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284 PAGES!

AMIGA

ISSUE 17 ■ DECEMBER 1990 ■ £2.95

FORMAT

COLOUR REVOLUTION

How you can have 16 million colours and 24-bit quality at your command

COVER 17 DISK **ULTIMATE RIDE**

Go for the ride of your life with Mindscape's fully playable demo.

3 months of free Personal Finance Manager, HiSoft Basic and Real Things Humans. PLUS: Utilities and The Gallery

COVER DISK 17 **AMIGA** FORMAT



Ultimate Ride
Wild wheelin' in Mindscape's speed king playable demo

Personal Finance Manager
Check out your finances with this useable demo

Real Things Humans
Demo of the latest living pictures



HiSoft Basic
Useable demo of the best-selling Basic

ERR - Little C error handler
SEARCH - AmigaDOS utility
COPY - Pic of the month

NO COVERDISK?

THEN ASK FOR ONE FROM THE NEWSAGENT

CREATING HISTORY

The games masters show you exactly how to make the past a dynamic new reality

WORDS OF WISDOM

We name the word processors with the speed, the functions and the right prices

HARD BARGAINS

Save money, save time, save effort as we reveal which are the best hard disk drives

GAMES

35 unmissable pages crammed with tips, reviews and previews



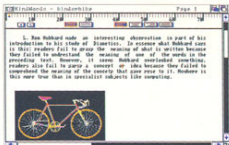
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● Definitive Reviews: Betrayal, Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge, Cadaver, Gremlins 2, Killing Game Show, Indianapolis 500, Mean Streets, Paradroid ● 20 hot previews ● Win a £250 tank ● How to get great colour grabs ● The year's best musical buys



CREATING HISTORY 25

Making the past come to life



WORDS OF WISDOM 191

Which word processor is for you?



HARD BARGAINS 167

Check out the best in hard disk drives

COMPETITIONS

WIN A £250 TANK!

Get a Team Yankee tank from Empire

126

WIN 4 MEG OF MEMORY!

Have a huge memory from EPD

222

Colour Revolution p34

A bloodless revolution is taking place where the only thing flowing is 16 million colours onto your screen. 24-bit video and True Colour have arrived to transform the world of Amiga graphics. Join the revolution and check out how you can have the most stupendous graphics in the world.

AMIGA
FORMAT

17

DEC
1990

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FRAMED! 233

You'll be hooked by the FrameGrabber



PLAYING FOR KEEPS 74

Can you survive the Killing Game Show?



GUNG-HO GUMSHOE 50

It's tough on those Mean Streets



Contents

SPECIALS

HISTORY IN THE MAKING	25
Creating dynamic new realities	
ALL THE COLOURS IN THE WORLD	34
16 million colours at your fingertips	
TESTBENCH TWO: HARD DRIVES	167
Save time and money by checking this out	
FIRST WORDS	191
We tell you which is the word processor you need	
SEARCH PARTY	209
Discover an indispensable AmigaDOS utility	
EDUCATION	223
Check out the latest in learning software	

REVIEWS

TECHNOSOUND	180
Has this sampler anything new to offer?	
GST GOLD SP	185
Transform your videos with a new genlock	
TITLE PAGE	188
How to jazz up those video effects	
FINANCE MANAGER	219
Get those accounts sorted out now	

FRAMEGRABBER	233
Grab amazing images with this nifty hardware	
VIDI RGB	237
Get superb colour pictures from an RGB splitter	
HYPERCHORD + PIXOUND	243
Two very Californian music and graphics programs	

REGULARS

NEWS	9
Stunning news of the new Amiga A1500 PHC	
COMING ATTRACTIONS	19
Over 20 hot previews for the Christmas season	
GRAPHICS	34
An invaluable DPaint tutorial and The Art Dept	
MUSIC	109
Essential buyers guide to the year's best stuff	
PD UPDATE	131
Find the best in free software here	
GAMEBUSTERS	149
Tips, maps, cheats and guides to busting games	
WORKBENCH	249
Get more from your Amiga here	
LETTERS	265
Seething debate on today's big issues	

Screenplay

FORMAT GOLD			
INDIANAPOLIS 500	64	CADAVER	69
KILLING GAME SHOW	74	PANG	70
		SPIDERMAN	74
		TORVAK THE WARRIOR	76
		XIPHOS	79
REVIEWED			
BETRAYAL	46	LOTUS TURBO CHALLENGE	80
VOODOO NIGHTMARE	49	JAMES POND	82
MEAN STREETS	50	PARADROID '90	89
IRON MAN SUPER OFF ROAD	52	FOOL'S ERRAND	90
THE SPY WHO LOVED ME	55	BADLANDS	93
NEW YORK WARRIORS	56	GREMLINS 2	94
EUROPEAN SUPERLEAGUE	63	MANIX	94
BATTLE MASTER	66	WOLFPACK	96

Disk Extra P99

THE ULTIMATE RIDE Mindscape	Climb aboard a throbbing beast of metal and rubber, burning its way across tracks around the world. Our demo is of the British stage, so watch out for the cows, sheep and four-wheeled, turbonutters.
PERSONAL FINANCE MANAGER Microdeal	Check out your finances with this handy demo.
HISOFT BASIC HiSoft	Check out this demo of a really great Basic.

REAL THINGS HUMANS RGB Studios	Delightful demo of the latest living animations.
ERR	A useful error handler for all Lattice C users.
SEARCH	Super AmigaDOS utility to accompany the programming feature on page 209.
PIC OF THE MONTH	Smashing image of a cosy sofa - it's comfortable!

SUBSCRIBE! P.125

If you read Amiga Format every month, why not make sure of your copy by getting it delivered straight to your door? Save hassle, save money and get a free game, too! See Page 125 for details! Also, take advantage of our Mail Order bargains.

MAIL ORDER P.254

Registered Circulation 57,123 Jan-June 1990



Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations

Christmas is coming and the shelves are getting packed. As the Software silly season starts, **TRENTON WEBB** checks out the contenders for the fabled Chrimbo number one slot.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

TEENAGE MUTANT HERO TURTLES

■ **Mirrorsoft: ETA Mid-November**



Radical dude! The heroes in a half shell are finally set for their Amiga debut. Splinter, Shredder, Donny, Mickey, Leo and Raff will be crawling around a sewer near you this Christmas. The screenshot shows part of the horizontally-scrolling sewer section, where the green team battle the forces of Shredder in a beat-em-up. There's also an overhead Gauntlet-style street section. With everyone going crazy over the little guys it should be one of the hottest licence games ever! Excellent, wicked, cowabunga, bossanova... bossanova?

STRIDER II

■ **US Gold: ETA Mid-November**



Strider is on the comeback trail. *Strider I* scored a Format Gold first time around with his platform-leaping, sword-slashing, Ruskie-bashing antics. In *Strider II* the man plays a similar role but this time it's a head-to-head battle with a band of alien kidnapers. There are five massive levels, but this time Strider has some major league extras up his armoured sleeve. In addition to his sword, Strider II has a gyro-laser gun and can transform into a robot when fighting the end-of-level guardians.



ROBOCOP II

■ **Ocean: ETA Late November**

Metal Murphy's back for one of the year's biggest releases, *Robocop II*. In an eight-level arcade spectacular, the future of law enforcement is once again trying to clean up Old Detroit. Robocop must battle through shoot-outs and solve puzzle sections as he tries to catch Cain - the Detroit drug lord.

OCP are still as corrupt as ever, so Robocop not only has to catch criminals but also destroy an evil Mark II version of himself! Four futuristic weapons, armour power-ups, multi-directional scrolling and bigger sprites will all combine to help *Robocop II* shoot for the top slot this Christmas.

TOTAL RECALL

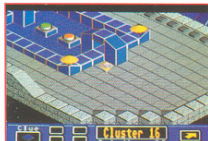
■ **Ocean: ETA Late November**



When Quaid (Arnie) discovers that his mind has been wiped, he nips on the first shuttle to Mars and turns nasty. In a bloodthirsty sci-fi arcade adventure you must help the big man get his memory back and unravel an interplanetary conspiracy into the bargain. All 200 screens will have cinematic presentation with digitised and comic book graphics, plus a menacing soundtrack written by David 'Beast' Whittaker.

SPINDIZZY II

■ **Activision: ETA November**



Activision have caught sequel fever as well and are set to send *Spindizzy II* whirling onto the small screen. The classic 8-bit game has been updated and revamped to make it even better than the original. A spinning top has to be guided around a 3D isometric world, hitting switches, leaping gaps and solving puzzles. The 8-bit *Spindizzy* had gameplay by the ton, so hopes are high for the Amiga version.

EPIC

■ **Ocean: ETA December**

Somewhere in the depths of space a refugee caravan runs for its life. Taking on the role of fighter pilot you have to protect this rag-tag bunch of star ships from preying raiders. The need for fuel and security forces requires you to fly missions at treetop level, attacking vast installations in strafing and bombing runs.



DEATH TRAP■ *Anco: ETA Early November*

There's a mad, bad wizard living in the castle at the end of the street. A man so mad that he's stolen all the treasure in the land, hidden it in his fortress and turned the whole place into a *Death Trap*. The challenge is to get the cash and live. As you leap around platforms the aim is to collect spell components that supply the right powers at the right time. In a feudal Japanese-style world you have to beat up goblins, ghosts and all manner of garish nasties armed only with a rice flail.

HORROR ZOMBIES FROM THE CRYPT■ *Millennium: ETA Early December*

Duff horror movies have a certain charm, with silly plots, badly made-up monsters and wobbly cardboard space ships. This B movie magic is captured in *Horror Zombies from The Crypt*, the big Christmas hitter from Millennium. Count Valdemar's family crypt has been disturbed and the dead have risen. In this arcade adventure he must fight through the house, out on the roof and eventually into the crypt to help his ancestors rest in peace again.

DEUTEROS (THE NEXT MILLENNIUM)■ *Activision: ETA December***WING COMMANDER**■ *Mindscape: ETA Late December*

The only good Kirathi is a dead Kirathi! This alien race have been mankind's foe for 20 years in *Wing Commander*, a 3D space combat simulation designed by Origin Systems. Running as an interactive movie this is an into-the-screen shoot-out with lots more besides. Commanding all the pilots of a wing, as well as your own craft, 30 different missions must be completed if the Kirathi Empire is to be defeated. Whether or not the Kirathi deserve this treatment ain't your problem!

PANZA KICK BOXING■ *US Gold: ETA Early '91*

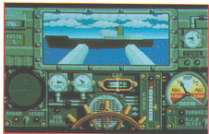
The French aren't famous for churning out boxing stars, but they have been rather excellent at Kick Boxing. Andre Panza is their all time hero and is the focus for this game of training, practising and fighting. There are masses of realistic attacking and defensive moves, which use nearly 600 frames of animation.

WIN A BILLION■ *Impressions: ETA Late November*

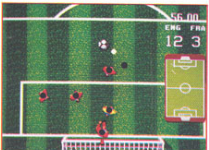
This is TV *Trivial Pursuit* played for keeps. Eddy 've've got ourselves a winner! Klutz is the host of this computer based game show, where the prizes are major league. Do well and



you could win a small European country (like the UK for instance) just by answering questions on music, film, sport, science, history, travel, TV, animals and pot luck. Unfortunately you don't get to keep your prizes!

ADVANCED DESTROYER SIMULATOR■ *US Gold: ETA January '91*

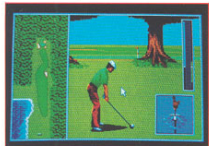
Advanced Destroyer Simulator comes from the people who brought us *Sherman M4*. Having exhausted the possibilities for land-based armour they have turned their attention to the great sea battles of World War II. As Captain of an advanced destroyer you will have to fight through 15 different missions, each of which recreates a historical naval engagement.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SOCCER■ *Elite: ETA December*

Like *Tournament Golf* below, this is another release in the Sega conversion deal for Elite. It claims to be one of the most realistic simulations ever of the great game, an aim that led them to ignore the obvious World Cup slot for release because it just wasn't ready. They've been waiting since then, to make sure all the extras they wanted were included, putting the final touches to a package that Elite feel should outscore all comers.

TOURNAMENT GOLF

■ Elite: ETA November



Elite look set to record a good round with this Golf conversion from the Sega Megadrive. Not only a good looker, if it plays as well as the console original, it should be up there challenging the Leaderboards of this world.

SCI

■ Ocean: ETA November



Son of Chase HQ, SCI stands for Special Criminal Investigation. Similar to Chase in plot, SCI lets you have guns to help stop the criminals. As the car races along the highway, a revolver-packing passenger can blast annoyingly slow civilians out of the way. While to get the specific bad guy on each level, friendly helicopters drop high-power bazookas which do even more damage than ramming them in turbo mode!

BILLY THE KID

■ Ocean: ETA November



When the West was wild there was one name that struck terror into all law-abiding citizens: Billy the Kid. Now in a Level 9 multi-scene arcade outing you can take part in computing's first Western adventure. Players can take on the guise of either Billy himself or Pat Garrett, the ex-friend turned Sheriff. Both characters love the same woman and only one will walk away from the final showdown. It's high noon soon for Billy and Pat.

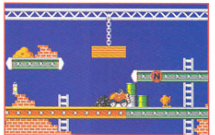
S.T.U.N. RUNNER

■ Domark ETA = November



Futuristic high-speed racing in a pipe is the best way to describe STUN Runner. Driving a bob-sleigh style ship down a twisting tube you can roll through 360 degrees in a desperate bid to maintain maximum speed, shoot bonus point targets and collect the stunning speed ups. These boost pads hurl drivers down the pipe at insane speeds, which give the game some maniacally fast moments. If it can emulate the arcade to any degree, Domark should have a major hit on their hands.

CAR-VUP

■ Core Design:
ETA November/December

Not an M25 simulator, but a cutesy platform game that will have drivers reaching for the brakes. They have to drive along platforms in a Speed Buggy (anyone remember Speed Buggy?) style of car. Every inch of each level has to be driven over, which is none too easy as you're being chased by aliens and monsters of all shapes and sizes, while mysterious power-ups drop from the sky. Okay, so maybe it is an M25 simulator!

LINE OF FIRE

■ US Gold: ETA Late November

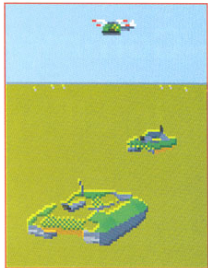


Where Operation Wolf went only Operation Thunderbolt dared follow. Now US Gold bring

on the game that made both of these fabled arcades look like wimps. Line of Fire is a floating, rotating, no holds barred shoot-em-up with a strong coin-op pedigree. As part of a two man team, players have the chance of shooting their way around a map in a killing frenzy. Lock and load, you're in the Line of Fire.

BATTLE COMMAND

■ Ocean: ETA November



"Tanks" to Ocean this Christmas could be one of the most destructive ever. Battle Command tells the tale of a space-age super tank that has the dubious honour of taking on the enemy alone. Armed with the tracks with cluster bombs, missiles and cannon, the tank must complete espionage missions, blast helicopters out of the sky and win countless slugging matches with other armour. As a strategy shoot-out it plays brilliantly in demo form. The full review will follow next month.

BATTLESTORM

■ Titus: ETA November

In the year 6997 a lone adventurer has returned to earth to find it has been invaded by four alien races. Flying an Airborne Attacker TROY208, the wanderer decides that the slimy ones must be ousted and that he's the man to do it. That's where you take control, flying the Attacker in the Amiga's first full-screen multi-directional scrolling shoot-em-up.



SHARP AND TO THE POINT, WITH A CUTTING EDGE

SCREEN PLAY

THE RATINGS EXPLAINED

GRAPHICS

Good graphics are an important part of any game; if the power is there, it should be used to the full. Both static and moving graphics come under scrutiny in this rating, but remember, graphic wonders alone do not a great game make.

SOUND

With stereo capabilities the last thing you want to hear are Speextraneous beeps, right? Tite tunes and effects all add to the atmosphere of a game and people who can greatly appreciate your enjoyment.

INTELLECT

How much real thought do you have to put in to play this game? Just because a game is mindless doesn't necessarily mean it's bad, but a game with a high intellect rating says immediately that you'll need to think to gain maximum enjoyment.

ADDICTION

How easy is it going to pick up and play? How much time will you get from it? Will you keep coming back? Important questions, all answered by a quick look at the Addiction rating.

