

**NO!**  
not an  
Amstrad  
publication!

# WE LOVE YOU

- crucial guide to  
the games of '88



**Talking turkeys**  
We name the guilty men

THE MOULD-BREAKING MAGAZINE FROM FUTURE PUBLISHING

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**ACTION**



## WHEN YOU WISH UPON A STAR



**£850 CHRISTMAS COMPETITION!**  
£450 Star LC24-10 AND £300 colour Star LC10  
two first class printers must be won!  
● Turn to p.6 now for our ridiculously easy competition

## AMAZING CHRISTMAS CASSETTE! TOTAL ECLIPSE

**FREESCAPE™**

Get the **FREESCAPE** sensation!  
- solid 3D from Incentive  
fantastic fully playable  
special edition!

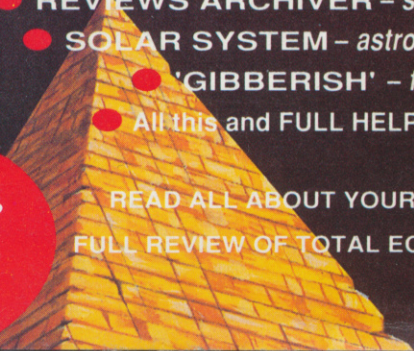
### PLUS ALL THIS!

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- PERSPECTIVE ART - full art package
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- REVIEWS ARCHIVER - spot winners
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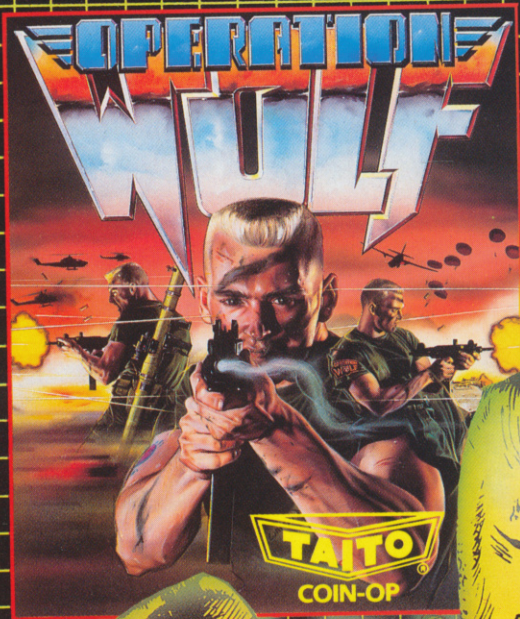
**AMSTRAD ACTION**  
- WITH THE CASSETTE YOU  
DON'T HAVE TO WRITE  
AWAY FOR!

**ALL THESE  
PROGRAMS  
TRANSFER  
EASILY  
TO DISK!**

READ ALL ABOUT YOUR TAPE p.16  
FULL REVIEW OF TOTAL ECLIPSE p.48



# THE OCEAN



**THE WORLD'S NO. 1 ARCADE GAME  
NOW THE COMPUTER SENSATION OF  
THE YEAR.**

It's undoubtedly a fantastic conversion of a marvellous arcade game. Virtually flawless. Addictive... One for everyone's Christmas list."

SINCLAIR USER

"Not only has all the action and gameplay been captured, but so has the excitement, making it one of the most satisfying and compulsive shoot-em-ups to have appeared in a long time" ACE

Your Opponents in your battle for supremacy are four types of Evil Ninja star-throwing Assassins whose skills are manifold and dangerous.

Also out to spoil your day are Acrobat Women Warriors and vicious Guard Dogs.

At the end of each level you must overcome the Ninja Master in order to progress - some examples of these superhuman villains are: A fire-breathing Fat Man, an Armour Clad Giant and the Green and Gruesome Giant Ninja - who has a disconcerting habit of suddenly multiplying into an army!

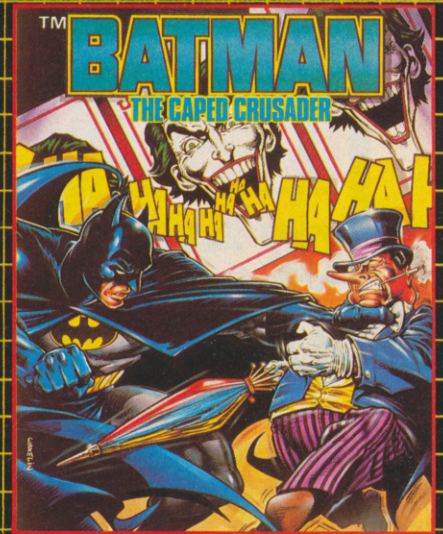
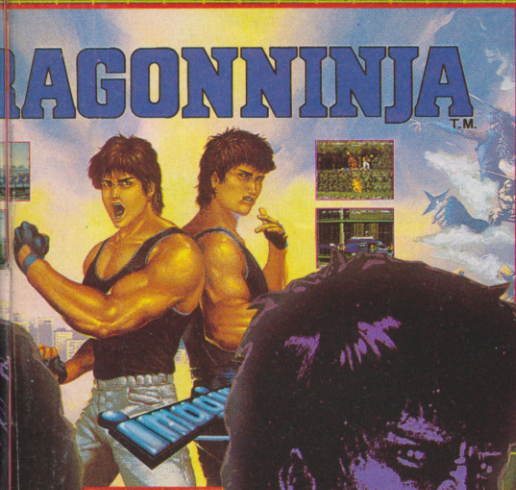
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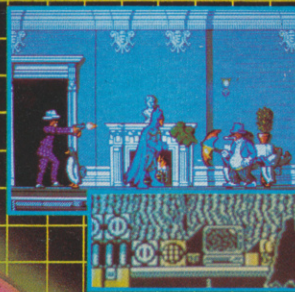
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# MAN FORCE



D.C. Comics' famous super hero Batman breaks onto the micro screen in a Wham! POW! Arcade adventure as you engage the forces of evil in Gotham City. Start in the Batcave and move on through the world of fun and excitement as you face the trickiest customer of all... the Penguin. Save some strength for battles ahead with the dastardly Joker however, or you'll miss the thrilling climax! Cartoon style graphics and animation make for stunning realism with



innovative game play for long lasting entertainment.  
T.M. & © DC COMICS INC. 1988  
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# THE LINE UP

AMSTRAD ACTION • CHRISTMAS/JANUARY 1989

## FRONT END

NEWS • LETTERS

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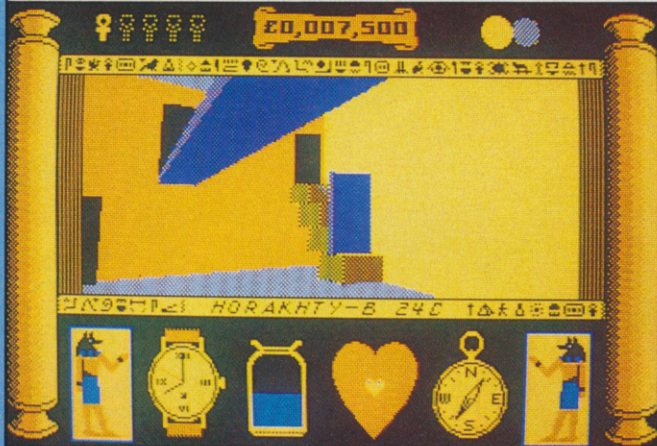
Another one bites the dust: CPCC goes west.

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Good grief, you people certainly have strong opinions and don't mind expressing them!

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Full details on the BEST Christmas cover tape around: the first opportunity to sample the 3D world that is *TOTAL ECLIPSE*, together with a HOST of games, utilities and programs that should keep you busy until... well, at least until NEXT YEAR!



## THE ACTION BEGINS ON 45!

GAMES • MAPS • ADVENTURING

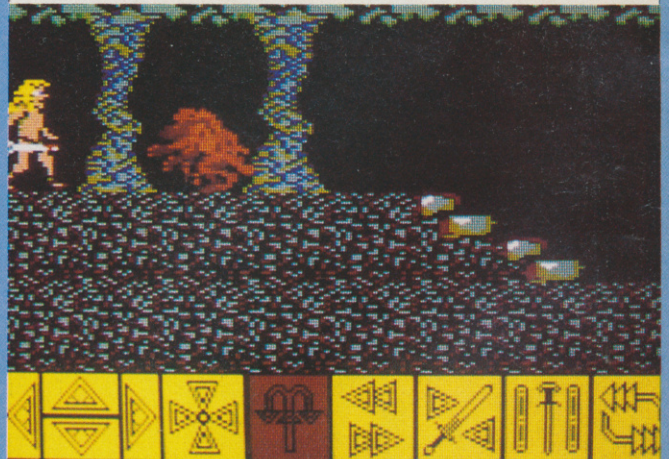
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Gremlin with a round table romp.



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Psygnosis hack 'em and slay 'em. No holds barred!



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Who's not a pretty boy then? We name the guilty men responsible for the really naff events of '88.

AMSTRAD  
ACTION

Future Publishing Limited  
4 Queen Street, Bath BA1 1EJ

Telephone 0225 446034  
Fax 0225 446019

Editor: Steve Carey

Technical Editor: Pat McDonald

Staff Writer: Gary Barrett

Art Editor: Ollie Alderton

Contributors: Richard Monteiro, Steve Cooke

Art Person: Sally Meddings

Publisher: Greg Ingham

Production: Diane Tavener, Claire Woodland, Jenny Reid

Subscriptions: Avon Direct Mail

PO Box 1, Portishead, Bristol BF20 9EG

Telephone 0272 842487

Mail Order: Clare Bates

The Old Barn, Brunel Precinct, Somerton,

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## ACTION TEST

All this! > Total Eclipse > Trivial Pursuit > Barbarian > Four Soccer Simulators > Operation Wolf > Thunderblade > Pepsi Challenge > Artura > Gary Lineker's Superskills > Classic Games IV > Megaplay Volume One > How to Be A Complete Bastard > Victory Road > And much more!

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WIN the 24-pin LC24-10 AND the Colour LC10.

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The insiders bring you their latest tips and ideas.

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How to make your word processor process words.

## GOODBYE CPCC

So the rumours were right. *CPC Computing* is no more – or rather, it's been merged into *Amstrad Computer User*, the 'official' one (see *Amscene* for the full story). We're at least partly responsible, of course: after all, their circulation figures had been plummeting at the same time ours have continued to soar (no, not a coincidence). But it's a pity, too, in a way, for it means now that what you have in your hands is now the only independent newsstand magazine for the CPC.

As such, we have an even greater responsibility to remain fiercely critical when you, the people who sustain the CPC market, are being hard done by. On the other hand, we don't mind giving credit where it's due. By inviting Incentive to grace our Christmas Cover with their *Total Eclipse Trainer*, we're hoping to encourage quality – and surely that's something we can all agree upon?

*Steve*

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A word in your ear afore we go...

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Amazing Christmas present ideas. But be quick!

# A STAR AT CHRISTMAS

No doubt like us you've drooled over many a really first class printer. Now you can enter AA's great competition, in conjunction with Star Micronics, and win either the super quality Star 24-pin LC24-10 or the colourful Star LC-10 Colour. And entering couldn't be simpler...

## Rules

1. The judge's decision is final and legally binding.
  2. No correspondence will be entered into concerning this competition.
  3. Photocopies of the entry form will be accepted, but only one entry per entrant is permitted.
  4. Entry implies acceptance of these rules.
  5. The competition is open to all *Amstrad Action* readers with the exception of employees of Future Publishing Ltd and Star Micronics Ltd.
  6. Entries should be sealed in an envelope. The winner will be notified in writing and the results will be published in *Amstrad Action*.
- Send your entry to *A Star At Christmas* 4 Queen St, Bath, BA1 1EJ before 15th January 1989.

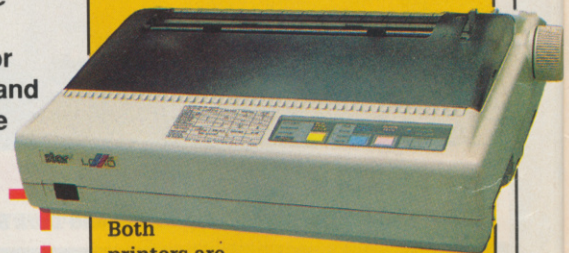
**C**hristmas is coming (oh, you'd noticed), and no doubt you're thinking of what presents you want. How about a superb top-quality printer, for all those letters, accounts, and artwork you always said you'd do if only you had the hardware? What's that? Can't afford it? Know the feeling.

Well, now's your chance! Top up your stocking by entering our Star Santa Special competition and win one of Star's fabulous

printers. And because it's Christmas and everyone's supposed to be feeling all festive and that (*bah humbug - ed*), we've made it very simple to enter.

All you have to do, for a chance of winning one of these fabulous prizes, is answer the questions, then to indicate which printer (LC-10 Colour or LC24-10) you'd prefer to win and why. And that's it! Couldn't be simpler. ●

## THE PRIZES



Both printers are superb prizes, the LC24-10 with its precision 24-pin printhead for true letter quality printing and the LC-10 Colour. Both machines offer eight fonts (including italics) and Pica, Elite, Condensed and Proportional spacing. The LC24-10 can also produce special effects such as shadow, outline and shadow outline printing. Both printers are also equipped with Star's useful 'paper parking' facility, so you don't have to remove continuous paper when using single sheets!

The LC24-10 prints at 170 cps in draft and 57 cps in letter quality mode, while the LC-10 Colour prints at 144 cps for draft and 36 cps for near letter quality. And remember, with Star's comprehensive front control panel you'll rarely have to fiddle about with DIP switches!



## THE COMPETITION

1. Arrange the following anagrams into well-known phrases:  
a) STAR'S ENGINE GOES (a Christmas message: two words);  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_  
b) A STAR MAD TONIC (computer magazine, two words);  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_  
c) STAR'S NOG TOAST (where Father Christmas hangs out, two words)  
Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name the Stars:  
a) Luke Skywalker's space adventure \_\_\_\_\_  
b) A famous pop fivesome \_\_\_\_\_  
c) Captain Kirk's journey \_\_\_\_\_

3. And to finish, here's a few questions about Wales (where Star have just opened a factory). All you have to do is to unravel these simple clues:  
a) A saint and a fire-breather \_\_\_\_\_  
b) The highest mountain in Wales \_\_\_\_\_  
c) Large onion and Welsh emblem \_\_\_\_\_

I would prefer to win the Star LC24-10/LC-10 Colour\* because (in no more than ten words) \*Delete as appropriate: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

# AMSCENE

If the writ fits... CPC news, obituaries and job opportunities

## ALTERNATIVE STOLE FROM US, CODEMASTERS CLAIM

Codemasters have issued a writ in the High Court in London seeking an injunction against Alternative, alleging breach of copyright. The legal move concerns Alternative's re-release of the old CRL game *Formula One* as *Formula Grand Prix*, with a cover bearing a marked resemblance to Codemasters 1987 hit *Grand*

*Prix Simulator*, and is part of a 'tough new policy' against those who allegedly steal their 'intellectual copyright'.

Roger Hulley of Alternative responded wearily: 'It's just a very tacky way of dealing with things, that's all. There's a wonderful invention called the telephone, and it would have been a much more pleasant

way of dealing with it. Still, Codemasters always take the tacky way' – a veiled reference to the fact that Codemasters published an advertisement in the trade paper *CTW* earlier this year speaking of 'inferior alternatives'. An apology appeared shortly afterwards.

Asked if he was going to defend the action, he replied: 'All the way. We're going to take this to its logical conclusion'. Codemasters were 'playing at schoolboys. Alternative have been wronged'.

The two covers, Hulley says, are 'Absolutely totally different' – which is something of an overstatement (see pictures).

No doubt this whole sorry episode, like so many others, will soon blow over and be forgotten.

It is unfortunate, however, because what lingers in the minds of the public is a vague and unjustified belief that the whole software industry is rotten to the core.



● David Darling, Codemasters MD: 'Tough new policy'



● Roger Hulley: 'Alternative have been wronged'



● Variations on a theme: left, Codemasters' *Grand Prix Simulator*; and Alternative's *Formula Grand Prix*. Coincidence – or theft?

## Better dead than read

*CPC Computing*, formerly *Computing with the Amstrad CPC*, is no more.

The title merges with *Amstrad Computer User* from January, leaving *Amstrad Action* as the only independent CPC newsstand magazine.

The merged title, claims Mike Cowley, of Database, is to be a 'bigger and better ACU, featuring the best elements of both magazines'. The result, it is said, will be a 'supertitle', which will 'knock Amstrad Action for six'.

According to Cowley the merger was one of four options under consideration: 1 CPCC to carry on ambitiously, with a large injection of cash. (In fact, the magazine was relaunched

only a couple of months ago. Clearly this didn't work, or it wouldn't be about to be swallowed up by another title);

- 2 Close;
- 3 Sell the title to Amstrad Action. 'But we didn't think they'd be able to come up with enough money', Cowley says;
- 4 Merge with Amstrad Computer User.

At least three of the above options created gales of laughter at Future Publishing, the company which produces Amstrad Action. Publisher Greg Ingham commented: 'They've done the decent thing and put the poor beast out of its misery. They've admitted the sheer impossibility of competing with *Amstrad Action*



● CPCC RIP: no flowers, please

and called it a day'.

Cowley is quoted on Micronet as claiming that the new merged title 'will become the leading Amstrad magazine' (italics added) – a clear acknowledgement, if one was needed, that it wasn't already. (Now who does that leave, we wonder?) This is known not to have pleased staff. However, Cowley now says he was misquoted.

## AA is after you!

Do you want to begin a career in computer journalism? Are you enthusiastic? Can you write games reviews? Good! We need you.

We're looking for a bright, keen young person to employ as a full-time games reviewer. We're based in Bath, prospects are good and you'll be working for one of Britain's fastest growing publishers. But you'll have to prove you enjoy a challenge and can produce well-written copy to deadline. What are you waiting for? Make that call! Ring Steve Carey, the editor, on 0225 446034.

*Future Publishing is an equal opportunities employer.*

## Alarming news for CPC

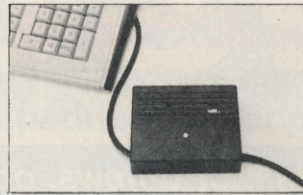
Evening all. Your average villain is a devious chappie, always on the look out for unprotected kit. And there's nothing Johnny Burglar likes less than Homeguard's anti-theft piercing 107 decibel alarm at just £19.99 with no wiring necessary available from leading High Street retailers, hardware, DIY and Department Stores. A major contribution to CPC safety, it says here.

But what if the alarm is activated accidentally, I hear

you ask? Well, funny you should ask, because it can be silenced by inserting the magnetic key supplied.

You know it makes sense.

● **And if that doesn't stop the blighters, what about this: high strength pvc-insulated steel cable fixed to the terminal at one end and by steel plates glued or screwed to the wall at the other. The screws have one-way heads, while the computer end is connected with a breakaway key which snaps off after**

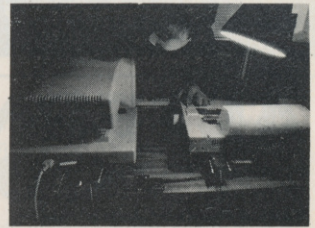


▲ A sight to make Johnny Burglar quake in his boots: The Homeguard safety alarm

tightening. 'The only way the protected equipment can be removed', say Blair Security (☎ 0922 710510), 'is by sawing through the cable with a hacksaw'. Two sizes are available, costing between

£5 and £7.

Our hardware correspondent, Ivan O'Level, points out that the Blair Security Computer Seal is not suitable for portable computers.



▲ And the Blair Security Seal. Best to make sure you can reach a power point first.

## Yearning for learning? Read on

As every parent who has tried will know, finding good educational material for use on the CPC is like searching for the Holy Grail/lost chord/fiver you left in your other jacket (delete as applicable). You'll be pleased to hear, then, of a mail order firm specialising in the supply of this elusive item.

**Rickitt Educational Media** (☎ 0460 57152) will send you a free colour catalogue on one condition: that you ask for it. We hope to

review some of their packages as soon as they get around to sending it to us (hope they're quicker with the catalogue than they are with the review copies), but here's a couple of examples...



▲ Learn and have fun with your computer!

- 'Early Words' (Willow Software): age 3-6 - £9.14 tape/£14.89 disk: *spelling with pictures;*
- 'Caesar's Travels' (Mirrorsoft): 3-9 - £11.50 tape: *word-recognition, shape and colour matching &c ;*
- 'Here and There with the Mr Men' (Mirrorsoft): ages 4-8 - £11.50 tape: *entertaining and rewarding early learning games'*
- 'Micro Maths' (LCL): 8-adult - £27.60 tape/disk *'24 easy-to-use programs for self-tuition/revision to O-Level' (that's what they think).*

## Joysticks from beyond the grave

Ever been waggling away when all of a sudden the knob of your joystick comes off in your hand? And have you found yourself just about to destroy the mothership when your button gets jammed?

You probably produce a stream of short Anglo-Saxon words and then set off into town to find an expensive new joystick.

Now there is an alternative: reconditioned joysticks from Roebuck Designs Ltd. Send them your non-functioning joystick and they send back one of the same model for only £4.50 (including VAT and postage). The joystick is guaranteed - but only for a month. Well, what are you waiting for? Send your broken down old stick to: **Roebuck Designs Ltd, Victory Works, Birds Hill, Letchworth, Herts SG6 1HX ☎ 0462 480723/480929**

## More trouble up ahead for PC200

Amstrad's coolly received Sinclair PC200 faces further difficulties from European ex-partners Schneider.

The threat comes in the form of the Euro PC - not a roving detective with a brief to clobber lager louts, but a direct competitor for the 'Sinclair Professional'. It's to be distributed by Greyhound Marketing (of Cliffdale House, 376 Meanwood Rd, Leeds), which should provide a few 'Schneider run with Greyhound'-type headlines (but not here folks, not here!). Spec includes 12in mono monitor (£359 including VAT) or 14in colour (£631). The PC drift towards 3.5inch drives is continued, by the way.

The good part is the bundle, which includes Microsoft *Works* (allegedly worth £145, but certainly better value than the PC200 *Professional Organiser*-plus-a-few-games deal).



▲ Greyhound's Phil Allott and Bob Simpson prepare to put the boot in on Sugar's 'Sinclair Professional'

## The record show

- Attendance at the Earls Court PC Show was 99,030 - 36% up on '87.
- 71,581 were business/professional visitors; 10,498 were trade.
- Reason for attending was split neatly (too neatly?) three ways: 34% to see business products, 36% for the leisure market and the remainder for both.

## Postman Pat in 'Addictive' own goal blunder probe

Oops! We laid the blame at the wrong feet: in fact *Postman Pat* is by Alternative Software. Sorry chaps (don't know who we should apologise more to, the people who are doing it or the people who accused of doing it!).



▲ 'Ere Mrs Miggins, that Amstrad Action said I was Addictive, when I'm really Alternative'

## Active bid for Freedom

Don't know quite what to make of this. French label **Coktel Vision** (don't ask me, I didn't give them their name) proudly present *Freedom*. Set in the colonies in the eighteenth century, it's all about unhappy slaves, led by your good self, making a desperate bid for - that's right - freedom. The foreman, the stewards and the manager 'all have different physical appearances and personalities' (well fancy that), and you also face the fearsome guard dogs set at your heels.

'The game', according to Active, who are distributing

the game, 'has the structure of a war game with strategic and tactical phases'. And of course there's role-playing.

Now it's well known that the French are somewhat more imaginative in their game creation, but what do you make of this one? For: strong plot, historical setting etc. Against: trite rubbish, bad taste etc. Seems like we'll just have to wait until the game's released to find out.

P.S. We'll soon be able to see what Coktel Vision have made of Walt Disney's 'Jungle Book', due for release in the new year.

## Know what I mean, Barry?



▲ The 'Clones cyclone' Barry McGuigan takes time out to give a boost to Superior/Alligata's entertaining boxing sim, *By Fair Means or Foul* (Raved in AA38). Funny, we thought Activision's Barry McGuigan's *Boxing* already

had the wee man's seal of approval. Not that we're getting at Bazza, of course, heavens no what gave you that idea (nervous laugh)?

Barry McGuigan would not like to thank Mr Eastwood.

## COMPETITION WINNERS

We've eventually managed to stagger out from under the amazing heap of entries for our three recent competitions. If only we'd thought to arrange a deal with the Post Office for bringing them all that extra work!

Second prize in our 'Not Completely Serious Competition' (AA36) goes to Mr. Alistair Hamilton of Sutton Grange Close, Harrogate, North Yorkshire; and the first prize winner is R P Binns of Heath Road, Beaconsfield, Bucks.

There were a whole heap of winners of the US Gold (also AA36) *Heroes of the Lance* competition.

First prize goes to lucky old Mr Michael Michaelides of Popes Lane, Ealing.

Second prize to Mr Richard



Palmer of High Street, Godstone. Third prize: Mr Andrew Bradshaw of Rose Walk, Purley; Miss R Hurley of Morden Street, Liverpool; Mr T C Ward of Cemetery Road, Wath on Derne, Rotherham; Damien Ryan of Thirlestane Terrace, Dublin; Claire Jenkins of Pines Gardens, Llanidloes Road, Newtown. Copies of *Heroes of the Lance* go to Mr D. Silk of Wyllye Road, Warminster; Mr Philip Williams of Park Close, Ashby-De-La-Zouch; Mr Benjamin Chee of Stilecroft Gardens, Wembley; Mr Gareth Powell of Duckpool Road, Newport in Gwent; and Mr Andrew Newsam of the

## Computer Boards

CDS Software have been quiet lately. The reason: *Tank Attack*. It's an 'interactive computer/board game', meaning you need to set up a board with plastic pieces on it next to your CPC. Two to four players take part.

Due for release just this side of Christmas, *Tank Attack* comes in a large box containing the board, plastic playing pieces and cassette/disk.



University of Warwick.

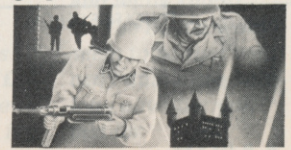
Copies of the *DRAGONLANCE* Boardgame go to: Richard Ormson of Heapy Close, Bury; Mr J Henderson of Lichfield Drive, Brixham; Ms Susan Meathrel of Fulmead Road, Reading; Mr Chris Hoy of Tweedsmuir Road, Perth; and finally, Mr (or Ms?) S M Weaver of Lumoden. Whew!

Oh, and fifty of you lucky people should soon be hearing the satisfying plop of a copy of Codemasters' *Four Soccer Simulators* falling through your letterbox.

## Nazi business

Interceptor are currently working on *F14 Tomcat*, due for release in early '89 on the budget Players label. You pilot the aforementioned aircraft through six levels of increasing difficulty populated by enemy aircraft, ships, tanks and ground installations.

Also due on the same label is *Into the Eagle's Nest*, a *Gauntlet-ish* game set in a fortified Nazi stronghold. Rather than being a straight re-release, though, there have been some improvements made to the music, sound and graphics.



## Long ago, in a galaxy (etcetera)...

... there was a trilogy of movies: *Star Wars* (bet it's on again this Christmas), *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*. The first two became above average computer games and now the

last of the trilogy blasts its way onto the small screen.

Have Domark got it right at last with a *Star Wars* game, or just come up with another average release? Find out next month...





# REACTION

Letters topical, controversial, cynical...

## How easy is 'easy'?

After reading the review of *Micro Music Creator* in AA38 I sent off for one for my 10 year old son. Regrettably the review was in many ways of the handbook and not the working program. The amendment slip merely tells you two out of five functions, demo and help, have been omitted due to lack of memory space. Since both of these struck me as being of great use and their omission appears to be as a result of a very lengthy protection system I am rather angry about it.

With kids using computers the need for making copies is ever present - regularly one of my kids or a friend will corrupt a disk and it's important to be able to replace the program from the master disk. *Micro Music Creator* not only prevents back-up but it also runs with write protect off!

Is First Byte going to replace damaged disks? If lack of disk space was a problem there was an easy way to solve it - the unused second side could have had the game on it.

When AA reviews software

## Chuckie's back!

I have just received my first computer the CPC 464, and I'm very pleased with it too. I once used my friend's computer a couple of years ago and played a game called *Chuckie Egg*. Is this wonderful creation still available from anywhere? Tracey Serrano Merthyr Tydfil

*Funny you should ask, because only the other day we heard that Pick and Choose of Manchester are apparently selling the old A'nF classic (originally reviewed way back in AA1) at £3.95. Rush your order to them at 45 Bury New Rd, Manchester or even better ☎ 061 831 7922.*

## Letters, pray!

Whether it's our reviews, the games that get released these days, the price of disks, or whatever, no doubt something in this issue of *Amstrad Action*, or something that happens to you this month, is going to:

- get your goat;
- tickle your fancy;
- rub you up the wrong way, or even;
- all of the above.

But don't just keep it under your hat - let off steam! We care, and we listen. Every single letter we receive is read, and we publish as many as we can. And one letter each month wins a software voucher for £15!

Get the writing paper out - or your printer - and write now to: **Reaction, Amstrad Action, 4Queen Street., Bath BA1 1EJ.**

could you not try out all aspects of it, as clearly not all producers are selling all that they appear to claim. And please say if back-ups are no go, since I for one don't get software I know is unbackupable. I must say, though, I don't understand why such expensive effort is needed for a £15 program. I use programs costing £1,000 at work and all are backed up (we wouldn't buy them if they couldn't be).

