it in by the back door!

David Crewdson
Solihull, West Midlands

stf Yours was just one of many letters we had along the same lines. Indeed, for a while the game had to be banned from the FORMAT office, because we were in danger of having no next issue of the magazine!

Incidentally, I'm not altogether sure of the wisdom of your confessing in front of more than 60,000 people. Can you be sure your wife isn't reading this letter at this very moment?

Wholly inconsistency!

Way back in STF 6 you gave Batman an ST FORMAT Gold award. At once I got my birthday money off my mum (I'm only 10) and bought it. Then later on, in STF 14 in your article about who gets your money, you say, "Bidding for prime licences such as Ghostbusters can start as high as £100,000 and can reach up to ➤

STRAIGHT TO THE POINT

■ Oil! How come Captain Sensible gets to review a game? Surely this guy earns enough to buy a game and not receive a free copy through the mail? If I can think up a strange name can I review one for the next issue?

Andy McCallum, Durham

– Captain, being an immensely rich geezer with more money than he knows what to do with (like everyone who's ever had a record in the charts), offered us a substantial sum of money for the honour of doing a review for us. With or without a silly name, Andy, you too can do a review for us, if the bribe is big enough. 20... 50... as a much as a pound, even.

■ I really liked Jeff Minter's Gridrunner when I first got it, but it's spoiled, I think, by the fact that shooting out one level doesn't give you permanent access to the next; if you don't get the next level first go you are back to the previous one. Is there a cheat mode?

D Whyte, Glasgow

– Well, type PINK-FLOYD-ARE-GODS (oh dear) during play for infinite lives. It's not exactly what you ask for, but it should do the biz.

■ Is it not the object of any game to complete it without cheating? I was tempted to use your cheat mode for Starray, but I kept my intellectual integrity and completed it without cheating – which made the game much more interesting.

Antonio Esposito, Abingdon, Oxon

– No-one's going to come round to your house and force you to use a cheat mode. But lots of people find a particular game so frustrating they're quite happy to cheat, which is alright by us.

■ Well done for putting the demo of Devpac ST2 of Cover Disk 10! So where was the beginning of a machine code series?

Nicky Haley, London

– We'd be delighted to present such a series, Nicky, if the demand is strong enough. Write to: We Demand A Machine Code Series In ST FORMAT, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW and we'll be glad to oblige.

■ How about a topic on the capacities and problems of disk drives?

Robin Borghmans, Belgium

– Good idea. It's on the list as of now.

■ How about a round-up of the best value printers (9-pin, 24-pin and laser) and disk drives (internal, external and hard)?

Niell Becker, Basingstoke

– That, too, is a good idea, and in fact both printers and hard drives are coming up next month. Don't spend a penny till then, ooor.

■ I was wondering whether to buy an Atari ST or an Atari STE. I sent off for ST FORMAT issues 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and numbers 11, 12, 13 of ST/Amiga FORMAT. Do all these Cover Disks work on both machines?

Michael Britt, Southampton

– We now guarantee that all programs on our Cover Disk work on STEs as well as STs, but that's only been since the summer. Before that you'll probably find that most stuff will work on an STE, but there's a slight risk of individual programs failing to load.

■ In STF 13, page 96, I see a very proud Chris Storm with one ST stacked on top of the air

vents of another. I think he must be a bit off his trolley (not for owning two STs though!). I have often seen this occurring, but surely it's not a good idea (however space saving it may be), what with all that heat?

Oliver Cannell, Eastleigh, Hampshire

– Although Atari don't actually recommend such a practice, we doubt that the ST gives off enough heat to cause a serious problem. (Legal disclaimer: under no circumstances ever stack one ST on top of another.)

■ Is my ST compatible with Atari VCS 2600 and 7600 games cartridges?

Steven Barton (aged 13), Rochester, Kent

– Steve, would you like the good news or the bad? The bad news is, the answer is no. The good news is, er... well, we printed your letter.

■ With more and more people buying hard drives for their STs, software houses should offer the option of installing a program onto hard drive, instead of always loading from disk. Multi-disk programs, such as Operation Wolf, would benefit from this because you wouldn't have to keep swapping disks all the time.