OVERALL

A personal mark that takes into account all the ratings, plus such as the listing, interest, documentation and packaging.

THE TEAM

There are two main Amiga Format reviewers. Trevor Webb made his mark reviewing CPC games for our sister magazine *Amiga Addict* last year and has been among the easiest boys to follow, finally made the move to the big staff. A first-time games player whose personal table-top compares everything from the best to the worst. Squad Leader to Amiga is over an able reviewer.

Matt Evans joined the staff doing sterling service on Zzap!64, recently he's been splitting his time between us and our sister mag, *STI Format*, but after getting the light has come out of the cupboard under the stairs and joined us full time. Matt's a solid all-rounder with a very nifty trigger finger and more than a match for most would-be high score challengers.

It is Amiga Format's policy only to review games as they will appear on the shelves; in other words, in a completely finished form. We don't review demos, screen shots or versions in other formats.

TRAITOR!

The knives are out for Rainbird's *Betrayal* P.46

LOTUS ESPRIT TURBO CHALLENGE

Speed kills P.80

MEAN STREETS

High-tech low-life
with US Gold's gumshoe P.50

XIPHOS

One of the Elite? P.79

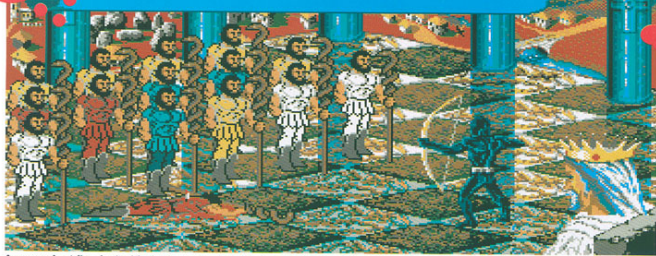
KILLING GAME SHOW

ED 209 meets
Wheel of Fortune P.74

INDIANAPOLIS

Who is Lola Buick? P.64

unfortunately your assassin
has been traced back to you



An assassin strikes in the King's Court. A red courtier lies dead but the black-robed killer has been traced back to his master. Rather than this play earning an extra opening at court for one of your lackeys, it is now certain that the King will have a man executed.

BETRAYAL

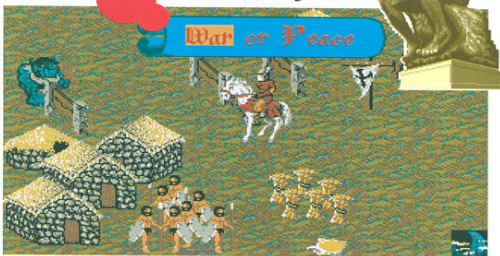
RAINBIRD £29.99 ■ Joystick or Keyboard

And thus I clove my naked villainy... and seem a saint when I play the devil!" The Book of Betrayal foretells of a time when four Lords will wrestle for power against their rightful King and Church. And it is in the book we find the true story of the West Marches' darkest hour.

Four equally-matched nobles seek power. They must dominate the courts of both King and Bishop, then depose them. Each noble has to manage estates, gather taxes, build armies, wage wars, spy and thwart the similar plots of his peers.

The four players each choose a starting station - Knight, Baron, Earl or Duke - which allots them a variety of villages and a number of courtiers. They must then travel to the villages collecting harvests and return to court for political manoeuvres. Your aim, playing in rotation over turns, is to control the twin courts and thus take power in the West Marches.

Vaulting ambitions are still governed by three major factors. Firstly, a Lord must have representatives at both courts, which requires the payment of taxes. Secondly the Lord must have some spare cash and an army for travelling. And finally will peasants, who make all the money and supply the soldiers.



After foolishly taking on a bigger force, the White Knight has been captured. His Gaoler has the options of release, ransom, imprisonment or banishment. Each has its benefits, but ransom is most profitable.

In the Villages

As Lord and Master over a number of villages you have total command of the peasants' lives and actions. Villagers serve four vital purposes: growing wheat to eat, making pottery to sell, forming militias for defence and supplementing your personal army. Villagers should be self-financing units, after they've paid taxes, otherwise their upkeep comes out of your personal fortune.

The economic balancing act is as tricky to master as it is to understand. Making the most of

fluctuating prices and the grouping of villages into units is vital as you try to offset expenditure (on the armies) against production (corn). The proximity to court becomes important as well, because each harvest has to be overseen personally.

At Court

In a court comprised of 24 courtiers, a majority of 13 is needed to overthrow the Monarch or Bishop - and both must be replaced to win. Your numbers can be increased in various ways, of

which the most moral means is tax payment. For each Lord one unit of tax must be paid per twelve-month cycle. If you offer more, and there are vacancies, then the King or Bishop may let you have more places.

There aren't always openings for trusting young courtiers, so some have to be engineered. Assassins can be hired and enemies can be accused of treason if you've collected some evidence scrolls, or they can be purely outbid for position. Each action in court, though, requires your

presence and takes a whole game turn to execute, whereas with moves outside the court the turn is split into six segments. So very few power moves can be attempted per twelve-turn year.

On the Road

The least predictable element in a world awash with betrayal is travel. The overall game map is quite unreliable, medieval cartography being made realistically dull. While travelling, as well as the problem of getting lost, you run the risk of being attacked by bandits or other Lords. On the up side you can also attack them and their villages or stumble on goodies that have been left lying around.

Battles for villages and between warring groups can be fought out as small arcade games. Two lines of troops wander towards each other, with you controlling one warrior. Below is a battle bar which shows who the next combatant is for either side. The fight continues until one team runs out of troops, so it pays to borrow the occasional soldier from friendly militia whenever possible. If defeated, you're captured and can be held to ransom or even banished, events which can both terminally hamper your game-winning chances.

Playing forces you have to combine all these elements into an overall strategy. The choice has to be made between using all six turn segments to ride around the West Marches managing your serfs, or going to court and trying a power play. Both must be done at least once every twelve turns, but which will pay the biggest dividends? Can your fellow players be trusted to keep their word or will they attack? Have you enough courtiers or is it open season for assassins? All these questions have no definite answer in a world full of *Betrayal*!



Each Lord has a personal finance management scroll. It tells you the inside info on how many villages and troops he commands as well as how much cash, evidence and tax has been collected.



The end of a battle approaches and it is time to bring on the trolls. Players can take control as either defender or attacker, when appropriate, getting the most out of each of the warrior's sword-strokes.



The map of the West Marches. Don't rely on it, however, because it's been made realistically inaccurate to reflect the naïf cartographic skills of the age. Stray off the edge and you're in the badlands!



Axe the tax, or raise it. The choice is yours every time a village is harvested. You control who grows what, who fights and how much tax they pay to either the King or the Bishop. This naturally affects the Lord's popularity with his subjects, but if they get stroppy then just hike up the tyranny rating.

GRAPHICS AND SOUND

Betrayal is a strategy game, so the graphics are subservient to the intricate gameplay. Yet the graphics maintain a respectable level. The scenes involving your Lord are mainly notational, intended to convey information via symbols, and so lack great realism. The battles are the highlight, with trolls trashing troops and heaps of broken bodies lying around. Initially appearing patchy, the graphics hang together as a shorthand system that makes the game prettier and more playable. As for sound the only real feature, apart from the Olde England style theme, is the mad horse you ride whinnying at every turn.

LASTING INTEREST

Betrayal has great appeal to groups of players. It works as a 'one man versus the world' game but is far harder to understand and win. Playing alongside fellow novices nullifies the learning problems. Then, as they learn the parameters, players will start exploiting the game's strategic elements and rely less on sheer military power.

Single players must be ready for a long manual session and many inglorious defeats. The economics are sound, but awkward, and four playing heads united in understanding their mechanics are far superior to one. The board-game style makes *Betrayal* a brilliant three or four way confrontation but frighteningly one-sided against the solo Baron.

JUDGEMENT

Betrayal must be played by at least three players to be fully appreciated. Play it alone and you have to beat three experts immediately. The complexity of the game makes it initially tough, but after a few abortive wars and stupid errors, it's possible to start some really messy backstabbing political battles. The more the game is played, the clearer it becomes that no one route leads to victory and that the possibilities for betrayal along the way are endless.

Trenton Webb

GRAPHICS	5
SOUND	2
INTELLECT	10
ADDICTION	5
OVERALL	84%



091 006 000

Running around the jungle Boots comes across the entrance to a temple. He hasn't completed all the missions yet though so dare he take mission on?

VOODOO NIGHTMARE

PALACE £24.99 ■ Joystick

Not all this black magic is mumbo jumbo – just ask Boots Barker. After a marital dispute left him stranded deep in the deepest depths of the Congo, he awoke to find he'd been cursed. An evil witch doctor had snuck up on the our poor hero and attached a magic mask unmovably to his head. Boots was now the proud owner of a real Voodoo Nightmare.

There is one chance – a long shot but it might just work – for Boots to remove his headgear and get back to civilisation. You must guide him through eight tasks which, when complete, allow a final showdown with the Doc who will then remove the mask. Can you help Boots discover the secret of the black magic hat box?

The jungle is a strange and dangerous isometric 3D wilderness. And, just as one would expect, it's littered with temples, beasties, shops, natives, traps and casinos. Casinos? All this isn't immediately obvious, though, as Boots comes to. He's one man lost and alone in the land that Strimmers forgot. Discovering what to do is the first task, so some sundry adventuring, wandering and being generally nosey is the order of the day.

Boots can jump over obstacles and on the creatures he meets, killing them with his 58-hole DMs. He can collect stuff to sell or use and stand over energy-giving food to eat – large wooden

masks apparently inhibit more normal methods of consumption.

Near where Boots awakes is a small pyramid with a paving slab in front. What quickly becomes apparent – because there's nothing else around – is that you have to enter it, on the first of five temple-clearing exercises. Once in, the aim is to dash about the place desperately grabbing jewels. This requires much stomping, use of the spider's web teleports and satisfying a big, bad, godlike figure's demands.

This earns the player not points, but pins, to stick in Boots' very own witch doctor Voodoo doll. Get eight of these and you earn a crack at the good doctor himself. Unfortunately there are only five temples to raid for pin purposes, so to gather the other stickers you need to fulfil three other missions as well.

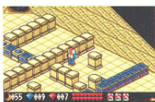
GRAPHICS AND SOUND

An eerie soundtrack runs continually in the background – spooky! This offsets the overtly cute graphics. The creepy crawlies creep and crawl just the way they should, while some dubious 1930s caricature natives pop up unexpectedly from the foliage. The foliage is solid enough to avoid confusion over passable routes, while giving enemies a place to hide in and surprise you from.

The isometric design is at its best in the temples, allowing the maximum view of each room. The size of the characters and the interaction between them and the scenery is good. Moving blocks by pushing is easily accomplished, while the introduction of the teleport allows for some really fiendish puzzles.

GOING SHOPPING WITH UNCLE GEORGE

Every now and again Boots stumbles across a helpful zombie storekeeper. Selling his bananas can get him (1) more powerful stomping boots, (2) a jungle cutting machete, (3) a bush road map, (4) an extra life to help stave off those dying blues.



To escape the temple Boots must move the blocks. Which one is safe to do first though?

LASTING INTEREST

Voodoo Nightmare is big, with eight small adventures crammed into the first half. The Temples are complex and require repeated attempts, while the need to solve them in the correct sequence, carrying the right kit, makes game-saving vital. Yet the game is hamstrung by an over-responsive control system which takes considerable patience and playing time to master. You'll find Boots falling off bridges and missing jumps just because of the lightness of touch required. Voodoo Nightmare is a large game that would take many attempts to beat if control was perfect, but hampered by such a control system it will take twice as long. Such is the incremental frustration factor of dying needlessly, that many may give up before the game really gets its addictive hook in.



Yeeeh! OTT cuteness strikes back in the lion mission.

JUDGEMENT

Voodoo looks the part and sounds the part. Mercilessly big and with an emphasis on a correct sequence of play, it has real lasting potential. This is marred, though not irrevocably, by the irritating control which causes needless suffering for players who die when they least deserve it. This is a crying shame as Voodoo could have been one of the true greats of the isometric 3D genre. If only Boots would drink less coffee and was less prone to leap maniacally around at the merest thought of a joystick command. Trenton Webb

GRAPHICS	5
SOUND	8
INTELLECT	8
ADDITION	3
OVERALL	75%



SYLVIA LINSKY - The Prof's daughter. With a massive insurance policy on her father nullified by suicide, was she in it for the dosh?

SUSPECTS



DELORES LIGHTBODY - Ex-fiancee of Linsky, she was dumped with the loving epithet "plenty more whales in the sea". Was it revenge?



The shoot-out. Tex has to work his way across the screen without taking too many hits. He can hide behind the crates, but this stops him shooting back: a real shame as these scuzballs are just begging for a bellyful of lead. No time to hide, though it's party time!

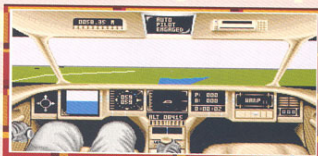
MEAN ST

US GOLD £24.99 ■ Joystick and Keyboard

His name is Murphy - Tex Murphy - PI in SF circa 2033 - and he's a hard-boiled gumshoe in the Mike Hammer mould. Some egghead took a flying lesson off the Golden Gate and his daughter smelt a rat. She wanted Tex to find out the truth. Was it murder? The answer lay on the Mean Streets of San Francisco, lurking in some smog-filled corner like a frightened rat. It was time for Tex to play the piper.

Tex had all the latest high-tech 'tec extras, like a hover car complete with fax, a video phone and a Colt '45. Machines, however, can't solve crimes, so he had to hit the shoe leather to track down the slimeball who'd jumped Carl Linsky.

There were five obvious places to start, five people who knew the guy, five goons to bribe and threaten into telling the truth. All Tex had to do was punch in the correct navigation codes (each address in the state has an address code) and let the autopilot take the strain. Gone were



Racing around 21st century San Francisco in the Speeder can be fun but dangerous. Learners are advised to use the Autopilot.

the days of incriminating telephone numbers on matchbooks, now it was all about Nav codes.

21st century travel still took time so Tex always used the 'phone to gather some background dirt on suspects while in transit. Vanessa, his secretary, was a smart dame. He'd lay one Vid call on her and minutes later she'd fax the info back. Then, of course, there was always the stunning Lee Chin, his grass. Lee Chin by name and leeching by nature - any street talk she passed on cost

an arm, a leg and a few other body parts besides - but that's another story.

Interviews were just a stagger in the park to Tex. He slugged through the door and got grilling. Tex didn't exactly have the gift of the gab - he made Hemingway look wordy. He'd only ever ask "What do you know?" then threaten, bribe or leave. All he ever tacked on the end of his questions were full names, company titles or places. Blunt, brutal and effective, just like Tex.

Tex also loved searching suspects' homes. People invariably had some dirty laundry tucked away and rooting through it was like taking a holiday in the dark side of their souls. He always kept any hard evidence he found - he also kept any hard cash.

Tex walked the Mean Streets packed, his one constant companion a '45 automatic. His cannon was the one partner who wouldn't walk out on him after a fight. In the newer regions of California where law and order seldom dared to tread, and if it did it ran quickly, he needed his persuader. Pimps, pushers, pros, perps and pervers just loved to take pot shots at 'tecs. Tex either shot back or hid behind crates, slowly working his way across to his destination.

One slip was near deadly - a few hits and he'd have been vulture bait for certain. But these shoot-outs were always good practice for bounty hunting, a fun task that kept the wolf from the door, the rent paid and the State Coroner on overtime.



SANDRA LARSEN - The new light in Linsky's life. Was she after his body, his money, his mind or his secrets?



RASH DAGOUT - Low-life extraordinaire, he hasn't got the nerve for murder. But does he know someone who has?

GRAPHICS AND SOUND

Mean Streets has style. It's *Blade Runner* meets *Mike Hammer*, space age slimeballs with a nice line in downtrodden urban junk. The digitised pictures are animated and ooze sleaze, giving the characters real, solid personalities. The searches are easy - the large animated houses are easily scoured using the joystick and menus. Even travelling to and from places is smart thanks to the great 3D car-flying section.

The music evokes the right sense of late-nite TV and bad Marlowe remakes. The car sections are annoyingly silent and this ruins what could have been one of the game's strongest points. Throughout the interviews and searches, though, there is some well-thought-out digitised speech, which adds atmosphere and humour. *Mean Streets* alternates between neat samples and total silence, but when there is noise it's good stuff.