**John Barrett  
Essex**

A spokesman for First Byte Software said:

*First, the protection system takes up one sector of track 0.*

Since the system thinks the disk is CPM format you don't in fact lose any storage space. 1K is taken up by the boot program - but that's hardly excessive! What does take up room is the Digitizer, composer, Empty Tummy and various example sound files.

Secondly, the composer has a help section which details all key presses. And the Digitizer uses cursor or joystick movements plus the spacebar for accessing functions. Empty Tummy features a scrolling message which details the key controls. There's also a manual which contains everything you might need. And you say you need a help file?

Finally, we will gladly replace corrupted software.'

And Pat McDonald, who wrote the review, said: 'I actually don't think there's any need for a helpfile or demo. Compared to the AMS it is easy to use! But that doesn't mean that any ten year old could pick it up and start using it at once - very little serious software is that easy! I do think there's a case to be made for the parent of any child checking to see if the software will be suitable. The best way to do that is to ring the telephone number given with each review: anyone in a company's marketing or sales department should be able to help. And, as always, get a name you can quote back if you're not happy!'

## Miscalculation

I dismissed *MasterFile III* as, according to your reviews, it only supports field totals. However, field-to-field calculations are supported without having to use BASIC. While this has not changed my final decision it would appear that *Masterfile III* did not get accurate coverage in your review.

**Tom McDonagh  
Co Dublin, Ireland**

## Hurry must end soon open bank holiday Monday buy now save fffs!

I looked in your *Special Offers* pages this month for AA binders only to find that you don't do them any more! Why not?

I notice recently that you have withdrawn a lot of your earlier offers, such as your excellent *Lords of Midnight* offer, which I would have taken advantage of if I had any money at the time.

Is there any chance of purchasing

a copy of *Lords of Midnight*, if you still have any in stock, and, if not, could you tell me where I could get a copy? Stephen Trimmer Broadstairs

**Mike Scialom, who runs our Special Offers, says:**

*'First the good news. The only reason the AA binders weren't in Special Offers was pressure of space. As you can see if you look in*

*this month's Special Offers, beginning on page 87, we are constantly updating our offers so that we can pass on to you our massive buying power' (oh no, he's off). 'Where was I? Oh yes, the binders. They are still available, and we're selling as many of them as we ever have. The Order Code is AA217, the price is still a remarkable £4 per binder, and the address and so on is*

*in Special Offers.*

*'And now for the bad news: supplies of Lords of Midnight have completely dried up, and I've spent many fruitless hours trying to trace some more.*

*Perhaps if any of your readers know of a plentiful source they could write in and let us know?'*

*The lesson would seem to be that we can't guarantee how long any offer will last for.*

● **What's the Bismarck doing in AA?**

Night Raider has been let down by some shaky research by Gremlin. The Bismarck was attacked and torpedoed by Fairy Swordfish biplanes and not by Grumman Avenger as stated in your review (AA36).  
Kim Wells  
Aylesbury

Well, yes and no, Kim. We're no WWII historians (and we're certainly open to correction), but the first attacks on the Bismarck –

which had just sunk the battlecruiser Hood, with the loss of all but three of the 1,400 crew and officers – were indeed made by nine Swordfish bi-planes of the 825 Squadron on May 24th, 1941: to that extent you're right. But the main damage was, as Gremlin say, inflicted by the new American prototype torpedo plane, the Grumman Avenger.

But as I say, we're hardly experts on the subject, and further contributions are certainly welcome.

Oops! You're quite right, To m. We've been caught napping, and our only defence is to plead ignorance, blame it on Richard Monteiro who wrote the original review and isn't around to take the flak, and move quickly on...



"BIT SENSITIVE, THAT TUTOR..."

● **Skillometer**

I enjoy playing games of all kinds, but to be honest am not too skillful in any one area. So, some indication of skill required – such as 'skill level 3 - 8' (on a scale up to 10) would tell me I had a chance of playing the game with some degree of success in a relatively short time. This also shows any new owners what games they could cut their teeth on.

I'm sure there are new people out there somewhere. People don't get issued a video games machine on their 3rd Birthday you know, they have to start somewhere.

Cpl Nick Grazier  
RAF Gutersloh

It's not a bad idea, Nick, but I could foresee endless argument about what skill level a game might be.

After all, that is at least in theory something objective,

● **What on earth is astrology doing here?**

What on Earth is astrology doing in a CPC mag? It may not be immediately apparent to everyone, but, in the world of astrology, computers are ruled by Uranus, brunt of a thousand school-boy jokes and the planet concerned with originality, technology and change.

At the end of 1981, coincident with the birth of the first real home computer, the ZX81, Uranus slipped silently and for the large part unnoticed, into Sagittarius, the sign dedicated to inspiration, excitement and fun. Almost overnight the potential for entertainment was realised and the home computer became the home games machine, dominated by wonderfully exciting and colourfully flamboyant space races and dungeon romps.

Now, seven years on, Uranus is once again poised to change its celestial tenancy. In December of this year it will quit Sagittarius, the symbolic child of the zodiac, for good (as far as we are concerned) and move into the maturity of Capricorn, a more comfortable and powerful position for it, and an infinitely more controlled industrious and organising influence for us.

It has become a noticeable feature over the past few months during its tran-

sition, that the content of computer magazines in general (your own included) has tended to become less frivolous and somewhat more orientated to the serious user – indicating presumably their readers' requirements. Even the programs/programmers themselves are starting to reflect a more responsible attitude and depth of response to what is needed.

Does this mean that home computing is about to come of age. Will 1989 see a completely new range of influences and motivations for the home computer user, more realistic gameplay, more customer satisfaction, more value?

Or does it just mean that Gary Barrett will manage not to lose so many of my cheats? Either way it has to be an improvement.

Phil Howard  
Nottingham

We're completely speechless, nearly. Here we were, convinced that the Man from Mapperley was only the world's greatest poka-master, and it turns out he's a secret astrologer as well!

Anything else we should know about – any nuclear physics you get up to in your spare time, Phil? Hang-gliding? Espionage?

while the Value Verdict makes no serious claim to be so. Still, if enough people indicate (i.e.

write in saying so!) we are happy to give the people what they want!

● **dBASE 3+? Look, are you absolutely certain this is Amstrad Action?**

I use a 6128 at home but an IBM clone at work. On the latter we have software that costs about 100 times that of CPC software. You may well wonder what the software vendors do to protect such valuable and costly products from being ripped off. Let me tell you.

DBase3+ sells for £684.25 by the Amstrad User Club to non-members. We have it on our

PC compatible at work. It is totally unprotected.

Have I ripped it off? Have I ripped off SuperCalc 4 or WordStar which we have as well and are also unprotected? Not only has no-one else had a copy of these programs, but the version 1.1 update we received some 9 months ago (for DBase3+) is not even loaded on our machine let alone other people's!

If it's OK for £600

products, why isn't it OK for £1.99 cassettes?

J Fairlie  
Bristol

The £600 package you refer to does have copy-protection, in the form of the 600 page manual that you need to work out how to use it. In fact, the main reason disk protection was dropped was because users threatened to sue producers if their key disks

failed and they were unable to access their £10,000,000's worth of data.

In any case, with DBase3 and many other packages, when you first load the package you're requested for a name and address; and each disk has a unique registration number, which in theory could be traced back to the original if it is copied.

The fact is, you're not

really comparing like with like. The market, the machines and the users of PC's are all totally different from CPC users.

Using your argument, you could also enquire why CPC games don't cost £20 and more, as they do for the PC; and why you can buy a first-class word processor for the CPC for less than the VAT on a wp package for the PC!



Sugarman by Sarkar

# HOT TIPS

## The hottest of the hot, from PAT McDONALD

### Clanking disk drives

Having just read Stephen Godrich's letter in AA36, I would like to offer a few words of advice to him and any others with the same problem.

If you separate the keyboard by taking out all the screws in the back and the two in the side and then carefully lift the two pieces apart, you'll see the disk

drive mechanism. On this you will see the arm which rotates out and in to read the disk. The problem is that this arm has rotated too far in and can no longer reach the disk, thus the clicking noise.

All you have to do is, using a small screwdriver, manually rotate this arm a few turns. There is a small screw on the arm, which can be used to rotate the arm. Once adjusted correctly, carefully

### £20 anyone?

We welcome contributions to *Hot Tips*, and the best published each month earn their author £20. So what are you waiting for?

Address your work to:  
Hot Tips, AA, 4 Queen St, Bath,  
Avon, BA1 1EJ

reassemble the two pieces of keyboard making sure that the plastic ribbon connector has not fallen out from the base to the top - if it has it merely pushes back in. Replace all the screws and the disk drive should now work.

This has happened to me three times in the two years I have had my 6128, and it has even happened to a friend who has a 664 plus disk drive. Is it a common fault?

I hope I've saved a few pennies for those who would otherwise have taken their computer back to an expensive repair shop.

**K Greener, Chester le Street**

### DIZZY

Disk owners who have backed up the AA37 tape! For the files on a disk, type the following:-

```
MEMORY &3FFF
LOAD "CODE2.BIN"
MEMORY &9B00
CALL &9BF5
```

NEW

Now, you have 39680 or so bytes of free memory to program with, and the added advantage of interrupt driven music! Type:-

```
CALL &9BF5 (stops music)
CALL &9BF5, 1 (tune one on)
CALL &9BF5, 1, 2 (tune two on)
```

As the music plays under interrupt it won't affect your programming: so how about that for fun!

**Niall Brady, Sligo**

*Nice one Niall. But do remember readers, that the program is copyrighted to the Oliver twins. So don't try palming it off as your own work: it'll only end in tears, prosecution, conviction and lifetime imprisonment.*

### More

On typing in Phillip Tate's solitaire game (*Typeins* AA39) I found that the last few lines of Basic was still showing on the screen after loading it in. I don't know if anyone else has had this happen as well, but after a bit of experimenting I discovered that you can clear it off the screen by adding to line 810, changing the CLS to CLS#1.

**J W Boxall, Peterborough**

## Character-building and time saving

I was disappointed to find errors in the code for the Real Time Clock and New Character Sets (just the things for my all singing and dancing WYSIWIG word processor) in the birthday issue.

First the New Character Set wouldn't work at all, so out with the disassembler. I found three RST 08 calls to location 1400 in the lower ROM - the routine which prints characters to the screen. Now I have a 664 (yes, some people did buy them), which has Basic 1.1. For my machine the location of this routine is 13FA. So for all those 664 and 6128 owners, change all 00, 94 pairs in the listing to FA, 93.

Direct calling of routines in the ROMs is a big naughty. One should make copies of the actual machine jump blocks. Then the 464/664/6128 ROM changes do not cause problems. Secondly, the Real Time Clock

The checksums need to be changed to:

```
140 DATA 21, FA, 93, 22, 5B, BB, C9, 3E, 20, CD, A5, BB, 01
    , 08, 03, 7E, CB, 3F, A6, 77, 08EB
150 DATA 23, 0B, 78, B1, C2, 37, 90, C9, FE, 7F, F2, 4C, 90, CF
    , FA, 93, C5, D5, E5, CD, 0C9C
160 DATA 00, CD, 78, BB, 7C, FE, 01, 3E, 0A, CC, 51, 91, E1, D1
    , C1, F1, C9, CF, FA, 93, 0BFA
```

resets the machine at midnight and jumps forward seven minutes at every hour. So for all those Cinderellas who don't wish to be caught out I have made the following changes:

```
230 DATA 9C3CFE18CC538032429C3E07CD5AF
240 DATA 5ABB3E00C93E00C93E06CD1EBB50D
```

I was pleasantly surprised to find this routine keeps good time in spite of many disk accesses.

**Simon Kidd, Malvern**

*Many thanks to all those who sent in*

*corrections to the Real Time Clock.. This one was presented purely on terms of content but I'm sure that there's hundreds of CPC experts out there.*



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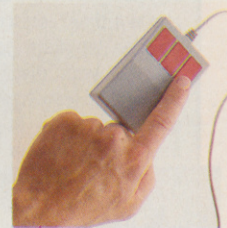
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# AA CHRISTMAS

The one you don't have to write away for! In our special festive extravaganza we have a special, unique *TOTAL ECLIPSE TRAINER* from Incentive, together with a whole host of other goodies: *Isotopes*, a brilliant complete game; an art package; disk and reviews archivers – and *Gibberish!* Read on...

## ISOTOPES

### ● Jeremy Fox-Geen

Radioactive waste: dump it or recycle it, you just can't love it. In this game, you must guide a robot round the screen, whose job description reads 'isotopes eater'. He goes round quite happily, making the environment safer. Pity those rocks get in the way: they make a right mess of its digestive system.

Also, as the robot eats waste, it tends to mutate. To be precise, it

### Controls

Z = Left      X = Right  
+ = Up        ? = Down

*Change speed and instructions are at the beginning.*

grows. And making the robot try and eat itself is bad, bad news.

It's hard to say exactly what makes this program so good: it could be the graphics, which are multicoloured. Might be the speed, which can be varied from arcade ace down to editor level. Have fun playing it, and don't go off the edge of the screen – you'll be terminated for dereliction of duty.



▲ Isotopes, radioactive waste zapper

## Solar System

### ● Graeme Porteous, Glasgow

Graeme is a student, and wrote a huge program for his degree. He chopped a bit out, smartened it up and sent it in. It draws the orbits and positions of the planets in our solar system, for a given time, down to the last hour and minute.

The program starts with the terrestrial or inner planets. These are all fairly close to the sun, and the positions change relatively fast. On the outer planets, the orbits are relatively larger, and planets go much slower.

This is a very educational program, teaching a lot of facts about the solar system. Which planet has a strange orbit? Which goes backwards relative to the others? Look at the program and have the situation demonstrated. 128K owners, if they load Bankman first, can flick between the two map scales.

## Disk Library System

### ● Jeremy Longley, Tonbridge

Tired of searching through endless piles of disks for just one program? Do you feel too lazy to stick all the filenames in a database, one at a time? Read on.

This excellent program makes keeping track of your disk collection very simple indeed. All you have to do is, log in your disks, one side at a time. The program reads the directory in, and makes a list of all the programs, and which disk they're on.

Each disk side must be named in some way, but that's no hardship. Searching for a program name is easy, and the system even understands the \* and ? wildcards. When you update a disk, re-logging in is no problem at all. This program really does make short work of bringing order out of chaos. And it's menu driven as well, so there's no long list of commands to learn.

## Reviews

### ● Frank Martin, Dublin

A short and sweet database program, for one application only: keeping track of AA reviews. You know all those indices and lists of cheats, reviews etc? Well, now you can create your own.

Type in the relevant AA rating, page number and issue, and any comments that you think are relevant. Looking items up is easy, and the program can store about 200 reviews: that's a year's worth of *Amstrad Action*. Not bad for a 3K program.

## Perspective Art

### ● Gavin Barry/Alan Brunyee

Art programs generally are not very good at creating perspective. This is the illusion of objects receding into the distance, in the correct proportion so as to look realistic.

Perspective art is a clearcut program that

lets you create line drawings in mode 1. It isn't up to much on its own, but when combined with another mode 1 art package you can come up with some very life like graphics.

If you have a 464, then ditch line 310 of the program. Otherwise take out the apostrophe at the beginning of the line to allow that part of the program to work – it uses the FILL command of the 664/6128.

The bad news: this program requires a joystick.

The good news: if you have a joystick, it's pretty easy to use.

### Controls

P+number	change background colour
I+number	change ink colour
A+number	change alternate ink colour
B+number	change border colour
CTRL-C	clear screen
M+1	select new vanishing point
M+2	Perspective draw to vanishing point
M+3	draw lines
S	save
L	load
F	Fill (6128/664 only)
X	XOR mode on/off
R	draw radial to vanishing point

## Gibberish

### ● Robert Eadie, Wedmore

Displays randomized sentences, with various combinations of nouns, verbs and adjectives. Gibberish works almost automatically. Simply press a key, and a new selection of nonsensical sentences will be displayed. It's great fun – and useless!

## Encore!

Now's your chance to see what makes a great *Type-In*. Two of the programs on the tape – *Gibberish* and *Solar System* – are also in *Type-Ins* this month.

# COVER CASSETTE

## TOTAL ECLIPSE TRAINER

FREESCAPE FROM INCENTIVE SOFTWARE

At AA we believe in bringing you the really great games. So here's a unique opportunity to look at the biggest innovation in games software during 1988 - *Freescape*.

Exploring a *Freescape* world is like no other game: now here's your chance...

### ▲ Ray's a curse

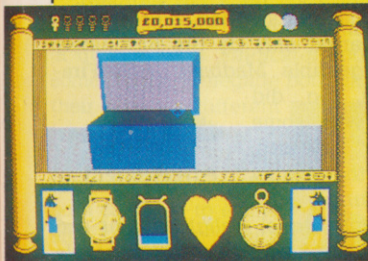
You start the game in the 1930's, having landed your plane next to a previously

unexplored ancient pyramid. Such tombs are sources of great wealth, and naturally you'd like a nose round. Problem is, there's a curse. An ancient curse. At the top of the pyramid is a temple. Anything blocking the sun's rays to the temple will be annihilated. And within two hours, the moon will eclipse the sun, be smashed into pieces and shower the surface of planet Earth with meteorites, ending civilisation as we know it. Only you can save the day.

But be warned. The time limit is two hours real time, and if you're going to succeed you need to know what you're doing.

### ▲ Go for gold

That's where the *Total Eclipse Trainer* comes in, providing you with a golden



▲ There's gold in that there chest

## Mechanics

To load the *Total Eclipse Trainer*, type RUN". (Disk owners type |TAPE first.) Then press another key when it's loaded.

The game backs itself up if you indicate. If you want a tape backup, no further commands are necessary, except for replying Y to the question, 'Do you want to save? Disk copies?' Type |TAPE. IN rather

than |TAPE at the beginning of the operation.

This is easy enough, but it means you're stuck with that irritating query every time you load the *Trainer*.

To get rid of it, delete line 20 from the loader program TEDEM.BAS.

Don't forget to re-save the TEDEM.BAS program after you've changed it!

## Controls

Forward	O	Look up	P
Back	K	Face forward	F
Left	Q	Height change	H
Right	W	▲ Stand/crouch - if crouching, speed is halved.	
▲ These keys also move sights if gun is drawn)		Interrupt game	I
▲ Joystick works too		Rest	R
Look down	L	▲ Shelter needed - calms the heart	
▲ Look before you leap!			
Draw/Replace gun	SPACEBAR		
Speed Change	S (Slow, medium, fast)		
Angle Change	A (Small, medium, large)		
U turn	U		

opportunity to explore *Freescape* and the pyramid. Your training mission: collect six treasures. Simple, eh? Well, no, actually.

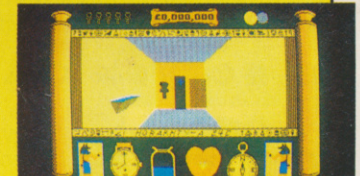
Be warned, the traps that have guarded the tomb for all those years are still active, just waiting for you to put a foot wrong. So be careful, and keep looking around. Help is at hand, in the form of an ankh, the Egyptian symbol of life. The ankh isn't difficult to find, if you have an open mind.

### ▲ Help, mummy!

The mummies, traps and so on spit an ancient poison, which increases your heart rate. If your heart beats too fast, you get heart failure.

There are two ways to alleviate this condition: first by resting (but that uses up valuable time) and secondly by keeping your water canister topped up, to avoid dehydration. But that means finding troughs of water.

Falling increases your heart rate. Keep an eye on your compass if you get lost: it's a lifesaver. Finally, do keep an eye on the time - you haven't got all day you know!



▲ Striding around, looking for a fast buck

## PROBLEMS?

If your tape won't load (rare but it does happen) return it to the duplicators, who guarantee to replace it for you:

**Duff AA cover tapes, Spool Ltd,  
Unit 30, Deeside Industrial Park,  
Deeside, Clywd, CH5 2NU.**

## DISK TRANSFER

Simply type RUN"ONDISK. The ONDISK program (courtesy of Gary) is the last program on side B, so fast forward it to about half way to save time. Once the program has run, rewind the tape to the beginning of side B. ONDISK will back up the programs, one at a time. This takes about six minutes and the

utilities and help file occupy 39K of a disk.

Finally, I'll give last what I should have given first. To run the help file, type (|TAPE if disk owner) RUN" <RETURN>.

Then, to run each program in turn, reset the machine and repeat the procedure.

# THE AA GAMES AWARDS

★ 1 9 8 8 ★

A hushed and expectant crowd gathers at *Amstrad Action Towers* to await the results of the 1988 awards. What was the game of the year? Who lived up (and down) to expectations? Who exceeded them? The tension is mounting, as compere Steve 'Mr Sincerity' Carey steps forward nervously to tear open the gold envelopes and mispronounce the winners' names...

## GAMES HOUSE OF THE YEAR

As ever it's been a varied year on the games front. Among the more than 170 releases for the CPC in 1988 that we've reviewed in AA (and that's excluding adventures, covered separately in *The Pilgrim*) there's been startling originality and stupefying banality in about equal measure. Software houses have come (**Mandarin**, **Dinamic**) and software houses have gone (**Powerhouse**, **Piranha**, **Ariolasoft**), but the **Digital Integrations**, **Rainbirds**, **Hewsons**, **Grem-lins**, **Microproses**, **Electronic Arts**, **US Golds**, **Mediagenics** and **Oceans** of this world go effortlessly on, coining it. Anyone who doubts the money still being made only has to attend a PC Show, where vulgar ostentation continues to be the rule rather than the exception. And it remains the case that the biggest rewards don't always go to those who produce the best work.

Still, that's not to say that innovation, hard work and sheer originality doesn't pay dividends. One of the best of the big players, **Electronic Arts**, had a gem of a year, with *Articfox*, *Bard's Tale* and *PHM Pegasus* as three straight *Raves/Mastergames*

### ELECTRONIC ARTS

in a row. It's a measure of their achievement that *The Train* could be considered a disappointment. For anyone else it would have been a triumph.

### Stupid and offensive

As you can see from our comprehensive breakdown over the page of who did what in '88 and how well, other mere mortal houses could only proceed, it



seemed, on a less certain path. **US Gold**, to take one example, released an astonishing 20 titles (some admittedly compilations) and had a rollercoaster twelve months, beginning with a respectable conversion of the arcade hit *720* and the much improved sequel *Gauntlet II* in January, the iffy *Rygar*, *Bedlam* and *California Games*, and



the wretched *Out Run* and *Rolling Thunder* in the spring. Summer saw credibility return with *Bad Cat* and *Impossible Mission II*, only to take a severe dent once more courtesy of *Shackled* and the appalling *Psycho Pigs*, memorable only for a stupid and offensive advert that aimed to stir up some controversy and aroused only contempt. Then, from nowhere it seems, springs *Heroes of the Lance*, a strong candidate for game of the year and one that held up production seriously here at AA Towers while Gary battled to seize the disks of *Mishakal* (he did it too - eventually!). So graphics weren't its strong point, but what a game!

### Heckle and jibe

The same Jekyll and Hyde story could be told of **Grem-lin**. *Masters of the Universe*, *Tour de Force* and *Blood Valley* all lost

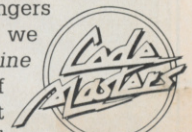


friends: *Venom Strikes Back*, *Blood Brothers*, *Night Raider* and the very accomplished and much-loved *Mickey Mouse* (which lost out in some quarters because macho male critics were afraid to be thought sissies) won many of them back. *MM* was, against the odds, the tie-in game of the year on the CPC.

**Ocean** - whose *Gryzor*, *Matchday II* and *Platoon* (never mind the ideology, feel the joystick) were all deserved smash hits - had a great year, marred only by the fortunately forgettable *Madballs*. And **Firebird** too did well, with some thirteen releases, of which the highly enjoyable *Bubble Bobble*, the *Druid* sequel *Enlightenment* and the wonderful looking *Savage* were notable successes, and only the **Silverbird** *Stunt Bike Simulator* failed to impress.



In the budget department the Darlings continued the **Codemasters** 'believe it or not' rise, featuring on AA's September front cover (in a spectacularly awful photo, it must be admitted), and even making it to Network Seven. Their work may not be as sophisticated as some, but they must be doing something right. And it has to be admitted that **Codemasters** more than anyone demonstrate the dangers of the reviewing system: we all hated *Fruit Machine Simulator*, but enough of you disagreed to make it a big, big hit. (It would make a change, by the way, to see one or two intelligent and articulate letters on the game reviewing debate.) If anyone at AA, though, sees another 'cute' picture of eight month old Willie and four day old Wanda getting high scores in *Ninja Nappywetting Simulator* we'll be sick, we just know we will.



And so to the awards. Our table of software houses' performances for the year (which you can see in full over the page) has been compiled on a percentage basis - i.e., the average score achieved in AA games review verdicts. Admittedly this does tend to penalise houses who produce a whole host of crackers spoiled by just the

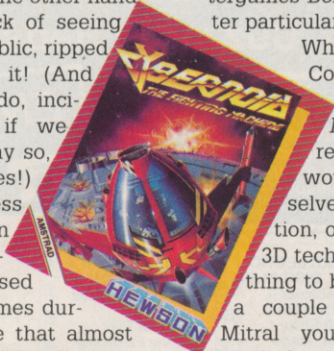
occasional turkey, but on the other hand we're getting heartily sick of seeing you, the games buying public, ripped off. We won't stand for it! (And another thing we won't do, incidentally, is soft-pedal: if we detest something, we'll say so, and hang the consequences!)

The list is more or less self-explanatory, and can swiftly be reduced by subtracting those who released fewer than, say, three games during the year. (It's notable that almost thirty houses had only one or two games out during the past year.) Of those who remain, the top seven places are taken by **Electronic Arts**, **Hewson**, **Imagine**, **Incentive** (a special case) **Microprose**, **Digital Integration** and **Ocean**.

**Electronic Arts** and **Ocean** we've already discussed, but what about **Hewson**? They produced a whole string of consistently excellent games - most notably *Cybernoids I & II* and *Nebulus*, *Mastergames* all. To have the entirely respectable *Marauder* and *Uridium* as your lowest-rated games is no mean feat.

**Imagine** too have succeeded in winning a name for themselves as producers of quality, with *Vindicator* and the gruesome *Target Renegade* both impressive in their very different ways.

**Microprose** and **Digital Integration** both continue to excite and impress, with *Gunship* from the former and the two *Mas-*



tergames *Bobsleigh* and *ATF* from the latter particularly good efforts.

What a year for Ian Andrew and Co! Last Christmas (OK so that was 1987, who's counting?) *Driller* appeared to the kind of reviews most games houses would blush to write for themselves. What attracted most attention, of course, was 'Freescape', the 3D technique which was 'the nearest thing to being there'. After you'd spent a couple of hours on

*Mitral* you suspended disbelief totally, and it seemed to become a matter of life and death that you find those elusive last few gas build-ups.

But what should not escape anyone's notice was the sheer effort and skill that had gone into the game-play itself. Here was something you could really get your teeth into straight away - none of this having to die a hundred deaths before you could work out what the hell was going on!

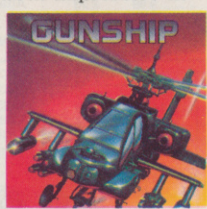
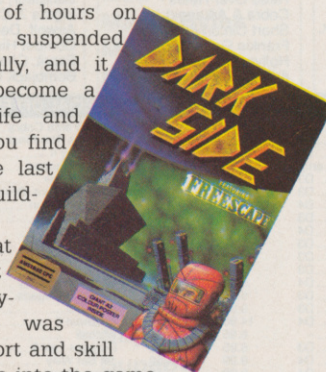
Summer saw the sequel, *Dark Side*, which was everything *Driller* had been and more. This time round the appalling time constraints were enough to panic the most hardened of players.

And now it's *Total Eclipse* time. We have a full and comprehensive review in *Action Test*, and of course the exclusive

demo on our fabulous seasonal cover tape, but it's worth noticing here that **Incentive** have quite literally come down to Earth - Egypt, to be precise. Andrew himself has likened the game to 'something like Indiana Jones in *The Temple of Doom*', and you can see what he means. Furthermore the increased number of locations and the improvement in speed of movement combine to provide something that's potentially even more gripping than its two predecessors. So **Incentive** can congratulate themselves on such a fine performance.

But in first place, for a string of intelligent, attractive and well-presented games that make a release from this company always something to look forward to, the AA award for games house of the year goes to **Electronic Arts**. *The Bard's Tale* comes agonisingly close to being game of the year, and *Arcticfox*, *PHM Pegasus* and *The Train* are all **Raves EA** can be well proud of, and which guarantee value for money. In the coming months we can expect *Skate or Die*, *Ferrari Formula One* and *Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight Trainer*. As anyone with a PC will tell you, *Chuck Yeager* is a superb game, and well worth looking forward to.

Long may their joystick fire! ●



## Desert island disks

Eventually, after much argument and the occasional tantrum, we came up with our list of ten totally wicked favourites of the year. We agreed on nine games, and played tug of war over the tenth. We don't make any pretence of objectivity, and if you disagree - well, tough!

- Advanced Tactical Fighter
- Bard's Tale
- Bubble Bobble
- Cybernoid or Cybernoid II
- Driller or Dark Side
- Matchday II
- Mickey Mouse
- Nebulus
- Pirates (if you can afford it)
- Target Renegade

# Game of the year is...

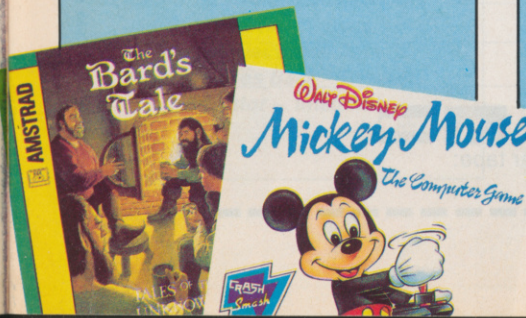
# DARK SIDE!