Dean Payne, Leicester

– Absolutely. Many PC Contemptible games do just this, but apparently the threat of piracy prevents this happening on the ST. Grrr!

■ A suggestion: when you repeat previously released programs, put them on side 2, since those who missed it first time round are probably new users, who therefore have double-sided drives anyway.

Simon Axon, Amersham, Bucks

– Good point, though of course we very rarely repeat programs.

■ I'd like to try writing my own games. Can you recommend a book which contains a lot of useful information and instructions for writing games without too much technical language (or at least an explanation of it)? Would the STOS Games Creator be a good thing to buy?

F McLachlan, Lancing, Sussex

– There's an introduction to the world of programming in this very issue, on pages 121 to 124, including a list of books and details on the major games creators. STOS is indeed the best bet, we reckon, because there's a thriving community of users who keep in touch and help each other. It's also been used to write commercial software – all the Fun School educational series, for instance.

Incidentally, an apology. We had intended to cover getting your game published this month, but we ran out of room. We'll be returning to the subject shortly, but in the meantime you can sample some of the delights of the process by reading our exclusive Strider II preview (page 32).

■ I ordered 25 D/S disk and an 80 capacity disk box from Brighton Computer Supplies (☎ 0273 506269), paid by cheque and received the goods in four days. Unfortunately the disk box had been broken in the post, so I sent it back. In three days I received a new disk box and eight disks for my inconvenience. Well done!

Paul Sealy, West Wickham, Kent

– Nice work, folks. They at least have recognised the value of a good reputation.

£250,000 – but as *Batman* showed, that kind of expenditure doesn't guarantee the customer a great game at the end of it." Well?

Joe Stevens
Yeovil, Somerset

stf Well, there are games that don't seem to have that longevity that distinguishes the classic from the merely competent. The funny thing is, Joe, you don't actually tell us what you think of *Batman*. That is what really matters.

Shades of discontent

Since Rob Steel's review of *Shades*, the Multi-User Game (STF 14), there has been much discussion between players both off and on the game about how the review was put together.

For a start, Mr Steel found that there were no other players on *Shades* in the afternoon, the reason for this being because at that time *Shades* (and telephone charges) are at peak rate, that's around £8 an hour. The best time to play *Shades* is late in the evening, when the charges drop tremendously.

As for *Shades* being "disappointingly small," I presume that Mr Steel didn't enter the city (the main playing area). There is much more to *Shades* than first meets the eye; fights for example can be amazingly-amazing, if you use the right comms software (*Ripper 3* being a personal fave amongst us fellow Shadists).

As for conversation in *Shades*, you need to introduce yourself and explain to others that you are new to the game. If you just sit there people think that you are an experienced player.

Every Multi-User Game has to change to

keep up with the times, you have good days and not-quite-so good days on line and you obviously experienced a bad one.

Zarlis the Shadist
Kenilworth, Warks

stf Fair comment, Zarlis (mind if I call you Zarl?). Rob was however approaching the game as a newcomer, and although your suggestions would clearly have helped, how are neophytes supposed to know such things?

Money for nothing?

Your average ST game costs £20 or £25, with most of the better ones costing about £30. Now then, what else could you do with £30 in the way of entertainment? You could:

- GO to the local cinema a few times (and films cost far more to make than ST games).
- HIRE ten, maybe 15 videos, or buy three.
- BUY seven LPs or eight paperbacks or subscribe and get 12 copies of *ST FORMAT* (aw shucks – ed).
- PURCHASE an RPG system or a couple of board games.
- CHEER your local footie team for at least five or six games, should the mood take you.

I suppose you could say you can keep playing a computer game, but once you've read a book or seen a film, it's over. However, once you've completed most computer games, the same is true.

Currently games software offers very poor value for money. Software houses might say that examples I have quoted above are not representative, because there is a far larger mar-

ket for them all and so therefore they are cheaper. To the software houses I say drop your prices and you too may find a larger market – or at least make your games worth the money you expect us to pay for them.

Jan Kaszubowski
Abertillery, Gwent

stf Mm. Your maths is a bit wobbly (seven LPs for £30? I don't think so!), but you have a point. Yet our feature on the subject (STF 14) suggested that software houses don't make much more than ten bob (that's 50p in this money) profit, which hardly seems excessive.