A mysterious message is discovered at the warehouse.



Now what was Prof. Linsky doing with a forklift truck?

LASTING INTEREST

Mean Streets is packed with clues, locations and suspects. The first few encounters just serve to make you aware of how vast the mystery surrounding Carl Linsky's death really is, with political pressure groups, ditched fiancées and leads by the bucket load. There's a large map to explore and bounty-hunting shoot-outs as a sub-game. The various styles combine well to make this an absorbing and atmospheric adventure. On the down side, though, there are two main sticking points. Firstly *Tex* spends too much time in transit, especially when the call of duty takes him down the coast. Secondly, as seems to be the case with most graphic adventures, there's just too much disk-swapping for the single drive player.

JUDGEMENT

Mean Streets is a tough, hard-nosed adventure. It's not a game you take on and beat in a few hours. It has slow moments and requires the usual pedantry to ensure success, but the satirical bent more than makes amends. The detective character is well designed and well defined in what he can and cannot do: so when conversing with suspects, he doesn't spend weeks trying to find the correct syntactical form to elicit an answer. All aspects of the game follow logical detective patterns, which helps in piecing together the scattered notes and solving the crime. Evidence pops up regularly enough to keep you interested while the plot is complexly vague enough to maintain real suspense. Trenton Webb

REETS



Searching the Professor's house can prove informative and lucrative. The clues come in all shapes, sizes and sorts. There are audio clues, visual clues and pieces of paper to keep. But what do they all mean?



Tex hits the road at the start of another day on *Mean Streets*.

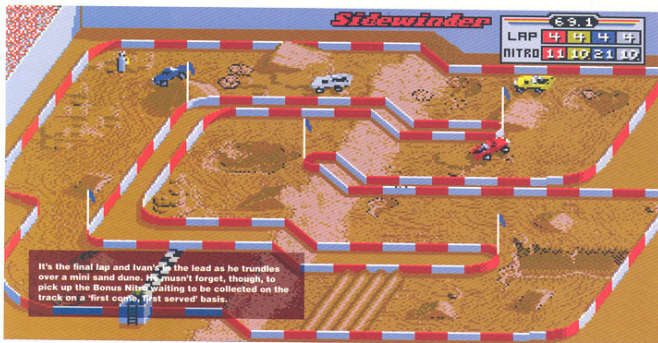


One of the more useful out of cockpit views from the hovercar.



The map is used for finding your leads - after you've found them!

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	7
INTELLECT	9
ADDITION	8
OVERALL	88%



Experience the trials and tribulations of off-road racing and the delights of four wheel drive, but don't expect Range Rovers and Suzuki Vitara's racing and meandering around green and pleasant lands: instead you are transported to the dry, hard, heat-soaked desert terrain of South West and Central America.

Your objective? To match the talents of Ivan Stewart (apparently a well-known sports personality in the States, which probably means he hosts the American equivalent of *Sporting Triangles*) whose macho ability allows him to withstand 250-mile marathon treks through uninhabited badlands, earning him the title of "The

Ironman of Road Racing". The competition is stadium based, which makes it impossible to appreciate the scale of the Ironman's cross-country exploits: instead, four laps of the track are all that's required.

There are nine lap designs, each of which has its fair share of obstacles: large craters, sand dunes, ramps and water holes. Another seven lap designs are achieved by changing the direction to run anti-clockwise, which can be taxing on the keyboard controls for the less ambidextrous.

Enticing you to get around the track as quickly as possible are occasional Bonus Bags of US dollars and containers of Nitro

Fuel which will, by a swift application of the fire button, boost you substantially ahead of the competition. Beware, however, as not only is Nitro Fuel definitely not unleaded or environmentally friendly, but it can also be a hindrance on the twisting, sand-dune-and-chicane-riddled circuits which will leave your all-wheel-drive "Cherokee Chief" wrestling with the scenery.

The reward for collecting your Bonus Bags is a shopping spree in Ironman's Speed Shop, where you can obtain tyres, Nitro Fuel, extra acceleration and better shock absorbers, all contributing to maximum efficiency around the track.

LASTING INTEREST

Although the game is not high on an intellect level, through its simplicity it becomes addictive; the competitive element in each contestant being the key to its appeal. The game does tend to be over generous on its allocation of money, which means that picking up Bonus Bags is more beneficial than actually getting a better position in the race.



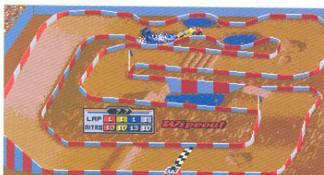
Don't worry if you only come second; you will still be blessed with the dubious pleasures of a slobbering female!

JUDGEMENT

Ironman attracted the punters in the arcades and no doubt will do the same on disk, its limitations probably being due to the fact that Virgin have tried to stay faithful to the original. Certainly if they had added a few more personal touches it would add to the attraction, but on the whole you'll enjoy trying to be the Ironman - or indeed the Iron Lady! - of speed. Gary Lord

SUPER OFF ROAD RACER

VIRGIN £19.99 ■ Keyboard or Joystick

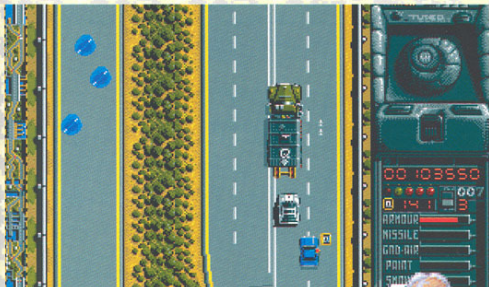


To earn the title "Ironman" be prepared to get a bit wet and sandy, as well as to ride roughshod over your fellow competitors.

GRAPHICS AND SOUND

There is never really any opportunity to make the most of the Amiga's graphical abilities because each race, being stadium bound, is tied to the same monotonous landscape. Although the animation as the trucks career over the sand and through the watersplashes is well detailed, the effects would be enhanced with superior sound. The plain dully-dum sound-track does not evoke feelings of exhilaration and speed.

GRAPHICS	5
SOUND	4
INTELLECT	3
ADDITION	8
OVERALL	80%



Coming up behind the Q-mobile. You've got to line up for those ramps very carefully indeed if you want to make it to the arming-up screen...

THE SPY WHO LOVED ME

DOMARK £24.99 ■ Joystick and Keyboard

Bond is back. Again. This, the fifth licence from Domark, follows the now standard format of game levels made out of various scenes from the film.

In Level One you drive the Lotus Esprit Bondmobile along a twisting course collecting things called Q-tokens – you'll need them later – avoiding pedestrians, oil patches and the roadside scenery. Not too taxing if you take it slowly and keep an eye on your car's armour level.

Halfway through the level you reach a jetty where your Lotus is magically transformed into a motorboat. You spend the rest of the level slicing through the water, mangling careless swimmers and holding off marauding enemy boats. There are yet more of those Q-tokens to collect.

In Level Two you're back on the road again. Straight away, life is tougher as there are lots more enemies. In the midst of all this mayhem you have to attempt to

drive up a set of ramps onto a moving Q-truck. This is where those Q-tokens come in handy. With them you can fix up your battered car as well as buy missiles, lasers, smoke canisters and all sorts of Bond-like goodies.



Arming up in Q's lorry. You can collect anything from torpedoes to smoke.

Level Three takes place in the giant cargo vessel Stromberg has used to capture the two missing subs. Bond slides precariously along the ceiling while baddies pop up out of the water and the scenery taking pot-shots at him. Bond's task is to top them in an Operation Wolf-style blast.

Somewhat of a puzzler is Level Four. Not too much at stake, though – only the total annihilation of the entire civilized world if you go wrong. You must reprogram Stromberg's missile targeting computer by matching the code symbols with those you find from tapping away on a keypad.

The to Level Five: and by this time the action is hotting up. Bond leaps on to Q's specially-modified Wet Bike and takes off across the waves in an attempt to burst through the defences of the island Atlantis, Stromberg's HQ, before the whole place goes up. Pick up the packages Q has dropped along your route and you'll be able to mash all comers.

Level Six (phew) and you're not far off now. It's another Op Wolf-style shoot-em-up section, this time with enemies leaping out of doorways at you. At last you come face-to-face with that man with dentistry problems – Jaws...



Quick – collect that Q-token (oh, and don't crash).



Careful with that boat – hit the woodwork and you've blown it.



Ahem. Even James Bond can have his off-days.

GRAPHICS AND SOUND

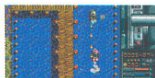
The graphics are bright and clear with no real cause for complaint – except that your sprite doesn't turn all that convincingly. The animation on the driving and sailing levels, however, won't exactly set the world alight. The sound is good, consisting of a decent Bond-style soundtrack and some excellent effects – especially the 'thumping' sound of traffic cones being sent flying and the agonised shrieks of pedestrians flying over your bonnet.



Level One and you're just about to transform into a boat.

LASTING INTEREST

The variety of levels gives *The Spy Who Loved Me* the edge over typical shoot-em-ups and the escalating difficulty as you advance through the levels is pitched just right. You'd have to be a very handy joystick waggler indeed to beat it, but a complete novice not to be able to knock off the first level on your second or third attempt. All in all, there is enough difficulty and variety keep you going for quite a time. Don't expect anything new, just good, solid fun.



If in doubt, kill! Aiming's tricky with your gun off-centre.

JUDGEMENT

None of the Bond licences have been the sort of stuff to set the gaming world alight, but they are growing steadily more proficient and playable. As ever, the levels are only thinly related to the plot – change a few sprites and backgrounds and it could be any other action film – but the game works well for its own sake, never mind as a faithful rendition of the film. Not a gaming great, but not bad either! Rod Lawton

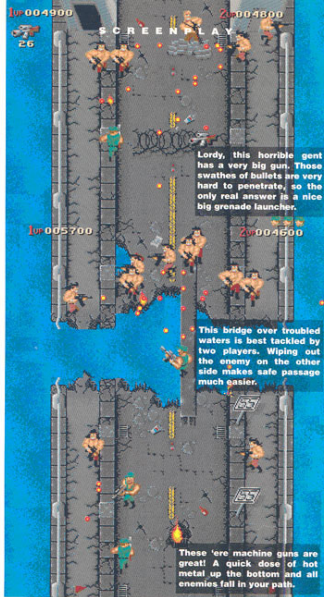
GRAPHICS	6
SOUND	8
INTELLECT	4
ADDITION	8
OVERALL	80%

New York was never the most pleasant of cities, but by 2014 things are a whole lot worse than anyone thought possible. Organised crime has taken over the city and is bleeding it dry. One group in particular has become strong: the Church of the Third Coming, known simply as C3C to its devotees, who are a nasty lot out for total control of the city. Only a brave few stand up to the criminals and gangs. The Warriors are the last remnants of law and order in the city – and they're looking for new recruits.

You are a Warrior who has just been detoxicated and kitted out in the latest hi-tech weaponry. Your mission is to battle your way through the streets of New York to the World Trade Centre, where some suitably deranged individual has planted a very unpleasant nuclear device on the roof.

The game is a multi-directional blow-em-up, played in a variety of urban locations. Obstacles, such as holes in the ground and derelict buildings, all conspire to stop you making it to the World Trade Centre within the deadline.

Each screen consists of one particular type of New Yorker, such as the star-chucking Assassins or the heavy-duty machine-gun-pumping Ramboids. These enemies lurk behind trees and machine gun emplacements and have a nasty habit of running out of buildings showering a hail of bullets down on your bonce.



Just one of the many enemy gangs you'll face is the Ramboids. "Don't push me!" Oh yeah? "Eat lead!"

LASTING INTEREST

It shouldn't take a hardened gamer too long to complete this one. However, this shouldn't mean that it's never brought down from the shelf again. It works equally as well as a quick blaster, or as a game to finish.

The two player option is a lot of fun and leads to the adoption of a rugged combat style of play where each player covers the other's back.

The main problem with *New York Warriors* is the fact that it can very easily be eclipsed by much better games. *Ikari Warriors* and *Leathernecks* both did the job much better – and those are old hat now anyway.



The Ninja Assassins have unlimited supplies of death stars, which don't do much for your complexion.

JUDGEMENT

Not original, but it does follow a time-honoured tradition of blood-letting en masse and it certainly has that "one more go" appeal. The various weapons crop up at just the right moment, namely just before eight or nine large barbarians appear on screen wanting to shake hands with your liver. The screens are just about the right length, so that just when you think you're about to kick the bucket you can move on. The main problem is just a complete lack of originality. This type of game has been ruthlessly over-used. Andy Hutchinson

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	7
INTELLECT	4
ADDITION	7
OVERALL	65%

NEW YORK WARRIORS

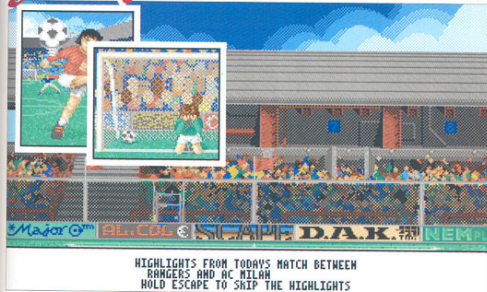
VIRGIN £19.99 ■ Joystick

GRAPHICS AND SOUND

New York Warriors uses a very peculiar perspective, from a high altitude, which means that buildings slant outwards and the enemies look slightly squashed. The cityscape itself appears gritty and run-down, with holes in the road and barbed wire in the windows. The enemies are detailed and large enough to be easily destroyed, but the animation is slightly off in that the Warrior's sprite tends to moonwalk when there's a lot happening on the screen. Some of the best graphical effects are the weapons. Amongst the tasty gizmos on offer are a grenade launcher, a missile launcher and a flame thrower. With large numbers of the enemy on the screen and all the explosions going off, things get a bit hectic and visibility becomes a bit of a problem. Sound is very much what you'd expect. Lots of explosions and bangs rattle the speaker and these add to the bloodthirsty appeal of the game.

EUROPEAN Super LEAGUE

CDS £24.99 ■ Mouse



This is what it's all about. You'll slog your heart out and frazzle your brain compiling the correct formula of class players, shrewd tactics and balanced morale. The actual match sequence is short and sharp, there's little opportunity to change strategy. Familiarise yourself fully with the opposition before kick-off.

For this bold new attempt to re-mould the tired computer football management game, CDS ought to be commended. It's a format which has suffered dreadful standardisation and an accusing finger can confidently be pointed at the lack of imagination from those who think the world begins and ends with Kevin Tom's tired *Football Manager*.

The revitalised appeal of *European Superleague* doesn't simply rely on the fact that it features AC Milan instead of Charlton Athletic. The difference lies in approach. Rather than opt for strategy – the heavyweight number-crunching of usual games – CDS have decided on a genuine football management simulation.

It's based within a point-and-click graphical environment and set at a football ground. You are the manager and from your office you can summon or visit players and staff. You can also contact other managers and even the press via the telephone.

The real idea is to interact successfully with everybody, to be popular as well as cunning. To hell with the hackneyed jibes of 'the lads gave a hundred percent, Brian' – football management is no breeze. If you fail to comply with certain social mores, the effects will work their way through

to the dressing room and, more problematically, to the pitch.

You are also working against the clock. *European Superleague* is based on the working week. On Monday you must arrange training schedules and lay yourself bare before the unpleasant chairman (is there any other kind?) On Thursday you must pick the team, on Friday you must work out Saturday's tactics in anticipation of your opponent's strengths and weaknesses.

But it's what you don't have to do that seems to count. Going down to training sessions, rather than arranging them from your office, will not harm morale. Telling the chairman to stick to his own business puts your job on the line, but the players will love you.

It is this level of genuine human interaction which makes *European Superleague* such a novelty. When talking to your coach, groundsman, scout or the press you will be offered various replies to click on. Say the coach reckons you are pushing the lads too hard. You can agree with him, suggest he's over-reacting, or decide that this kind of pressure is exactly what the boys need.

Another delight is that all the teams feature real players. So Waddle plays for Marseille, Grobbelaar for Liverpool, Ancelotti for AC Milan and Walters for

Rangers. You can call any other manager and offer any fee for any player – this is much better than waiting for all the rubbish to turn up on the transfer market.

Each player has a file (with an inaccurate picture) detailing the normal attributes and faults. It is your job to patch up weaknesses and encourage strengths of individual players. This is achieved by arranging each player's training schedule for each day of the week. This can become rather a tiresome chore, but is important.