Set on Evath's other moon, *Tripuscid*, the sequel to *Driller* achieved what many thought was impossible by improving on it while continuing to use 'Freescape'. **Incentive's** task was to take what was no longer so startlingly original and use it to create something that was even better. They succeeded.



▲ Ian Andrew: 'speechless'

For one thing the time-limit this time round was sickeningly tight, and few of us who played *Dark Side* will readily forget the rising panic as that timer crept ever upward. '*Driller* was good', Gary's Verdict concluded, 'but *Dark Side* is even better because of the more logical problems and tighter time limit'. So step forward Ian Andrew and the **Incentive** crew and accept your reward...





## Who did what in '88

House	releases reviewed	average rating%	House	releases reviewed	average rating%
Activision	7	59	Infogrames	7	58
Addictive	1	72	Konami	1	51
Americana	1	40	Leisure Genius	1	63
Ariolasoft	1	76	Loriciels	5	67
Audiogenic	1	81	McQuoid	1	64
CDS	1	82	Mad X	4	44
CRL	3	40	Magic Bytes	1	58
Code Masters	6	53	Martech	1	65
Capcom	1	72	Mastertronic	2	57
Databytes	2	75	Microprose	3	80
Digital Integration	2	92	Mirrorsoft	2	66
Dinamic	1	69	Ocean	7	73
Domark	6	57	Palace	1	81
Electronic Arts	4	84	Piranha	2	64
Electric Dreams	4	57	Powerhous	1	66
Elite	5	71	Rack It	1	54
Endurance	1	63	Reaktor	1	77
Firebird	13	60	Skyslip	1	36
Go	6	52	Superior	1	83
Grand Slam	5	56	System 3	1	68
Gremlin	17	60	Titus	2	59
Hewson	6	81	US Gold	20	61
Imagine	6	81	Virgin	2	62
Imageworks	1	83	Zeppelin	1	45
Incentive	2	94			

### Raves of 1988

*Arcticfox* – Electronic Arts  
*Arkanoid II, Revenge of Doh* – Imagine  
*Bubble Bobble* – Firebird  
*By Fair Means or Foul* – Superior  
*Captain Blood* – Infogrames  
*Enlightenment Druid II* – Firebird  
*Fernandez Must Die* – Imageworks  
*Get Dexter II* – Infogrames/Ere  
*Gryzor* – Ocean  
*Gunship* – Microprose  
*Impact* – Audiogenic  
*Impossible Mission II* – US Gold  
*Live and Let Die* – Domark  
*Matchday II* – Ocean  
*Mickey Mouse* – Gremlin  
*PHM Pegasus* – Electronic Arts  
*Platoon* – Ocean  
*Savage* – Firebird  
*Sorcerer Lord* – PSS  
*Spy v s. Spy trilogy* – Databytes  
*Stifflyp & Co* – Palace  
*Train* – Electronic Arts  
*Venom Strikes Back* – Gremlin  
*Vindicator* – Imagine

## THE YEAR'S MASTERGAMES

- **January – Driller**  
Incentive's superbly innovative 'Freescape' epic
- **February – Bobsleigh**  
Digital Integration's wonderful snow business
- **March – Deflektor**  
Vortex/Gremlin addictive 60 level 'cell-out'
- **April – Advanced Tactical Fighter**  
Digital Integration flying high again!
- **May – Cybernoid**  
Hewson and programmer Cecco strike gold
- **June – Nebulus**  
Hewson/Gremlin fiendish Pogo demolition job
- **July – Dark Side**  
Incentive are back to top *Driller*
- **August – Target Renegade**  
Imagine's vigilante violence
- **September – The Bard's Tale**  
Electronic Arts go for the role-playing vote
- **October – Heroes of the Lance**  
US Gold's complex and engrossing AD&D'er
- **November – no award**  
If only *The Train* hadn't run out of steam!
- **December – Cybernoid II**  
Hewson and Cecco get set to have themselves a merry little Christmas

# 1989 here we come!

So that was 1988. But what about the year ahead? STEVE CAREY gets the low-down from those in the know

**F**or most of us, the turning of the year offers a natural break, the ideal opportunity to consider what the future will hold. It's a time for New Year's resolutions to be made (lose some of that Christmas weight; spend less than you earn; get somewhere with *The Hunt for Red October*), and a time for New Year's resolutions to be broken.

Well, it's not that different for software houses. They too make promises they know they haven't a hope of keeping, in the shape of release dates that at present are no more than half a dozen half-finished action sequences and some artwork. Still, what they tell us they're doing is the closest we're going to get for the time being to what they actually are doing, so here goes...

## Coining it

For US GOLD, the CAPCOM string of coin-op licences continues with *Led Storm*, a futuristic driving combat game

featuring 'laser enhanced destruction powers'. Hot on its heels comes *Black Tiger*, which pits you against three fearsome dragons in a five-level subterranean eight-directional scroller. Later on we're promised *Forgotten World*, about which little is known (even by US GOLD, we suspect): 'its most impressive feature', we discover, 'is the frightening pace of the action speed as the game hots up'. Roughly translated, this means, 'We haven't got even the faintest of ideas what it's about. Why don't you go away and ask someone else your damn fool questions?'

## Commendably hazy

DIGITAL INTEGRATION'S Rod Swift reveals that they are releasing *F16 Combat Fighter* on the Amstrad, and is commendably hazy about release dates: 'probably in the second quarter of '89', is all he will commit himself to. 'It's very definitely the next generation over

what we've done before as far as complexity and accuracy are concerned'. He is frank, too, about the place of the CPC in DI's plans: 'Of course the 8 bit machines are still important to us, but it has to be said that we've found it a struggle as far as performance, speed and so on are concerned.'

INCENTIVE'S Ian Andrew, still showing evident signs of relief and jubilation at having completed *Total Eclipse*, is understandably cagey about future commitments: 'We'll probably be doing just two games for the CPC, as we did in '88. We'll definitely be supporting the CPC, naturally in *Freescape* or an enhanced version of it. We're constantly updating it and adding to it, so that we get better and better each time.' More than this he was unwilling to say.

It promises to be an interesting twelve months at CODEMASTERS, where they've just released their first full-price game (*Four Soccer Simulators*, reviewed on page 61 this issue) and thus at a stroke opened up a whole new future. At the same time they're moving up their budget price from £1.99 to £2.99 and aiming more titles at 'the lower end of the full-price market'.

There are said to be a number of *Dizzy* spin-offs, sequels and follow-ons in the pipeline. Look out in the months to come for *Treasure Island Dizzy*, *Dizzy Goes to Hollywood*, and a sequel to *Gone with the Wind* entitled *Dizzy: Back Again with the Wind*. The blame should be laid squarely with those people who, claim Codemasters, inundate their HQ with fan-mail for the little chappie. Needless to say there are more

## Violence to come

HEWSON appear to have a violent year in prospect. Look at these:

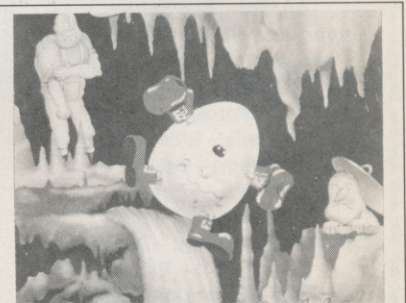
- *Eliminator*. Expected January '89. By John Phillips (of *Nebulus* renown) and converted for CPC by John Wildsmith. 'Hammer down the highway', you're instructed, 'spin to the ceiling, flip across the floor in this electrifying, death-defying blood arising action game'. Phew! If the game matches the advance publicity then
  - a) it'll be the first time any game by anyone does; and
  - b) it'll be mega!
- *Stormlord*. Due February. From the quality pinkies of Raffaele Cecco, of *Cybernoids I & II* and *Exolon* fame. The scenario involves a mission to free the captured and defend the peace and tranquility of your realm (peace? tranquility? what kind of game is this?). You must repel the evil Queen, or else (that's more like it!)...
- *Kalashnikov* - announced for June. The new Chris Hinsley ST game gets a CPC conversion. You're the guardian of an alien death chamber



▲ Andrew Hewson of that ilk: threatening violence!

protecting the nuclear-charged tobs from energy consuming parasites. Don't expect to see this game released though - the name's being changed soon (cold war thaw?).

- And finally, *Astaroth*, a conversion of Marc Dawson's new ST game, in which you aid Ozymandias (any relation to Ozzy Osbourne?), the fearless brigand, make his way through the labyrinthine crypt filled with treasures both precious and magical, using mind-power and magic to destroy Astaroth, Angel of Death, and her evil minions.



▲ Dizzy: about to spawn a host of sequels. Can nothing be done to protect the nation's youth from this dire threat?

simulators in the pipeline: about 439 at last count. And long term there are plans to develop the role-playing game market, beginning with an Amstrad conversion now under development (doesn't take very much, truth be told) for the Commodore 64 *Superdragon Slayer*.

It's too early to tell yet, but it is going to take a great deal to convince the 12-to-14 year old boys, who traditionally have been their strongest market, to find a tinner for a Codemasters title. And no-one is going to be easy on the Darlings at that price!

Still, their 'firm commitment to the CPC' is to be applauded, and it would be nice if it could imitated. 'We find the Amstrad serves us well', says Managing Director David Darling, 'and we intend to continue working on it throughout the year ahead'.

## Chuck: up in the air

ELECTRONIC ARTS have some mouth-watering prospects in the offing. Coming almost before you know it is *Skate or Die*, which offers five skateboarding events: Ramp Freestyle, Downhill Race, Ramp Hill Jump, Pool Jousting and Inner City Downhill Battle - in which you compete against computer opponents Poseur Pete, Aggro Eddie and, toughest of all, Lester.



▲ Chuck Yeager in person: 'The guys at EA', he says, 'have taken the terror factor out of test piloting and made it fun for everybody'

Hot on the heels of the skateboard, *Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight Trainer* will be taking off. General Yeager was the man who broke the sound barrier, and he helped artist Ned Lerner in designing the game, which has already been an enormous hit on the PC.

The game 'includes 14 different aircraft from Spitfire to Experimental Jets, and features three levels of onscreen instructions from Chuck'. The first teaches basic flying skills, the second goes on to advanced manoeuvres like 'aileron rolls and hammerhead stalls' (haven't got the foggiest what they are, but they sound pretty stomach-churning to me). By the third and final level the player is learning aerobatic stunts and is ready to use the Formation Flying feature while still keeping lunch down.

The problem EA face is living up to recent releases and matching expectation with achievement. Still, you can do it, can't you guys?

Later on in '89 from EA we can expect *Chainsaw Warrior*, the licence of the Games Workshop solo role-playing game. It's an arcade action game originated in the UK by Equinox and featuring a central character who's apparently something of a cross between Rambo and the bionic man. Mission: save the world from killer zombies in an hour or less. Finally, *Ferrari Formula One* is a grand prix racing simulation of the 1986 season featuring some 16 tracks. The rest you can more or less work out for yourself.

## Hairy arm syndrome

AGAIN AGAIN promise *The Munsters*, *Operation Hormuz*, *Gilbert* (yes, the 'hilarious alien' - well, one out of two ain't bad - from Tyne Tees TV) and Durell's *Saboteur III*.

ALTERNATIVE have a whole pile of titles coming at you, ranging from *Postman Pat* - their first budget licence - to *Graham Gooch* by way of *Oink*, *The Double*, *Mini Office*, *Academy* (aka *Tau Ceti II*) and the stomach churning *Slug*.

Over at MARTECH Managing Director either has something very special up his sleeve, or in fact nothing more than a hairy arm. He flatly refused to part with any information, and would only say: 'We have some exciting products in the pipeline, the very nature of which does mean that we can't release information until well into the New Year. But I'm sure people will sit up and take notice - especially you Amstrad users!' (He added that last bit just to show off that he knew who *Amstrad Action* was.)

ACTIVISION'S plans include a host of licences, though details are sketchy. They include Sega's *Time Scanner*, *Galaxy Force*, *Sonic Boom*, *Altered Beast*, *Hot Rod*, *Ace Attacker* and from 20th Century Fox *Die Hard*. The arrival of new boys John Twiddy (*Ikari Warriors*, *Last Ninja*), Hugh Riley and Mev Dinc (*Last Ninja II*), operating as Vivid Images Ltd, should also help. Vice-President of Activision Europe Rod Cousins told AA that the signing is evidence that 'we are continuing to attract and invest in new talent, which in turn strengthens our position in the industry'.

In addition to Schwarzenegger vehicle licence *The Running Man*, GRANDSLAM have secured the computer game rights to *Thunderbirds*, one of those TV programmes it's inexplicably becoming cool to know all about - though older readers will remember just how naff it



▲ The Munsters are back: coming soon from Again Again

was once considered. Naturally it features all the crew: the Traceys, Virgil, Brains, Lady Penelope and her driver Parker.

Another mass youth appeal licence Grandslam have outbid the competition for is *The Dandy*, featuring Smasher, Korky the Cat and the editor's personal favourite, Desperate Dan. Those of you brought up on *Viz* may find it all a little quaint and innocent, but for the nostalgia kick *The Dandy* is potentially the capture of '89. Eagerly awaited.

Not quite so eagerly awaited is Grandslam's fourth acquisition, *The Saint and Greavsie*, who are to computers what Les Dawson is to fashion design. Undaunted, Stephen Hall of Grandslam boasts that these four titles 'are a continuation of the growth and strength of Grandslam in 1989'. But what about the CPC? 'Obviously these titles will be available for cassette and disk, as the Amstrad is still a very strong machine in the marketplace'. And he warns: 'Watch this space - lots more will be released in '89!'

## Promises, promises

And, as Barry Norman is supposed to say, there you have it. There appear to be some solid gold prospects in the offing, a few excellent licenses and conversions, and already it looks as if the Turkey awards for 1989 may yet have to be awarded.

A word of warning, however (though it won't be necessary if you've had your CPC longer than about five minutes): remember that writing games is a creative process, and it's notoriously difficult to finish a game according to schedule.

Indeed, the events between the conception of a game and its appearance in the shops can be summed up in a law: the more promising the scenario, the bigger the licence, the more money invested in promotion and the more hyped-up a release is, the less likely is it that it'll appear in time for Christmas. So don't hold your breath! ●

# WORDS WORK

Word processing tips with **PAT McDONALD**

## Mini Office II

I have a 6128 with a Rombo ROM box, an RS232C interface and a Pace modem. When I run *Mini Office 2* I get the front menu, but when I select any of the facilities the program resets. I have tried turn-

### SPARE TIPS, GUV?

In our computing we all pick up novel solutions, short-cuts and neat ways of doing things. And for every problem you have, there's probably some other AA reader who knows the answer. So write now to:

*Words Work, Amstrad Action, Future Publishing, 4 Queen St, Bath BA1 1EJ*

## Xtra Print

Here is the print routine for the Fantasy Map Designer in Type-Ins this month. To use it, just type in the extra lines to the main program. The printing takes over four hours to run, and gets through reams of paper to create

a huge map. If you're a bit surprised at it producing reams of text, there's a good reason: you're supposed to join all the edges together to form one picture four sheets down by eight across.

The program originates in AA22, but seeing as that has sold out I have no qualms about reprinting it. To use it on its own, just type in the whole

```
80 SYMBOL AFTER 32:MEMORY 28999:GOSUB 1095
1095 GOSUB 1110
1100 CALL 29000:RETURN
1110 RESTORE
1120 FOR n=0 TO 259 STEP 10
1130 total=0:FOR x=0 TO 9
1140 READ a$:g=VAL("&"+a$):total=total+g
1150 POKE (29000+n+x),g:NEXT x
1160 READ b$:checksum=VAL("&"+b$)
1170 IF checksum<>total THEN PRINT "Error in data
in line ";n+1190:END
1180 NEXT n
1190 DATA CD,2E,BD,DA,03,72,06,08,21,23,359
1200 DATA 72,7E,A7,CD,2B,BD,30,FB,23,10,4AA
1210 DATA F6,3E,00,21,46,72,E5,F5,CD,35,4E9
1220 DATA BC,F1,E1,70,23,3C,FE,10,20,F2,57D
1230 DATA 06,10,FD,21,46,72,DD,21,56,72,3B2
1240 DATA 16,00,FD,7E,00,21,2B,72,5F,19,2C7
1250 DATA 7E,DD,77,00,DD,23,FD,23,10,EE,4F0
1260 DATA 21,00,00,22,66,72,21,8F,01,22,1EE
1270 DATA 68,72,11,6A,72,0E,00,06,00,2A,205
1280 DATA 66,72,09,D5,EB,2A,68,72,C5,CD,537
```

```
1290 DATA F0,BB,21,56,72,4F,06,00,09,C1,3B3
1300 DATA D1,7E,12,13,0C,79,FE,50,20,E1,448
1310 DATA 3E,0D,12,13,3E,0A,12,06,52,21,143
1320 DATA 6A,72,7E,CD,2B,BD,30,FB,23,10,46D
1330 DATA F7,2A,68,72,2B,7D,FE,FF,C2,97,5F9
1340 DATA 71,7C,FE,FF,C2,97,71,3E,0C,CD,5CB
1350 DATA 2B,BD,30,FB,2A,66,72,11,50,00,376
1360 DATA 19,22,66,72,7D,FE,80,C2,94,71,4D5
1370 DATA 7C,FE,02,C2,94,71,C9,06,13,21,446
1380 DATA 10,72,7E,CD,5A,BB,23,10,F9,C9,4D7
1390 DATA 50,52,49,4E,54,45,52,20,4E,4F,2E1
1400 DATA 54,20,52,45,41,44,59,0D,0A,1B,21B
1410 DATA 51,7F,1B,41,07,1B,6E,40,57,48,29B
1420 DATA 4C,4F,42,35,3F,53,56,49,31,37,2AB
1430 DATA 28,29,21,23,26,2A,3C,3E,3D,2F,1CB
1440 DATA 27,2C,2D,20,00,00,00,00,00,00,0A0
```

Star owners use these last lines instead:

```
1410 DATA 51,7F,1B,41,07,1B,3E,EF,EF,EF,459
1420 DATA EF,EF,EF,E5,E5,E5,E5,E5,E5,E2,90D
1430 DATA E2,E2,E2,E2,E2,E0,E0,E0,E0,E0,8CA
1440 DATA E0,E0,E0,E0,00,00,00,00,00,00,380
```

ing off some of the ROMs with **ROMOFF**, but nothing works. I have to disconnect the peripherals to use *Mini Office 2*.

A J Shears, Sutton

Why not just leave the lid off of the ROM box, flick the dip switches and turn the machine off and on? Actually, I'm a bit surprised, because our *Mini Office 2* works fine with our ROM boxes and modems. Possibly you have an early version, though I can't tell without seeing it: try speaking to those nice people at Database software on ☎0625 878888 for a possible update.

## Citizen strikes back

I am writing to you about my use of the Citizen 120D printer with *Protect*. This printer has the notorious double line feed problem.

To overcome this, rather than cut wire 14 or the like, I set the printer control code for @ (which *Protect* always calls before printing anything) to 27 64 27 65 6. Also I have set the codes for k to 27 126 53 49 27 62 for on and 27 35 for off. This enables many interesting characters to be printed, including the Greek alphabet.

The find and replace facilities are much more flexible when you let them prompt you rather than typing every-

thing in directly.

For example, replacing all the 'a's' with 'b's' can be done directly by typing `r a b a g` and RETURN in edit mode.

If you want to replace any letters or words by nothing or blank spaces, however, it can only be done by typing `r, RETURN` and following the prompts.

The only bug I can find in *Protect* is its inability to erase files whose filenames begin with a numeral.

Tony Watson, Oswestry

Nice work Tony, and thanks for sharing it.

listing, delete line 1100 and type `RENUM 10,10,10`. `CALL 29000` sets off the routine.

One final word - the program as set up works for printers that can handle Epson with NLQ: Tom Fiers of Destelbergen sent in some extra lines to cope with Star printers. They are the final group.

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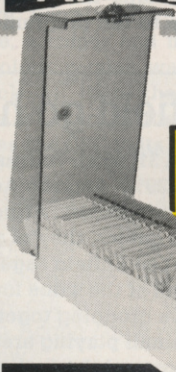
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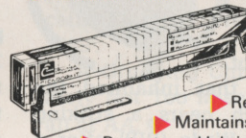
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# TALKING TURKEYS

Bootiful they're not. You've seen the best, now try the rest  
 - GARY BARRETT presents the awards no-one wants

**C**hristmas is a time for eating too much, giving and receiving presents and wondering why the *The Sound of The Great Escape of the Wizard of Oz* is on yet again. It's also the time of year when turkeys get worried and run around making gobbling noises in a desperate attempt to lose weight and avoid the chopper for another year.

And while we're talking turkey let's cast a cynical eye over a selection of the worst things that were released, escaped or were

just plain thrown out in the last twelve months. Yes folks, it's the awards no-one wants.

After many hours (translation: ten minutes at lunchtime) of heated debate and careful consideration (tossing coins) of everything that came out, fell out or dropped off in 1988 we present the off-colour mixture of games, serious software and a few other titbits that receive the dubious honour of Totally Useless Releases Known Everywhere as Yuk (Turkey).

■ **Outrun** (US Gold, AA 30, 37%). Take one highly successful arcade game, put it onto the CPC and what do you get? A truly awful racing game. Not only was it incredibly slow, but it also had some of the most stunningly bad sound effects ever. Unfortunately the game sold very well, and it's all due to its arcade reputation.

■ **Madballs** (Ocean AA 29, 48%). The only good thing was the packaging. It came with some grotesque stickers of the bouncing balls that inhabited the game, one of which bears a striking resemblance to Bob Wade (RIP) after a late night. The game itself was far too tedious to play for more than five minutes.

■ **Stunt Bike Simulator** (Silverbird, AA 36, 29%). Completing dare-devil stunts on the back of a motorbike - sounds exhilarating, but unfortunately Silverbird's attempt came close to rivalling watching paint dry in the excitement stakes. Not only were there some totally un-awe-inspiring graphics, but you also got absolute silence to listen to while you were playing.

■ **Street Sports Basketball** (pyx, AA 36, 44%). Deformed teenage basketball players in abundance in Epyx's basketball game of 1988. The graphics were grotesque and once again you could listen to the hum of your CPC working instead of sound effects.

■ **Pyscho Pigs** (US Gold, AA 36, 28%). The only psycho thing about this little game from US Gold is the person that said 'Yes it's

good enough. Release it'. It was a simple game of running around a very boring screen with only the prospect of more boring screens to keep your interest.

■ **Rolling Thunder** (US Gold, AA 30, 37%). The tradition of bad arcade conversions was upheld by US Gold with a game that had some of the most incredibly badly animated sprites of the year. Definitely not a case of 'It'll be alright on the sprite' (ouch).

■ **Masters of the Universe** (Gremlin, A A 30, 42%). Based on the film of the cartoon series and described by Bob Wade (AA's ex-He-Man) as 'Enough to make you buy *Outrun* - well maybe not'. More of a *Disastergame* than *Mastergame*.

■ **Tour de Force** (Gremlin, AA 31, 20%). Gremlin's lowest rated game of 1988 had many problems, the most obvious being working out which of the identically coloured bikes is yours and which isn't. The best feature of the game was kicking your opponents off their bikes. Perhaps the same should be done to the programmer?

## Lee Enfield go home

Space Ace (AA 31, 46%). Tournament of Death (AA 31, 29%). Amazon Adventure (AA 32, 37%). Infogrames. Although three separate games, they're all part of the tedious Lee Enfield saga and since they're all of the same low quality they deserve grouping together. The last two had small playing areas with lousy animation and the first was just *Prohibition* set on the moon.

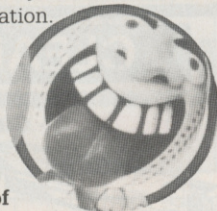
## This little piggy went into marketing


1988 saw the rise of two completely different marketing ploys. The first of these is the Code Masters 'look, we've taken a grotty photograph' syndrome. Believed to have originated from Bruce Everiss, the marketing manager, this involves taking photographs of no interest whatsoever, and sending them to computer magazines. As the photographs insult no-one and generally have some tasteless message - 'Here's the Oliver twins up a tree', 'Here's some very young

Darlings: aren't they Darlings?' - they have a good chance of being published by lazy editors with impending deadlines and small minds.


The flip side is the 'controversial debate' method. Software companies come up with a way to rub someone important up the wrong way, whether it's large colour posters of large-chested girls Maria Whittaker or Corinne Russell stripped to kill, advertising hoardings with topless girls and a sexist slogan, send-

ing particularly blood-thirsty games to the censors to automatically receive an 18 certificate, or including a free *shuriken* that could, in theory if not in practice, cause an injury. These cause a storm of free publicity (frequently getting articles written about them, allowing editors to reprint the offensive pictures while tutting about the sexism of it all). Which of course sells the game - the object of the exercise in the first place. Simple, aren't they?






■ **Geebee Air Rally** (Activision, AA 34, 39%). Flying around a course and avoiding other aircraft could have been good, but instead it was dreadful. Flickery graphics and not enough to do were part of its failing. When it crashed it came as a relief.



■ **Plasmatron** (CRL, AA 32, 17%). Occasionally a game arrives just so incredibly bad it leaps out at you and says 'smash me into a thousand pieces', and here's one of them. It flickers, it jerks along and makes horrible noises at you. What more could you do without?

■ **Dark Sceptre** (Firebird, AA 33, 47%). *Dark Sceptre* had potential to be excellent, and turned out to be decidedly iffy. The design of the game was fine, but unfortunately it turned into a spectator game where you just sat back and watched the action, even if it did appear to be in slow motion.



■ **Bionic Commando** (Go, AA 37, 39%). Some games get a little confusing when played on a green screen monitor. This one managed to be so even in colour. Admittedly there were two versions of the game, a colour and mono one, but the colour version was even worse to look at than the mono. Two colours for most of the game hardly stretches the CPC to its limits.

■ **Action Force** (Virgin, AA 37, 46%). In the past Virgin have produced other games with long and unavoidable messages that are printed so slowly that even Steve Carey can keep up with them, and the ones in *Action Force* were stunningly dull and slow.

■ **Fruit Machine Simulator** (Code Masters, AA 33, 15%). *FSV* currently holds the record for the longest Second Opinion in the history of AA. Bob Wade (RIP) was the man responsible and waffled on a lot about state of the art and how much this isn't it. That didn't stop it from reaching number one in the software charts (or Bob playing in for three days).

■ **Personal Excellence Package - Can you find the real you?** was the full title. PEP was designed to ask all sort of questions in order to reveal information about your intelligence, personality, performance

## Amstrad's funny old year part 1

Alan Sugar's decision to do a bundle on the CPC should be highly welcomed: after all, such deals bring down prices quite sharply, with an increase in sales and interest. Usually.

On the other hand it really is hard to imagine many people rushing to spend money on the new deals. These involve a CPC464 or 6128, plus a Clock Radio, tuner for the

monitor (so you can use it as a television), computer desk and 17 games. The price is between £299 and £499 - with £100 over the standard list price buying you the bits and pieces. The deal itself contains some very desirable equipment, but the cash incentive to buy is non-existent.

Overpriced, underadvertised and available in limited quantities.



## - and part 2



Alan finally did it. Four years after releasing the 464 on a waiting world, he's introducing a replacement.

Just think, this Christmas you could be playing games on a PC200 - a machine with more expensive games, poor colour and sound capabilities to make the tone deaf wince.

One argument is that people can use software from their work at home if they buy a PC200. All

very well, but work PCs mainly use 5.25 inch disks, whereas the PC200 uses 3.5 inch. Also, does anyone really enjoy working at home?

Won't the kids be on it perpetually, playing the latest arcade game which they have saved for six months to buy?

Not very likely, is it?

and mental aptitude.

The way in which the program was presented was very good, with a good manual explaining things. Why's it a turkey? Well, it's pretty hard to imagine anyone spending £25 on a program, and using it just the once - using it repeatedly is pretty pointless. And we found that exploring your personality in company with a few friends can prove highly embarrassing.

Of course, getting round a table on New Year's eve and trying to get an IQ of less than 77 could prove a formidable task, as could defending your abilities on tolerance, generosity and politeness.

## Bah humbug

Another new year will soon be upon us and perhaps there won't be any Turkeys next year. We might also have a summer, see Pat touch something electrical without breaking it, contact small alien life forms that want to 'phone home', have no errors in *Cheat Mode* or *Type-ins*, games will be released on time and software houses will actually return our

calls. Ah well, here's to 'Talking Turkeys 1989'.

A Grudging Christmas and a Moderately Not Too Miserable New Year from all at AA. ●

## Fleet St Editor

Definitely DTP package of the year - in the sense that it was the only one. Published by Mirrorsoft, slated by Pat McDonald (in AA38), *FSE* was a long time coming (previewed in AA41), and just went to show what a waste of time it is waiting for things to arrive. We had a competition in this office to decide what *FSE* really stood for - but none of the entries can be published, partly for reasons obvious to anyone who has seen *FSE* in action, and partly because we tried to print them in *FSE* and crashed the program.