Incidentally, surely buying vids is the most expensive of the lot: how many times do you really ever watch a film you've spent a tenner buying? (On second thoughts, watching the *Albion* these days is pretty expensive, in terms of amount of enjoyment the average Baggies fan gets.) **stf**

WRITE TO FORMAT

If you find Atari's behaviour over this STE hard drive business (see page 7) extraordinary – or indeed admirable; if you cannot believe there's not more money in Public Domain (page 26); if you reckon there are far too many ST games coming out these days – or not enough; if you've had particularly good service – or bad... – whatever you want to comment on, write to: Feedback, *ST FORMAT*, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW. Make it short and snappy and you'll have a much better chance of getting your letter printed.

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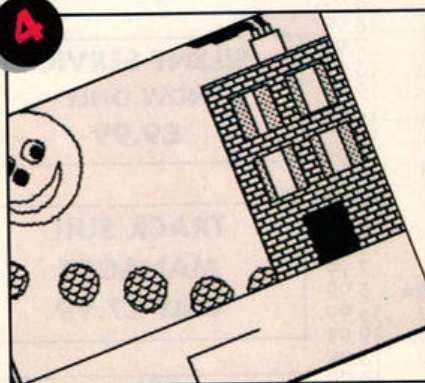


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Exclusive! Multiface ST espionage shock! ROMANTIC ROBOT IN A SPY SCANDAL

By our own intelligent correspondent

A Third World diplomat was expelled from Britain last week for engaging in industrial espionage on behalf of an unnamed East European country, Foreign Office officials confirmed in London early this morning.

The diplomat was caught red-handed, using a unique computer add-on, known in the business as **MULTIFACE ST**. The device is used to freeze, inspect and back-up running ST programs, sources familiar with the case said.

Magic button

Although seemingly just a small black box, it is apparently full of hi-tech wizardry and even sports a so called **MAGIC BUTTON**.

Some sources suggested **MULTIFACE** could have been embargoed from exports to any non-NATO country, but Cocom officials could neither confirm nor deny the instrument had been included on the list of banned equipment.

Cocom is a Paris based inter-governmental agency set up to monitor trade in strategic goods and create lists of such equipment whose sale to potential enemy countries is prohibited.

The unorthodox use of **MULTIFACE** by the diplomat, whose identity and country of origin remain hidden for fear of reprisals against British nationals, had been detected when a nurse in the envoy's Kensington Gardens estate reported a change in the man's habits to her Foreign Office contact.

"He visited a computer outfit, called **ROMANTIC ROBOT**, came back with a black box and has been spending every free minute in his den ever since," the 30-year-old woman, whose identity is protected under the Official Secrets Act, said.

"I've even heard him screaming 'Multiface, oh, Multiface' in his sleep," the nurse added.

Contacted in his office at **ROMANTIC ROBOT**, a company spokesman said the question had put him on the spot.



"There's a saying one oughtn't believe any rumours until they have been officially denied, so I can neither confirm nor deny your story. I personally think it is utterly preposterous, but it's up to you to decide," the spokesman said.

He said he would rather not comment on reasons for the diplomat's strange behaviour.

"He seemed perfectly normal. He was, obviously, very keen to get the **MULTIFACE**, but nobody at Romantic Robot has ever detected

anything out of the ordinary in the envoy's manners."

"Your readers might find it interesting to try **Multiface themselves**," the spokesman said. "I hope their reaction would be just as ecstatic. Obviously they should exercise some degree of self-control - in their own interest!"

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"Of course, I'd rather not if this were to sound as an advertisement but I am given to understand **MIS** are considering seeking an injunction on the sales of our device, so it might be wise to send for a **Multiface** now, before they find a co-operative judge. At £29.95 (£30 below RRP) plus £1 p&p it is a real bargain - some may say it is even more than one bargained for."

Foreign Office officials declined to comment, saying they would not debate cases where a judicial decision might be pending.

The Romantic Robot spokesman said his company could not accept responsibility for any mishaps occurring to anyone visiting its premises at 54 Deanscroft Ave, London NW9 8EN.

"We seem to be getting most orders through the post, anyway," he added.