Tactically, *Euro Superleague* offers simple graphical options. So if you click on a flashing 4:4:2 option you will then be offered 16 different strategic plans (presented graphically). For example, you may wish to play the midfield wide, mark hard in defence, and encourage forwards to run at the opponents' defence. This would be a good idea when playing Rangers at Ibrox. The game will allow you to pick five such options.

Superleague's main fault is that after an exhausting week being the boss, the match itself fails to create much excitement. Matches last about 30 seconds and, while being pretty representations, fail to conjure up butterflies in the stomach, or the kind of rage displayed by players of other footie management games.



Try not to offend any of your staff. A poor atmosphere will filter through to the players, making life very uncomfortable.

GRAPHICS AND SOUND

You are presented with a series of static screens which, while they are drawn impressively, are hardly inspiring. Sound is restricted to the odd whistle blowing or telephone ringing. And that's about it.



Make full use of your resources and listen to advice. The chairman is as mean as a snake, so treat him with extra caution.

LASTING INTEREST

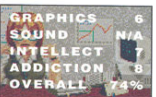
It doesn't take long to get into the swing of things and, if you can handle the draw-out process of setting training schedules, you'll probably have a lot of fun. The only problem is that, being set around a working week, the game does begin to feel like a slog, especially when things aren't going well.



When setting down training schedules the coach isn't much help. This task can be a drag, but don't be negligent, or else...

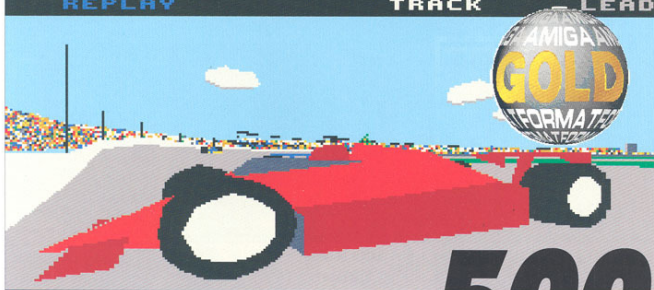
JUDGEMENT

The user-friendly interface has left little room for the plain, stolid strategy of older management games: it is actually to CDS's credit that you are left wishing that the game could offer more interaction. No doubt this effort will be seen as desperately limited in a few years, but it's a step in the right direction now. Check it out. Colin Campbell



CAMERA
REPLAY

VIEW:

IN CAR
BEHIND
TRACKTO
SKY
LEAD

The moment of impact, frozen by the trackside camera. Right about now Murray Walker would be reaching fasetto fever-pitch, you'd have soiled your fire-resistant Nomex overalls, and the cameraman taking this shot would be preparing for a large hospital bill.

INDIANAPOLIS

ELECTRONIC ARTS £24.99 ■ Joystick, Keyboard and Mouse

South of the Great Lakes and Kalamazoo, a few miles west of Cincinnati, lies one of the world's most famous gladiatorial arenas. But the chariots here are a far cry from El Cid: this is the home of the Indianapolis 500, America's less brutal but far more dangerous sport. For a back-breaking 500 miles, with the roar of engines constantly in their ears, America's car-crazy combatants hammer it out till death – or mere retirement – overtakes them.

There's nothing manifestly different about Indy 500 when compared to Formula One or any other motor race, although every hot-blooded American will tell you that Indy is The Most, The Biggest, The Toughest... and all the usual superlatives. As you'd expect, this is an exaggeration. But not totally,

From the moment you take your place in the cockpit, you know you have a powerful, barely controllable machine of death at your command. You appear in the pits faced with innumerable options to alter, check and generally fiddle about with. Your most likely course of action is to forget the array of wing tweaks, tyre swaps and suspension mods, and just put the hammer down. With automatic gear-changing as standard, you accelerate up to 150 mph just in time to smash into the wall at the end of the pit lane. A quick change of underwear later and you're ready to give it another go, this time saving the power until you're actually on the track.

It's then that you can begin to appreciate the real excitement of racing. Flying around the circuit,

clipping bends and bouncing off the walls Donnelly-fashion, you gradually muster the skills needed to tame this beast. Mouse control, with its analogue input, is far more responsive than other methods and provides true car feel.

Screaching tyres and a sideways look at the world outside mean you're over-cooking the bends. Don't hit the brakes or you'll spin uncontrollably. Instead, ease yourself back onto the track by easing off the throttle and steering into skids and wait until the car has settled down before blasting the turbo-boosted engine back into life. If you're lucky, you'll make it back to the pits!

To enter a race, you must first qualify for a position on the start grid. This means much practising, to find the perfect balance for

your car, followed by a stab at four lightning-fast laps to get a high average lap time. Once you're happy with your start position, it's time for the real thing.

As with the rest of the game there are options: you can choose a short race without fear of car damage, or go for a full-length epic battle, complete with yellow-flag rules and the risk of engine failure or burst tyres.

Whichever race you choose, you can be sure that there'll be trouble. Cars litter the track, lurking behind corners just when you power into them with quite spectacular results, and leaders plough into your tail as they attempt to lap you. Chaos reigns supreme: unless you keep a cool head, a watchful eye and, most importantly, in front.

SPEEDWAY





GRAPHICS AND SOUND

Indy features some of the fastest, most detailed 3D graphics ever seen anywhere and you have plenty of opportunity to check them out using the vast range of camera views offered – if you have a 1 Meg machine. The level of detail can be offset against speed, but even at its most colourful, *Indy* is gaspingly fast.

Combine the superb vector-generated racing cars with the throaty roar of their engines and you have all the atmosphere you need. You can sense the presence of faster cars by the increasing pitch of their engines. If a check in your mirror shows one there, overtaking, you hear the full doppler-effect as it whistles by. Not for the faint-hearted!



Speeding down the main straight, you have little idea of what lies around the next bend...



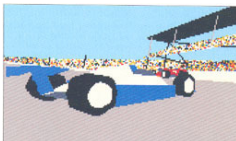
...The sky-cam shows you have limited options for escaping chaos. You're the red car at the bottom!



...The TV camera not only shows your spin, but reveals more backmarkers heading into the mess!



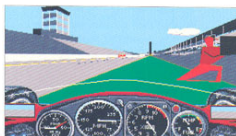
Panic in the pits, as you rush your repairs and try to rejoin the race before the grey guy in front.



...So it's scary then, when you see a mad blue car attempting high-speed parking manoeuvres ahead.



...You strike a glancing blow on the obstructing car and begin a balletic glide across the track...



Charging into the pits is not a good idea! Pit-crews come off worst as you bounce along on the grass.

LASTING INTEREST

Prepare to end up like Dick Dastardly more times than is healthy, for the first few hundred laps. You'll spin, bounce, fish-tail and get punched all the way round the track before you master the technique and set the car up correctly. But frustration gives way to a need for revenge just as soon as you've got the hang of it. And from that moment on, there's no turning back. You've just got to win, to show those rednecks that you're the best on the circuit, and this could be the race that clinches it... maybe.

JUDGEMENT

Car-racing games have been around since the earliest days of computers and, until now, have been predictable, derivative and less exciting with each iteration. But *Indianapolis 500* captures the speed, excitement and seat-grabbing realism of racing far better than any of its predecessors. Fast 3D vector coding and awesome sounds make your stomach heave and have you leaning into bends holding your breath in anticipation.

Without doubt, *Indy 500* is the best race game money can buy. A realistic, totally believable example of an old idea given new life, it comes as a breath of fresh air in what was a stagnant genre. If you've ever been remotely into real racing you'll not be disappointed. If, up to now, you've been happy with the multitude of tacky *Out Run* clones, now's your chance to get behind the wheel of a large automobile and have your pants scared off Hikers, ramblers and couch-potatoes will hate it, but you're not one of those... are you? Neil Jackson

GRAPHICS	95%
SOUND	95%
INTELLECT	7
ADDITION	9
OVERALL	92%



The heat of the battle can look confusing. Your hero (in this case, a Dwarfven wizard) is beneath the tree with the red arrow hanging over it. The bearded guy with the axe is a follower, while the fellow in green is an Elf.

GRAPHICS AND SOUND

Beyond a loading tune of mediaeval inclination, sound in *Battlemaster* is limited to the hack of blade on armour, the ozone-devouring whoosh of a flying fireball and, of course, the screams of the dying. But the graphics work wonderfully, especially in a party of Orcs: all those round-shouldered green guys shuffling up behind the boss has to grab a giggle from even the weariest cynic. The backgrounds are all colourful but clear and the stats screens are adorned with all kinds of implausible weaponry. To top it all, you can actually tell what everything is on the screen, a criterion often ignored for the sake of effect.

BATTLEMASTER

PSS £29.99 ■ Mouse

Dwarfs hate Elves and Orcs. Elves hate Dwarfs and Orcs. Humans don't like anyone but despise Orcs the most. Orcs hate everyone. Now then, who do you want to be?

In *Battlemaster*, the hero you play is chosen from a roster of sixteen, four from each race. You might be a merchant, a fighter, a wizard or a thief but whatever or whoever you are your task is the same. Four kingdoms that have warred and crumbled now face complete extinction, unless a hero who can prove his worth and gather an army can conquer all four nations and take the crowns of each race to the immortal Watcher who resides in the north-eastern wastes.

You may start with a number of followers, which is partly determined by your character: warriors, for instance, always begin

alone. Your hero is kitted out with one ranged weapon and one close-combat weapon and promptly plunged into the midst of the first scenario. This may be based on a puzzle, combat or negotiation: there are a good many scenarios and they vary considerably in style.

Most play occurs on the left-most two-thirds of the screen, on which you view all characters present. The rest of the display is given over to icons for accessing other features. Followers tag along in formation: they might engage enemies in combat, should morale be high, or try to leave the scene of battle if they don't think much of your leadership. You can ask them to wait while you go ahead, or call them to you: these commands are made via a group of icons on the right of the screen.

Other icons lead to nested screens, dealing with character status, parleying or travelling across the world map from one scenario to the next. You can only leave the scenario you're in after completing it but, depending on where you are in the game, you can get to a number of others by calling up a beautifully-detailed map. Action on the main screen freezes while you access icons.

To help you figure out what needs to be done in each scenario there is a message window at the bottom of the screen. Some are easy. Others demand good tactics and planning and will cost you at least a follower or two. But as you go, you'll face traps (and tricks) and will find rewards in the form of artifacts, treasure and food: all three of which are the staple diet of every hero in the making.

LASTING INTEREST

Though it's hard to survive at first, the number of different openings will call you back for long enough to want to sit down and start a serious bash. A large party engaged in combat with a similarly large group of opponents sometimes proves difficult to control via the mouse, but the keyboard controls (which are redefinable) are easy to master. Once you make an iota of progress you'll be fumbling for the save game option right away.

JUDGEMENT

Take a plot that's longer in the tooth than a dragon's incisor and then apply a unique approach to turning it into a game. It's not as static as *Laser Squad* and is more visually appealing than anything in the *Ultima* vein. It has a good sense of humour, too, thank goodness (this isn't given away much by the tame and tired documentation but boot up and there it is). *Battlemaster*, thanks to some clever design, has both instant and lasting appeal. This way, grunts! Sean Masterson



"Roit, ladz. Foller me an' remember - 'edz ar softest. First boy ter stop five gets a pint uv Armpit XXXX but don't loiter or arl 'avyer."



Connected yellow squares (bottom right) are jobs you've done.



It might be rude to enter uninvited, but the door was open.

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	5
INTELLECT	5
ADDICTION	8
OVERALL	83%

CADAVER

IMAGEWORKS £24.99 ■

Joystick and Keyboard

Karadoc the dwarf is a thieving, lying, low-down scumbag with only one thought in his head: treasure. The fact that is that he has been sent by one warlord to take out another is only a side issue to him. Basically the guy has not had a good time of it and instead of accepting human warmth he has to compensate by rushing around Castle Wulf in search of gems, helmets, potions and gold and trying to beat things up before they get a chance to have a go at him.

Unhappily for him, his exit from the castle appears to be blocked and the evil Neuromancer awaits. Not the kind of entity you would want to take home to your mother, the Neuromancer is one of those monsters which does a hell of a lot of lurking – in the background that is. He, she or it has been in some pretty heavy battles in the past and so is obviously protecting an already fragile yscyshe by beating the life out of anyone or anything which crosses its, his or her path.

What we have waiting here is a potential disaster for the poor avicious dwarf and lunch for the Neuromancer. Or do we?

Much depends on your hand to eye coordination. Not only are there severe amounts of joystick waggling to be done but there are also several icons to be used.

These are abysmally described in the manual so, for the most part, you have to experiment.

The icons help you pick things up, drag them, open them, push and pull them, and generally act like a sentient being. The controls at first are not the easiest in the world, but after a few plays they become second nature and you begin to be able to enjoy the sumptuous graphics.

The downside, at least for the lily livered, is that you also get to meet some gruesome opposition: small black spiky blighters who seem okay until you get up close, then they drain your very life force away leaving you as a husk; putrid little white fellas which are all legs and torso, who bounce all over the place with a nasty sound; long, yellow worms which can be killed but simply regenerate and come back at you.

Dragons lurk in various ponds and ponds just waiting to get you. If that isn't good enough you have to avoid the green fluid which passes for water, in the same way as the sea off most English seaside resorts does – in other words it's highly toxic and will damage you beyond repair.

Pausing along the way you will find various life enhancing potions and one particular brew which is clever in its effect but not to hot if you need to move fast in the right direction. Remember to examine everything before playing with it, boys and girls.

GRAPHICS AND SOUND

Nice ones both. As you would expect from the Bitmaps, the sound is not overdone: it is also fairly effective with some beefy 'creatures dying in explosive agony' sound effects. The clink-clanking sound when you pick things up is a little irritating after a while but is not so irritating as to interfere with the gameplay. Thankfully all the audio works on a level which enhances the atmosphere of the game.

Graphically the game is wonderful. The backgrounds are rendered in luscious 3D isometrics which are not marred by garish colours – the whole thing has a strangely sepia feel to it. Movement suffers a little with this form of graphics: you can find yourself hanging in mid-air or losing some perspective, but this is true of most 3D isometrics, so we won't quibble.

LASTING INTEREST

Quite a lot of this. While the opening screens are fairly simple with a few puzzles to tax the newer adventurers, the game only really gets going after you've managed to backtrack – won't say where – and have flicked a few levers. Once into the main body of the game there is enough digital gore to keep Sam Raimie (*Who he? -Ed*) happy, and there is also a deal of brain power required.

While the manual does nothing to help in playing the game, this merely acts as an incentive to beat the damned thing. A definite plus factor in keeping on with Cadaver is that Karadoc is such a great little guy: endearing and fairly hard with it.



Karadoc the dwarf in a state of some confusion. Where to go?

JUDGEMENT

Cadaver is one of those games which has taken a great deal of working and will be fun to play from now until you finally finish the damn thing. There are a few illogicalities in the play, such as losing a key, or being pinned inside three spikes. Moans aside for a moment, there is no way in which the adventuresome type, the strategist or the arcade freak (or even Karadoc the Dwarf himself) won't get some real enjoyment out of this game. Not a classic, but most certainly an excellent game. *Tim Smith*

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	7
INTELLECT	5
ADDICTION	6
OVERALL	83%



This is not the right time to deal with the dragon. Check out the stamina bar to the left of the picture. Oh well, off to the pub again...



Wrong turning, this isn't the pub. It's where the big stiffs hang out. Still, there should be some goodies to pick-up. Go left, young dwarf!

PANG

OCEAN £24.99 ■ Joystick



The maze of platforms and ladders outside the Emerald Temple could cause its fair share of problems, especially those bubbles in the top corner. Get the wrong weapon and they're there for good, so do be careful what you pick up and let them have a taste of your harpoon as quickly as possible.

Apparently, 'pang' is a transitive verb of Scottish descent meaning to stuff or cram. It's also defined as a short period of pain. Well, Ocean's latest conversion of a Taito coin-op incorporates both of these elements!

The game plots the adventures of two harpoon-wielding heroes who must travel, via 18 different locations, from Japan to the island of Paques shooting balloons en route. Sound strange to you? Well it is!

A number of rounds is played at each of the locations at various

times in the day. The game itself involves balloons which bounce around screens scattered with platforms and ladders. Our heroes shoot their harpoons skywards, attempting to burst the balloons. Once a balloon is hit they split into two smaller ones, which in turn split into two even smaller balloons which can then finally be destroyed completely.