Occupying two disks and accompanied by a manual intended for the beginner and easily able to reduce Pat to tears within minutes, *FSE* isn't a patch on *Stop Press*. An editor's job is bad enough, what with recalcitrant writers, copy deadlines and stingy publishers without 'aids' such as *FSE* that quite happily chew up neat columns and headlines like some demented puppy. With help like this, who needs hindrances?



## Hunt for Red October

(Grand Slam, AA 33, 44%) Difficulty levels vary considerably in games and this must hold the record for being one of the toughest.

An average game lasted for about two minutes before you died and the

office record is claimed by Pat The Perseverer to be nine minutes and 56 seconds (don't believe it myself, but there you go).



# THE GENESIS OF NEMESIS

Nemesis have been selling tape/disk utilities for three years now, and show no signs of fading away. PAT McDONALD talks to main man Colin Harris, reviews some of the Nemesis range and generally makes a nuisance of himself (so what's new?)

**I**n the beginning, Colin Harris was one of many who bought a ZX81 for his computer capers way back in 1981. Impressed by the hobby, if not by the machine, he soon graduated onto the Dragon 32. About the time he set up Nemesis, Dragon folded and the machine became an endangered species. Soon after that the 464 appeared, and his first adventure game software was released about the time that the machine appeared in Dixons.

**How long have you been running Nemesis?**

"Well, full time... must be about three years. At least. I've earned a crust doing it since I started. I think I've sold around 12000 copies of Bonzo Super Meddler, which probably means around 100000 in use round the country. At a guess, given the way the world is."

**And who is Bonzo?**

"Bonzo was a kitten who grew into a fourteen pound cat. I had to spend three months indoors with a badly broken ankle, Bonzo, and a computer. During the time I learned machine code. Bonzo dissappeared two years ago, but he's remembered in a sentimental way".

"My private life, before you ask, revolves around my wife and three more cats, called Blitz, Bobby and Tilly. I'll even go as far to admit that I'm a professionally trained photographer, but that's all."

**Why did you call your company Nemesis?**

"Well, it's a bit lateral. Nemesis is the Greek goddess of retribution. I'm a

(failed) adventurer, and I wanted to get my own back on those people who produced bad adventure games. The tape-disk aspect is similar, getting your own back on companies... you know, the difference between spending minutes loading a cassette, and 10 seconds loading a game from disk."

**It's nothing to do with the price difference between tape and disk games then?**

"Er... no."

**Why did you produce tape-disk transfers?**

"Back in the days when I was producing adventures, I would get some good reviews, place some advertising, and sell a mere handful. One I did had a really marvelous review and a quarter of a page ad. I sold five copies."

"I went back to something I'd been doing on the Dragon called Super Meddler, a gen-

**"When the CPC dies, I shall probably die with it"**

eral purpose tape/disk. Lots of interest was shown, and I made some money for a change."

"Don't get me wrong. I'd much rather be a philanthropic adventure writer. They're more fun to write and more entertaining to play. Tape-disk stuff is a bloody hard slog and gives me brainache. But I can make a living at it, which is why I do it."

**What sort of after-sales service do you give?**

"Well, I realise that the programs aren't infallible. There are plenty of one-off games, ones that need a unique touch. I do tape-disk transfers

on an individual basis for these. But I do insist on an original tape or inlay being

**"Four people have been brought to my attention, one of who was so incorrigible he was pirating my stuff too!"**

included with the order."

"Then there's the Bonzo Bulletin, which comes out at irregular intervals. I charge £10 for eight copies, but the entire collection of back issues (all 24) costs £13. The quality's been getting better, and it's packed out with tape-disk transfer methods. Of course, I'm always available on the phone."

**Doesn't that place a strain on you?**

"Not really, in fact I carry a transportable phone around with me. I don't want to miss anything."

**What are your thoughts on piracy?**

"Mixed. The vast majority of my customers appear to be honest, regularly getting in touch about transfer problems. The ones who don't talk much, just ask for occasional information and disappear, they can be rogues. When I find out for sure, I

**"A lot of people are getting in touch now who've just got 6128's"**

throw them off the mailing lists and I don't help again.

"Four people have been brought to my attention, one

of who was so incorrigible he was pirating my stuff too! I'm not going to encourage piracy, but there's not a lot I can do about it. I can cut off supplies of updates, but that's about all."

"I suppose I'm too pleasant really. When one company, Pride Utilities, disappeared, another competitor laughed an awful lot. I don't like that. I prefer competition - it keeps you on your toes, stops the market going stagnant."

**How busy are you during the year?**

"In October business was quiet, but now (coming up towards Christmas) it's absolutely crazy again. Mind you, for me August has always been my best sales period - can you believe that? - apart from the lead-up to Christmas. I s'pose it's the kids on holiday."

"There's no drop against this time last year. A lot of people are getting in touch now who've just got 6128's. Okay, so some had 464's but quite a few got their machines new. Alan Sugar's bundling the 6128 with a desk and a chiming alarm clock seems to be working. I find it a bit surprising, myself. Personally I would have thought a price cut or bundling it with a printer would have done the trick, but then I'm not the chairman of Amstrad."

"You know, around 60% of my business is tape-disk transfer. I only cater for the CPC nowadays. I don't touch other machines at all (can't stand the Atari). When the CPC dies, I shall probably die with it."

## BONZO SUPER MEDDLER/BLITZ

£12.50 EACH ● NEMESIS ☐ 0933 623967

Tape-disk transfer utilities make up the bulk of Nemesis sales. There are two disks – but the contents overlap somewhat. *Bonzo Super Meddler* is a general purpose disk for simple needs. It has been designed to transfer 'standard' files – files saved using the standard **SAVE** command – but also has *The Hack Pack*, for games with obscure loaders (such

as *Thrust*, which played music while it loaded). Recently companies have been changing loaders, making them more individual and, hence more difficult for one utility (such as *Super Meddler*) to deal with. So *Bonzo Blitz* was born.

*Bonzo Blitz* is a suite of programs for coping with the whole range of flashloaders. This includes a Detect option, which

scans through a tape to see what it can analyse. It's not perfect, but it offers you several options you wouldn't otherwise have.

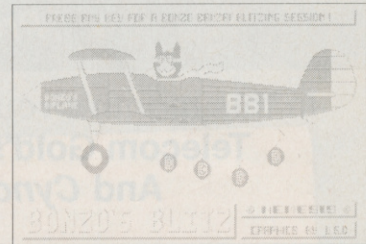
Scanty instructions make using the programs more difficult than it might be, and if you're not au fait with your Amstrad you'll find it tough to understand just what is going on. *Super Meddler* and *Blitz* do, however, have one redeeming feature. They do the job that they're supposed to do, with an excellent chance of backing up most software.

If you are heavily into tape/disk transfers, the Nemesis bulletin might interest you. It's not very pretty, but it contains a wealth of information on more than 700 transfers. Trouble is, they cost: £13 for the entire set 1-24, plus an £10 subscription per eight after that.

Still, if you are concerned about getting all your games onto disk (you hopeless games addict you) then Nemesis is a real alternative to investing in a Romantic Robot *Multiface* 'black box'.

Nemesis still sells software – not because of massive advertis-

ing budgets, corporate image or licensing deals. They don't underprice their product, and their presentation and manuals leave a lot to be desired. The reason why Nemesis is so popular is that they supply something that is in



▲ *Bonzo Blitz* at work

demand. People want to back up their games collections to disk. They are prepared to pay a fair old price for this, and put up with less than perfect presentation and so on. Nemesis also offers quality, friendly support for newcomers to the hobby. Its programs work, and work well, and while it's unlikely that they have many friends among games developers and software houses, they have a wide and loyal following among users. Long may they continue!

## Buster's pal

**Inevitably controversy surrounds protection busting programs: once programs are easily copied, they spread like wildfire. It keeps software prices up for those who actually pay for it.**

Unfortunately, Nemesis' *Super Meddler/Blitz* falls into this category. The *Blitz* instructions do at least state, "It is a condition of sale that this program is not

used for illegal purposes...'. A pity that the fact that software piracy is illegal is not included.

The legal aspects of tape/disk transfer are unclear. As far as I am aware, no companies or individuals have yet been prosecuted. There seems to be apathy on the part of the people who could do something about it, but don't.

## BONZO'S BIG BATCH

£12.50 DISK ONLY ● NEMESIS ☐ 0933 623967

In the blue corner we have a pools predictor. In the red corner, a screen designer. Refereeing the pair is a database program. Perhaps this is intended as evidence Nemesis can program things other than tape-disk utilities.

The screen designer boasts an inbuilt 'sprite' design program. The problem is, they are static. Rather than writing an arcade game, you're expected to use them just for designing screens. Bit of a cheek to call them sprites, really.

The *Screen Designer* lets you mix and match 25 of the 36 'sprites' loadable at one time. These screens are always in mode 0. You can stretch the 'sprites' in both the x and y axes. There is no clash between them, because the colours do not clash with each other.

Specifications are not that special: 60 screens can be remembered at once. Bear in mind all those screens consist of is the positions and sizes of 36 different sprites.

What's good about the system is the way in which ordinary screens can be loaded in and played around with. Merging two screens together is no problem either. Although nothing overly special, this is a worthwhile program.

The *Database* is more useful. Putting information into this, sorting it, and printing it out in a given format is easy. To demonstrate this, a sample datafile, handling a record collection, is included on the disk.

## Allsorts

Once you have some data to work with, you can sort it. The *Big Batch Database* supports two forms of search, the standard and sliding varieties. The former compares the beginning of fields with the search string, while slide searches go through the whole field looking for a match with the search string.

Sorting a file by any one field is easy enough to select, but takes time to complete. Oh

well, they also serve those who only stand and wait. On a similar note, a sub-file can be drawn from the main database: this can be totalled up, erased or saved separately. The logical operators are concerned with 'equal to', 'not equal to' and greater or lesser than certain values. Similar searches can be performed on characters. You could, for example, delete all the entries beginning with A, or get a list of records larger than a certain value.

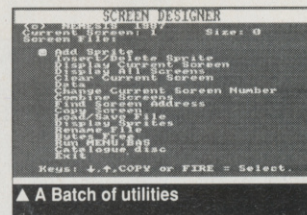
The last major feature of the program is tied up with the latter: you can output groups of records as reports. The reports can be sorted by fields, but fields which don't matter don't have to be printed (clever!).

There are also various odds and ends to look after the filing system and screen colours. The most important feature, though, is in a separate program – the initializer. This resets the database, letting you edit file sizes, layout of records, etc.

Up to 500 records can stored at once. The field types can be alphabetic, numeric or simple Y or N. File structures can be loaded and saved, and configuring the program is not difficult.

The *Football Predictor* program is simply a souped-up database with a few logical guessing routines that is really aimed only at people who want to introduce some method to their madness. Forget it.

Although the manual for this is much better than for either *Super Meddler* or *Blitz* (it's book shaped rather than a few tatty sheets of



▲ A Batch of utilities

A4), it still suffers somewhat from being unreadable if you're a novice. A few more examples and discussion would have been nice, rather than a fairly dull list of features. Still, it's better than a poke in the eye with a sharp stick.

*Big Batch* is pleasant to use, efficient – if not lightning fast – has a passable manual and is well worth the asking price. Let's hope that Nemesis continue their range in a similar vein.

# ONLINE

Press for action with PAT McDONALD

In this month's round-up for comms fans: a long hard look at *Microlink*, Telecom Gold's scrolling business service: is it worth the cost? And *Cynotel* – an old friend making a welcome return

## MICROLINK

☎ 0625 878888 ● Cost: see box below

The omens are not good. It's a pity, for instance, that getting onto the service is so unclear. Once you are registered, you're presented with a tacky piece of paper that tells PC owners to use their supplied software! Oh well, here goes.

There are three ways to use *Microlink*. The first is to dial *Telecom Gold* direct, on their London number. This is expensive: what is needed is a local number. Such a pathway exists, in the form of a PSS account. (This last confusing acronym stands for Packet Switch Stream, and is a convenient way for British Telecom to string together lots of comms enthusiasts and various computers. It has nothing to do with the company PSS, who do strategy wargames. Message ends.)

Using PSS can be a pain, because you have to type in strings of identifiers to your local PSS node. It saves money, but unless you have some nifty auto log-on software then it doesn't save a great deal of time.

### Cost of comming

Registering costs £5. Then there is a standing charge of £5 per calendar month, or part thereof. You are also charged by time on the service: if you're direct dialling, the cost is 11p per minute standard rate, 3.5p per minute standard rate. Using PSS is much cheaper: logging on with a 300/300 modem costs 2.5p per minute, and a 12/75 system costs 3p per minute. And that's at any time, day or night.

You can register to send telexes at any time, which costs £10. Each telex costs from 5.5p for 100 chars in the UK, up to £2.75 for 400 characters to any ship at sea. (Great! We could send a greetings card to the publisher on his yacht.)

These prices don't include the extra and separate cost of using the phone. Cheap and *Microlink* don't mix.

The third way to log-on is to use one of the many Debenhams computers, which is probably useful only if you have a local branch.

### Moment of truth

So you've registered, got online, done your ident and password, and set your alarm clock so you don't overspend. What do you get? Not an awful lot really. *Microlink* is text-only, which means reams and reams of text flowing across your monitor. It doesn't look nice, but on the other hand you do get the data faster than on, say, *Micronet*.

Once you're in, the orientation of *Microlink* is obvious. The service is all about talking to other people. I've been doing that for years – what's so different about that?, I hear you ask. Well, *Microlink* lets you talk with some fairly outlandish services. You can for instance receive Meteosat weather pictures and display them on your computer screen. Then there's the world news service offered by Dialnet, a huge US company. Most of the news is like a goldmine: four tonnes of overburden to one ounce of gold. But the ounce makes it worthwhile. Reading all the truly global news can take you an hour or more. Its UK correspondent, by the way, is none other than Steve Gold, erstwhile *Micronet* hacker.

### Chatline

There are several ways to talk to regular users, from the usual bulletin board (big), through the usual mailbox (*Telecom Gold*), to the more exotic ways. You can send Telemessages (remember telegrams? This is the next best thing nowadays), Telexes, and even use Interflora by means of a credit card. If you have a radio pager, it can be set to go off when you receive a mailbox or telex. Pretty useful, I suppose...

In truth while the special features are laudable, you can do all of them without incurring *Microlink* charges. They're gimmicks, toys to try and please. The Telex option is quite useful, but wouldn't a machine be cheaper? For the home user it's like a Filofax: nice to have, but you managed all those years without it. Small businesses, however – that is, under five foot – could well find these particular

*Microlink* comms options invaluable.

The story doesn't end there though, because there's plenty of information providers too. Plainly speaking, these are groups or individuals who provide information: for a price. Services available include legal advice, translations into 36 languages, and typesetting documents. You can also take a look at forthcoming

### Overpriced

The cost of using your CPC for comms never seems to decrease. I wonder how much cash UK modem manufacturers are raking in? A comparative US price for a modem simply replaces the sterling symbol with a dollar sign. UK modems are, on average, 170% of the US price.

*Microlink* will quite happily sell you a modem for £179. It's finished in a black and red trim (a nice match for your Konix joystick, designer Amstrad fans). Capabilities are good at the price: 300/300, 1200/75 and 1200/1200, all full duplex. You can get an RS232 interface too: the official Amstrad one costs £55. A lot of cash, but the software is adequate to get you fully operational – it will allow you to use both viewdata and scrolling boards.

Compare the *Microlink* price of £299 for a year's sub. plus equipment with the *Micronet + Propak* at £236.40. Personally, I'd get the *Microlink* one, because it can handle full 1200/1200. The *Propak* can't.

London shows, and book tickets in advance.

For the business person there's company advice, listing facts and figures on all 1.7 million UK companies. This certainly does not come cheap. There's loads more company information available: they can even track down international finance.

Finally we come to the edge of *Microlink*. Gateways are available to other, overseas computer bases. One example is Euronet/Diane, with over 600 scientific and technical sources. There's also the great European dictionary, which is 380,000 words long and growing fast. All sorts of goodies that are not actually part

of *MicroLink*, but which can be accessed from it.

## Signing off

*MicroLink* is undoubtedly daunting. There is so much, with hundreds of different options. The parts of most interest are the news service and the Closed User Groups. CUG's are available on a wide variety of different subjects, including ham radio.

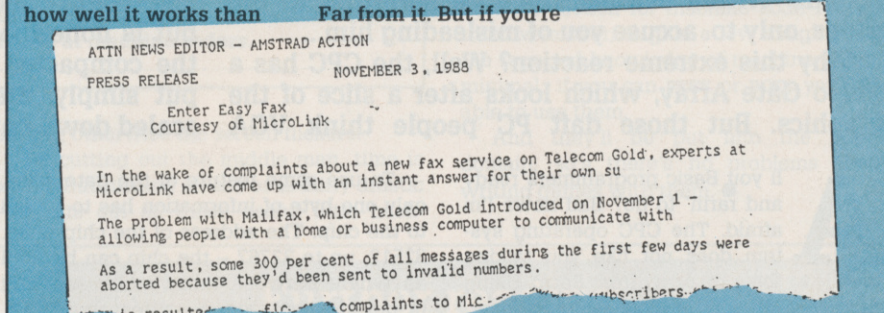
On the one hand *MicroLink* is pricier – much pricier – than *Micronet*, with no

## PRESS RELEASE OF THE YEAR

'Easy Fax', is a recent addition to *MicroLink*. It incorporates 'Fax-Check', a simplified method of seeing whether messages queued for transmission have been correctly sent. And what better way to advertise the service and illustrate how well it works than

by sending out a fax using the service? The press release is reproduced below and ends proudly: 'Please note that both *Easy Fax* and *Fax Check* were used to send this press release'. Now we're not claiming we're perfect. Far from it. But if you're

going to knock a service, claim you're better and proclaim that you believe in it so much you're going to use it to issue its own press release, you'd be well advised to make absolutely sure you're on firm ground.

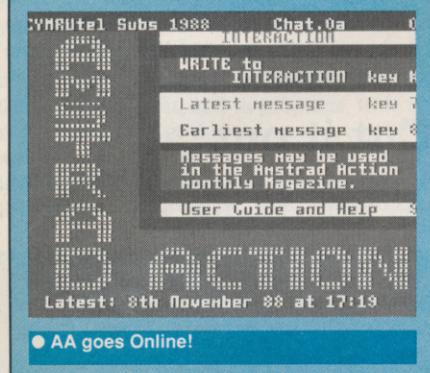


### AA goes online!

Remember *Cymrutel* from AA38? The sysops now run a small section devoted to your favourite publication: no, not *Viz*, *Amstrad Action*! To get in touch with us via *Cymrutel*, type \*AAGATE# to get into the separate area. It's quite impressive, and I'll be keeping a careful eye on the mailbox for any messages for *Reaction*, *Hottips*, *Cheat Mode* etc. So get online, logon and communicate!

- Viewdata 12/75 7 data even parity 1 stop bit  
☎ 0492 49194

Sysop: Ian Woodroffe



graphics or frills. It looks and sounds dull. On the other hand there is a huge amount of information to look at. And there's the comms options, which appear much faster and more comprehensive than *Micronet*.

On balance the average home user would do better to stick to the more comfortable *Micronet*. I think I'll be back to *MicroLink*, even if it's just for the excellent news service. ●

Program Name	Description	Line 53	Col 78	Free	144%	Insert	Caps	Lock	Mag	Issue	Computers	Type
Print Using Beep												ASC
Answers												ASC
Zoids												ASC
Notes												ASC
MicroLink												ASC
Samurai Master												ASC
Tajapat												ASC
Genocide												ASC
Coloured												ASC
Boback												ASC
Batman												ASC
Advanced Art Studio	Screen Expander											ASC
Micro Design	Print Utility											ASC
Sprite Designer												ASC
Standpinger												ASC
Spring on a Thing												ASC
Golden Tailsman												ASC
Overlander												ASC
Destructo												ASC
Mickey Mouse												ASC
Memory Editor	(from hairy hacker)											ASC

BB	Bulletin Board	BX	The Box
EE	Electronic Mail	EG	Exhibition Guide
FL	Floralink	GI	Golden Lips
LP	Legal & Financial Advice	LI	Legal & Financial Advice
LI	Loadlink	MU	MicroLink Users
MU	MicroLink Newsletter	AB	NewsBytes
PP	MemPad	SS	System Setup
SI	System Information	SM	Shop Window
ST	Statistics	SW	Shop Window
TL	Theatre Link	TS	Telesoftware
TP	Typesetting	TS	Telesoftware
TT	Telex	WU	WeatherLink
XL	ExpertLink	PCOOLD	... for PC users only
STD	Phone dialing codes		

Enter the letters of your choice      These can be used at any > prompt

Enter HELP ? for further details      Also HELP ACCESS and HELP PROGRAM

● AA goes Online!

● MicroLink's telesoftware lists

● MicroLink's options

## CYNOTEL

Viewdata 12/75 7 data even parity 1 stop bit  
☎ 01 3462816  
Sysop: Julian Smith

*Cynotel* has been offline for a while, and it's good to see it back. A viewdata bulletin board based in London, it has a special interest: it runs on a CPC with a 5.25 inch second drive attached. The result is impressive, all things considered.

Getting on to look around is very easy. Simply type in your name and 00000 for a password, and you'll be in under the guest facility. You can look around, upload a

public message, and say hello to the sysop. Full registration takes about a week, but then you can actually access the whole of the board.

One of the more novel features is an area aimed specifically at those who want to set up their own bulletin board with an Amstrad CPC. Examples of boards set up are listed, as well as software to get you going. Only snag is, most of this only works for the *KDS 104 Communicator*, which is actually prohibited from connection to the BT telephone system. I've never heard of any harm resulting from using it, but I certainly wouldn't use it if I was setting up a bulletin board.

There is an area devoted to the CPC: unfortunately updates take some time to

complete (sometimes a week-end), so this area can't be depended on to be around. When it is there, there's a few hardware/software reviews, hints, tips, news etc. Not a great deal to get excited about.

Of more interest is the availability of people willing and able to help with problems. Drop a line to the public board, and you should get an answer. Telesoftware is available too: some of it is good.

One feature of *Cynotel* I haven't talked about is the gallery. This serves a similar purpose to our own *AA Gallery*, in that artistic graphics can be placed on public display. There's a big 'don't touch' notice, indicating written permission is necessary in order to use the pictures else-

where.

I recommend going on *Cynotel* for people who haven't done much comming before. There's a comprehensive help page, easy gateways and you can't get lost.

A beginner's board, but worth keeping a mailbox on and contributing regularly.



● Cynotel: not just a pretty menu

# THE LOOK

Part four of a graphic series with PAT McDONALD

How to annoy a PC owner: tell him you bought a machine with VGA graphics for a few hundred pounds. Within seconds, he'll be sprinting to the shops, only to accuse you of misleading him...

Why this extreme reaction? Well, the CPC has a Video Gate Array, which looks after a slice of the graphics. But those daft PC people think VGA

means 'Video Graphics Adaptor'.

Anyway, remember all those INPs and OUTS from last month? The gate array uses similar commands, but is none too easy to explain, mainly because of the compacted nature of the device: gate arrays, put simply, are collections of many components, scaled down onto one chip.

**A**ll you Basic programmers ready and rarin' to go? Bad news I'm afraid. The CPC operating system does not like you talking directly to the gate array from Basic. Using machine code is OK, though, so here goes.

Remember, only use instances quoted here. Don't expect us to foot the bill for your experimenting!

To use some feature of the gate array, only one byte of information has to be fed to the chip. The address of the chip is no. 32512, up to 32767 - the chip can be read anywhere between those addresses, and in hexadecimal this is written as &7FXX, with X anywhere between 0 and F.

So the command to use is **OUT &7F00, n**, up to **&7FFF, n**. What, I here you ask, is the

value of n? Depends what you want to do. The gate array looks after four main subjects, with another minor one. These are: extra memory (on a 6128); ROM selection (turning on or off); graphics mode; and the values of the pen colours. The minor subject is clearing the raster 52 divider, which isn't what it sounds like and I'm not going into.

What I will do is concentrate on the mode and ink changing. The CPC supports 3 graphics modes, labelled 0-2. The number of inks is set to 16 out of 27. These are numbered 0-15. Ink number 16 refers to the border colour.

## For the MC buff

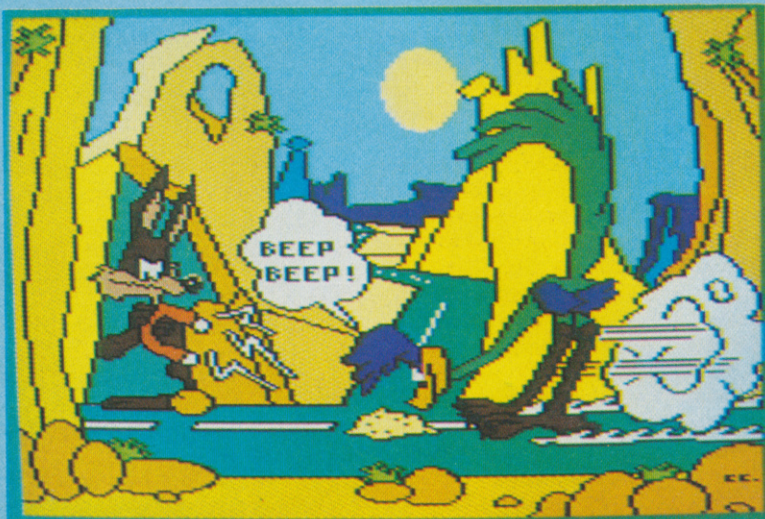
The best way to access hardware from machine code is to load the B register with the high byte of the address, and to load the C register with

the data. Then perform the standard command: **OUT (C), C**.

Use **IN C, (C)** to get information from ports - but when you do this,

make sure that you get the address correct. Be warned: trying to access data from two devices at once can wreck them both!

## The gallery



● Christian Capostaff's efforts on Road Runner net him £20 - on its way to Great Yarmouth



● Simon Fincher from Evesham was inspired by AA37.



● M Madden sent in a great collection: this is the neatest

## Using the gate array

000XXXXX: Select ink number to change, from 0-16.  
 010XXXXX: Set colour value of selected ink.  
 100XXXXX: Two least significant bytes are for the mode (don't use mode 3).  
 Other bits refer to ROM selection, and the Raster divider.  
 11XXXXXX: Switch extra memory banks in and out on 6128.  
 (X can be 0 or 1.)

Using this, you should have some fun, if only messing up the ink colours. If you don't have much luck, never mind - it's aimed at machine coders.

because the CPC continually updates colours and screen modes, even if they haven't changed. By going around the operating system, your work is undone at the first opportunity.

At first sight then, the above information doesn't seem that useful - after all, what's the point of bypassing a system that then blithely ignores the changes you have made? The reasons I printed the above were twofold: to show machine coders how to go about writing their own mode changing/colour changing routines, and to prove that such routines are difficult to use from Basic!

Why bother? Well, bypassing the operating system can be a good idea. The os slows things down, and in graphics, time is of the essence. Let me explain: every fiftieth of a second, the electron beam scans down your monitor. Any changes to the display have to be completed between two

passes, otherwise the screen flickers.

By cutting out the middle man, time is saved. But turning off the os is fairly drastic - it cuts out all those useful little back-

ground tasks like flashing inks and reading the keyboard.

## Pokers' pleasure

Yes readers, those all singing and dancing sprite routines begin next issue. Now you will be able to use real sprites that don't interfere with the background and are multicoloured. (Pause for applause to die down. Or indeed, to start.)

With each listing we intend to have a shortish section for machine code readers to browse over, to gain a few insights. But the required knowledge of machine will be minimal: if you can PEEK or POKE you'll be able to use them.

And they'll be put into the public domain, so's there's no problems about writing games with them. ●

## Further reading

► CPC Firmware Guide, Amsoft 968, £19.95.

Infamous for lacking an ISBN number. If you can find it, buy it: it's packed out with technical information of all sorts.

► Anatomy of the CPC, Bruckman-Englisch, Gerits-Steigers, First Publishing Ltd, ISBN 0948015462, £14.95.

Out of print, unfortunately. Translated from the original German, it lacks some

clarity, but is nearly as good as the firmware guide.

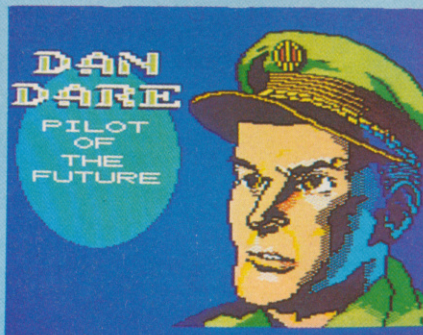
► Ins and Outs of the Amstrad, Don Thomasson, Melbourne House, ISBN 086161190X, £8.95.

Difficult to get hold of. Although it lacks a lot of detail, it is relatively speaking an easy read.

Good for beginners in machine code who want to learn something about using the hardware.



● Ray Thompson, part time Newport Paladin and artist extraordinaire



● Gavin Blann Dares to try for the Gallery



● C Capostaff, with a nice pic drawn from advertising



● C Capostaff drew for truth, justice and the AA way



● My personal favourite, but those arty people disagreed - from James Garside of Rhyll



● Gavin Manning, a Londoner and a certified Ghostbuster



● James Garside again with a more seasonal entry

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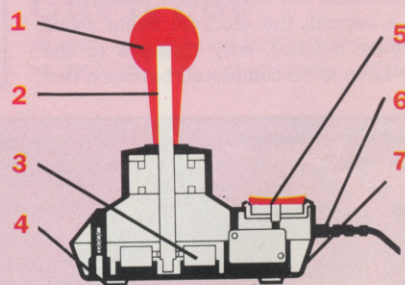
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# ABSOLUTE BEGINNERS

Basic for beginners with **ANDY WILTON**

Last month we were up to our eyes in <s, >s and conditional commands. This month we move on to **WHILE-WEND** loops...