He said also those who'd rather use their **ACCESS/VISA** cards and order by telephone, at 081 200-8870, should be extremely cautious in their choice of words.

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This program is a must for anyone interested in analysing their handwriting, or analysing other peoples. It is also very useful for analysing prospective employees handwriting. To use the program, a sample of handwriting is obtained, preferably in ink. From the main menu of the program you will be prompted and guided to examine each detail of the sample. You will then be taken through deeper and deeper sets of sub menus, all prompting you for relevant details of the writing, and the points to watch for, and add to the file if applicable.

Upon completion you are left with a disk file up to 15 pages long (depending on the depth of detail you choose), this file can then be edited within your word processor to produce a full report for the writer.

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We must however stress, that unless you are experienced in graphology, then we can in no way guarantee the accuracy of the information that the program provides. If you are an enthusiastic amateur or just curious, then this program could provide hours of entertainment, whilst teaching you the finer art of this fascinating subject.

The text within THE GRAPHOLOGIST was researched and written by a top London graphologist/criminologist James Woodward. The software was written by Martin Evans our consultant software writer.

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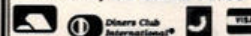
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the twilight zone

(Cue pub-singer) *Ander now-ah, thee endiz neeeear-ah! And-uh so we face-ah!...*

All done in the best passable taste

Well, that just about wraps up another issue. If this were an Agatha Christie novel people would be standing about saying, "There's just one thing I don't understand..." But it isn't, it's Britain's best-selling magazine for the Atari ST range of home computers and we hoped

you like it enough to give us another go next month.

It was at about this point in the proceedings last month we invited you to submit suggestions for celebrity interviews. Here's a few of the better ones:

Stevie Wonder to do *Degas Elite*;
The French government, New Zealand Story (ooh, bit political, bit political);

Cecil Parkinson to review – oops, sorry, can't print that one;
Marc Bolan, *Stunt Car Racer*; and our personal favourite so far, **Arthur Scargill** to cover *Personal Finance Manager*.

Thanks to Brian Short of Deal in Kent and Matthew Towers of Norwich for those. Neither of you will be getting a nice piece of ST software, though, because we expect to be inundated over the coming month. Come on, folks, get those ideas in to: Reviewing the Situation, *ST FORMAT*, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW.

It's so very fat!

We confidently predict that the so-hot-it's-still-smoking December issue of *ST FORMAT*, available from your friendly neighbourhood newsagent come Thursday 8 November, is going to break the record, equalled by this one, for the fattest ever. If it were, say, an Editor, it would be on a com-

pulsory diet. But it's not, it's Britain's best-selling magazine for the Atari ST.

The problem is, however, that as each issue gets bigger, we find more and more to put in it. We were forced to leave out half a dozen things from this month's ish, which we hope to squeeze in next time round. But that of course requires us to do some more squishing. Anyone know of a crunching utility that works on pages instead of disks?

Still, it does suggest that things are looking bright for the ST. There have never been so many games released in one month – and if you think that's good, just wait till Christmas gets its Claus into things! And "serious"/productivity, art, graphics, music and education on the ST are all busier than they've ever been.

Ah well, mustn't complain. Don't forget to make a date for Thursday 8th November. **stf**

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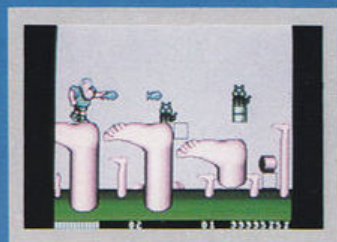
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NO IT'S
NOT