The smaller the balloons get, the lower they bounce, which starts to cram the screen after a while (hence the Scottish verb connection) and makes the going

dangerous – if a balloon touches a player he loses a life (and this is where the pain comes in).

Additional weapons gradually become available to make the going a little easier, such as double harpoons and the stunning mega-fast Vulcan Gun. However, colliding with any of the various creatures that wander on to the screen disables your new weapons for a short while.

All the balloons that appear at the start must be destroyed within the time limit or it's back to the beginning of the round.

GRAPHICS AND SOUND

Ocean have come up trumps again with the accuracy of this conversion. Both the sprites and backgrounds have been superbly designed, using full colour to capture the bright and cheerful appearance of the original coin-op. Even when the screen is crowded with balloons and creatures, the action is still swift and smooth. The sound is in the jangly, cutesy style you'd expect in a game of this type, boppy music with some nice-popping effects. Very jolly!

LASTING INTEREST

Pang's gameplay is very easy to get into, but despite the simple action the game is incredibly difficult to put down. You'd think that popping balloons would become tedious after a while, but it doesn't. It's one of those 'Oh I'll just have a quick game' jobs that turn into three hour joystick-wibbling sessions.



Player Two's got a shield, but Player One's about to be stuffed!

JUDGEMENT

Simple and enjoyable games like Pang don't come along too often. Most of the time the emphasis seems to be on getting the biggest, hardest, meanest warriors to leap and career around the screen spraying leaden death around. So it's nice to see an amusing little jaunt like this pop up every now and then. The cutesy sound and colourful graphics make it entertaining, but the sheer addictiveness will keep you coming back for just a quick couple of hours of gaming'. *Altogether now... "I'm forever po-o-o-noppin' bubbles! Deadly bubbles overhead".* Maff Evans



This screen isn't too difficult if you can get rid of those blocks.



Night time at Mount Fuji and the two heroes are hard at it.



Right then... line yourself up with the gap and... POP! That's it!

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	7
INTELLECT	2
ADDITION	8
OVERALL	87%



Clock
Freezes all nasties for a while.



Hourglass
Allows extra time.



Anchor Harpoon
Attaches itself to the ceiling for a short time.



Double Harpoon
Fires two streams at once.



Shield
Protects against one hit from bubbles but not from creatures.



Vulcan Gun
Can't destroy platforms, but flings out loads of bullets.



Dynamic
Pops all the balloons to their smallest size – very hairy!



KILLING GAME SHOW

PSYGNOSIS £24.99 ■ Joystick



And Bunty the poodle was soon safely back with her owners. That concludes the news for this evening, so without further ado, let's go across to the studio for the latest instalment of the Killing Game Show!

"Thank you very much, Dan, and a hearty welcome to our viewers out there in TV land! You're tuned into the most dynamic game show in the Galaxy, so sit back and enjoy the slaughter!" Cue the morbidly jolly intro music...

This is the television of the future. Gone is the homely charm of Telly Addicts, no longer can you

see families making fools of themselves on programmes like The Generation Game, lost are the jocular jolly japes and antics of Beadle's About. Perhaps it's not such a bad thing, then...

The television companies have come up with the answer to two problems. Firstly, viewers want more dynamic game shows with much more at stake than just a holiday in the Bahamas, so more dangerous challenges are needed. The second problem is the rising crime rate: the authorities have no real way of dealing with convicted felons. The solution to both of

these dilemmas is the Killing Game Show. The TV companies use the captured criminals as... er... 'lucky contestants' and transform them drastically, using plastic surgery, into MUGS - armoured, weapon-packing cyborg creatures suitable for the game.

The Game Show is ready to begin as the MUGS are placed in the Pits of Death, specially-constructed game arenas full of platforms and climbable walls. The MUG must make his way to the top of the pit, reach the exit and move on to the next round and another death pit.

This isn't as easy as it sounds, though, since some of the routes are occasionally blocked by barriers, which have to be unlocked with the relevant key. This isn't made any easier when you have deadly HALFs (Hostile Artificial Life Forms) trying to bring you to a quick demise. Oh, and as if that wasn't enough, the pits gradually fill up with DOLL, Deadly to Organic Life Liquid, a strange kind of acid which is lethal to touch. Who said quiz shows were bland?

THE AMAZING SPIDEY

EMPIRE £24.99 ■ Joystick

Web-head is back in town, and this time he's brought his wife Or at least he would have, if she hadn't been snatched by arch-bad guy Mysterio. Now our 'friendly neighbourhood wall crawler' has to save her from a fate worse than death. Well, just plain, simple, death actually.

In traditional supervillain manner, Mysterio has told Spidey the exact address, telephone number and zip code of the film studio hideout where he is hiding Mary Jane. All that Spidey has to do is break in, avoid a mass of traps and then

beat seven buckets out of Mysterio. Spiderman must methodically work through each and every room in the film-studio complex searching for his good lady.

Naturally the place is crammed full with old film sets, and each section of the game takes a famous movie theme for both its decor and traps. Most of the dangers are deactivated or diverted by switches which Spidey can hit with his hands, feet or webs. The trick is finding the right switches, in the right order, quickly enough.

Spiderman can walk on walls or ceilings and fire webs, which are useful for reaching high ledges or swinging over dangerous holes in the scenery. Even these abilities aren't enough - are they ever? - to guarantee success and its up to you to supply the split-second timing and perfect jumping to see him through this test of superheroism.

Webby has to overcome zero gravity space sets, vulture-culture Wild West scenes and Indy Jones zones filled with burning floors, rolling balls, electrified fences and

robo-zombies. With only one life the Wall Crawler must make reaching the six energy refreshing clapperboard rooms his prime objective - they also act as game save points - if he's to be in any condition to win. Will Spidey reach Mary Jane in time or will she be the first heroine to meet the sticky end promised by the villain?





This week's MUG comes under attack from the HALFs as he tries to get to the door. BANG! That's him dead, now... damn, forgot the key!

GRAPHICS AND SOUND

Killing Game Show has been blessed with an intro by the Psygnosis in-house team – and I can safely say that it is the best and most atmospheric intro sequence yet seen on a computer game. The dark graphics and manic sound effects capture perfectly that violent, futuristic TV feel. The game itself maintains the superb, polished feel, both in sound and graphics. Some clever programming has gone into making the game look excellent and the sound effects have to be heard to be believed, with racking gunfire, shrieking laughter and clear speech samples. What more can I say, other than brilliant!



The extra energy pod won't do a great deal of good: if that nasty DOLL stuff creeps up any higher all you'll have is one pretty dead MUG. Quick! Crawl up that wall! Now! Go, go go! I can't bear to watch it!



Aha! There's the key. Now all that has to be done is get back to that locked door. Erm... whereabouts was it again?

LASTING INTEREST

Initially the going is incredibly tough, but soon enough the frantic gameplay pulls you in and pathways through to the exits start to emerge. Many a time you'll find yourself saying "What the hell is this? I can't do it at all!" Perseverance is the key, so just keep trying!

JUDGEMENT

Just when you thought all the polish and ideas in shoot-em-ups belonged to arcade conversions and big licenses, along come Psygnosis with another audiovisual gem to delight your eyes and ears. Moreover, it isn't just all flash and no go – the gameplay is superb too. The action is frantic, the puzzles are difficult and it has a hook which could wind in a killer shark. Watch the superb intro, then play the game and be blown away! Maff Evans

GRAPHICS	9
SOUND	8
INTELLECT	5
ADDICTION	9
OVERALL	92%

DERMAN

GRAPHICS AND SOUND

Arachnophobics fear not! This spider is deliberately made small allowing him to strike 256 different animated positions and whole rooms to be viewed at once on the screen so you can see what pressing that particular switch actually achieves. The spider sprite, although a good mover, behaves oddly, sticking to everything, which makes negotiating smaller gaps interesting, as Spidermen seem to insist on standing sideways rather than obeying the rules of walking we all know and love.

LASTING INTEREST

It may sound trite but, a puzzle game is only as good as the posers it sets the player. By this mark Spidey will have you climbing sideways rather than obeying the rules of walking we all know and love. As well as the obvious blocked doors and dangerous floors, Mysterio has arranged for other surprises in the shape of unclimbable walls, unwebbable ceilings and illusory blocks to throw you into confusion. The puzzles and perfectly-placed game-save clapperboard rooms

make Spiderman a game of the-carrot and stick variety. It's possible to finish, but only if you have radioactive blood and stubbornly refuse to be beaten by costumed creeps.

JUDGEMENT

The Amazing Spiderman takes a classic gameform and manages to live up to the pedigree. The characters, though small, are tolerable, the puzzles are solvable and progress possible. It's packed full of intricate switching, jumping and webbing manoeuvres which are only hampered by Spiderman's occasional insistence on standing in the wrong place. Spiderman is no revolution, just a cracking platform puzzle challenge that can hold its masked head high with pride. Trenton 'Spider' Web

GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	4
INTELLECT	8
ADDICTION	8
OVERALL	77%



Spidey's energy is on the wane. The more of his bones that show, the less power he's got left. Better find a clapperboard room fast!



Now how do you avoid Godzilla? Maybe that switch will help.



Now what does the title 'Bad Moon Falling' refer to?

TORVAK THE WARRIOR

CORE DESIGN £24.99 ■ Joystick

Torvak was miffed. Having nipped out to buy a packet of Polos and fight a quick war, he returned to find his house a smoking ruin. The destruction was the work of the Evil Necromancer. Angry, embittered and homeless, Torvak swore to avenge his fallen kinfolk by slaying the wizard who did the dirty deed.

Torvak is another one of those fur clad heroes who bears a grudge badly. He has to battle through five, four stage levels to reach the Necromancer and get even. Each level is packed with its own blend of foes, who are all eager to take the Torvak treatment. Individually these monsters aren't that tough, but they kill by whittling Torvak's power points down with repeated small hits.

Strategically-placed tombstones can be found all over the place which Big T can smash to collect treasure, extra health and potions. Lying in inconspicuous places are weapons of varying power that help fend off the growing legion of monsters. His first weapon is an axe but this can be upgraded to a sword, war hammer or morning star, each of which is useful at certain moments.

Unlike most joystick warriors Torvak doesn't fight as fast as the fire button. Initially he's beaten to the punch by even the slowest foe, which makes the fighting awkward but not exciting. Only by collecting speed-ups and better weapons can his reactions be improved. There's also the chance to pick up long-range shot potions, give the furry fella five or ten blasts of distance blade power. These are few



EeeeK! It's the attack of the killer-zombie slime creatures. They are easily beaten with a few well-timed blows. The goggy-eyed tree monster in the background sets the scene well for level three.

and far between and are best saved for use against the end-of-level beasts, who are far tougher than their level-based brethren.

In a further variant to the hack-and-slash formula the exits of each level get progressively harder to find, hidden away in subterranean vaults or on high ledges. This makes mapping your route essential if you're going to find the

quickest and safest way to the Necromancer. Torvak is not fighting a single battle here, but a drawn-out war of attrition. On top of slicing the Necromancer's lackeys, Torvak must negotiate the usual array of floating platforms, lethal lava pits and fatal waterfalls. Torvak is a test of timing, where speed of sword stroke is not always the primary concern.



Torvak gets serious with his morning star - never has a left-wing tabloid been used so effectively in the field of human slaughter. Torvak is sparkling because he's wearing a magic shield that fends off half the damage for a set number of hits.

GRAPHICS AND SOUND

Torvak is a heavy metal hero, complete with barrel chest and flowing locks. The backdrops grow more menacing by the level and show a healthy variety in design. Monsterwise Torvak's opponents never make it into the big league: they are well drawn but never reach terrifying status. Finding the treasure tombstones can cause problems, because sometimes they are hidden behind the immediate foreground, but once you know what to look for there's the precious little mystery. The on-screen slaughter is supported with a good range of tunes, but none captures the mood of a grief-stricken warrior on the vengeance trail.

LASTING INTEREST

Torvak effectively has fifteen levels to explore and five guardians to bash. Initially his lack of fighting speed hinders the killing, but power-ups soon cure that. The repetitive and weak monsters mean Torvak is a game for dogged battlers, exhibiting few nail-biting moments. Progress is simply a matter of repeatedly playing levels until the fastest and safest route becomes obvious.

JUDGEMENT

Torvak the Warrior follows in the fabled footsteps of Rastan and chums. The formula has been followed rigidly, with few extras thrown in. The levels are subdivided into three with a guardian forming the fourth and final part of each section. The energy-eroding enemies are familiar friends, as is the ease with which they are dispatched. Generic similarity is not necessarily a bad thing, Rastan was a good game in its day, yet that was long ago and little has been added to help things evolve. This limits Torvak's gameplay to just a lot of leaping and chopping, a fact that seriously hampers the game's staying power. Trenton Webb



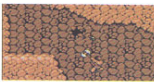
If hell hath no fury like a woman's tongue, then the Big T is in for real trouble as he goes to challenge the first level guardian.



Hey sukka, kiss my axe! He said ripping off someone else's line.



The stag is an end of level beast, who's easily killed with a potion.



A leap in the dark, the only way to travel, for fur clad barbarians.

GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	5
INTELLECT	1
ADDICTION	4
OVERALL	69%



Approaching a Qon starbase, normal procedure would be to hail it and wait to be towed in. However this plot hasn't killed any Pios and so has nothing to spend, a situation a quick dogfight will soon solve.

XIPHOS

ELECTRONIC ZOO £24.99 ■
Joystick, Mouse or Keyboard

The words "I quit!" blipped up on the screen in every Xiphos home one morning. The message came from their central controlling computer, Xiphos, which governed everything from their five-level, self-contained universe through to their pizza delivery service. In the resulting chaos what the Xiphos did was what any self-respecting civilisation would have done in the circumstances: start a civil war.

Disguised as a mercenary, you must fly a ship into the heart of the Xiphos galaxy, find the central computer and trash it. Information is sketchy, but what is known is that there are two main Xiphos factions, the Pios and the Qons. From their starbase installations in orbit around the planet they fight in small-scale skirmishes. Pios and

Qons both welcome outsiders who want to help them in hunting the other side, rewarding successful killers with cash. This is how you will earn enough pennies to fuel your ship's five-system star trek. You also have to buy missiles and other weapons in order to earn money, in order to buy weapons, to earn money, to...

It's OK to bag victims from either side of the warring Xiphos factions and store the kill value to trade in at the opposition's space stations, spending Pio kills at Qon bases and vice versa. Never, ever, under any circumstances, forget whose station you're on, because both races get touchy if they are offered their own dead.

Xiphos isn't just about zapping around the universe blasting at

anything in sight. Initially your ship's weapons are limited, as is the fuel supply, so economy of travel and careful preying on wounded battlers is advisable. You must also maximise the ship's resources, building up the credits that will allow you to get to the next star gate and one step closer to the planet Xiphos.

Trade is at the heart of the game: only by bartering for the best prices will the mission be feasible. When you want to trade, hail the nearest station and they will hook you up on the tractor beam to drag the ship in. Then it's haggle time. You can't just pay the asking price, or you will end up getting burnt. Besides which, no-one will respect you. Xiphos only ever respect strength.

GRAPHICS AND SOUND

This is a seriously smooth trip into the land of all that's weird. The 3D universe lets you ring off in all directions at eye-befuddling speed. The graphics make combat realistically tough. No long laser duels here: ships flash past, making anticipation firing essential until you can afford homing missiles. The ships are well drawn in the vector style, as are the bases, and the further you get into the game, the more varied the designs become. The control panel is laid out in classic Elite fashion, with the all-important radar clearly visible in the centre. Other controls are not so easily deciphered and make it tough on the monitoring front.

LASTING INTEREST

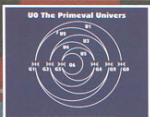
There are five different universes to explore, which means there's plenty of flying and fighting before you finally have a chance to waste the computer. With the arts of war and commerce to master there's learning potential by the score. Yet getting rich enough to buy the more exotic goodies is hard going - many pilots will be lost before you leave the first galaxy. Earning cash is directly dependent on killing, and since killing is difficult, initial appeal is limited. Plus the ship starts out seriously weak so you must bag a couple of Xiphos just for a fuel top-up.