**T**his program is very much like some we saw earlier in *Abs. Beg.* when we we looked at variables and expressions.

```
10 MODE 1
20 FOR a=370 TO 0 STEP -10
30 CLS:MOVE 310,a
40 DRAW 330,a
50 DRAW 330,a+20
60 DRAW 310,a+20
70 DRAW 310,a
80 NEXT a
```

This draws a small square, drifting down the screen till it reaches the bottom. That **STEP-10** tells the CPC to reduce the loop variable 'a' by 10 every time it runs through the loop until a goes below the second operand of the **FOR** command - zero, in this case. Now that's all very well, but it's not quite the effect we're after. Really we want the square to gain speed as it moves down the screen, so it looks as if it's falling: that is, we want it to move down by a greater amount each time through the loop, rather than the ten units fixed by the **STEP** size.

There's nothing too difficult about getting the square to gain speed. Edit lines 20 to 80 to look like this:

```
20 FOR b=0 TO 50 STEP 5
80 NEXT b
```

Now add these new lines, and then try the program out:

```
15 a=370
```

```
75 a=a-b
```

The square certainly looks a lot more as if it's falling, but unfortunately it doesn't get as far as the bottom of the screen. The problem is there's no easy way to work out what **FOR** or **STEP** operands get the square just to the bottom of the screen.

When we had the original listing it was simple. The loop variables are presented the height of the square above the bottom edge of the screen. We could use the second operand of the **FOR** command to stop the loop (and thus the square) at some particular value of the loop variable: some particular height above the bottom edge, in other words. With the second operand of **FOR** set to zero, the square kept on moving down until it was just off the bottom edge.

## Aargh

Now, however, the loop variable is 'b'. This represents the amount by which the square moves down each time - its downward speed, in other words. We can only use the second operand of **FOR** to 'limit the maximum value of 'b', so we can't tell the CPC that was the height we want to stop at; just the speed we stop at. Either we work out how fast the square's going to be moving when it hits bottom (and who wants to do that?) or we spend five minutes trying different

**FOR** and **STEP** operands.

If neither of those two solutions appeal to you, don't worry - there's a better and simpler way. Edit lines 20 and 80 so that the whole listing looks like this:

```
10 MODE 1
15 a=370
20 b=0:WHILE b<50:b=b+5
30 CLS:MOVE 310,a
40 DRAW 330,a
50 DRAW 330,a+20
60 DRAW 310,a+20
70 a=a-b
80 WEND
```

If you run this you should find it behaves exactly the same as it did before the alterations. In other words lines 20 and 80 form a loop which sets b to 0, adds 5 to b for each time through the loop and then stops when b goes over 50.

If you look at line 20, you'll see that it breaks down into three separate commands. The first and last of these are familiar: **b=0** sets 'b' to 0 while **b=b+5** adds 5 to b. That means that **WHILE b<=50** and the **WEND** in line 80 form the loop and stop it when b goes over 50.

From this you should be able to see that **WHILE** and **WEND** are rather simpler than **FOR** and **NEXT**. **WHILE-WEND** loops don't have loop variables: in the above example b is no different from any other variable. The only thing **WHILE-WEND** loops do have is a condition: **b<=50**, in this case.

Just as with **IF-THEN-ELSE**, this condition determines which of two things the CPC does. If 'b' is less than or equal to 50 then the condition is true, and it repeats the loop. If 'b' is greater than 50, however, the condition is false and it stops repeating the loop.

This still doesn't solve our problem - after all, it only does what our program already did with **FOR** and **NEXT**. We can soon change that, though. If you remember, our problem with **FOR** was that you could limit only the loop variable b, and we wanted to limit the height 'a' instead. There's no such problem with **WHILE**. There's nothing special about any of the variables as far as **WHILE** is concerned.

At the moment the **WHILE** condition just tests for b going over 50, but it could just as easily test for anything you can write a condition to test for. If we change line 20 to:

```
20 b=0:WHILE a>=0:b=b+5
```

then the CPC will carry on looping until 'a' is less than zero.

This means that it will stop repeating the loop only when the square is about to go off the bottom of the screen - and that is just what we were after. ●

Next month in *Absolute Beginners* we compare the two types of looping commands - the **FOR-NEXT** loop and the **WHILE-WEND** loop.

## To sum up

■ **FOR-NEXT** loops are more complicated and do a lot more work for you. If you want a variable which increases (or decreases) by a fixed amount each time through the loop for use inside the loop, and if you want to stop after a fixed number of times or

when the loop variable reaches some fixed value - it comes to the same thing - then **FOR-NEXT** is what you're after.

■ If you want more freedom, **WHILE-WEND** might well be what you need. You have to do more of the donkey work yourself, mind you. If you want a variable increase by some fixed amount each time

through the loop, you're going to have to fix it yourself. The **b=b+5** in the new line 20 wasn't necessary in the old line 20, because **FOR** and **STEP** took care of that for you.

■ When you need to decide which type of loop to use, just ask yourself (a) do I need the loop variable? and (b) when do I want the loop to stop repeating?

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# BAR CPM

First Steps part five with **RICHARD MONTEIRO**

For the last few months Bar CPM has covered CPM's in-built commands - DIR, ERA, REN, TYPE. The last of CPM's in-built commands is brought to you courtesy of this instalment, together with a look at the files sitting on your system disk.

**A**s you well know, using the DIR command forces the computer to display the complete contents of the disk, right? Wrong! In fact, DIR shows the contents of the *currently active user area*. Normally this will be zero, and it is very likely that all files will be stored in this area. If you venture out from the safety of user area zero, however, you will discover that files can be kept in any of 15 other areas. These areas are totally separate from each other. You can move between these areas by using USER followed by a number between 0 and 15.

The purpose of user areas may not be immediately obvious: imagine you have several file types on a disk (BAS, DOC, COM and ASM for instance). Rather than having all the files jumbled in one user area, you could have all BAS files in one area, all DOC files in another and so on.

CPM's user areas are on the same level, unlike other operating systems which use nested directories.

## Transient types

Commands that identify program files on disk are called *transient utility commands*. There are over 20 on your CPM system disk. When you enter a command keyword that identifies a transient utility, CPM loads the program and passes it any filenames, data or parameters you may have entered. In the box is a list of transient utilities and their functions (we'll be looking at each in detail later):

## STATus seekers

To display disk information under CPM 2.2 use STAT, short for STATus. The command not only displays secrets about files stored on disk, but also allows you

to alter file attributes. Attributes actually determine whether files are read-only, read/write or hidden from the directory.

In its simplest form, STAT returns something like **A: R/W, Space 40K**. This tells you which drive you're using, whether the disk may be read and written to (R/W) or read-only (R/O), and the amount of space remaining in K.

Adding a filename after STAT forces CPM to show you information regarding the file. For instance, typing **STAT AMSDOS.COM** produces

```
Recs Bytes Ext Acc
  2   1K   1 R/W A:AMSDOS.COM
Bytes remaining on A: 50k
```

assuming you have an unmodified 2.2 system disk in the drive.

The four headings stand for **Records, Bytes, Extents** and **Access**. The first three show the length of the file and how it is stored while Access displays the file's read/write status.

Wildcards are permitted with STAT, so **STAT \*.\*** displays information on all files on the disk. The files are listed in alphabetical order.

If you follow the filename in a STAT command with **\$R/O**, you set that file to read-only status. Basically you can read the file, but you can't write to it or erase it. A file altered in this way can only be set to read/write by issuing a **STAT filename \$R/W** command. You can also hide a file from the directory by using **STAT filename \$SYS**. Similarly you can reveal a file by typing **STAT filename \$DIR**. The only way you can tell exactly what's on the disk is by issuing a **STAT \*.\*** command. ●

Join us next month when we shall look at more exciting CPM utilities.

Name	Function	Name	Function
ASM ①	Creates executable binary code from assembly source.	PALETTE ≠	Sets ink colours.
AMSDOS ①	Returns to Amsdos.	PAPER ≠	Initializes printer.
BOOTGEN ①	Makes a bootable disk.	PIP	File copying program.
CHKDISC ①	Verifies that 2 disks hold same info.	PUT ≠	Directs printer or console output to disk.
CLOAD ①	Copies files from tape to disk.	RMAC ≠	Translates assembly source into relocatable code.
COPYDISC ①	Copies a disk.	SET ≠	Alters file options.
DATE ≠	Sets or displays the date and time.	SETDEF ≠	Sets system options.
DDT ①	Dynamic debugging tool.	SETKEYS ≠	Configures the keyboard.
DEVICE ≠	Assigns logical devices to physical devices.	SETLST ≠	Initializes the printer.
DISCKIT3 ≠	Disk utility program.	SETUP ①	Sets system options.
DUMP	Displays a file in ASCII and hex format.	SET24X80 ≠	Sets screen to 24 rows by 80 columns.
ED	A simple text editor.	SHOW ≠	Displays disk and drive characteristics.
FILECOPY ①	Copies files.	SID ≠	Debugger.
FORMAT ①	Formats a disk.	STAT ①	Displays disk and file information.
GET ≠	Console input is taken from disk.	SUBMIT	Automatically executes multiplecommands.
HELP ≠	Displays info on how to use commands.	SYSGEN ①	Copies CPM os onto a disk.
HEXCOM ≠	Produces a prog. file from MAC output.	XREF ≠	Produces a list of variables from assembler source.
INITDIR ≠	Allows time and date stamping.	XSUB ①	Executes multiple commands.
LANGUAGE ≠	Selects the keyboard character set.		
LINK ≠	Links relocatable program modules.		
MAC ≠	Converts assembly source into binary.		
MOVCPM ①	Lowers CPM's memory top.		

① CPM 2.2 only

≠ CPM Plus only

# FIRST BYTES

*Our assembly language series with RICHARD MONTEIRO*

Forget the pussyfooting around. This month we go for the jugular. You know how to load a register with a number, place a value somewhere in memory, retrieve a value from memory and even pass values between registers. The theory is all good fun, but the practical is so much better. Get out your MA (er... MAA), dust it down, and remove all REM statements. Do it!

**A**ddressing refers to the specification, within an instruction, of the location of the operand on which the instruction will operate. In plain English, addressing modes are different ways of specifying the location of data. Here is a quick look at various addressing techniques, and how you

might use them with the LD (or load) instruction.

**Implicit (Implied or Register) Addressing:** instructions which operate exclusively on registers. For instance, LD A,B - which translates to 'transfer the contents of B into A'.

**Immediate Addressing:** the operand

## HACKERS ONLY

Armed with last month's knowledge of the hidden SLL instructions, you should be pumping out code with instructions that officially don't exist. **Damian Scattergood**, for instance, has written a short routine demonstrating the use of SLL (HL). Damian's routine fades the screen to red in Mode 1 and then to black.

The source code below can be entered with little modification into most assemblers. You can **ORG** the code it into any sensible area of memory:

```
XOR A          LD HL, &C000
LD B, A        LD DE, &FFFF
LD C, A        LD BC, &2000
INC A          loop2
CALL &BC32    XOR A
XOR A          LD (HL), A
LD B, A        EX DE, HL
LD C, A        LD (HL), A
CALL &BC38    EX DE, HL
LD B, 8        DEC DE
loop          INC HL
LD HL, &C000   PUSH BC
LD DE, &4000   LD B, 15
loop1         loop3
DB &CB, &36 ;sll (hl)
INC HL        DJNZ loop3
DEC DE        POP BC
LD A, D       DEC BC
OR E          LD A, B
JR NZ, loop1  OR C
DJNZ loop     JR NZ, loop2
              RET
```

The majority of hidden Z80 commands relate to IX and IY registers. If you study

the opcode for any index register command and compare it with the HL register equivalent, you will find that the index register opcode is simply the HL code preceded by hex value DD (for IX) or FD (for IY). Don't forget that as IX and IY are index registers, you'll also have to add an offset byte. For instance, **ADD A, (HL) 86, ADD A, (IX+4) DD 86 04; DEC (HL) 35, DEC (IY+2) FD 35 02.**

There are however some gaps in the logical sequence of codes for the index register instructions. LD A,H (hex 7C), for example, has no published IX or IY equivalent, whose code would be DD 7C or FD 7C. If you experiment with those codes you will find that the high bits of IX or IY will be loaded into the accumulator. Similarly, LD A,L (hex 7D) has no IX or IY equivalent. But again, if you experiment, you will find that the low bits of the IX or IY are loaded into the accumulator.

The implications of this may not have hit you yet (*frankly, no - ed*). But suddenly you have another four 8-bit registers - the high and low bits of IX and IY. On the Amstrad, where there are precious few registers to play with due to the operating system's exclusive use of the alternative set, this facility is more valuable than... than something which is quite valuable.

**Next month: the full list of hidden index register instructions AND examples of how to use them!**

## MAA MEMORY MONITOR

Here is a short and simple text dump routine to enable fast scanning of memory for Ascii messages. Kindly supplied by David Till of Dudley, who wins himself a crisp tenner.

Simply load MAA (AMCUSTOM.BAS) and make the following alterations to these lines:  
2100 LOCATE 30,15:INPUT"

```
Choose. ", a
2110 ON a GOSUB 2130,2980,3271
Add these lines:
2095 LOCATE 27,13:PRINT" (3) Text
Dump"
3271 CLS:INPUT"Start location";lo
3272 IF lo<0 OR lo>65535 THEN 3271
3273 CLS
3274 p=PEEK(lo):IF p<32 THEN p=46
3275 PRINT CHR$(p);
3276 lo=lo+1:a$=INKEY$
3277 IF lo>65535 OR a$<" " THEN
RETURN
3278 GOTO 3274
```

Finally save the file as **AMCUSTOM.BAS**. The alterations add an extra item to the menu. By pressing key 3 you will be prompted for a 'Start location'. Simply enter any value between 0 and 65535 to view the contents of memory in Ascii form.

You win a crisp tenner if your **MAA tweak** is published. Entries to **MAA Tweak/First Bytes**, Gorgeous Richard Monteiro (*shome mishtake shurely - ed.*), 4 Queen Street, Bath, BA1 1EJ.

contains the actual data. The data is available immediately; it isn't necessary to fetch anything from memory. LD B,24 and LD HL,2345 are prime examples.

**Absolute Addressing:** refers to the way in which data is retrieved from or placed in memory. LD (34524),A and LD HL,(45656) for instance.

**Direct (Short or Relative) Addressing:** the opcode is followed by an 8-bit address. Typically this is the realm of JR-like instructions. We haven't dealt with these yet, so don't worry. Suffice to say that you can jump forward or backwards in your code by 127 bytes.

**Indexed Addressing:** technique used to access the elements of a block (or table) successively. The idea being that the instruction specifies both an index register and an address. The contents of the register are added to the address to provide the final address. There are two index registers, IX and IY. LD A,(IX+5) is acceptable. ●

**Next month: more assembly language programming; addressing techniques in full; and a final look at the hidden Z80 instructions.**

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# PROBLEM ATTIC

A bumper extravaganza monster edition with PAT McDONALD

## Just popping out

Over a year ago I built a second disk drive using the Hitachi HFD305SX drive, which is working perfectly on my 6128. Using CPM+ is it possible to operate this disk drive on double density?

While we're at it, I have noticed some disks pop out of the internal drive quickly, while others just creep out. Is there anything that can be done to encourage the slow ones to hurry up a bit?

**Alan Coleshill, Sheffield**

*If it is a double density drive, then the answer is yes. A good choice for CPM+ would be Ramdos, a disk utility from KDS (☎04853 2076). Price is £24.95.*

*On your second point: it's the disks that are at fault. We've found the best way of removing sticky disks is to raise and push them in slightly, then eject. Much better than pliers or hammering on the eject button.*

## Upgrade troubles

How do I avoid having to throw away six years of work writing programs for Bridge scoring simply because of a little change (!) from the CPC464, 664 or the 6128 to 'Big Brother' - the PC1512.

Many clubs are totally satisfied with the 6128 version of my scoring system, but several bridge buffs would like to think that they could 'easily' move over to the 1512 or 1640. No-one has offered even a hint of a solution on how.

Seems like we are all doomed to a terrible fate - even worse than having to use something other than the wonderful Amstrad range. Is there no one who will rid me of this scourge? I've written to other mags who remain ominously, knowingly silent.

**F B Brighton, Sheffield**

*Cross transference of programs from one machine to another totally different one is notoriously tricky, even for major software houses. I suggest that you get in touch with PC Plus, our sister magazine for the PC. Write to them at our address, include a few more details, and the info will be passed on.*

## Mouse: not a squeak

I have a NEOS mouse I thought maybe it would work on my Amstrad CPC464. It doesn't. Moving it does not give any response. Pressing the right button gives 65RTGF. When I switch the computer on, lots of arrows and XZ are printed on the screen. I have no other gadgets connected. Please put me out of my misery and tell me how to get it working.

**Shabaz Yousaf, Slough**

*Using a mouse on a CPC generally needs some sort of interface. Try talking to AMS (☎0925 413501) or Siren (☎061 228 1831) about interfacing. They should be able to supply you with such an interface, as they produce mice for the CPC.*

## McDonald fails to measure up

I was really pleased to see your reply to my letter in AA39 and, with warm feelings about AA, I duly sent off my order for an FD39 tape drive belt to Maplins.

A few days later, the requested belt arrived and, wielding a trusty screwdriver, I started delving into the innards of my trusting CPC464. Following the excellent instructions

which Richard Johnson gave in AA33 I soon had the old drive belt out and it was then that my warm feelings turned to dismay.

The new belt is actually bigger than the old one which would, I think, yield more 'Read Error b's had I fitted it.

Something stinks, AA, and I'd like an explanation!

L K Chapman, Pentre

*Erm, it was me. OK, OK I got the measurement wrong, and for that I'm very sorry. Steps are being taken: we're making absolutely sure that the part is right this time.*

*Next month we'll print the number, in the meantime we'll send you an example to test out. And Steve is at this very moment preparing to set fire to my feet.*

## Ram jam

Can you supply any information about how to connect extra RAM to a 664 and make it behave like a 6128? I can find no advertisements for the 64K and 256K RAM packs, and I am capable of constructing the required circuits to expand the memory. I have details of the ROM boards, and there are several types available, but no-one seems to make RAM expansions.

**Kevin Seymour, Portsmouth**

*Dk'tronics used to make the RAM expansions, but their business is now handled by RAM Electronics. Contact them on ☎0252 850085. As for doing the upgrade, a full project on installing the 6128 ROM was published in AA30. You never know, maybe one day we'll publish a RAM pack in Soldering On: that is, assuming we receive one...*

## Shorts

First, I would like to know how to set up RSX commands. I've noticed that the Classic Collection has gone from Cheat Mode. Will it return? Has there been a poke for Arkanoid?

**Adam Lloyd, Tunbridge Wells**

*The full story of RSXs can be found in the Firmware Guide (see the answer to G Ross) but broadly speaking it goes something like this: a call is made to &BCD1, with BC holding the address of a command table, and HL pointing to four spare bytes of RAM. Setting up an RSX using Basic alone is not possible: some machine code is always involved.*

*Classic Collection ran out of requests for old pokes. Arkanoid? How did you miss them? Disk Arkanoid was covered in AA22 and 23, with other pokes presented in AA25, 26 and 36: a Multiface poke was printed in AA37.*

## Get 'em off!

Get your contributions off now to:  
**Problem Attic, AA, 4 Queen St,  
Bath BA1 1EJ**

## Taking the PIP

I have a 6128. When the Logo TS command is used, and you type something in, the first letter appears at the top of the screen as well as near the bottom and the rest of the word continues near the bottom, so I end up typing TS CT to cure the problem

Is it just my copy, or is it a general fault? Also when copying files using PIP, I have to put in and take out disks rather a lot. Does this damage the drive?

Niall Couse, Bishopstown

It's not your fault Niall: everyone has to put up with it. And no, taking disks out and putting them in a lot doesn't do your drive any harm. It's a nuisance, but that's all.

## Eternal question

I am interested in writing an interrupt driven sprite routine, and continuous sound, on my 6128. I understand that you have to set up things called events, but I don't understand how to set them up.

Also, would the procedure be different for a ROM routine?  
G Ross, Oxford

I assume that you want to set up a machine code event. The whole subject is too long for Pratic, but here's the gist of it. First, you have to tell the operating system that you want a certain routine to execute every so often. This involves a call to &BCEF. A data area has to be specified, to help keep track of the information. Next, a call to &BCF2 activates

the routine.

It's worth noting that there are three forms of event: the normal event ('ticker' which occurs 50 times a second, the 'frame flyback' which is synchronised with the raster scan of monitors, TVs etc: and the 'fast ticker', which can operate up to 300 times a second. Different event structures have different call areas.

I suggest you get SOFT 968: the CPC Firmware Guide by Amsoft. It costs £19.99 and is full of information on the machine. (MJC Supplies ☎0462 32897)

If you're trying it in Basic, the relevant info is on Chapter 9 page 30. Chapter 7 page 7. Analyze the example and look up the keywords used (AFTER, EVERY, ON SQ).

## Hungry Amstrad

I own an Amstrad 464 that keeps chewing my tapes up. Is it hungry after all the games it's loaded? During the last month it has got through Ping Pong, Ikari Warriors, Target Renegade, Mickey Mouse, and now Football Manager 2 for breakfast. Since then I've

smashed the plastic dust cover due to my moodiness. I've ordered a 6128, but I really do want a working 464. If it keeps on chewing the tapes up, it'll have to go. Can it be fixed? My computer is three years old. Haydn Warrent, Llandudno Junction

Look on the bright side: your machine appears to have excellent taste.

It's probably just got too dirty through long usage. Take it to someone who repairs conventional cassette recorders. They'll have it fixed before you can say Amstrad Action.

## Cap in hand

I have a 464 and I love to type in programs but there's one thing that is blocking the way, which stops me completing my programs: character 160 in the Ascii character set. I just don't know how to get it into a program and for it to stay there without deleting itself. Could you please tell me what to do?

M Packer, Fleetwood

What is printed as ^ in listings should be typed in as the up arrow next to the CLR key. This happens rather too often for comfort. If you see a 'hat' in the middle of a listing, nine times out of ten it should really be an up arrow, indicating 'to the power of'. If it's in the middle of an equation, then it certainly should be an arrow.

storing the figure in memory and adding it to a 16 bit register pair, then ANDing it for the range required.

## Any old Protexit

Is it possible to purchase an interface for the CPC to control, say, Lego motors by entering a Basic program?

And does Protexit run on an unexpanded 464?

Jonathan Cochrane, Coleraine

I advise you to purchase a good book on using your computer for control applications. The Robot Book, written by Richard Pawson, published by Windward (ISBN 07112 20414-4), costing £7.95 for the paperback, is a really excellent introduction to the subject. Very highly recommended, although not specifically aimed at the CPC.

A device that will let you carry out the projects is the Circuit/Honeysoft HSP1, for £27, inclusive of tape software, VAT and P&P. KJ Bennet of Budgetsoft is currently checking your order for Tomahawk. Protexit on tape will work on an unexpanded 464.

## Think of a number

What are the data numbers to load A with a random number? Here's an example of

what I mean:

£4000	OUT (C), C	ED, 49
£4002	LD A, R	??, ??
£4004	NOP	00

Barry Boschen, Surrey

That command loads A with the R register. This is not a random number generator: instead, it merely stores the refresh value for the memory chips in the accumulator. Anyway, the opcodes for that command are ED, 5F.

Using the R register on its own is not enough for very random results. Try

## We have the technology

I own a 6128, and I have a 5.25 inch second disk drive. I cannot run any of my games that I have copied to my 5.25 inch disks, as the computer goes back to the default drive to load the rest of the files. Is there any-

thing I can do to prevent this?

Thomas Brennan,  
Pimlico

Yes. Strathclyde Developments is working on a switch you mount inside your 6128.

On flicking it, the A and B drives are switched around. Neat. I'll take a closer look in next month's Hardware Projects, but if you can't wait then contact them on ☎0292 541283 between 6 and 7pm.

# AA SMALL ADS

## FOR SALE

Fantasy adventure game by author of AA's Smart programs. Superb graphics, interactive characters, novel plot. 100K+ of code. Disk only £5. Cheque payable to R Buckley, 57 Lebrun Sqaure, London, SE3 9NS.

Small traders! Our simplified range of CPC business software includes accounts, invoicing, stock/mailling management etc. Recommended in reviews. SAE for catalogue, SD Microsystems (Dept AA), PO Box 24, Hitchin, Herts. Telephone: (0462) 675106.

Windows, icons and pointers on any CPC. RSX commands usable directly in your Basic programs. Come with demo programs and manual (including tutorial). Cassette £10, disc £12.00. Send Eurocheques to: Mark Rison, 7 Chemin Des Colombettes, Appt 11, CH-1202 Geneva, Switzerland.

Amstrad CPC6128, monochrome monitor, DMP2000 printer, Multiface II, cassette recorder, joystick, Protex, Advanced Art Studio, games, disks, magazines, manuals, boxes, leads, and printer paper, excellent condition, only £445 ono. (0646) 686259 (Simon).

Win a fortune in hours with the ultimate horse racing program, uses newspaper form. £8 on disc, £5 if disc enclosed. Cheque/PO to PD Ambery, 42 Amenbury Lane, Harpenden, Herts.

Amstrad PC1640 HD20 with ECD with many extras. Only one year old, hardly used, perfect condition. Best offer accepted. Phone (0923) 52291 to arrange a viewing.

2nd 3" disc drive, suitable for Amstrad CPC with first disc drive. Supplied with full instructions, but no case, power supply or leads. £37. Tel: Steve on Bracknell (0344) 425766.

DMP 2000 printer, Tasword 464 word processor, Melbourne Draw art program, Mini Office, 9 games, joystick, £110. Tel: 01 842 1627 evenings.

CPC 464 colour, disk drive, 64K memory expansion, DMP2000, multiface 2, over 100 items software, games and serious, much on disk, magazines and books £450 or offers for quick sale. Tel: (0905) 351914

7 socket rom boards. High/low roms selectable. Kit £15, assembled £20, pcb only £5. SAE for details: Phil Craven, 212 Dudley Hill Road, Bradford, BD2 3DF. (0274) 636652.

Rom deactivator, fits between computer & romboard, undetected by software, 100% loading every time. LED status indication plus special reset switch. £15.99. D Crossman, 61 The Crescent, Breaston, DE7 3DE. SAE for details.

CPC6128, colour monitor, tape recorder, joystick, books, 100+ mags all early issues, Protex, Mini Office 2, Ad-Art Studio, 100+ games, all on disc, Multiface 2 + many extras worth over £1000 as new. Bargain at £300. John, Leeds (0532) 524679 after 4pm.

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Mono CPC464, modulator, printer, disc drive, 2nd 5.25" drive, Speech synthesiser, light pen, joysticks, loadsa software disc and tape, magazines including all AA's worth £1000+, sell £500. Phone Justin 0792 467787.

CPC464, green screen, DK 'tronics 64K ram pack, disk drive, £200 worth of software including games and utilities. £60 worth of programming books and magazines. £250 the lot. Tel: 0582 864156.

## WANTED

Colour monitor also printer eg DMP2000 for CPC6128. Phone Jim 0424 210446.

Wanted DD11 first disc drive for CPC464. Must be in good condition. Will pay £50. Telephone: 0305 848879.

Wanted colour monitor only for CPC6128. No disc drive and keyboard. To update from green screen to colour screen. Tel: Marc Westwood on 021 429 6163. Thanks.

## SERVICES

Eprom Service your own programs (Basic, Basic/Binary, Binary) programmed into eprom run using RSX commands from £9.95. Tel: (0438) 354908 (evenings), DJ software, 25 Dovedale, Stevenage, Herts. SG2 9EP.

Phoenix Tape to Disc specialists. state 464/6128. 85p per game, Compilations 80p per game, Multiloaders £3.50, add 30p for each tape to be returned if required. Enclose disc, Tape, instructions &

Inlay card when ordering. Phoenix, 10 Walter St, Draycott, Derby, DE7 3DE. Tel: 03317 4490 after 7pm. SAE for catalogue. If we can't disc it no one can. Try us and see!!.

Tape-to-Disc conversions 464/6128; send original tape(s) plus a disc & 75p per game (max. 6 games per disc) and we will transfer them to disc. Compilation tapes 70p each game. If you want tapes returned add 30p per tape to total cost. We also run a Disc Recovery Service recovering erased games etc. We can supply discs for £2.50. State whether 464/6128. Send SAE for free transfer list & games for sale. D R Hudson, 13 Cromwell Road, St Austell, Cornwall, Tel: (0726) 65640. Please note new address.

CPC users! Join CPC software library now! Only £2 membership. Loads games, utilities etc.. Latest titles now available. Write: CPC, 58 Hawkins Street, Hill Top, West Bromwich, B70 0QS.

Eprom copying service. Personal back-up only. Have your eprom copied onto a blank eprom. Includes eprom, post and packaging. Send £10 to P Williams, Barnwell Consultates, 105 Ditton Walk, Cambridge.