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witty interpretation
of the Python
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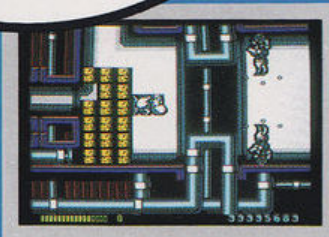
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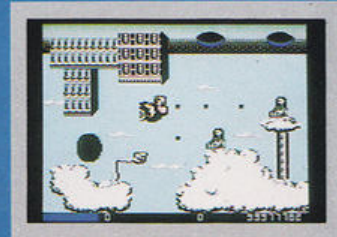
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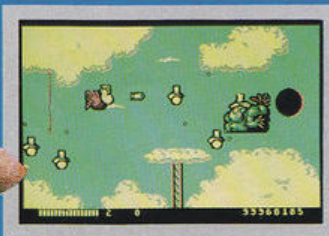
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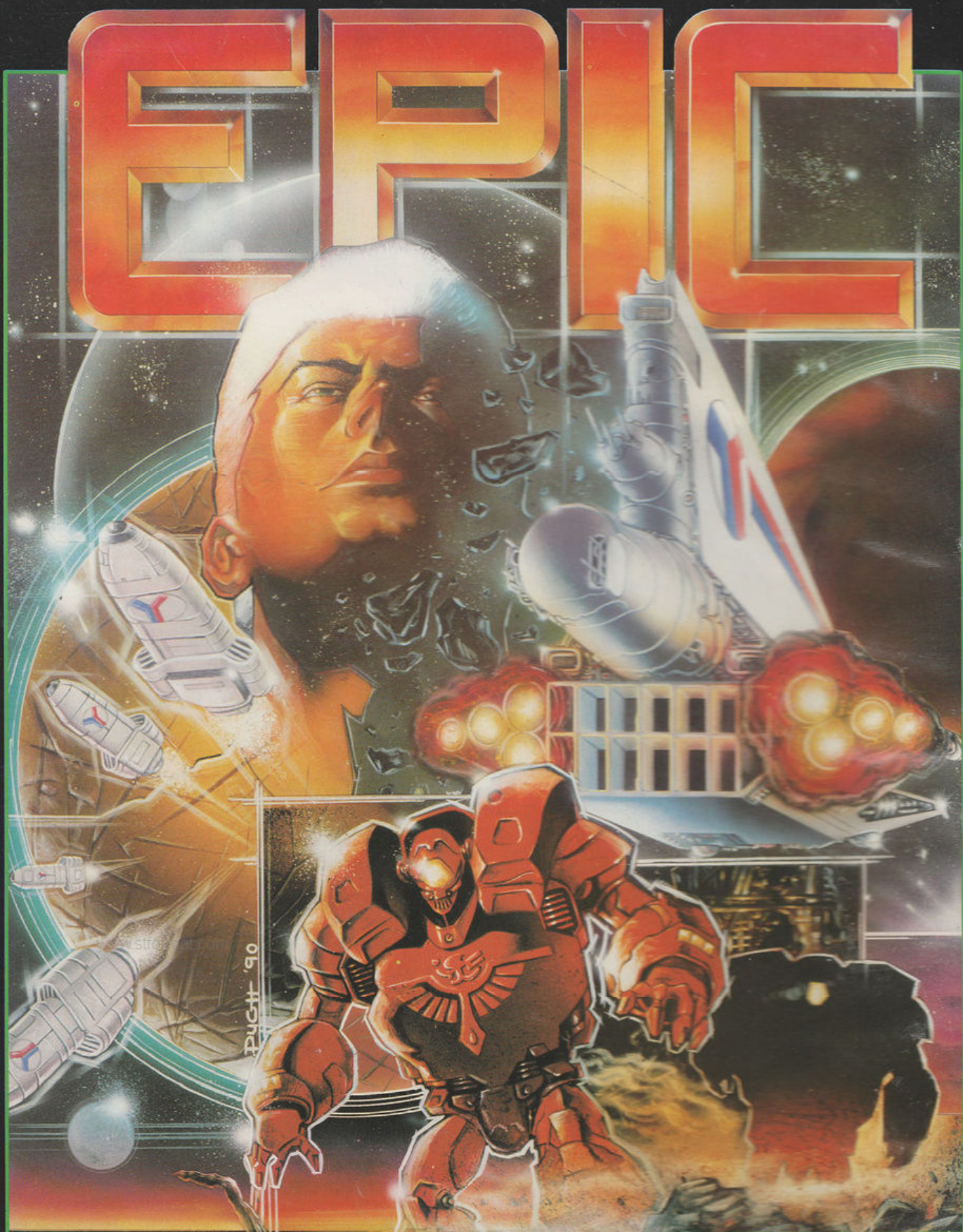
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