JUDGEMENT

In the beginning there was Elite. The software houses looked at it and realised it was a winner. With the genre now established many have tried to produce an Elite beater. Xiphos has better graphics, a stranger universe and great subtlety. Yet somehow this doesn't help it beat its archetypal forerunner. The trading options are initially too limited with pilots caught in a never-ending cycle of killing and refuelling, unable to gather enough credits to make exploration possible. Really it is a space-trading sim that is only for the seriously committed. Others will find it monstrously testing on the stamina front, even when they are just trying to maintain enough energy to keep the ship running. Trenton Webb

THE WONDERFUL WORLDS OF XIPHOS

U0 is space as we know it. U1-5 are the five layers of the Xiphos system. G0 (Gate 0) gives you access to U1 (Universe 1) and explorers must make their way to G1 in order to pass into the second-layer U2 system. Each gate exerts a 'gravitational' field effect. This means more energy is expended flying towards an exit gate than an entrance. For ease of comprehension among human pilots the two are viewed



by the ship's on-board computer as North/South poles. Note, too that the gateways are controlled, and a transit tax is levied on all who pass through, so make sure you've plenty of credits spare.



Oh deary me! I must be dead, because that's my coffin there!



A Pio ship makes itself a sitting target. So spend, spend, spend!

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	3
INTELLECT	8
ADDICTION	8
OVERALL	80%

Some cars, especially red ones, just sit there and beg "drive me" and the new, curvy Lotus Esprit Turbo is just such a motor. But if you take Gremlin's Challenge you won't drive one at all—you'll drive two.

Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge sets a thoroughbred car in a head-to-head charge to the finish line. You take the wheel of a spiffy shiny red sportster that's racing against 19 cars of exactly the same spec, so winning is down to skill and not horsepower. Your task is to finish first after a preset number of laps, a possible stop for fuel, a few gut-churning hills, numerous hairpin bends, quite monumental amounts of atrocious driving by the computer cars and vast quantities of outrageous cheating by other human racer.

The two human-controlled cars have half a screen each. If the other guy gets ahead, you can

see him scream off into the distance. If he's just behind, you can sneak a quick peek at his half of the screen to help avoid collisions. The white drone cars must be considered just as dangerous as, if not more dangerous than, their red human counterparts. Designed to protect their racing line, they sweep out in front of you and slide into corners, cutting off overtaking routes.

Winning isn't the most important thing—it is the only thing. You start the first meeting placed last on the grid and must work your way through the field to finish at least 10th to qualify for the next race. This is no mean feat when there are cars blocking good starts and mad geeks cutting you up at every turn.

On longer courses there's the challenge of negotiating fuel stops and maintaining your place in the face of ever stiffer competition.

Your position in the last race determines your starting place for the next. Win a race and you kick off from the back of the grid. As you compete for the Lotus licence the tracks get ever more tortuous with sharper bends, nasty roadworks, big rocks and huge signposts—all out to prang your car.

Damage is not a problem, but the ensuing loss of time is. If you tag a tree then your engine takes time to build the revs back up. The Lotus has legendary acceleration, but it's not fast enough to keep pace with those lucky people who manage to avoid the danger and stay on the road.

As the pressure to win builds, you have to try more outrageous passing manoeuvres and risk those time-devouring shunts. Luckily your Lotus handles well, but everybody has these advantages so you must exploit them fully to get ahead.

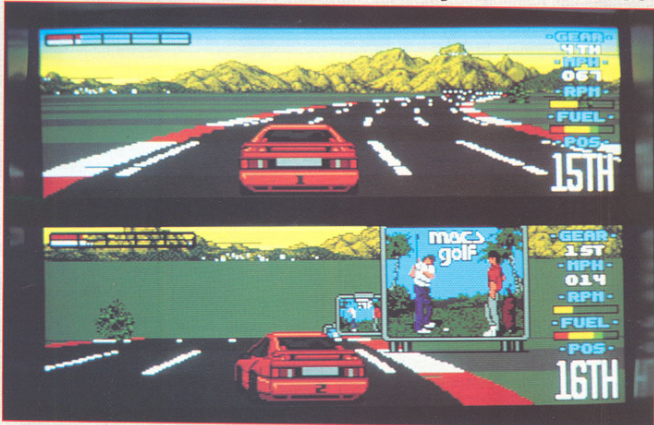
To help players get the most out of their red speeders there is the choice of either manual or automatic gears, as well as two different styles of joystick control and a mouse option.

Four levels of difficulty (though that's including practice) lend the game great variety, as does the number of totally insane race tracks. You'll never notice them, though, because the car's so swift everything becomes a blur. Even the background and sound effects are completely ignored by drivers whose attention is locked into a race, because you're too busy shouting obscenities at drone cars driven by nutters!

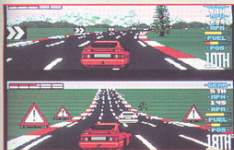


LOTUS TURBO ESPRIT CHALLENGE

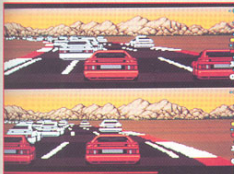
GREMLIN GRAPHICS £24.99 ■ Joystick or Mouse



Team Lotus get serious: they have to if they want to win. Look at the losers trailing around in 15th place! It's outrageous, you give a guy a shiny new ultra-fast supercar and what does he do? Drive it at a speed that makes Miss Daisy look reckless. Still, he does have another four computer drivers, who move into your way the split second you hoped they wouldn't.



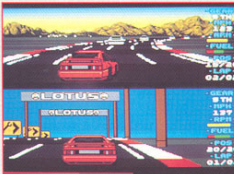
Caution! Those Gremlins seem determined to make life awkward, they've put roadworks on the track!



Get out of the way you little...! Starts are really too hard - there's no room to overtake anybody.



Win a race and you start at the back of the grid for the next one. Life can be so cruel.



Now either we've left everyone for dead, or 20 MPH isn't quite racing speed for these Lotus car things.

LOTUS ESPRIT TURBO SE

ENGINE - Mid-mounted Lotus 2.2 litre aluminium alloy 16-valve chargecooled engine.

Water-cooled TB03 turbocharger with integral wastegate.

Multi-point fuel injection system with electronic ignition.

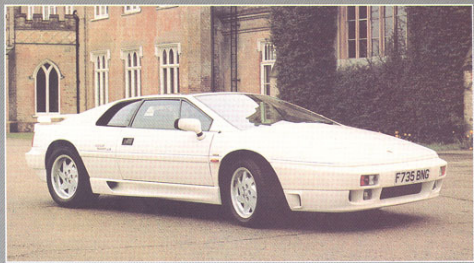
Max power: 264 bhp at 6500 rpm.

Max torque: 261 lb ft at 3900 rpm.

Max speed: 163 mph.

0-60 mph 4.7 seconds.

0-100 mph 11.9 seconds.



Player One attacks, trying for eighth place while Player Two stops off in the pits for some petrol.



Now, just when you've got the hang of this racing lark they have to put rocks on the road. Not fair!

GRAPHICS AND SOUND

Lotus looks and sounds like the best straight racer ever to hit the strip. The cars are large but move with real speed. 160 mph actually looks like 160 mph, without any loss of control. The split-screen choice is inspired, allowing two drivers to go head-to-head and giving twice as much game without hindering the speed or view. With the action linked by some beautiful incidental screens showing the Lotus in its full glory, Turbo Esprit Challenge lives up to its great pedigree.

Sonically the game's no slouch either, offering a choice of in-game music - on the Lotus CD system, naturally. Best of all is the squeal of tyres as you push traction to the limit.

LASTING INTEREST

Most racing games fall down heavily here. Blasting round a track ain't fun for everyone and the novelty wears thin after you've seen the same circuit 58 times. Lotus has three levels of actual racing and with each degree of difficulty new tracks are added - easy has seven raceways, medium ten and tough fifteen. To win the entire game you have to score the most points over the fifteen-race 'hard' season, where even seeing the next track is an achievement. Yet even with all this variety, if you don't find high-speed high links massively appealing then the game will not weave its spell on you.

JUDGEMENT

Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge is the best racing game yet. In a world filled with Out Runs and Chase HQ's it takes pole position without a doubt. The car itself, in real life, is in a class of its own and the game captures that hand-crafted quality too. It is a complete racing exercise with high-quality sound and pictures; but without the ability to adapt the car, or the curse of permanent crash damage, Lotus remains simply a two player race game. Even so, it's a race game that leaves all comers trailing in its tyre smoke. Trenton Webb

GRAPHICS	9
SOUND	9
INTELLECT	2
ADDICTION	8
OVERALL	89%



James is in trouble on Level 10. He needs to get past that dogfish if he's going to complete the mission. He had better get his 'skates' on if he wants to get out of this 'plaiice' 'unbattered'.

JAMES POND

UNDERWATER AGENT

MILLENNIUM £24.99 ■ Joystick

James Pond is a 'lake-onic' secret agent with a 'tail' to tell. 'Pond'-er this, as the world's greatest underwater agent he must 'sea' that the 'scales' of justice are tipped in the good guys' favour. Cool and ef-'fish'-ent, he is licensed to 'gill'. (Good 'Cod' what a lot of fish jokes - Reader's voice).

Now Pond faces his greatest challenge yet: 12 missions that would even make a Great White blanch. A View to a Spill sets James against oil magnates as he has to plug a leaky pipeline, in *Fishinger* it's a battle to stop smugglers looting a sunken wreck, while *Orchids* as *Forever* sees the fearless fish fight the foes of the forests who are foraging for some frightfully fragile flora.

Licence to Bubble is Pond's first mission. Dr Maybe, the world-famous mad, evil, megalomaniac

scientist, has imprisoned six of Pond's lobster friends in pots and sent a crack team of restaurateur divers to pluck them up from the sea-bed. James has to set his fishy friends free before the entrées are served.

Swimming around this underwater wonderland you'll notice it's full of junk and nasties. The overall playing area is surrounded by cliffs and caves, while the surface has small islands, which house pick-up points. The fish on a mission can swim in all directions and grab objects between his front fins. In this case he's after the keys that will open the door to freedom for his crustacean chums.

James is forever blowing bubbles, which trap his enemies and a quick swish by the fish turns them into collectable point style goodies. The debris that lies on

the sea-bed is a treasure trove of trinkets and traps. Most turn into points at the touch of a tailfin but some, especially on the later levels, prove fatal.

The missions have time limits that are generous enough to encourage exploration, which is just as well because there's more to James Pond than meets the eye. James can nip home to save special items for use on later missions: there are also three styles of secret caves full of extra points, short cuts to higher levels and more hidden bonus points than it's possible to collect. James Pond will have to 'trawl' every inch of the playing screen if he's going to 'net' even a fraction of the points that need to be 'hauled'.

GRAPHICS AND SOUND

James has style. The backgrounds are a sumptuous blend of coppers that span the spectrum and the sprites are colourful and exceptionally cute. James swims smoothly - except when drunk on Jack Daniels - and picks stuff up with ease. The visuals have the backing of an excellent theme 'tuna' and brilliant underwater effects. Pond is a fish with class and the game shares his sophisticated look.



Home sweet home. James takes an item back so he can use it on a later mission.

LASTING INTEREST

James has 12 levels and the later ones are real sharks. Good players who are dead-dead-good gamers will finish it within weeks. However, Pond has a secret up his scaly sleeve. In the very best *Rainbow Islands* tradition the whole game is littered with secret caves and gameplay touches that will both bemuse and amuse you. In the same way that the graphics have been polished until they shine, the gameplan has been carefully worked, reworked and worked again, so although James doesn't win in terms of the game length stakes, he certainly does in 'depth'.



James's bubbles have no effect on the dreaded pirate ghost. Is his treasure safe? I think not.

JUDGEMENT

James Pond is the first of the Christmas cuties. He looks good, plays well and sounds spiffing too. The cute tone is backed with a sense of fun, which is what it is all about. Gargantuan brain-twisting games have their place, but so do the amusing tests of joystick control. Pond treats that 'fin' line between overt cuteness and tough game design: play it and you're ensured a 'whale' of a time! Trenton Webb-ed Feet

GRAPHICS	9
SOUND	9
INTELLECT	4
ADDICTION	8
OVERALL	81%

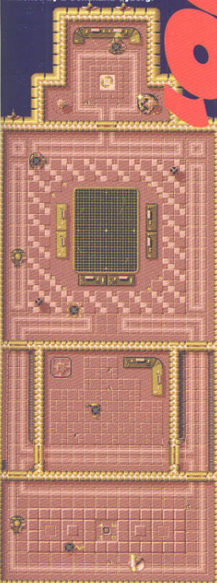
GREAT FISH OF OUR TIME

Number 12 in an occasional series: *THE COD*.



Gadus Morhua can be found in both the North Atlantic and the Baltic. Coloured brown with grey spots they can grow up to 1.5m in length and were formerly a staple foodstuff. Overfishing has led to a decline in numbers and an increase in price. Cod are a lonely breed and are renowned for their poor dress sense. The result of this is that they are only ever invited to dinner parties for all the wrong reasons.

One of the decks of the USF Vigilant. At the bottom is the bare influence device, but moving to the top it gains control of various droids before being attacked by a Command Cyborg.



HEWSON £24.99 ■ Joystick

PARADROID

At the Space Shipping Federation control centre, disturbing things are happening. Over the past few days broken, garbled messages have been coming through from the fleet.

Apparently, a strange force has taken over the systems that control the fleet's droids and has turned them into renegades. The messages speak of ensuing panic as the droids wander the decks, blasting anything that moves. The crew has little chance of survival, but as long as there is still hope something must be done.

A rescue cruiser has been sent out to the fleet in an attempt to try and save any survivors, but primary scans of the ships show that all the crew members are dead. That's not the only problem. The fleet has also been invaded by pirate raiders.

This highly volatile situation means that beaming a standard attack force on board is much too risky, so an alternative plan has been devised. A remote control unit called an Influence Device will

be used. The unit can be moved anywhere within the ship, using its on-board laser to destroy droids and raiders. Additionally, any droid can be controlled temporarily by taking over its brain functions, allowing you to take advantage of its improved weapons and armour for a limited period of time.

In order to switch control to another droid, the Influence Device has to battle the host's brain in a 'transfer sequence'. This is in the form of a two-sided circuit, with a column of lights in the centre. The object is to send energy pulses through the circuit to try and turn as much of the central column to your own colour as possible. Success gives you control of the droid, but failure means that you are checked off your current host and left as an Influence Device. If, however, you aren't controlling a droid, you will be burnt out, thus ending your mission.

If you manage to clear all the decks of droids and raiders, then you can zoom off to a teleporter, ready to take on the next ship.

GRAPHICS AND SOUND

The overhead scrolling view employed is strange. You can pass under some of the scenery and the enemies don't appear until you turn a corner! The graphics are very well drawn, with some excellent use of shading to make the droids and decks look suitably hard and metallic. Those of you lucky enough to have one meg of memory – something of a must these days – have the added bonus of an enhanced droid library, with full-colour drawings of the robots along with their data. The sound isn't quite as strong as it could have been, though. The tune and effects sound decidedly weedy at times, rather than having the booming sci-fi feel the game calls for.

LASTING INTEREST

Your first instinct when playing the game is to storm in and blast everything in sight, but it soon becomes clear that all this manages to do is get you dead! Once you've got the grasp of both shooting and transferring, storming through the decks becomes far more fruitful and enjoyable. But even if you manage to clear one ship, there are still more to keep you playing for a while – and they've got vicious pirates on them. Arrgh!

JUDGEMENT

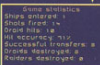
On the eight-bit machines it has long been considered a classic game but now, with the extra power of the Amiga, new life has been injected into the game. The pace is more frantic, the game is bigger and the look is more polished, but all the gameplay that made the original a hit has been retained. If you haven't played the game before it may not be what you'd expect from your usual blaster, but have a try and you'll soon see what all the fuss was about. Maff Evans

By logging on to a terminal, you can gain access to information about the current ship, a deck map, the droid library and in-game statistics such as transfer successes, kills and hit-rate.

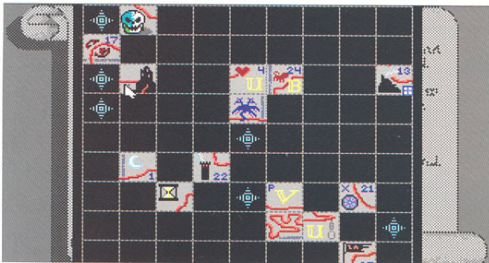


USF Vigilant onboard computer

- ⊗ Log off
- ⊙ Ship data
- ⊙ Deck data
- ⊙ Droid library
- ⊙ In-game statistics



GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	5
INTELLECT	5
ADDICTION	8
OVERALL	88%



The Sun's map. All right, so it's early in the morning and the Sun hasn't quite got around to setting all the pieces of the chart out for you, the fool. So your task is to get hold of the rest of the sections by solving puzzles. Once you've managed to solve all 80, it's time to put the map together because, as you would guess, the sections are as far away from the correct order as possible. Have fun, pals!