Earn extra income with your Amstrad. Cash in on the demand for office services. Unique guide shows you how to get started. SAE to Avoncliffe, 5 Cliffe Drive, Limply Stoke, Bath, BA3 6HY.

## OTHER

Computer appreciation diploma. Answer question paper. Only £14.95. A prestige framable certificate. Newcomers and old hands details: Coordinator, Miss T Cowell, 14 Lanes End, Totland, Isle Of Wight, PO39 0AL.

Fed up with games - or can't afford the one you want. Your micro can earn you extra cash. Further details. SAE, AA2, 429 Portway, Bristol, BS11 9UQ.

This section of the magazine offers you the chance to speak directly to the huge world of CPC owners - or would be owners. Users report good results.

You can place an ad up of up to 30 words for just £5.

So you could use it to sell a printer or launch a user group or publicize a piece of software you've written.

One thing you can't advertise is the sale or swap of software. Such ads can be misused by pirates

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# ELECTRONIC ARTS

winners of AA's first 'Games House of the Year' award  
want you to help them celebrate!

It's not easy to produce a hit game. Producing a faultless succession of hits is even harder. And to get it right in your first year is not far off impossible. Yet that's what Electronic Arts have done. This is what they did in '88:

- Arcticfox (AA35; an 81% Rave);
- The Bard's Tale (AA36, their 90% Mastergame);
- PHM Pegasus (AA37, 84%: Rave);
- The Train (AA38, 80%: Rave).

Some record. For that, they richly deserve their award as AA's first 'Games House of the Year'.

Naturally they're more than a little chuffed with this award, and naturally they want to celebrate. And who better to celebrate with than you, the people who bought their games and made them what they are today?

That means a competition. That means winners: six, to be precise. The prize is simple: everything Electronic Arts release in 1989. Yes, everything. Already we know that will include *Skate or Die*, *Ferrari Formula One* and

*Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight Trainer*. There will be more: and you will have it.

And that's not all. For you will also visit Electronic Arts HQ and see how their games get written, and by whom. You'll see top security items: games awaiting release, games in production, games at the planning stage.

And that's not all. For by winning this competition you will prove that your judgment of what makes a good game is not in doubt. So we will be asking you to report on Electronic Arts' releases during the year. What we want to know is: are they going to be 'Games House of the Year 1989'? Or are they resting on their laurels? Getting over confident? Going off the boil?

During the year to come we shall be monitoring their progress,

with your assistance. That means getting your name and opinions where it matters - in *Amstrad Action* - regularly throughout the year. In effect, that means you will be playing your part in helping 35,000 people decide whether they want to buy a game or not. So we have to make sure you're up to the job.

Here's what you do. Tell us what you think was this year's best game - by Electronic Arts or by whoever - and, in 15 words or less, why. Simple? Don't be fooled. There are a lot of smart people out there who want to win this prize, and they'll be trying hard. So you had better do so too.



NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ AGE: \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

TEL. No. (if you have one): \_\_\_\_\_

I THINK THE BEST GAME OF 1988 WAS: \_\_\_\_\_

AND IT WAS BEST BECAUSE (in 15 words or less): \_\_\_\_\_

Send your entry by 15/1/1989 to:  
**Electronic Arts Competition, Amstrad Action 4 Queen St,  
Bath, Avon, BA1 1EJ**

photocopies of this entry form are acceptable. One entry per entrant.

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1. Not open to employees of Future Publishing Ltd or Electronic Arts or their relatives. Sorry mum.
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# ACTION TEST

Games galore with GARY 'GbH' BARRETT

- Gremlin travel back in time (this page);
  - Incentive do it again! (p.48);
  - Barbarian (yes, another one), p.46;
  - Operation Wolf is on p.47
- and Codemasters go full price (p.61)

## MASTERGAME TOTAL ECLIPSE pages 48-51

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## ARTURA

Gremlin ● £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk joystick/keys

Once upon a time there was a sword called Excalibur that lived in a rock. It may seem an odd place for a sword to live, but some stupid idiot shoved it in there for a bet. There was a rumour going around that the person that could pull the sword out of its rocky scabbard would be a really nice guy and an ideal candidate for king. Needless to say there were many people willing to suffer the awesome responsibility of being king (the great wealth and possession of a kingdom being even more important). Eventually a wimpy guy called Arthur dragged the sword out and said 'Where's me castle then?' And so the legend of King Arthur was born.

### The Verdict

**GRAPHICS** ..... 67%

- Detailed sprites.
- Lacks colour.

**SONICS** ..... 62%

- Title tune is nice but soon tires.
- Few effects.

**GRAB FACTOR** ..... 74%

- Walking round hacking things is fun.
- Confusing at first.

**STAYING POWER** .. 78%

- Large castle to explore which demands mapping.
- Stupid opponents make life too easy.

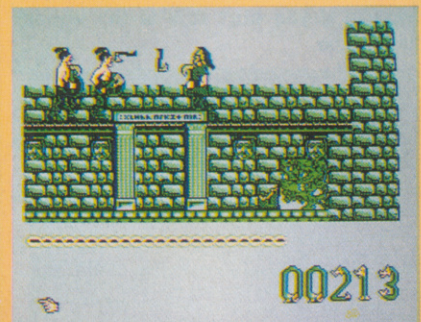
**AA RATING** ..... 75%

- Better than Gremlin's recent attempts, but not quite a Rave.

Artura is based on this legend and set in the kingdom of Albion (*doing ever so well since Atkinson left, by the way - ed.*). Albion is in a bit of trouble at the moment and to get it out of it the sacred treasures of Albion must be collected and only Merdyn the Mage knows where they are. Merdyn has mysteriously vanished and his apprentice, Nimue, is being held prisoner in the castle of Artura's half sister, Morgause.

The screen is split into two bits: a flick screen playing area in which Artura wanders around and a panel at the bottom that shows you energy score and runes carried. Energy decreases every time you come into contact with one of Morgause's many minions.

Morgause's castle is made up of many rooms that are usually split into two lev-



▲ Hubble bubble, Artura's in trouble

els of floor. Movement off either side of the screen is possible and doorways lead into and out of it. Strewn around the castle are runes and health restoring objects to aid you in your rescue mission.

Rats, ghouls, spiders, soldiers and cute little birdy things all want to stop you from finding runes and freeing Nimue. Fortunately they don't like you throwing things at them, in fact it can be very fatal for them, and it doesn't hinder your score either.

On the title screen there's a nice tune that has a certain Arthurian sound to it, but there are none in the game itself. Sound effects are limited - just the impact of your weapon on enemy flesh and the sound of them dying after several hits. Although lacking in colour the graphics are detailed and animation of them is good if not mindblowingly superb. (Gargoyle still hold the title for the best animation of big characters, but at least Gremlin tried.)

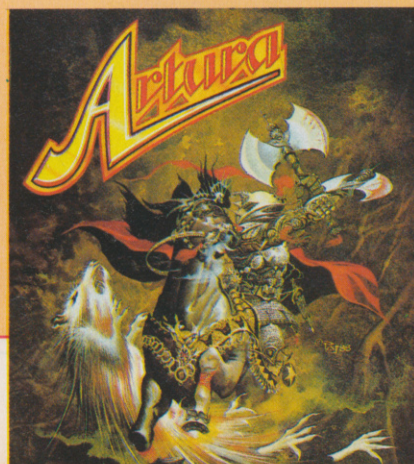
There's a large playing area to explore and plenty of foes to kill, though it's a pity they're so thick. It's a game that demands mapping and people will be grabbing for sketch pads before they get anywhere in the game. **GBH**

**FIRST DAY TARGET:**  
1,000 points

## SECOND OPINION

"Artura looks good, though the animation's jerky. And you're kept on your toes by the warriors as you pursue your objective. If you want a mix of Lap of the Gods, Manic Miner and The Shining then Artura fits the bill." **PbM**

**GREEN SCREEN:**  
Well, it's green



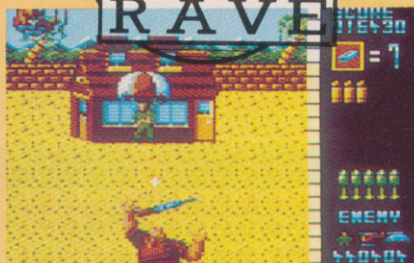
# AA RAVE

## OPERATION WOLF

Ocean ● £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk joystick/keys

Put your thinking cap back in the cupboard right this minute and go grease up your joystick arm.

Ocean's *Operation Wolf* is here and it's time for mayhem! A tin of boot polish and a headband are not essential, but they'll help you look the part as you set out on a mission to rescue some of your fellow soldiers who very cleverly managed to get themselves captured by the nasty old enemy (boo!) and are being held hostage in a concentration camp. It's down to you, you modest hero person you, to set them free and escort them to safety – reckon you can handle that? You'd better be sure, because if you ain't this is the wrong place to be.



● Let's go crazy and shoot everyone in sight. Healthy?

Targeting the enemy involves moving a cross-hair sight around the screen using either the joystick or keys and then pressing fire, which turns the cross-hair into a bullet hole (or a shower of earth spewing up from the ground if you're aim's a little off).

Mind you, it wouldn't be so bad if all you had to contend with were foot soldiers, but – like life – things are never that easy. There are also a set number of helicopters, tanks or gunboats to be destroyed. Polishing off these bigger baddies is not too much trouble if you've still got some rockets left, but if you haven't you're gonna have to rely on destroying them with machine gun fire. Death's not the only thing on your mind, though, because poor innocent defenceless people like nurses, passers-by and small children wander across the screen from time to time. And if you are stupid or callous enough to kill any of these poor, defenceless &c, &c, your energy meter (which runs up the side of the screen) creeps towards the top. Should it reach the top, well, it's game over. Thank you and good night.

Fortunately, you can pick up some life-giving potions by shooting them as they scroll past on the floor. These knock your health meter down a few points – your health meter gets bumped down a few points when you complete

### The Verdict

**GRAPHICS** ..... 94%  
 Fast and colourful.

**SONICS** ..... 75%  
 Good sound effects.

**GRAB FACTOR** ..... 95%  
 Instantly addictive and very tough to put down.

**STAYING POWER** ... 88%  
 The levels start tough and just get tougher.

**AA RATING** ..... 89%  
 A brilliant arcade conversion.

a stage as well, so that helps too. You have to shoot ammo clips and rockets as they scroll past on the floor too because your supplies are limited and should you run out of ammo, well, let's just say your life expectancy is not going to be long!

Each level gets progressively harder, and halfway into the game the smart and selfish ones among the enemy even start wearing bullet-proof jackets. Some people, honestly, just show no consideration at all! That only leaves you with one option – shoot 'em in the head!

If you've played the arcade game (and who hasn't?) the first thing you'll notice about the game is how much faster the scrolling on the Amstrad is. That doesn't detract from the fun though, and the rest of the graphics are very colourful and well animated. *Op. Wolf* is manic action all the way: your brain cells won't get taxed but your joystick arm certainly will. AS

First day score:  
Complete stage 2



● Another one bites the dust! Just 41 more to go (and three tanks and gunboats!)

If you can you'll have to blast your way through six stages of enemy territory, dealing death to the enemy. Armed with a machine gun and a fistful of rockets (*that's, er, not very many actually – ed.*) you've got a set number of the enemy to kill before you complete the continually horizontally scrolling stages and move on further.

## VIOLENCE IS GOLDEN

There's an argument in the press and on TV a lot at the moment you may have heard about. One side says violence on the telly and in films is wearing down people's ability to understand reality: that watching too many violent pix is likely to make you go out and do something similar. (Michael Ryan, the man who shot more than a dozen people in Hungerford, is often cited as someone who had got carried away with the 'Rambo mental-

ity' – even though, to the best of my knowledge, there's absolutely no proof at all that he was into violent videos in a big way.) Then on the other hand of this argument about violence in the media are those people who say that someone who plays violent video games and watches Rambo films isn't necessarily a zomby. Of course he/she can tell fantasy from reality, they say. These activities merely help to get rid of aggressive emotions by

fantasising about them rather than actually go out and carry them out.

There is little doubt that *Operation Wolf* is a particularly violent game, and though you could say that the fact that you're punished for shooting nurses is a good thing, I'm not so sure.

Still, it sells, doesn't it?

What do you think? Write to 'Violent Video', AA, 4 Queen St, Bath, Avon BA1 1EJ

### SECOND OPINION

"This is as fast and frantic a game as I've seen in a long time. Fans of the arcade game won't be disappointed – unless you're expecting it to look the same, that is!

Andy's right, too, about the relative peace your brain cells will find: if thinking games are what you're into, forget this one right now.

But if it's excitement you want, come on in and join the fun!" SC

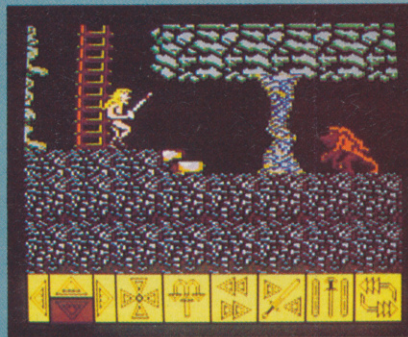
**THE SCREEN IN GREEN:**  
No problem

# BARBARIAN

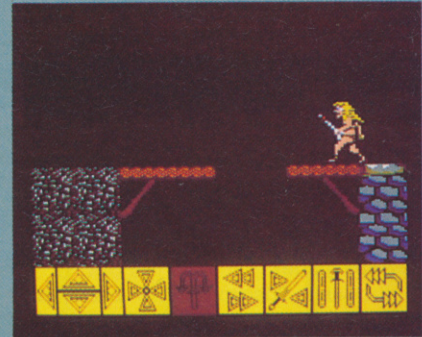
Psygnosis ● £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk joystick/keys

No. This is not Palace's *Barbarian* again, but rather another game with the same name, which appeared first on sixteen bit machines. Palace have a reputation for cover art featuring scantily clad women, but now Psygnosis have gone one step further: there's full nakedness on the cover. Before you get too excited I should explain that the being in question is in fact a dragon. Members of the Society for the Protection of Dragons from Exploitation should contact Psygnosis direct.

Right then, some background, courtesy of the little novella that accompanies the game. (It's a sort of Gothic Coronation Street, so be prepared.) Thoron and Necron are twin brothers who meet an old druid one day as he is wandering through the forest. He befriends them and teaches them to fight with sword, bow and spear. After a year of daily visits the druid turns up as usual, but carrying only the sword and bow. He asks the brothers to close their eyes and when they open them again they feel power surging through their bodies. Necron can cast fire from his fingertips, but is warned never to burn Thoron because the flames would



▲ Take care on the bridge



▲ Arrows waiting to be collected



turn back and destroy Necron. The bow is given to Necron and the sword to Thoron. Many years pass and the boys part company, only meeting again much later in a village, during which time nice

Necron has turned into a real bad guy. When they meet they fight tooth and claw (sound like normal brothers to me) and eventually Necron is slain. Thoron doesn't have the will power to destroy the soul of his evil brother and so in fact Necron doesn't die, he is merely forced to live underground. Thoron is later killed by a dragon sent by Necron and Thoron's son Hegor swears to avenge his father's death and bring the evil Necron's life to an end. You are Hegor and you wield the sword of your father. Phew! Got all that?

The screen is split into a row of icons and a flick screen playing area with a large sprite of you standing at the left. There are ten icons on screen and a further three can be accessed at the flick of a button. Left/right moves you and up/down alters which icon is highlighted. Fire activates the icon. There are four normal movement icons and you can also run. A dramatic forwards or backwards somersault is also possible and you can stop dead in your tracks with another icon. No barbarian would be complete without a sword, however, and this can be wielded menacingly at any monsters. If a monster is too scary then you can turn tail and run, leaving your sword behind in your haste. The extra icons allow you to pick up, drop and select objects. Your lives-score and number of arrows are also shown with the second set of icons. Arrows are picked up later in the game.

Each of the screens that you wander around has one of two types of danger: moving and static. Static ones include sections of ceiling that bash you on the head and sections of bridges that vanish when you step on them. Moving dangers are the toads, werewolves and ghosties of this world. Contact with static or mov-

## The Verdict

**GRAPHICS** ..... 87%

- Colourful sprites.
- Chunky graphics.

**SONICS** ..... 31%

- No tunes.

**GRAB FACTOR** ..... 85%

- Nice mix of icons and hack'n'slay.
- Very frustrating at first.

**STAYING POWER** ... 78%

- Large playing area and many tricky obstacles to deal with.
- Finish it once and that's it.

**AA RATING** ..... 81%

- Fun, but lacking in the long term.

ing dangers are equally lethal. You start with four lives, but in your first few games they won't last very long.

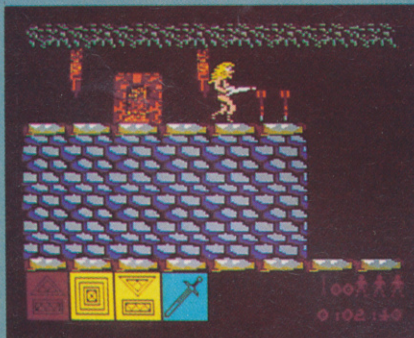
That's one area in which the game lets itself down badly: it's too easy to end up dead unavoidably. Traps have no warning, and so the first time you come across one you're almost guaranteed to lose a life. Monsters may only take one blow to kill, but timing it can be very dodgy. I suppose it's like an arcade game: you die a hundred deaths before you start to recoup your investment.

Graphically *Barbarian* is not technically brilliant and the graphics are in general chunky. There are no tunes, but the few sound effects are good.

There's not really any great depth to the game, which is just a series of problems with basically only one solution to them. Once you know how to deal with them there will be little challenge to the game. This is one of the most obvious examples of a game that you'll only ever bother to complete once. A nice try at cutting a sixteen bit game down to eight bits.

GBH

**FIRST DAY TARGET:**  
Complete 20%



▲ Hack the werewolf

## SECOND OPINION

"This is better than Palace's *Barbarian*, in that there's an objective. I always like games which give me a reason to play them and the novella certainly helps. And I like running through a fortress chopping everything in sight: this barbarian's a guy I can sympathise with." PBM

**GREEN SCREEN:**  
No major problems

# MASTER GAME

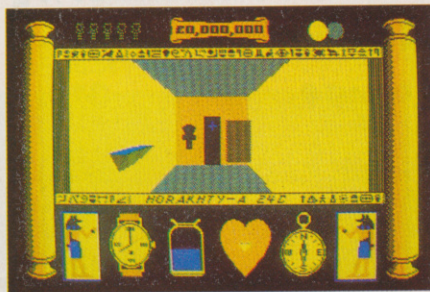
## TOTAL ECLIPSE

Incentive ● £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk joystick/keys

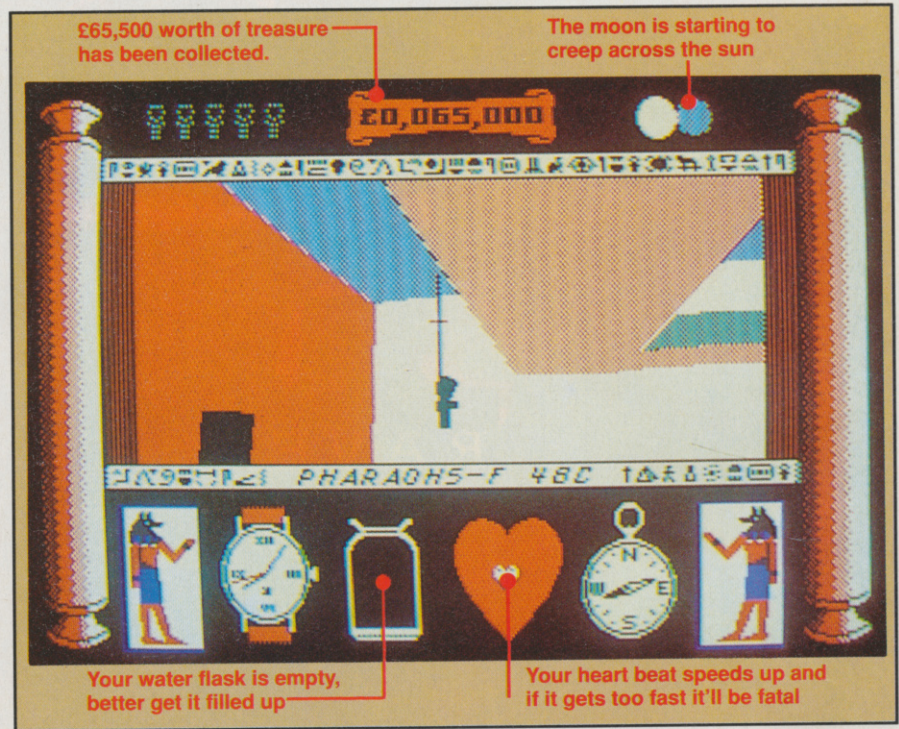
Last Christmas's *Mastergame* was *Driller*. In July the sequel, *Darkside*, was also a *Mastergame*. Can Incentive make it three in a row with their latest *Freescape* game?

Evath and Triscupid have been left behind and *Freescape*, the 3D environment you've no doubt heard about (you'd have had to be living on Evath not!), has travelled back in time to Egypt. The year is 1930, the date is the 26th of October and the time shortly before breakfast (if you have breakfast about 8.15, that is). A total eclipse of the sun is due just

before 10am and if you don't do something about it this review won't get finished, because this could be The End of Civilization As We Know It. As the sort of person who finds himself or herself saving the world on a regular basis,



▲ The entrance with trough and ankh



# THE ANKHS ARE COMING!

STEVE CAREY talks to Ian Andrew and (right) puts *Total Eclipse* in perspective

In an industry packed with oversized egos and overhyped 'product', finding someone who's got something special but is not inclined to shout about it is rare indeed. *Amstrad Action* tracked down shy and retiring (not yet, we hope!) Ian Andrew and forced him to answer our questions. AA: Ian, how would you describe *Total Eclipse*?

**Ian Andrew:** As if the player was the character in *Indiana Jones* in an adventure to stop the curse in a pyramid in Egypt. The first thing you see is the plane outside the pyramid. Your mission is to reach the shrine at the top of the pyramid before the eclipse occurs and that will stop the curse that would end civilization as we know it.

The legend goes that many hundreds of years ago the Pharaoh was angered by his people he set a curse and built the pyramid and said that if anything

ever blocked the sun in daylight hours it would be destroyed. The moon is about to block the sun and will explode and shower the earth with meteorites and plunge the earth into ecological disaster. Did you know when you were finishing *Dark Side* what the next game would be like?

Yes, we'd done a lot of the ground work already. It was very much a team effort. We knew we wanted to set it on earth because people were beginning to think all *Freescape* was good for was abstract space stuff. We wanted more realism – and also put more detail in.

**The scale is very different, it seems to me: everything is much more life size, human size than cosmic.**

That's right, there's a lot more in it. It's about 70 per cent bigger than the other two games – there's about 50 locations in it. But we're not giving help away this time!

**How do you mean?**

Well, last time on *Dark Side* people were phoning us up after they bought it asking, 'How do I get this?' So with *Total Eclipse* we're being very strict and not helping.

**Who are the Incentive team?**

There's Chris Andrew my younger brother, who does the 8-bit coding and programming; Sean Ellis, who does the 16-bit coding and programming; I do the game design and layout of the data; and Paul Gregory, who does the play-testing and a bit of the programming and a bit of the game design.

**How do you do your play-testing?**

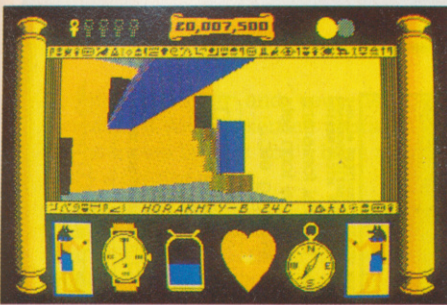
We have various people of differing standards of expertise. From people who've played *Freescape* games before and know all about them, we get their comments and watch them play; down to people like my sister-in-law who either don't like games or haven't played them. We don't give them any prompting and just see how they



● Ian Andrew: 'Every time we do a new game we improve the speed and the compression'

get on. ***Total Eclipse* looks faster than *Driller* and *Dark Side* –**

–Yes, every time we do a new game we spend time optimising the speed and the compression so we can get more into it each time, and also make the design more suitable for it. ●

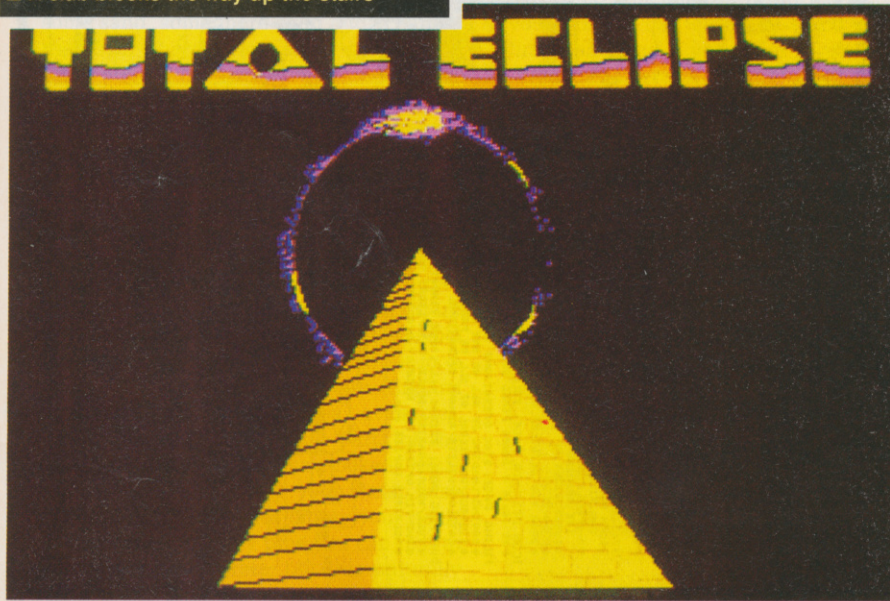


▲ A slab blocks the way up the stairs

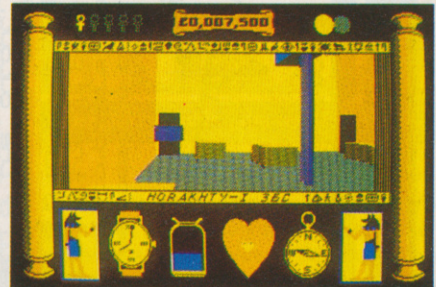
you're the ideal candidate to go into the pyramid and smash that shrine. (For more of the story behind Total Eclipse, see the interview with Ian Andrew below.)

The screen is the now familiar 3D freescape view of the world, while above it there's a moneymeter and a representation of the moon's and sun's relative positions. Any treasures found inside the

pyramid increase the moneymeter which works like a score. Below the main screen is a row of hieroglyphics (more on these later) and a row of four icons: a wrist watch, a water bottle, your heart beat and a compass. Water is used up as you explore the pyramid in the heat of an



▲ The loading screen: there's your pyramid – and there's the eclipse, two hours away!

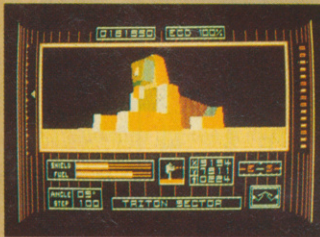


▲ A barred door needs an ankh to open it

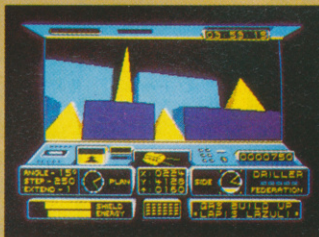


▲ Your plane waits outside

## Freescape: Total Eclipse in perspective



▲ Driller: the first Freescape experience and an instant hit



▲ Dark Side: the 3D feeling grew stronger – and the time limit more severe!

One little touch that really tickles me and somehow sums up the face of Freescape third time round is the high-score. Incentive have put a pound sign in front of it, and although that shouldn't make a scrap of difference, it gives getting a high score a meaning it never really had in Driller or Dark Side.

It tells us too that we're definitely out of the abstract, space-age 3D and into a recognisably human world. Egypt is an inspired choice: the pyramid, the flat sand and the baking sun are ideal Freescape fodder (smooth and monochrome), while the

mummies, hieroglyphics and associated hocus-pocus all add atmosphere. This is evident too in the manual. With Driller they had to produce a lengthy and, truth be told, rather tedious novella to conjure up a sense of reality; but with Total Eclipse, a few paragraphs do the job admirably. You don't necessarily believe in it – in fact it's a load of old camel-droppings – but that doesn't matter in the slightest. It's just something to hang the game on, and as such works perfectly.

Ian Andrew, as you'd expect, is keen to point out the improve-

ments to the Freescape system. There's no use pretending that an 8-bit machine is ever going to have the graphics ability of a Quantel Paintbox, but Incentive have tried their very hardest to make the most of what there is. And since they do their development on a CPC, they know the machine and its capabilities inside out.

They've done more than just pay lip service to their policy of continual improvement: here's a few examples:

▲ The face-forward option (key F) saves all that tedious reori-

entation;

▲ There's an equally neat 'U' turn (key U);

▲ There are many more puzzles per location, and more locations altogether;

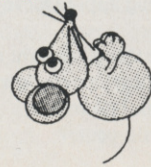
▲ There's frequently more than one way to do something, and no 'right' way;

▲ The more human scale makes the speed increase possible, but also makes the whole thing appear more realistic.

One thing, though: in the game your heart slows down when you accumulate treasure.

Would yours? ●

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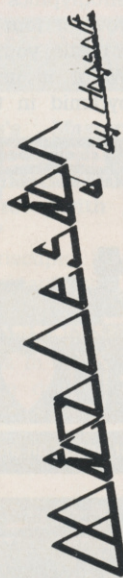
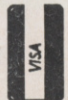
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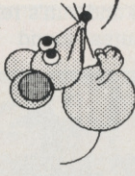
**SIREN SOFTWARE, 2-4 Oxford Road  
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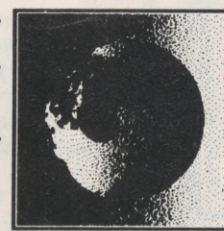
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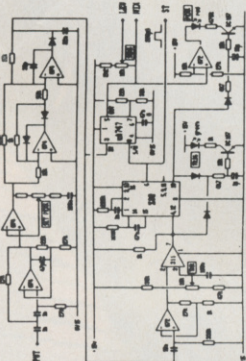
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this page produced entirely using cpc6128, **IREN** and a £200 printer

Egyptian morning and your heart rate increases if you're exerting yourself. Take the heart too far and you'll have to take a rest – a cardiac arrest.

You begin standing outside your plane that has just arrived in the desert. (Doesn't look as if it could've flown here with *that* propeller, though.) The moon is just touching the sun as the approach to eclipse time begins. Look around and you see some sand, some more sand and – *what's that over there?* Yup, some more sand. Quite a lot in the sand department, really. Fine if you're in the egg-timer business, not so good if you're trying to eat a cheese sandwich. Fortunately this featureless waste is relieved by a whacking great pyramid. (Hint: before going in and beginning your mission it's well worth visiting the plane, there's something hidden on it.)

As you enter the pyramid you see two things that are going to be very important to your quest: an *ankh* (Egyptian symbol of eternal life: it's a tall cross with a loop on the top) and a water trough (English symbol that there's no tea available). *Ankhs* are used to open up parts of the pyramid that are otherwise blocked, while water is needed to keep your water flask topped up. If it becomes empty your heart rate increases. At any time you can rest to reduce your heart rate, but this naturally takes time, and the eclipse draws ever closer. Collect *ankhs* by bumping into them and fill your water bottle by touching the trough.

The row of hieroglyphs between the playing area and information panel aren't

all useful, but many are. They show which direction you're moving, whether you're crawling or walking, how big your steps are, the size of angle, and there's a gun or pyramid to show whether you're in fire or walk mode and also the name of the location to help in mapping.

Inside the pyramid you'll find big chests (not the *Barbarian* or *Vixen* kind) and urns. Touching an urn or chest gains you money. The chest must be opened first – shooting it with your revolver does the trick. There are some other vaguely coffin shaped objects in some rooms and surprisingly enough they often contain mummies. These are no ordinary mummies though, because these mothers can spit acid if you get too close, and hardly surprisingly this does your heart no good at all.

The pyramid has some 50 locations,

**SECOND OPINION**

*"Once in a while – it seems to be at about six month intervals – we get a game that I just can't wait to get home and play all evening, Sportsnight or no Sportsnight. This time last year it was a little thing you may remember as Driller. Six months ago it was Dark Side. Now it's Total Eclipse.*

*It's still Freescape, of course, and if you hated either or both of the others then it's unlikely you'll be converted by this one. But I've yet to meet anyone who falls into that category (write to us at the usual address, I'd be amused to hear from you)."*

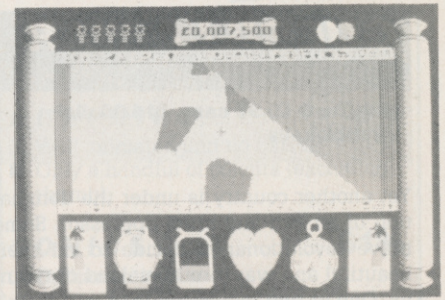
SC

**THE SCREEN IN GREEN:**  
*No problems, though you're missing a colour treat*

with considerable variations in size. Some areas are blocked off until you've solved a problem, and you'll gradually start to work your way upwards.

Many problems are hieroglyphics on walls: they're usually in pairs, and shooting one changes something in the room with the other hieroglyph. It might for example open up a secret door, slide a wall across or disarm a trap.

Certain sections of the pyramid have pressure pads on the floor that can be lethal, setting off poison darts that get your heart pumping disastrously. It's essential to look down when you enter a room, because the floor could be a good distance away. Most drops aren't fatal, but none of them are exactly healthy. Some parts of the pyramid do things when they're shot, in good old fashioned *Driller*



▲ Exploring inside the pyramid

style.

It's not absolutely essential to make a map, but it definitely makes things easier. Unfortunately, however, the floors aren't all on the same level, so a bit of 3D mapping is necessary. Keep looking around, because you'll see ankhs, traps and loads of other things on the floor, ceiling and high up the walls. Control is very similar to the other two *Freescape* games, but there's a useful extra control (the F key) to face you forward again if you've confused yourself as to which way the floor is. There's also the essential save and load game options.

It can't honestly be claimed that there's been a vast improvement in the already extremely high graphics quality of *Total Eclipse's* two predecessors, but on the other hand speed has increased. Things are still angular and smooth, but this is a trade-off against speed of screen refreshing. One relatively minor complaint must be made for the third consecutive time, and that is that sound is still uninspiring, being limited still to a mere handful of effects and no tunes. Incentive plainly feel that the memory required to create good in-game sound is simply not worth the sacrifice.

Incentive continue to improve their system and their games just go from strength to strength. This time round there are more problems to solve and a 66% bigger playing area to explore, making the objective even more challenging. There is also more than one solution to most problems, making it possible to solve the game in many ways. You could even go back for another go and try doing it another way.

If you've seen either of the two previous *Freescape* games you will need no persuading that Incentive have something really special. When we tell you that the extra locations, puzzles and added speed make *Total Eclipse* a faster moving and even more exciting adventure than *Driller* and *Dark Side* put together, you should be convinced. And if by any chance you've so far not had the pleasure of *Freescape's* acquaintance, wait no longer.

*Total Eclipse:* now you know what you want for Christmas. GBH

**FIRST DAY TARGET:**  
Collect £125,000

**The Verdict**

**GRAPHICS** ..... **91%**

- Good perspective very real environment.
- Shading makes it look more colourful.

**SONICS** ..... **34%**

- Still needs work in the sound department, lads!

**GRAB FACTOR** ..... **92%**

- Not too tricky to begin with, but things get tougher as you get further into the game.
- Few instant-deaths which can put you off a game.

**STAYING POWER** ... **95%**

- 50 locations to explore and two hours of real time to do it in.
- More puzzles to solve and many ways to solve them make it less trial and error and more fun.

**AA RATING** ..... **93%**

- The best of the three *Freescape* games. More puzzling and things to do.

**GUERRILLA WAR**

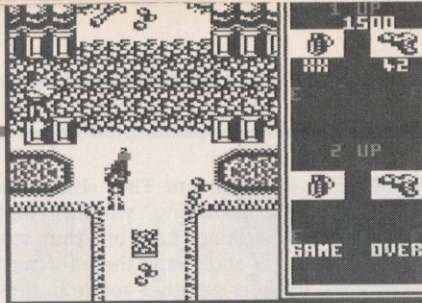
Imagine ● £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk joystick/keys

Yet another country is under the domination of an evil and cruel oppressor. Some brave revolutionaries decide to rid their beautiful and war torn homeland of tyranny. One or two rebels can take part simultaneously in this scrolling game of gratuitous violence.

After the number of players and controls have been selected the first level is loaded from tape or disk and subsequent levels are likewise loaded. Fine for disk, but can be irritating for tape users. They'll just have to get used to it though because more and more games are often multi-loaded nowadays.

The right of the screen is a status area for each player. Health, ammunition, grenades and score are shown here. Health decreases with every hit you take until it's time to meet your maker (the demi-god Shu-te-mup). The rest of the screen has the scrolling playing area in which you massacre the oppressive hordes of enemy troops.

You have two weapons at your disposal: grenades and a gun. The former is more destructive, but you only have 50. Bullets are in infinite supply (very large



▲ A hostage tied to a post in 'a poor person's Ikari Warriors'

magazine on the gun). In places there are tanks that you leap into and drive around in (not in the slightest reminiscent of *Ikari Warriors* is it!) and blast away at your foes from.

They're armed with similar weapons and they stand around in tactical positions waiting to blow you apart. They're not very intelligent though and tend to stand in one spot shooting at where they hope you'll go, pretty standard stuff for a shoot-em-up really.

Graphically it's disappointing with ill defined sprites. Colour is used poorly and just makes the screen look untidy and

**SECOND OPINION**

"Running through a jungle and shooting the opposition to the revolution. Exciting? Nope, afraid not. PbM

**GREEN SCREEN:**  
Not so glaring

glaring. Sound is bad too with indistinct effects, but a reasonable tune on the title screen. As a shoot-em-up it's not that bad, but then again it's not a wonderful game either. Although this and *Victory Road* are very similar in concept the execution of *Victory Road* is better and so if came to a choice of the two go for VR. GBH

**FIRST DAY TARGET:**  
Score 5,000 points

**The Verdict**

**GRAPHICS** .....59%

- Flickery graphics.
- Gaudy colours.

**SONICS** .....53%

- Good title tune.

**GRAB FACTOR** .....59%

- Two player blasting.
- Too tricky to begin with.

**STAYING POWER** ...52%

- Five levels plus and end of level enemy.
- Blast, blast, blast!

**AA RATING** .....54%

- A poor person's *Ikari Warriors*.

**VICTORY ROAD**

Imagine ● £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk joystick/keys

With simultaneous two player action and a vertically scrolling screen packed with nasties just waiting to kill or be killed, this looks like *Ikari Warriors*. There are a few extras thrown in for good measure.

**The Verdict**

**GRAPHICS** .....72%

- Smooth vertical scrolling.
- Colourful sprites and backgrounds.

**SONICS** .....41%

- Good effects. Pity there's no tunes.

**GRAB FACTOR** .....78%

- One or two player game.
- Heads are tricky to deal with initially.

**STAYING POWER** ...69%

- Loads of aliens to deal with.
- Repetition will get to you eventually.

**AA RATING** .....74%

- Not mind blowing original, but plenty of fun to be had in slaying things.

**SECOND OPINION**

"Now if you've got to have *Ikari Warriors* clones, make 'em like this. Terrific!" SC

**THE SCREEN IN GREEN:**  
fine

The playing area is in the centre of the screen and this scrolls downwards. On either side of the playing area is a score panel and the number of lives left for each player. You begin the game with six lives.

Your objective is to kill as many aliens as possible and generally blast your way to the top of the high score table. A truly original concept for a game is very rare, and this isn't one of them. You're armed with a gun, you've taken your shirt off because you're 'hard' and you're in a mean mood. Monsters beware!

Each level is several screens high and is a mixture of open terrain and obstacles that get in your way. Some obstacles can be blasted out of the way, but others are so stubborn that they just sit there and look undamaged. There are also some other objects that can be collected to enhance your firepower. Some obstacles can only be destroyed with a more potent weapon than the standard gun.

Your friendly neighbourhood foes come in several flavours: vampires, little green things, floating heads, spiders and more. They're tough little critters though and they take a sin-

gle hit to blast, except for the heads which linger and lurk doing their best to stay in one piece. You have as much resistance to them as they do to you, one hit loses you a life. Run out of lives and it's game over.

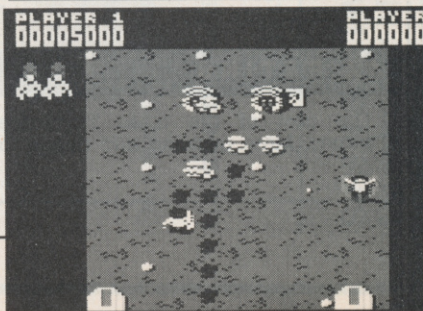
That's about it as far as gameplay goes, you walk around killing bad guys or you can walk with a friend and kill-em together. When you come across one the green squares you can go through and battle a big head, after which you return to the surface and shoot more little guys.

The scrolling is smooth and the graphics colourful if a little lacking in detail. There are no tunes, but the sound effects are very good.

Even though *Ikari Warriors* is considerably older it has the edge, but that doesn't mean that *Victory Road* should be completely ignored. Have a look at the two and then make your choice if you want a gratuitous shoot-em-up for Christmas, both are very good games. GBH

**FIRST DAY TARGET:**  
20,000 points

▼ Out for a stroll down Victory Road



## GARY LINEKER'S SUPER SKILLS

Gremlin ● £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk joystick/keys

The likeable and once prolific Leicester lad's first foray into computerworld was Gary Lineker's Superstar Soccer (AA29: 66%). My, how things have changed! Now, while our Gazza is out there at

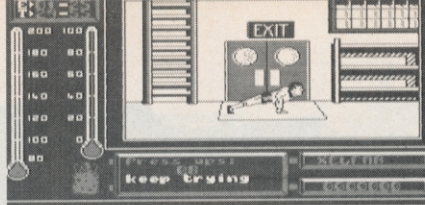
### SECOND OPINION

"This gym joystick-wagging business requires a high boredom threshold I don't possess, and the point never seems very clear. Still, there must be enough people out there who love nothing better than a good waggle... But why?" **SC**

**ON THE GREEN PITCH:**  
duller, but playable

Barcelona striving to get onto the score-sheet (and occasionally meeting up with Robbo and the lads to get another hard-earned goalless draw against some soccer nonentity), Gremlin release the second. The emphasis has shifted from tactical and arcade-like action to a wagging game that trains a budding electronic footballer.

From one to four players can take part and there are two major sections to the



▲ Get those muscles going

game: in the gym and field work. The gym section has four events: press-ups, squat thrusts, weightlifting and monkey bars. Field work consists of dribbling, chipping, shooting, penalties and ball juggling. In each event you have a certain amount of time in which to complete it, and there's also a maximum time limit by the end of which you must have completed all the training. A timer on screen shows you how much time you have left to complete the event and the game.

All the gym events are pure waggle, with subtle differences between the events. By subtle I mean the direction that the joystick is being moved changes from horizontal to diagonal to vertical. Sophisticated stuff!

Once you've gone through the gym it's time to go out onto the pitch and kick some ball. Dribbling, chipping and shooting are all very similar in play - just a matter of running around with the ball and kicking it occasionally. A sight is used to decide where the ball's supposed to go and then you give a good kickin'. Finally there's ball juggling in which you press the appropriate numeric key to get that ball bouncing.

Graphics are bright, but not colourful with good animation. Sound is decent enough, if a little simplistic. An nice tune that's somewhat reminiscent of Deflektor plays on the title screen, but there are no tunes in the game itself.

### The Verdict

**GRAPHICS** .....73%

- Bright and colourful with cute sprites.
- Smooth four way scrolling.

**SONICS** .....64%

- Nice tunes and functional sound effects.

**GRAB FACTOR** .....67%

- Simple to play. Ideal for younger readers.
- Perhaps a bit too easy though.

**STAYING POWER** ..64%

- Plenty of mazes to go through.
- Lacking in sophistication.

**AA RATING** .....65%

- Great fun and no blood...
- but vigilantes won't enjoy it.

different/wierder.

Most of the screen is taken up by the four way scrolling playing area and a score and lives panel. The playing area

### The Verdict

**GRAPHICS** .....71%

- Well animated and no flicker.
- Only a handful of colours (excluding thumb).

**SONICS** .....61%

- Brilliant title tune.

**GRAB FACTOR** .....67%

- Once you start doing badly things get even worse.

**STAYING POWER** ..62%

- Plenty of events to play through.
- Tedious after a while.

**AA RATING** .....64%

- The skills section of 4 Soccer Sims is better and you get a soccer game too.

Gary Lineker's Superstar Soccer mixed the strategy and arcade elements together well, but Super Skills lacks the essential ingredient to make it stand out. Some of the gym events are bit too tricky: they seem impossible and you just sit there wagging to no avail. It would have been much better to introduce the player gradually to the game rather than throw him in at the deep end immediately. **GBH**

**FIRST DAY TARGET:**  
1,000 points

## THE PEPSI CHALLENGE

US Gold ● £9.95 cass, £14.99 disk joystick/keys

Take a can of the fizzy stuff, throw in a team of programmers, ask them to come up with a game, shake them all up and what do you get? A sticky mess, or a Pacman variant?

You play a small blobby thing on legs that wanders around mazes eating pills and avoiding ghosties (sound familiar?). There are plenty of mazes to go through and some zap-game bits to make it a little

### SECOND OPINION

"Must take issue with Gary on this one. I enjoyed it, and so will anyone who doesn't demand lots of ketchup and vigilante violence with their games. Recommended." **SC**

**GREEN SCREEN:**  
Tricky once in a while

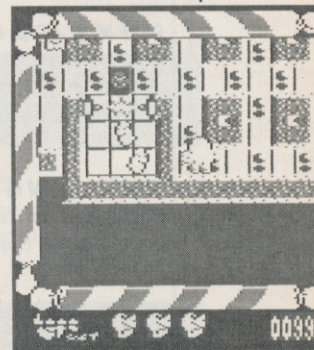
itself is very large for each level, covering several screens.

The zappy bits come in the form of special corridors in the mazes you can enter and when inside you change into a laser base and can blast any ghosts, Space Invaders style, that come too near. Pacman has power pills and this has squares that change you into something else: big hump-backed things and little red guys are two of your forms.

On the title screen there's a brilliant little ditty and there are also the occasional tunes within the game itself - losing a life provides one. Sound effects are well done. The graphics are colourful and nicely animated, with some humorous sprites.

Not the most original or difficult game, but it's pretty and it should keep younger players busy and happy for many hours. Maybe a little overpriced, but still worth considering. **GBH**

**FIRST DAY TARGET:**  
30,000 points



▲ Stomp the ghosts in humpy form



## HOW TO BE A COMPLETE BASTARD

Ricochet ● £1.99 cass joystick/keys

Deep down there's a part to most of us that just loves to be nasty to people, and being rude and obnoxious is one of the most common methods. If that sounds like your idea of a good time, or your idea of a great scenario for a CPC game, then you may get some satisfaction from playing this game, and if you're too shy to be nasty ask them to put the game in a brown paper bag when you buy it and then play it in secret.

The story goes that you have gate-crashed a tupperware party (only joking, it's a guppy. *Isn't that a fish?* Ah yes, quite right, sorry it's a yuppie party.) and you want the place to yourself. The only way to do that is by driving the guests away and what better way than by being a real barsteward to them.



● What a jolly anarchic game!

Around the split view playing area are four meters: **drunkometer, weeometer, fartometer, smellometer**, and your score. No explanation of the meters is necessary, and indeed they give a good indication of the level of humour in the game: i.e. bottom level (pun intended). To know whether *HTBACB* is for you, try this simple test: say those four meter names out loud. Did you laugh? If you did, then you'll love the game. If you didn't, congratulations: you're a member of the human race.

You have at your disposal three essential items in infinite supply: curry, alcohol and coffee. One helps build up your gas power, another gets you drunk and the last sobers you up.

All over the house are objects you can cause mischief with. They range from the humble hammer and meagre match to the sadistic superglue (for the loo) and cunningly concocted custard pie. Some things – itching powder for example – cause a guest to leave, but they come back after a while, whereas the superglue in the loo trick, not surprisingly takes the guest out for ever (what a way to go!). When a guest leaves one of the letters at the bottom of the screen lights up and if all sixteen are illuminated then you've won the game.

The room graphics are fairly dull and all look very similar and the sprites themselves wander around

### IMPORTANT WARNING

Remember, kids, Adrian only gets away with swearing because he's a Lovable Rogue. Don't imitate him: swearing at home could seriously damage your pocket money.

### HISTORY LESSON

"About 400 years ago there was a TV series called *The Young Ones*. They made jokes about bottoms and everyone said they were 'alternative'. Now the actors are grown up and married and that, but their youthful excesses return to haunt them – such as when a software house re-releases a game you foolishly got involved with all that time ago. Wonder what Jennifer thinks about it? (Oh what a giveaway for our competition!)"

Oh, one more thing: *The Young Ones* was extremely funny." **SC**

### GREEN SCREEN: fine

badly and are poorly drawn. On the title screen there's a good tune, but in the game all you're likely to hear are farting sounds.

If you don't like yuppies, love to drink, enjoy making rude noises with various parts of your anatomy and have two quid to spare then you can do far worse than buy this game. **GBH**

**FIRST DAY TARGET:**  
Make five guests leave

### Tasteless jokes

**VOM GRAPHICS** .....49%

- Dull and boring rooms.
- Badly animated sprites.

**FARTING SONICS** ...42%

- It farts.

**PUKE FACTOR** .....67%

- Unsuitable for those of a delicate disposition.
- Being obnoxious is fun for several games...

**SMELLING POWER** .....53%

- Wears a bit thin though after a while.
- Driving all the guests away is no simple matter.

**AA RATING** 72%

- Juvenile humour, but great fun for £2.

## WIN AN EVENING WITH ADRIAN EDMONDSON SECOND PRIZE: TWO EVENINGS

Ricochet, who are re-releasing their game based on the book by Ade Edmondson, *How to be a Rather Unpleasant Person* (Steve won't let me use the word Bastard) and are full of Christmas spirit, find they have 25 copies of the game and the book they want to offload on you, our legitimate readers.

All you have to do is answer the following four simple questions.

- 1) What sort of party is Ade trying to wreck?
  - a) Yuppie
  - b) Guppy
  - c) Tupperware
- 2) Ade Edmondson also starred in the TV series *The Young Ones*. What was his name in the series?
  - a) Jane
  - b) Tara
  - c) Vyvyan
- 3) Who is Ade Edmondson married to?
  - a) The Queen
  - b) Jennifer Saunders
  - c) Pat McDonald
- 4) How many issue 35's of AA have there been? (*Ok, anyone can make a mistake – ed*) (but what about the two Septembers as well? – not the ed)
  - a) None
  - b) Two
  - c) Too many

Send your name and address ON A POSTCARD OR THE BACK OF AN ENVELOPE to: *Slightly Naughty Comp, Amstrad Action*, 4 Queen Street, Bath Avon BA1 1EJ. Closing date is January 10th 1989. The first 25 entries with anything written on them which we pull out of the turkey's ribcage receives a copy of the game and the book.

## TRIVIAL PURSUIT - a new beginning

Domark ● £14.95 cass, £19.95 disk  
joystick/keys

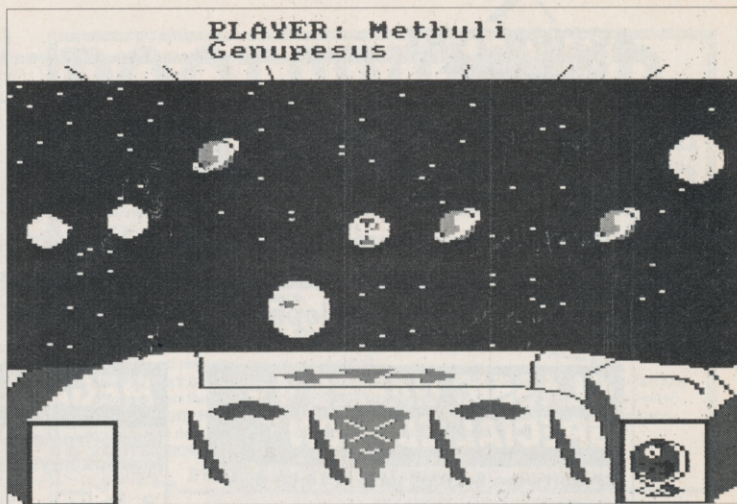
Not long ago there was a playing board, six different colours of counters and a thousand cards with six trivial questions of different categories on each. The categories were science and nature, entertainment, art and literature, geography, sports and leisure, and history. The aim was to wander around the wheel shaped board collecting coloured wedges and then head for the hub and answer one more question. Winning was not important (except to the eventual winner): the real purpose of TP was as a fun party game for people frightened of intelligent conversation.

Influenced, no doubt, by the ludicrous amounts of money pouring into their bank accounts the designers decided to bring out some expansion sets of questions and charge extortionate amounts of money for them. They too sold incredibly well and the game and expansion sets inevitably came out on home micros.

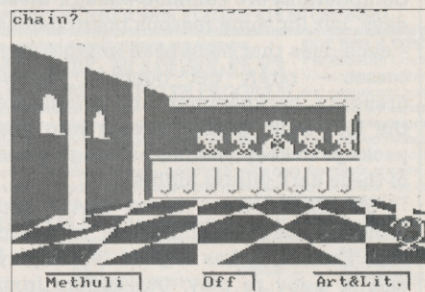
In this latest addition to the TP craze there's a slight variation on the gameplay, and even a scenario. In the distant future the earth is dying and mankind must find a new place to live. The planet Genus II seems ideal, but the inhabitants don't want any old idiots moving in as neighbours and create a test. Hidden around six different galaxies (one for each question category) there are six objects (futuristic equivalents of wedges) that must be found and collected by answering a ques-

tion set by the alien lifeforms that live on the planet. Once all six objects have been found you can go onto Genus II where you're asked a question by six of the wisest beings on the planet. If you answer all those questions correctly you have found a haven for the earth people and can live happily every after.

As with the original TP up to six teams or players can take part and you take it in turns to answer questions. Extra goes are awarded if you get the answer right. Dice are no longer rolled to move from one planet to another: you can select your destination by simply moving the cursor over a planet and pressing fire. When you land on a planet a question is asked and you press a key when you've decided what your answer is. The correct answer is shown and you have to be honest and tell the computer whether you got it right.



▲ A View of the galaxy. Where is that item?



▲ The elders set your final question

(This is fine when there are several players, but in solo play I found the temptation to cheat irresistible.)

The question categories are the same, though there are some audio and visual questions too (both can be switched off).

Graphically it's not devastatingly exciting, but they serve their purpose. There are no problems with the graphical questions. Sound effects are adequate and the tunes on the musical questions are played well.

Trivial Pursuit is a game you come back to occasionally, and as long as you don't have a perfect memory for trivial details the 3,000 questions keep you going a long time. As a game for the family over Christmas it's ideal, but for solo play it lacks compulsiveness. **GBH**

**Q. ENTERTAINMENT:**  
Q. How many times did Fred and Ginger team up in films?  
A. Ten times

**HISTORY:**  
Q. What King George died in 1830?  
A. IV

**SPORT AND LEISURE**  
Q. Over what distance did Carl and Ben battle for half a million in Zurich?  
A. 100 metres

**ART AND LITERATURE**  
Q. What colour is Jack Sprat's cat?  
A. Black

### SECOND OPINION

"What's with these TP spinoffs anyway? There was the book, now there's another micro version. Don't let Domark fool you his really is a new beginning - that's just marketing.

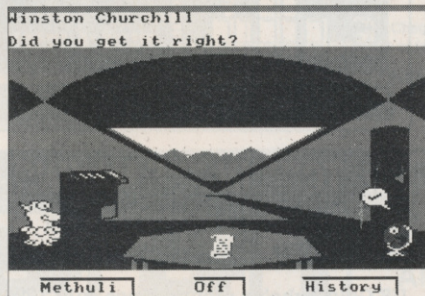
The little aliens are fun, the questions aren't bad and unlike Gary I found no difficulty in being honest about whether I'd got the answers right. If you're a fan of the original you'll enjoy this too.

And I think Gary's right: as a Christmas family get together game it's fun, but you won't find yourself playing it alone very often.

One last thing: it's too expensive."

SC

**GREEN SCREEN VIEW:**  
No problems



▲ Get the question right for an item

### The Verdict

**GRAPHICS** .....59%

- Colourful graphics.
- Cute little aliens.

**SONICS** .....53%

- A few tunes for questions.
- Average sound effects.

**GRAB FACTOR** .....67%

- Fun for a family gathering.
- Useless for solo play.

**STAYING POWER**...73%

- 3,000 questions supplied.
- As long as you don't have a photographic memory you'll still drag it out for an occasional game.

**AA RATING** .....69%

- Fine if you don't have a trivia game already...
- ...but not original enough if you do.

# A COMPILATION OF COMPILATIONS

Bundled games are often excellent bargains and the cheapest way to build up your collection – if you don't mind waiting for the big names to filter down to you! GARY BARRETT tears the cellophane off a few of the biggest Christmas boxes around

## CLASSIC GAMES 4 – SPECIAL EDITION

CP Software ● £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk keys only

Compilations are common enough these days, but for some reasons board games – even ones that have been notable successes – rarely get bundled. Chess, draughts, backgammon and bridge are the four mind games thrown into this package to keep you busy through some of these dark winter nights.

3D Chess was Raved (AA9) and proved a tough opponent for ex-editor Pete Connor. It has a good 3D display and is a joy to play, but suffers from absolutely abominable speech synthesis – or 'ablololobloble bleep blinblebib', as it would call it. Bridge Player 3 (AA8: 58%) is reasonably laid out and has a challenging opponent for both beginner and intermediate level player. (Beginners will need a book or they won't know what the heck is going on.) Backgammon and Draughts are previously unreleased titles.

A pile of thoughtful play here. It may not appeal to the arcade game fiend, but anyone who wants a game of something more mentally stimulating than a mere test of dexterity should find this a cheap and worthwhile purchase. GBH

GREEN SCREEN VIEW  
No problems



● 3D Chess

**AA RATING 64%**

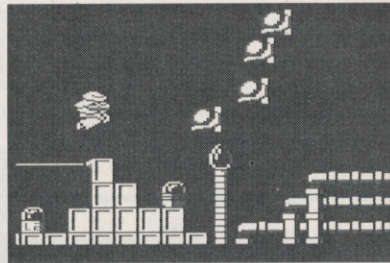
Four games for the player more concerned with mind than fast reactions.