The FOOL'S ERRAND

MILES COMPUTING £24.95 ■ Mouse and keyboard

Did you ever invest time and money in one of those puzzle mags which litter the shops at airports and railway stations? Well, this mystical version contains some 80 puzzles with everything the dedicated solvo-freak could wish for, from anagrams and word searches to reflex-testing and code-breaking.

Theoretically at least, there is a plot. There's a bunch of reading to be done but don't skimp on this, otherwise you'll merely find yourself moving from puzzle to puzzle with no rhyme or reason. Not unsurprisingly the story centres upon the fool and his errand.

At the beginning of the game you, the fool, are presented with the Sun's map. The Sun is a tricky chappie and doesn't want you to have all the clues in one go. Unfortunately there are only 21 sections of the map available, they are all in chaos and they mean doodley-squat without the remaining 79. Quite simply, you have to solve 80 puzzles to complete the chart. On completion of each one several others are opened up to you and new pieces of the map come to light.

You can either move through the puzzles in the order in which they appear, or you can use the menu bar, at the top of the screen, to flip between the five

sections, each of which contains a number of tricks.

Three of these puzzles really do catch the attention. One should be avoided by anyone who has an adverse reaction to strobe lights, or quick pelican crossings for that matter. It involves chasing numbered squares around the screen and then clicking on them with the mouse pointer.

The second sees you competing with an 'old man' at an arcane game of cards in which the rules are never explained.

The third sees you avoiding the red blob of death as it comes shooting out at you from the hidden recesses of the screen. Again you have to click on it with the pointer. A hint here is to remember the menu.

The other 77 puzzles are a mixture of the absurdly easy - make an anagram from the letters OWOD, fer gawd's sake - to the irritatingly irritating: word searches with vegetables, would you believe. Still, pitching conundrums at a level which everyone will appreciate is a difficult task.

Once you've completed all the tasks and made sense out of the Sun's map you are treated to a lengthy animated end sequence, which chronicles the history of the Fool and gives you a warm tingly feeling inside.

GRAPHICS AND SOUND

Graphically the game is quite a treat. There are sections which entail rearranging pleasantly drawn pictures from a jumble of constituent parts. Others require the screen to be illuminated with all the colours of the rainbow for no particular reason. As for sound, well that's another story entirely. Dull, dull, dull. Loads of late 1970s beeping and farting with not much else. It's a shame really, because the mediaeval feel of the piece could have benefited quite strongly from some lute music, or even the occasional human voice.

LASTING INTEREST

Once you've cracked the really easy, fairly simple, and reasonably cunning puzzles, which make up 60 per cent of the game, you have two choices: either plough through the word searches and other frustrating outings in order to complete the map; or wait for a torrentially rainy day and get back to them. The game is undoubtedly addictive for the first day or two, after which it begins to wane. Not to be binned, however, as the card game makes an interesting section in itself.



To quote a well-worn cliché of the 90s, "Spooky, or what?" Yes, it's the doomsome pair of Death and his Mrs: or should that be Mrs Death and her Mr? Who knows and only a fool would care. This is a stroke of luck because you are that fool. Not only do you get to meet them both in the opening titles, but they are also integral to a card game which you will have to play along your foolish way.

JUDGEMENT

There is supposed to be an element of strategy to it but this only really becomes apparent after the puzzles are solved. The most positive feature of *The Fool's Errand* is the sheer number and variety of the puzzles. Get some mates round for the evening and see if you can crack it in one go. Aside from some qualms about the thin graphics and sound, the game is

an intelligent use of the machine and should fire the imagination of any seasoned adventurer or student of the not-quite-so-straightforward in life. Tim Smith

GRAPHICS	6
SOUND	3
INTELLECT	8
ADDICTION	8
OVERALL	70%



In the city you'll have to avoid the downed live wires.



The nuclear-blasted freeway has a wicked jump to negotiate.



Select weapons and further improvements to your car here.



You're racing around an oil refinery. The red car's about to collect a spanner. This can be spent on missiles or turbos. Anything, in fact, to make your car faster and more dangerous than the others.

DOMARK £19.99 ■ Joystick and Keyboard

BADLANDS

Once again, nuclear war has broken out. The planet Earth is trashed. Staying alive has become the ultimate struggle. But the Badlands survivors can't be bothered with finding sufficient food and shelter to enable them to continue the human race. Instead they build very powerful and dangerous cars, take them to hazardous racing circuits and use them to try to kill each other.

There are eight of these perilous circuits bulldozed through the Badlands, the derelict remains of the previous civilisation. Each circuit can have eight hideously blasted backgrounds. Not the sort of place you'd let your kids romp around after dark.

The first circuit is right in the wasted heart of the city. The three competing cars line up, waiting for the off. Suddenly the race is under way. Full power sends you skidding into the first bend. You

avoid the oil spills on the course, only to slide into live electrical cables which have fallen into your path. You grind to a halt as your enemies stream past. Open fire with the roof-mounted cannon (fitted as standard) and you might still be in with a chance!

Either one or two players may participate, with the other car(s) being controlled by the computer. You can select the joystick configuration that you prefer: the fire button can either be used to loose off weaponry, or to accelerate. You can, of course, opt for keyboard control instead.

Each race is over four laps and you must collect the spanner symbols which appear around the track. These are also the prizes awarded to the winner and runner-up. Collect enough, and you can afford the optional extras to enhance your vehicle. Guided missiles come in packs of four; they



destroy any car within range, forcing a new one to be airlifted in to where the old one died. This takes valuable seconds, giving everyone else an advantage. Shields can, however, be purchased. These are temporarily impervious to missiles.

Other equipment enhances the performance of your set of wheels. Speed boost, new tyres and turbos all enable you to burn past those which you haven't already destroyed.

The next circuit is an oil refinery. Using your weapons here might cause fires of Red Adair proportions, so be careful. If you survive, you'll get to race around a volcano, a military compound and even a prison. All have unique and rather nasty hazards.

GRAPHICS AND SOUND

Each course fits onto one screen, so many of the graphics are small. The cars look (and act) like little cartoons as they bounce around. Everything is smooth, however, and there are nice spot-effects for explosions, obstacles and so on. There is little in the way of post-holocaust atmosphere, though: it all seems rather jolly.

Sound is fine. A tense little tune attempts to remind you of the recent fate of mankind. The sounds of weaponry unleashed are OK, and enhance the cartoon feeling surrounding the game. The sonics don't detract from the gameplay, but don't add a great deal either.

LASTING INTEREST

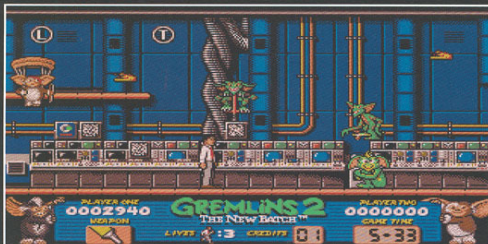
Each new circuit poses its own hazards, and your opponents often take some beating, so there is instant addictiveness. However, once you have seen the courses and survived, there is nothing else to do except go round again. On later levels the computer cars speed up to Senna-like velocities, making it virtually impossible to win, even with missiles.

Racing a flesh-and-blood opponent is more satisfying, as it can develop (or degenerate) into static warfare. But ultimately this too is of limited enjoyment.

JUDGEMENT

This form of highly dangerous sprint-racing in an (irrelevantly) radiation-blasted world is addictive and fun once you start to win. But, further on, when you start to lose, and when all the circuits start to look the same, you find the thrill palling somewhat. There isn't that much gear you can buy for the car, so you don't really progress; you just try to keep surviving through to the next race. *Badlands* is quite a fun little arcade game, but, unfortunately, has a rather short half-life. There just isn't enough variety. James Leach

GRAPHICS	5
SOUND	5
INTELLECT	3
ADDICTION	4
OVERALL	46%



Billy normally uses his torch to kill the Gremlins by exposure to 'Bright light'. If the going gets really tough, though, he can call on the Rambo Gizmo for aid by collecting an 'R' token.

GREMLINS II

ELITE £24.99 ■ Joystick and Keyboard

Mogwai don't get mad, they get silly. Way back in the mists of time (1984) the lovable rogues terrorised a town after getting wet and turning into Gremlins. Gizmo (hurrah!), the original Mogwai from whence the Gremlins sprang, has now been captured by an evil scientist (boo!) and - guess what? He's been and gawt and got soaked once more (gasp!) The only hope is to collect

the five parts of Gizmo's magic box, which could just save the day.

Now Billy (yipee!), the human hero of the first outing, has to stop the Grems overrunning a shopping mall. Using a torch (bright light!) he has to clear the place store by store. Dashing horizontally about each floor, picking up different weapons (tomatoes, frisbees and phones), he must clear a path to the next lift, leaping on desks,

filng cabinets and platforms to avoid the Gremlins' attacks.

The Gremlins are wild, wicked and witty. Once they have finished ransacking the shopping mall they have masses of death-dealing tricks 'up their furry sleeves'. Skateboarders, rocket riders, pogostickers, jetpackers and bomb throwers are just some of the creatures that are both hilarious and invariably fatal.

GRAPHICS AND SOUND

Sound effects rarely make a game but the Gremlins' giggles lift it gloriously. Deaths are accompanied with a growled "Bye bye, Billy!" and a chorus of evil laughter. Backing up the realistic Gremmo tittering are some brilliant Gremlin sprites, they actually look real. They move in mischievous ways, which makes up for the functional scenery, supplying an eye-catching focus for the game.

Gremlins has one major graphic fault, a flick-scroll system that irritates in the way only flick screens can. The screen can be clear of critters, with Billy one pixel away from the edge of the screen, when a Gremlin decides to bounce on. The result is a death that you could not foresee or avoid, which makes the game considerably harder and massively more frustrating.

LASTING INTEREST

Killing Gremlins is hard going. They are unpredictable little tykes who always home in on Billy. The toughness of the game-play and the clumsiness of the scrolling combine to make collecting the five parts of Gizmo's box, each of which lives on its own level, a practical impossibility. It's fun but too frustrating, especially as they keep laughing at your every mistake!

JUDGEMENT

Spot on in both the graphic and sound departments. The Grems translate perfectly into sprites and their anarchic antics are amusing and annoying. Elite may have fallen victim to a Gremlin themselves because it's way too tough, protecting the Gremlins from Billy's bright light forever.

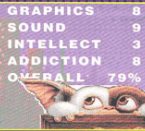
Trenton Webb



Run away, there's Mohawk! The Gremlins' leader!



Part one of Gizmo's box is in the bag: four more to go.



MANNIX

MILLENNIUM £24.99 ■ Joystick or keyboard

The world's gone mad. All the neatly-trimmed lawns have turned funny colours, the duck pond has become toxic and bombs are falling out of the sky. Filbert, our yellow blobby hero, must bounce around putting every square foot of turf back the way it ought to be - namely green.

The gardens are isometric 3D areas cut up into small screen-sized blocks. You play screen by screen, bouncing on

the squares to make them revert one stage closer to normal. Some patches may take multiple bounces to clean up, others take just one.

The tricky bit is controlling the bounce of our Fil and working out which of the bits that drop from the sky are a help: cups of tea, for example, make everything seem all right, while both the Ninja and Viking Warrior chaps are an obvious danger.



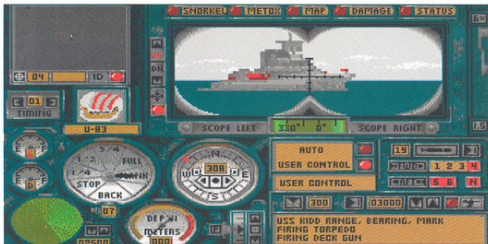
Filbert gets mad when his garden goes from green to wizard. Now he must bounce on each and every patch to get it back to normal.

Mannix can be a puzzle game, a two-player competition or an ongoing challenge to clean up the whole garden. There are 128 different screens to clean, plus a variety of soundtracks and a customise option. It's a

diverting game but never really captures that mad addictive hook alluded to in the title, which is a shame - young Filbert certainly has promise, but he doesn't really shine.

Trenton Webb

GRAPHICS 7 / SOUND 7 / INTELLECT 5 / ADDICTION 4 / OVERALL 69%



The USS Kidd sails straight for your submarine. The guns are loaded, the torpedoes are ready and the battleship looks set for a scrap metal course. There's always the problem of hitting the damned thing though, it may be big but it's moving. Act now or you're sunk!

WOLFPACK

MIRRORSOFT ■ £24.99 Mouse or keyboard

When the Kriegsmarine U-boats prowled the seas during World War II, they hunted like a wolfpack. Attacking in waves, they would first wound and then sink their prey. By interrupting the flow of materials vital to the war effort, U-boats sought to siege Britain into submission.

For submarine captains this was the 'Happy Time' when convoys provided easy pickings and the 'Wolves' ruled the waves. After D-Day the introduction of sonar and radar systems forced a change of tactics and the packs started hitting military targets, often at the cost of their own lives.

Submarine warfare is a game of cat-and-mouse played with 1000-ton ships. In *Wolfpack* you can take command of either the ships or the U-boats. The submarines must second guess the surface shipping's every move and set up ambushes. The surface ships must anticipate the submariners and either flee or fight.

As commander of the sub, you must use your vessel's limited capabilities - which vary as the war continues - to maximum effect. Surface ships' captains use new technology, improving weaponry and their knowledge of sub formations to keep the Wolves away from the civilian ships.

Each battle is fought as an individual scenario. Victories for the Allies are scored when the convoy reaches its destination or the time limit expires. The U-boats win by sinking at least 50% of the ships. The odds may seem stacked against the submariners, but they always strike first.

A strategy element is added to the simulation with each commander having control over a number of vessels, rather than being stuck with just the one. The ships in your charge run on preselected orders, which they follow until you take the helm. Submarines with a human at the helm can sneak in for a torpedo shot or surface for a pop

with the deck cannon. Drone submariners can only anchor, patrol and shadow the convoy. Some commands, though, may be disobeyed by the occasional computer captain if a ship makes itself a target. Surface shipping has a similar limited list of 'group commands', the brevity of which actually helps make the larger convoys manageable. The only orders that seem to be disobeyed is sinking without permission!

Over a series of preset missions commanders can explore the possibilities of underwater warfare, with the chance to play both the hunter and the hunted. After these have been beaten it's time to delve into the construction set and build some serious scenarios. Using the parameters explored in the pre-set modules you can build stupid one-sided battles that would test the mettle of the best. It even allows for duels between two captains, with one hunting the other on the open seas.

GRAPHICS AND SOUND

Clear and easily-accessed controls are vital if a sim is to succeed. In *Wolfpack* all the commands are clicked onto the various dials and gauges. Once you're used to their positioning, orders can be sent far faster than it's possible for the ships to respond. The window on the world, which represents a periscope view, is small but clear enough for lining up shots. Stirring music introduces *Wolfpack*, the kind of tune that accompanies all those xenophobic war movies, setting the scene perfectly for some 'Jerry' or 'Tommy' bashing.

LASTING INTEREST

The limited number of preset missions shouldn't be used as a measure of *Wolfpack*'s depth. Most of the gameplay parameters are touched upon in these ready-built missions, but are far from fully explored. As trainers, the 'ready to run' modules are complex enough to teach the basics of naval war, yet playable enough to be fun. Even when the tactics become obvious, there's always the tricky task of implementing them.

JUDGEMENT

Submarine sims will always be curious beasts as they lack the gut-wrenching sensations associated with flying or driving. The hunting is tough enough to stop players destroying the cream of the Allied navies first time out, but with practice it is distinctly possible. Luckily *Wolfpack* is free from the technophile tendencies that sink so many simulators, where gameplay is sacrificed to absolute accuracy. *Wolfpack*, quite correctly, uses the multiple ship strategy elements to supplement its gameplay quotient and is not an in-depth investigation of WW II diesel engines. The sub simulator itself is strong enough to justify the game and the strategy is an excellent second string to its bow. Trenton Webb



The Kidd takes a direct hit. Pass the Schnapps Fritz, Ach Schnell, Got in Himmet, Achtung... and other great lines from Warlord Comics.



"Both subs running and ready to patrol, Herr Kaptain!"



Another victim for the *Wolfpack*, that is if they don't mind.



Check out your tub with a quick-glance at the damage chart

GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	6
INTELLECT	9
ADDICTION	7
OVERALL	83%

SHADOW OF THE BEAST II

After breaking ground with the cheat mode for this impressive sequel, Amiga Format is proud to present... (cue music) DA-DA-DAAA...! The solution! Okay, let's get down to it, boppers...

From the start head left, watching out for the hands throwing the crystal balls from the trees. Cross the bridge, carefully judging the timing to avoid the leaping fish, and shoot the demon to save the man trapped in the field. Ask him about TRAPS and he will be able to tell you about either a higher or lower switch.

Go left and down (watch for the bats). Land on the left ledge and duck to avoid the flying demon. Chase him to the right and kill him before he can cut the rope. Let the man pushing the block get close to the edge, then kill him. Go left avoiding the falling blocks and kill the demon on the hill to the left. Go back to the right and the demon will have dropped a key. Head back to the left and drop off the edge, but watch out for the flying demon.

Go up the rope, head right and use the key to open the door. Now go right watching for another falling block. When you eventually come to the switches, hit whichever one the man you freed told you about.

GAME Busters

It's getting towards Christmas and all those new goodies, but don't you think it would be good to get to grips with the games you have already? Clear away those half-finished game blues with **MAFF EVANS**.

Go up the lift, go right (avoiding the bats) past the chain leading down, through two open doors to the next chain. Go up the chain into the alcove and collect the bonuses. Go back down the chain and continue right to collect the key. Go left and down the chain, taking care not to wake the sleeping guard. Use the key to let the beast free from the cage and hit the lower switch on the right. Now head back to the lift and board it to head down.

The switch that you hit should have caused a bridge to appear. Go left across it and use the three levers on the right to operate the claw. Pick up the rock with the claw and drop it on the spike in the floor on the right. And now push

the remaining, smaller rock onto the see-saw over to the right and climb the rope, jumping off to land on the other side of the see-saw. Run to the other lift and you will go up.

Go right to kill Ishran, then free the prisoner, who will tell you the password. Go to the gateway to Barloom's domain and whisper the password. Go right to collect a bonus then up the rope to collect a parchment from Barloom. Leave and head left past the rope. Look out for the giants with maces and collect the bonus.

Enter the hut and go right to collect the ale, then leave the hut and return to the game's starting point. Head right, watching for the pygmies (remember the cheat mode here, kids) and head diagonally up

to the left on the stepping-stones. Watch out for the jelly-firing monster on the bridge and collect the bonus. Kill the monster to get the axe and head diagonally up to the right for another bonus. Go back down the way you came and head left until you find a covered hole. Jump on the cover (taking care not to land on the platform above) and you should drop through.

Go left, dodging the crystals that pop up from the water and collecting all the bonuses on the way. Chase the goblin to the left until you reach the drawbridge. Switch to axe and jump to shoot at the bloke winding up the bridge, but remember the time limit on the axes and keep piling them at the bloke. Switch back to the mace to kill the other goblin and smash through the door.



Go left and up, then hit the switch to turn off the spikes. Go left and crouch to hit the switch on the right. Go right, down, left and down, then kill the goblins. Go right, collect the key, then go left and under the cage. Oops! Captured! Never mind...

To escape from prison, offer the ale to the goblin and use the mace to break the cage door. Go up to the top and go left. Kill the goblins to collect the ring, then go down and kill the sleeping guard to collect the key. Go back and release the remaining prisoner in the cell above yours. Go back down to collect your mace again, then go up and to the right. Use the remaining key to open the door then go right looking out for the spikes. Leave the caves and return to the surface.

Go right, down, then right and kill the giant head. Go right, up the rope and right, looking out for the bats. Go down the rope then right across the bridge. Get the giant lizard-man to follow you left back across the bridge so that he falls through. Go right (jumping over the hole the lizard-man has just made) and carry on heading right until you reach the old man. Offer the old man the ring and the parchment and collect the weapon he makes - this is the one to use from now on.

Go left and drop through the hole in the bridge. Head right watching out for the bats, then go down and collect the bonus. Go right onto the rope, then right again onto the ledge to collect the horn. Go back left and down the rope, then quickly jump out of that nice healthy acid and head right. When you reach the snail, ask him about KARAMOON and answer 'yes' to both his questions.

Head off back to the surface and once there go right, looking out for the twin giants hurling axes. Go right, over the cliff edge, then right, killing the giant toads. But look out for the giant serpent in its nest! Now walk to the sea edge and use the horn to call the sea-beast. Climb onto its back, then right and enter the tower. Go right, down the stairs then up the adjacent stairs to collect the bonus. Go down, then right and it's time for the big battle!

If you can defeat Zelek the Beast Mage, then you've completed the adventure. If you can't then... err... you're dead, I suppose.

S Csoka,
Andreas, Isle of Man

MONTY PYTHON



Never mind about that, miss. Miss? I'm sorry I have a cold. Anyway, on with the hint. Does that little tree that follows you around annoy you? Well, never mind - it's just Mr Johnson trying not to be seen. If you really want to get rid of him, though, just go to the right until the screen starts to scroll, then run towards the left of the screen. Then the tree will be



dead. It will cease to be. It will be an ex-tree. It will sniff it. That's enough! It isn't a parrot.

Ah, the Norwegian Blue, lovely bird, beautiful plumage. That may be the case but it ain't a parrot. SHUT UP! Bloody Vikings.

Ben Cowdall,
Cirencester, Gloucestershire

SPHERICAL

This amusing little puzzle game, which according to games-playing myth and legend was 'inspired' by Solomon's Key, can be a mite tricky at the best of times, not to mention frustrating when you want to get straight to a particular level. Want to stop all that hassle? Want to make your life about fifteen squillion times easier? Then listen carefully to this tip...

All you have to do is type BladeRunner on the title screen and you can use the left and right cursor keys to move forwards and backwards through the levels.

Tim and Matthew Whitby,
Buckhurst Hill, Essex

NEW ZEALAND STORY

Yes, I know there's already been quite a lot of stuff on the Kiwi epic from Ocean already, but this is worth some space.

All you have to do while playing the game is find a place with spikes and jump towards them. When you are about half a centimetre away (on one of the early series monitors, like the 1084B - the one without the ratcheted V-hold button, of course) type the following: JOHANN GAMBOLPUTTY DE VON AUSFERN SCHPLENDEN SCHLITTER

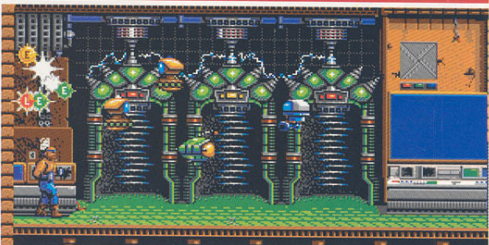
CRASCRENBON FRIED DIGGERD-
INGLEDANGLEDONGLEDUN-
GLEWURST BURSTEIN VON KNACK-
ERTHRASHER APPLEBANGER
HOROWITZ TICOLENSIC GRANDER-
KNOTTY SPELLTINKLE GRANDLICH
MITTLER AUCHER OF ULM

There should be no spaces (except the ones between some of the words). This will cause the kiwi to fly upwards while painting itself purple and playing 'When Will I be Famous' on the banjo.

We couldn't get this to work on the pre-pro copy we have in the office, but possibility it only works on the version in the *Batman* pack.

Jonathan Longden,
Bingley, West Yorkshire

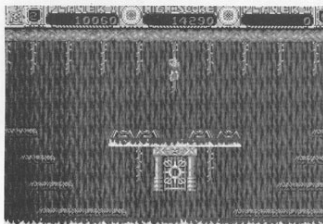
HAMMERFIST



Right... into this room... belt these monitors and... what's going on? Let me through! Damn! Got it wrong.

If this is a familiar scene to you when you're playing *Hammerfist* then this tip is for you! Just play the game enough to get onto the score table, then die. Enter your name as TAEHC OT TNAW I, then start a new game. Now all you have to do to skip levels is press F7.

Kenneth Fryde,
Middlesbrough, Cleveland



YOLANDA COVERDISK DEMO

It looks like there are one or two people out there who have a soft spot for this frustrating platform game, so we've got some tips for the little demo piece we featured on the Coverdisk. Much needed they are, too!

LABOUR ONE

Walk left and jump onto the platform on the left-hand side, then jump onto the rope. Climb to the top of the rope and jump onto the platform, then onto the next two ropes. Jump to the right, so that the platform you land on disappears. Just as you touch the next platform, press fire. The platform will now vanish and if you were quick enough on the fire button you should jump.

Repeat the steps for the next platform and a new platform should appear under you as you begin to fall. Walk right along this platform and jump off the end to the small rope. Jump to the big

rope, climb up and jump for the doors. Phew, that's tricky!

LABOUR TWO

Walk along to the right and jump up to the long rope. Climb to the top of the rope and jump along to the row of small ropes, continuing to jump along the row until you reach the end. Drop onto the platform below, which will disappear, but don't worry - a new platform will appear to break your fall.

Walk off to the right so that you fall down. As soon as you touch the platform it will disappear, so do a quick diagonal jump to the left to reach the doors.

LABOUR THREE

At the start of the level jump up onto the long rope and climb to the top. Jump along the row of ropes to your right and stop on the one above the end of the bottom platform. Fall onto this platform, timing it so that you miss the creature that walks up and down.

As soon as you land, jump diagonally to the left onto the rope next to the doors. Now all you

have to do is jump into the exit.

LABOUR FOUR

Jump to the platform on the left, where there is a moving creature, then onto the small rope. Now you have to time your next jump so that when you leap diagonally to the left, you land just to the left of the moving creature.

Quickly jump to the long rope and climb to the top, then jump along the ropes to the middle platform. Next, jump to the ropes on the right until you are above the bottom platform. Now just fall off and walk in through the doors.

LABOUR FIVE

A simple one this. Just walk right, off the platform, to drop next to the exit, then hit the doors.

LABOUR SIX

Jump over all the creatures so that you get to the end of the platform, then jump down to the platform to the lower right. Jump diagonally left onto the platform under the one you started on.

Walk left until you fall off the end onto the platform below, then jump onto the ropes and make your way towards the doors. When you reach the end of the platform jump for the middle section, then onto the platform on the right. Now all you have to do is jump for the doors.

LABOUR SEVEN

This is one of those deceptive screens with loads of invisible platforms, so extra care is needed. Jump onto the small rope above the platform by jumping diagonally to the right, then jump right again, off the rope. You will now be falling down towards the flames, but a platform will appear just before

you hit them. Walk towards the right and jump diagonally off the end onto another platform which will appear.

Repeat this process until you are over on the far right of the screen. Jump up so that another platform appears, then do a diagonal left jump to land on another magically appearing platform. Walk off the left of the platform to land on another invisible floor, then jump for the doors.

LABOUR EIGHT

Jump onto the first platform from the left, then go right and jump onto the first platform on the right. Now jump to the platform to the left and keep going left until you get to the top.

Jump up onto the rope, then continue right, jumping from rope to rope until you reach the top-right platform. Now you can make your way to the doors.

LABOUR NINE

There are two quick ways of doing this, but it's incredibly tricky.

1. Walk to the right off the end of the platform JUST as the flying creature is going down past the platform you are standing on, then hit the doors.

2. Jump off the platform towards the right and once in the air pull the joystick left. You should fall to the left and land on the doors to finish the screen.

LABOUR TEN

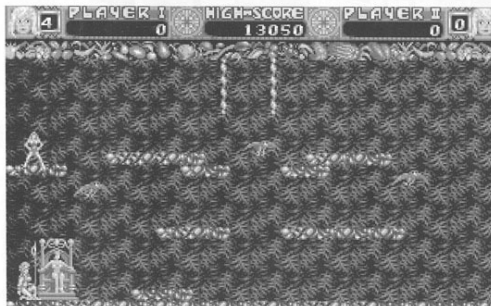
Jump up straight away to avoid the fireball that flies in from the right, then fall off the right-hand side of the platform to land on the one below. Jump across to the right, avoiding the fireballs, until you reach the last platform. Watch the timing of the fireballs, then jump straight up. A series of platforms will appear until you reach the top, then jump for the doors.

LABOUR ELEVEN

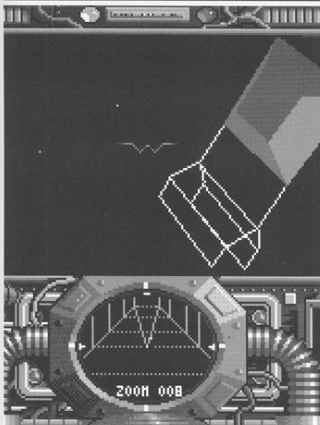
Jump onto the platform which is just to the right of where you are standing, then (this is the tricky bit) jump so that you land between the two creatures. Jump to the right over the creature, then quickly jump right again. If you are too slow, then the flying creature will kill you.

Jump over the two creatures on the platform, then jump for the long rope. Once on the rope, climb up so that you can jump onto the next platform, but wait until the creature is moving away from you before you do so. When ready, jump onto the platform, then straight away jump for the doors.

Simon Walkley,
Nuneaton, Warwickshire



FEDERATION OF FREE TRADERS



This game caused a lot of consternation when it was originally released, ooh, ages back, since a lot of people took a huge dislike to it because it was too hard. Well, it's about time I threw my golden penny's worth into the sewer with some interesting tips to make it a little less traumatic.

One thing that could cause big problems for would-be traders is buying up stock that you can't shift. Here is a list of things to steer clear of:

- Simple Manuals
- Arcturan In-Flight Space Jackets
- Class 4 Missiles
- Watches (you can't even shift them on the street corner, me old china)
- Starport Blasters
- Sirius Cybernetics GPP Robots
- Exotic Space Lingerie (oo-er!)
- Sub-Etha Chronographs

As always, the things that won't shift are balanced out by things that fly out like snot off a hot buttered shovel. These include:

- Old Janx Spirit
- Fallian Marsh Gas Cannisters
- Sub-Etha Sens-o-matics (a

- very useful tool for Galactic Hitch-Hikers)
- Sens-o-tape copies of Playbeing (phwoar!)
- Arcturan Mega-Gin
- The Book (and we all know which book, but don't panic!)
- Algolian Cigars (very hard to come by)
- Qualactin Hypermint Extract (yum)
- Algolian Claret (very hard to come by)
- Bath Towels (a really hoopy frood always knows where his towel is)

For some pretty nifty trading, whack into communications mode by pressing F1, then get a ship to pass the sights, press F8 and enter the net as usual. Now press T followed by Return.

Now instead of chatting to the alien as usual, just keep hitting return until he replies. When he does, he might have something to sell or otherwise will ask you if you have anything to trade. If he just ignores you and logs off, just get into the net again and repeat the process until he loosens up.

This provides you with an easy way to trade on the Black Market, as you don't have to work out anything to type in.

Alan Hunt,
Norwich, Norfolk

SKIDZ

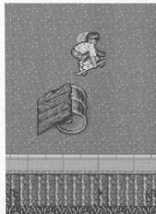


You know how it is. You're just about to dump off that last piece of litter, your skateboard hits a bump and you've had it. What? That doesn't happen to you? You're obviously not playing Skidz, then.

If you are playing Skidz and finding it difficult going, then just

start the game, hold down fire and the Alt key. While doing that, press C to gain extra energy or M to skip a level. Dead easy, that! Where's me wheels...

Ben Coddall,
Cirencester, Gloucestershire



WINNERS

This month's prizes should go out properly this month. There were a few problems recently, due to the fact I was deeply involved in a major car crash and so had other things on my mind... like my back! And nasty phone calls DON'T help! Still, the winners of this month's vouchers are S Czoka for the *Beast II* solution, Ben Coddall for his big list of tips and *Monty Python* and Alan Hunt. No, not thanks to Ben for *Monty Python* and Alan Hunt, Alan Hunt wins the third voucher!

Now that's sorted out, I can ask you to send in your best tips. Er... send in your best tips, please! If you've got something decent, for goodness' sake get it in an envelope and post it to GAMEBUSTERS, Amiga Format, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.