## MEGAPLAY VOLUME I

Mastertronic ● £9.99 cass, £14.95 disk joystick/keys

Six budget games burst out of the archive: *Agent X II* (AA 28, 38%), *Zub* (AA 16, 76%), *Rasterscan* (AA 21, 88%), *Destructo* (AA 25, 77%), *Curse of Sherwood* (AA 21, 68%) and *180* (AA 17, 67%).

A mixed bag ranging from the



● The return of Rasterscan

straight shoot-em-up of *Destructo* to the arcade adventure style of *Curse of Sherwood*. There's even something for fat, heavy smoking alcoholics (professional darts players) in the form of *180*.

The total for all of these games separately would come to just about £18, so £10 is well worth it if you haven't got more than two already. GBH

GREEN SCREEN VIEW  
Fine

**AA RATING 73%**

A cheap stocking filler (for all you people with cheap stockings).

## HISTORY IN THE MAKING – THE FIRST THREE YEARS

US Gold ● £19.99 cass, £24.99 disk joystick/keys

US Gold, who've around since July 1984, have decided to celebrate their third anniversary after four and half years. Well, it makes sense to them.

*History in the Making* is a truly awesome and appropriately gold-coloured package of 15 games from that three year period: the much-repeated *Leaderboard* (AA 21, 83%), which seems to be out on one compilation or another virtually every week, *Express Raider* (AA 21, 53%), *Impossible Mission* (AA 13, 85%), *Super Cycle* (AA 20, 71%), *Gauntlet* (AA 16, 93%), *Beach Head II* (AA 15, 42%), *Infiltrator* (AA 16, 75%), *Kung Fu Master* (AA 11, 72%), *Spy Hunter*, *Road Runner* (AA 26, 74%), *Bruce Lee* (AA 2, 88%), *Goonies*, *World Games* (AA 23, 70%), *Raid* (AA 2, 89%) and *Beach Head* (AA 1, 82%).

Amongst that lot there are quite a few *Raves* and only one real turkey – *Beach Head II*. Admittedly there are some decidedly average games too, and the bundle is very expensive, but if you've only just got your CPC then you'll get plenty of entertainment from this pack. Even if you do have some of the games already then it might still be worthwhile, since they work out at a

paltry £1.67 each game for disk and £1.33 for tape. GBH

GREEN SCREEN VIEW:  
No problems



● Welcome back Spy Hunter

**AA RATING 71%**

Enough games to keep you going until the spring – at least!

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# THUNDERBLADE

US Gold ● £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk  
joystick/keys

US Gold's major push for Christmas is a helicopter shoot-em-up in twelve stages. Your mission is to destroy an enemy fortress – only trouble is, the enemy themselves aren't too keen on the idea. 'Hold onto your stomachs', you're told, 'unscramble your brains for the journey of a lifetime as you take the controls of the most advanced 'chopper armaments specialists could ever conceive – outmanoeuvre the fastest jet fighter, outgun the most dangerous gunship! Traverse the war-torn skyline of a skyscraper city as you sharpen your skills for the battle ahead. Plunge out to sea for an epic encounter with an immense, heavily armoured gunship. Race on to a shoot-out in the rocky canyon and dense forests, where your flying expertise is tested to the limits as you dive, hover and skillfully manoeuvre your way through this fortified maze!

Phew, quite a brief: but how does it translate into gameplay?

The view of your surroundings varies according to which stage of the game you're playing. There are 12 stages in all, some viewed from above and others from behind. Your helicopter is always central on the screen and what you see depends on how high up you are. The size of the helicopter remains constant and enemy vehicles and buildings change in proportion. There's also a score panel and lives indicator to remind you of how well (or badly) you're doing.

Stage one is viewed from above and your objective is to reach the end of the level blasting as many enemies as you

## SECOND OPINION

*"Thunderblade is the sort of game its fans will love – by which I mean that those who really thrill to 8-bit conversions of coin-op arcade games will need no further recommendation."*

**GREEN SCREEN:**  
Tricky in places

SC



▲ An overhead view of the first level

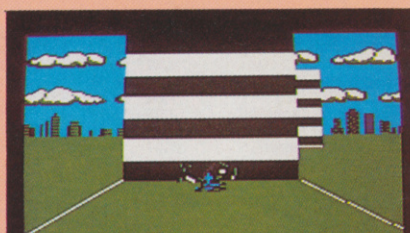
can and avoiding their fire. Helicopters, though, even Thunderblade, are easy to knock out of the sky (ask Mike Smith). You're armed with bombs and bullets, the latter destroy things more easily.

In stage two the setup is virtually the same only this time you view the world from behind the helicopter. Buildings become more dangerous as you fly towards them and occasionally you lose sight of everything when a bomb explodes in front of you.

The third stage is set out in the middle of the ocean over a huge ship. Gun emplacements are scattered across the ship and must be dealt with before they get you. This section is also viewed from above, like the first.

Later stages of the game get progressively more difficult to complete: the fourth is set in a canyon filled with hostile forces and jagged outcrops of rock, while later stages have enemy boats to blast and hordes of screaming jets. Eventually you'll reach your ultimate objective, the heavily defended enemy fortress which is going to take an unbelievable effort to destroy.

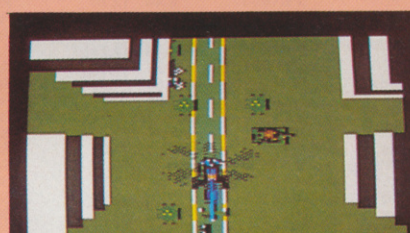
Thunderblade in the arcades had two things going for it: graphics and sound. With all arcade conversions the process of getting a game from the arcade onto a home micro is not easy



▲ Oops! We just crashed into a building



▲ Stage two: now you're behind the 'chopper



▲ Stage three: attacking a ship

and eight bit micros especially suffer from the transition. The graphics are good and sound effects are up to scratch, but don't expect the same game on your humble CPC as you saw in the arcade, or you'll be sorely disappointed.

I'd speculate that it won't be too long before arcade conversions become impossible on the eight bit micros because of the sheer processing power required to get some of the games running. But as long as arcade conversions are made they will continue to sell. And US Gold will no doubt be continuing to sell them. If you want to see what they look like, try Thunderblade. GBH

FIRST DAY TARGET:  
80,000 points

## The Verdict

**GRAPHICS** ..... 69%

- Terrain moves well in all viewing modes.
- Bright and colourful graphics.

**SONICS** ..... 59%

- Good title tune.
- Explosive in-game effects.

**GRAB FACTOR** ..... 78%

- Grab a stick and blast away.
- Speed control is awkward initially.

**STAYING POWER** ... 73%

- Twelve increasingly difficult stages to complete.
- Kill some bad guys, kill some more, and then more...

**AA RATING** ..... 74%

- Not a turkey, but no award winner either.

# Amstrad Action? Amstrad Action!

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Brian Clough Football	C D S	11.84	14.21
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Bubble Bobble	Firebird	7.07	11.81
Buggy Boy	Elite	7.86	11.81
Bulls-Eye	Domark	6.28	
California Games	U S Gold	8.49	12.74
Captain Blood	Infogrames	7.86	11.81
Championship Sprint	Activision	7.89	11.84
Charlie Chaplin	U S Gold	8.49	12.74
Chubby Giraffe	Grand Slam	7.86	11.81
Cluedo	Leisure Genius	7.86	11.81
Colossus Bridge	C D S	9.44	11.81
Colossus Chess 4	C D S	7.86	11.02
Colossus Mah Jong	C D S	7.89	11.84
Combat School	Ocean	7.07	11.81
Computer Hits 4	Beau-Jolly	7.86	11.81
Conflicts	P S S	10.23	14.18
Countdown	Domark	6.28	
Crazy Cars	Ent. Inter	7.86	11.81
Cybernoid	Hewson	3.49	12.74
Cybernoid 2	Hewson	8.49	12.74
Daley Thompson	Ocean	7.86	11.81
Dark Sceptre	Firebird	7.07	11.81
Dark Side	Incentive	7.86	11.81
De Luxe Scrabble	Leisure Genius		12.60
Death Wish 3	Gremlin	8.49	12.74
Defektor	Gremlin	8.49	12.74
Desolator	U S Gold	8.49	12.74
Dragon's Lair (1 + 2)	Soft Projects	7.07	
Draughts	C P Software	4.70	7.86
Dream Warrior	U S Gold	8.49	12.74
Driller	Incentive	11.81	14.18
Eddie Edwards Sking	Elite	7.89	11.84
Elite	Firebird	7.86	10.23
Elite Collection	Elite	11.81	15.76
Empire Strikes Back	Domark	7.86	11.81
Enduro Racer	Activision	7.89	11.84
Epyx on Amstrad	U S Gold	8.49	16.99
Evening Star	Hewson	7.61	12.71
Every Second Counts	Domark	6.28	10.23
F15 Strike Eagle	Microprose	7.86	11.81
Fire and Forget	Titus	7.89	11.84
Fists 'n Throttles	Elite	10.26	11.84
Five Star Games 3	Beau-Jolly	7.86	11.81
Flintstones	Grand Slam	7.07	11.81
Flying Shark	Firebird	7.07	11.81
Football Director	D&H Games	7.89	15.79
Football Director 2	D&H Games		
Football Manager 2	Prism	7.89	11.84
Footballer of Year	Gremlin	8.48	12.71
Four Smash Hits	Hewson	7.89	11.84
Frank Bruno's Big Box	Elite	10.26	14.21
Freddy Hardest	Ocean	7.07	11.81
G Gooch Test Cricket	Audiogenic	7.86	11.81
Game Set & Match	Ocean	10.23	14.18
Game Set & Match 2	Ocean	10.23	14.18
Games Winter Edition	U S Gold	8.49	12.74
Gary Linekers Football	Gremlin	8.49	12.74
Gauntlet	U S Gold	8.49	12.74
Gauntlet I + II	U S Gold	8.49	
Gee Bee Air Rally	Activision	7.89	11.84
Get Dexter II	Infogrames	7.86	11.81
Gothik	Firebird	7.07	11.81
Grand Prix 500cc	Loricels	7.89	11.84
Great Glanna Sisters	U S Gold	8.49	12.74
Gryzor	Ocean	7.07	11.81

Guerilla War	Imagine	7.83	11.81
Guild of Thieves	Rainbird		15.76
Gunship	Microprose	11.84	15.79
Gunsmoke	U S Gold	8.49	12.74
Hercules	Gremlin	8.49	12.74
Hopping Mad	Elite	7.89	11.84
Hot Shot	Addictive	7.89	10.26
Hunt For Red October	Grand Slam	11.81	15.76
Ikari Warriors	Elite	7.89	11.84
Impact	Audiogenic	7.86	11.81
Impossible Mission 2	U S Gold	8.49	12.74
Indiana Jones	U S Gold	8.46	12.74
Jewels of Darkness	Rainbird	11.81	15.76
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Karnov	Activision	7.89	11.84
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Konami Arcade Coll	Imagine	7.86	14.18
Konami Coin-Ops	Imagine	7.86	11.81
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Leaderboard	U S Gold	8.46	12.71
Leaderboard add on	U S Gold	4.24	8.49
Leader Collection	U S Gold	12.74	16.99
Live Ammo	Ocean	7.86	11.81
Live and let Die	Domark	7.86	11.81
Lurking Horror	Infocom		19.74
Mask 3	Loricels	7.89	11.84
Magnificent 7	Ocean	7.86	14.18
Marauder	Hewson	8.49	12.74
Mask	Gremlin		12.74
Mask II	Gremlin		12.74
Matchday II	Ocean	7.07	11.81
Mercenary 1	Novagen	7.86	11.81
Mercenary Comp	Novagen		15.76
Mercenary Re-launch	Novagen		11.81
Mickey Mouse	Gremlin	8.49	12.74
Mindfighter	Activision	11.84	15.79
Monopoly	Leisure Genius	7.86	11.81
NATO Assault Course	CFL	7.86	
Night Raider	Gremlin	8.49	12.74
Ocean Compilation	Ocean	10.23	14.18
Operation Wolf	Ocean	7.86	11.81
Out Run	U S Gold	8.49	12.74
Overlander	Elite	7.89	11.84
Paperboy	Elite	7.07	11.81
Pawn	Rainbird		15.76
Peasant Tale	Pirate		11.81
Pegasus Bridge	P S S	10.26	14.21
Peter Bradsley	Grand Slam	7.07	
Pink Panther	Gremlin	8.49	12.74
Pirates	Microprose		15.76
Platoon	Ocean	7.86	11.81
Predator	Activision	7.89	11.84
Rambo 3	Ocean	7.86	11.81
Rampage	Activision	7.89	11.84
Renegade	Imagine	7.07	11.81
Revenge Of Doh	Imagine	7.07	11.81
Roadblasters	U S Gold	8.49	12.74
Robo Cop	Ocean	7.86	10.23
Rolling Thunder	U S Gold	8.49	12.74
Salamander	Ocean	7.07	11.81
Samurai Warrior	Firebird	7.06	11.81
Scalextric	Leisure Genius	7.86	11.81
Scrabble	Leisure Genius	7.86	11.81
Scraples	Leisure Genius	7.86	11.81
Shackled	U S Gold	8.49	10.19
Silent Service	Microprose	7.86	11.81
Silicon Dreams	Rainbird	11.81	15.76
Skate Crazy	Gremlin	8.49	12.74
Solid Gold	U S Gold	8.49	16.99
Sorcerer Lord	P S S	10.23	14.18
Spitfire 40	Mirrorsoft	7.86	11.81
Spy vs Spy Trilogy	Databyte	7.86	11.81
Star Wars	Domark	7.86	11.81
Starglider	Rainbird	11.81	15.76
Steve Davis Comp.	C D S		7.89
Street Basketball	U S Gold	8.49	12.74
Street Fighter	U S Gold	8.49	12.74
Strike Force Harrier	Mirrorsoft	7.86	11.81
Strip Poker 2	Anco	6.28	
Summerlime Special	U S Gold	11.04	
Super Chess	C P Software	4.70	
Super Hang On	Activision	7.89	11.84
Super Sport	Gremlin	8.49	12.74
Taito Coin Op Hits	Ocean	10.23	
Target Renegade	Ocean	7.07	11.81
Ten Great Games	Gremlin	8.49	
Ten Great Games II	Gremlin	8.49	
Terrapods	Melbourne	7.89	
Tetris	Mirrorsoft	7.10	10.26
They Sold a Million	Ocean	7.86	11.81

		cass	disc
They Sold a Million 2	Ocean	7.86	11.81
They Sold a Million 3	Ocean	7.86	11.81
Thrust/Ninja Master	Firebird		5.52
Thrust 2/Parabola	Firebird		5.52
Thundercats	Elite	7.86	11.81
Tobruk	P S S	7.86	11.81
Tomahawk	Digital Int	7.86	11.81
Top Ten Collection	Elite	7.89	11.84
Trivial Baby Boomer	Domark	11.81	15.76
Trivial Genius Edition	Domark	11.81	15.76
Trivial Young Edition	Domark	11.81	15.76
Twenty Chartbusters	Beau Jolly	7.89	
Typhoon	Imagine	7.07	11.81
Victory Road	Imagine	7.07	11.81
Vindicator	Imagine	7.07	11.81
Vulcan	C C S	7.86	
We Are The Champions	Ocean	7.86	14.18
Winter Games	U S Gold	8.46	12.71
Wizard Ward	U S Gold	8.49	12.74
Wolfman	C R L	7.86	
Wonderboy	Activision	7.89	11.84
World Class Leaderbd	U S Gold	8.49	12.74
World Games	U S Gold	8.49	12.74

## CPC6128 utility software

Advanced Art Studio	Rainbird		19.71
Advanced Music System (+464)	Rainbird		23.66
AMX Stop Press	A.M.S.		43.99
Stop Press + Mouse	A.M.S.		70.00
Dbase II	1st Software		78.96
Extra Extra (Stop Press)	A.M.S.		19.74
Mastercalc 128	Campbell		26.07
Masterfile 2 (464)	Campbell		26.07
Masterfile 3	Campbell		31.56
OCF Art Studio	Rainbird		15.76

## Arnor CPC Software

	cass	disc	rom
Protex	19.95	26.95	39.95
Prospell		24.95	34.95
Promerge		24.95	
Promerge Plus			34.95
Utopia			29.95
Maxam	19.95	26.95	39.95
Maxam 1.5			29.95
BCPL		24.95	29.95
Model Universe	15.95	19.95	
ROMBO Rom box			34.95
Protex Filer (needs Promerge)		24.95	
Protex Office (needs Promerge)			34.95

Amster's Cage ROM Viewdata software 31.95

## Arnor PCW/CPC 6128

Protex (v2.2)	59.95
Prowort (German Protex)	59.95
Prospell (v4.1)	29.95
Pocket Protex	29.95
German dictionary for Protex	19.95
Maxam II	49.95
C	49.95
Maxam II & C together	69.95
BCPL	24.95
Protex Filer	24.95
Protex Office	34.95

## Arnor PC software

Protex (v4.0)	99.95
Protex demo disc	7.00
Protex Filer	24.95
Protex Office	34.95
German dictionary for Protex	19.95

For details of our word processing and utility software send an s.a.e. or see last month's Amstrad Action.

All prices include VAT, post + packing. Please phone to enquire about products not listed. We can supply software for most computers at very low prices. Please make cheques payable to Arnor Ltd. or quote Access/Visa number. 24 hour sales line on 0733 68909. Arnor Ltd (AA1), 611 Lincoln Road, Peterborough, PE1 3HA.

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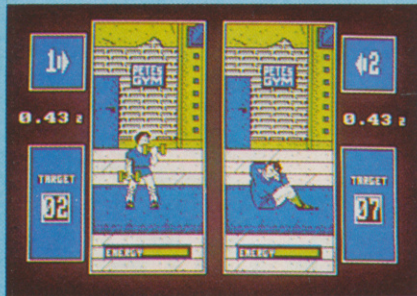
number \_\_\_\_\_ exp \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

BARCLAYCARD



## 4 SOCCER SIMULATORS

Codemasters ● £9.99 cass, £12.99 disk ● joystick/keys



▲ In the gym

Codemasters have finally decided to go for full price games with their new Gold label. This first full pricer is a quartet of football games. Three are standard games of soccer in the *Matchday II* style, while the fourth is a *Decathlon* waggling-type game.

The four games load separately and from one to four players can take part in each. All the soccer games have basically the same layout: a goal at the top and bottom of the screen and a four way scrolling pitch which moves with the ball. A number appears over the head of the player nearest to the ball. Soccer skills is the fourth game and the playing area varies according to which bit of training you're doing.

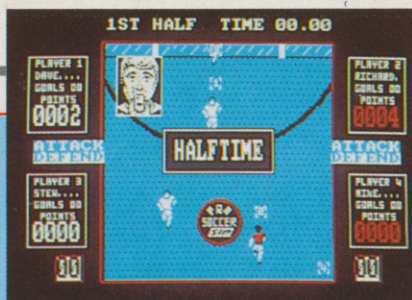
11 a side soccer is first on the list and here you have two full teams of players with the usual rules for corners, throw-ins, penalties, fouls, goalkicks and offside. There are three difficulty levels to play at: easy, medium and hard. On easy the computer is a walkover; medium is reasonable; and the hard opponent is challenging. The match duration can vary from 5 to 90 minutes, but it's more enjoyable to play over short matches.

Indoor Soccer uses the normal rules for indoor five a side, with no corners or throw-ins, the ball just bouncing off the walls. Street Soccer is basically football without the rules, fouls go unpenalised and the pitch is more irregular with cars and buildings to get in the way.

If there are more than one players



▲ Four player action in 11-a-side



▲ Half-time at 5-a-side

then you can have one of four combinations: player vs player, two players vs computer, two players vs one player and two vs two. The extra options add to the fun in the same way that a similar option in *Matchday II* did. There's also an option on the main menu for auto or manual. This allows either the computer to choose the player that's under computer control or you can select him manually by moving a pointer over him.



Soccer skills, the fourth game in the pack, has eight different events for you to practice your ball and physical skills

### The Verdict

**GRAPHICS** ..... 67%

- Smooth scrolling.
- Few colours.

**SONICS** ..... 58%

- Good in game effects.

**GRAB FACTOR** ..... 86%

- Very good version of a football game, with all of the rules.
- Four games for the price of one full price...

**STAYING POWER** ... 77%

- Three of the games are very similar.
- Three difficulty levels.

**AA RATING** ..... 81%

- A good start to the Gold range, but it would have been better rated at £5 than at £10.

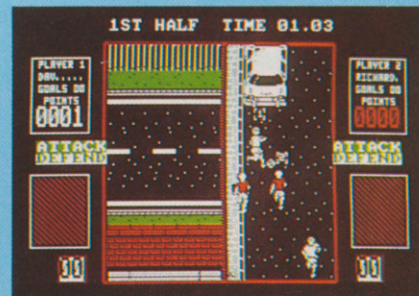
in. They're ball control, goalkeeping, penalty taking, sprint training, press-ups, weight lifting, sit-ups and bar lifts. Ball control has you weaving in and out of a set of cones, goalkeeping lets you practice penalty saving and penalty taking speaks for itself.

Sprint training is a standard waggie game where you have to run up the pitch and back again in the shortest possible time. Press-ups, weight lifting, bar lifts and sit-ups are self explanatory.

As with all Codemaster's games the graphics are slightly above average, but nothing spectacular. Sound effects fall into the same category. There's a good tune on the title menu screen for each of the games. *Matchday II* is the only game to compare it with and there are some major differences. The first is in the playing area: *Matchday II* has goals at the left and right, while this has them at the top and bottom. *Matchday II* also has a tougher computer opponent - but perhaps a bit too tough (*I agree -ed*). There are plenty of options on the menu, but *Matchday II* has a much better selection. Unfortunately there are no trophies to play for and no league championships to fight over here, which does detract from the game a lot. You can play against other human players, of course, but *Matchday II* is a much better solo game and since they both cost the same it's all down to which of the two styles you prefer. Both games are very good, but *Matchday II* definitely has the edge, Brian. GBH

#### FIRST DAY TARGET:

Beat computer on medium level



▲ Foul the pavement (geddit)

### SECOND OPINION

"So Code Masters have grown up and moved into the full price market: how do they do?"

Well, pretty much as before, in fact. Four 'simulators' (yeah yeah) - none of which I found quite as instantly addictive as

*Matchday II*. On the other hand the three football games are each respectable efforts (*Soccer Skills I* found no more interesting than *Daley Thompson* or any of the other pointless 'press up simulators').

1989 should provide some firm pointers to how the Darlings will fare in the long term: it'll certainly be interesting to watch." SC

#### GREEN SCREEN:

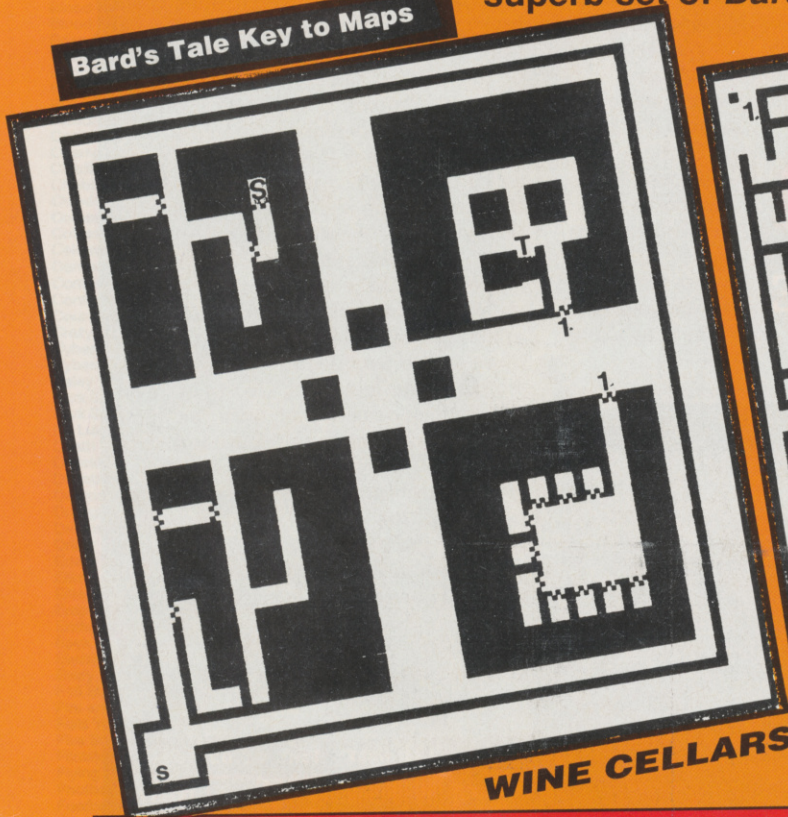
Fine

# CHEAT MODE

GARY BARRETT'S survival kit for CPC games

In this month's bumper six page edition we have the second part of our complete guide to Electronic Arts' *Mastergame, The Bard's Tale*, together with more pokes than it would be reasonable to expect. But we begin with a superb set of *Bard's Tale* maps...

## Bard's Tale Key to Maps



- 1 Message
- Ω Trap
- S Stairs Down
- s Stairs Up
- P Portal Down
- p Portal Up
- T Teleport Sender
- t Teleport Arrival
- M Secret Stair to Mangar's Tower

Note: Some doors are secret and therefore will not show up in torch/lantern light

### Cellars

- 1) Fine Wine

### Sewers 1

- 1) Message: "Something strange is

- going on here..."
- 2) Spider God Statue (Spinner)
- 3) Warm water.
- 4) Message: "Golems are made of stone..."
- 5) Giant spider carved in wall.
- 6) Slime!
- 7) Message: "Pass the light at night..."
- 8) Message: "IRKM DESMET DAEM"

### Sewers2

- 1) Tracks lead west here.
- 2) Rotting clothes and bones.
- 3) Something smells.
- 4) Message: "No exit till seven words are said..." (try levitating out of the room.)
- 5) Message: "Head not what is

beyond understanding..."

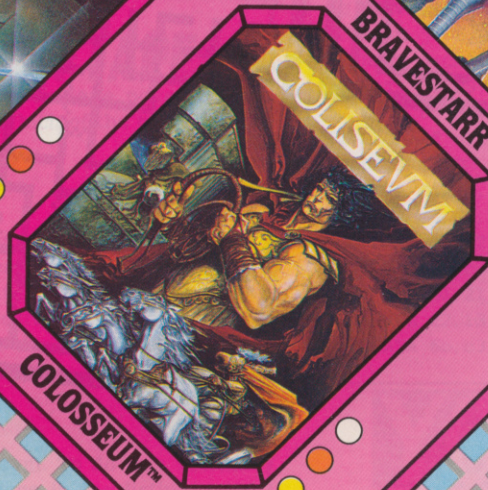
- 6) Magic Mouth: "Know this, a man named Tarjan thought to many to be insane, had through wizardly powers... proclaimed himself a god in Skara Brae a hundred years ago, his image is locked in stone until made whole again..."
- 7) Message: "Thor is the mightiest son of Odin..."

### Sewers 3

- 1) Message: "Seek the snare from behind the scenes..."
- 2) Message: "The hand of time writes and cannot erase..."

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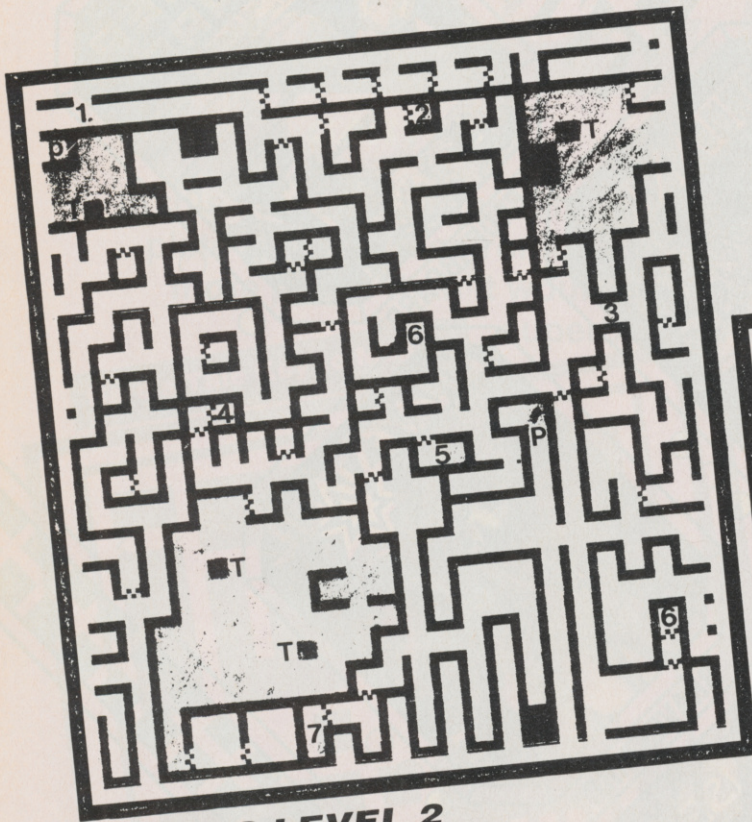
**SYSTEMS AVAILABILITY**

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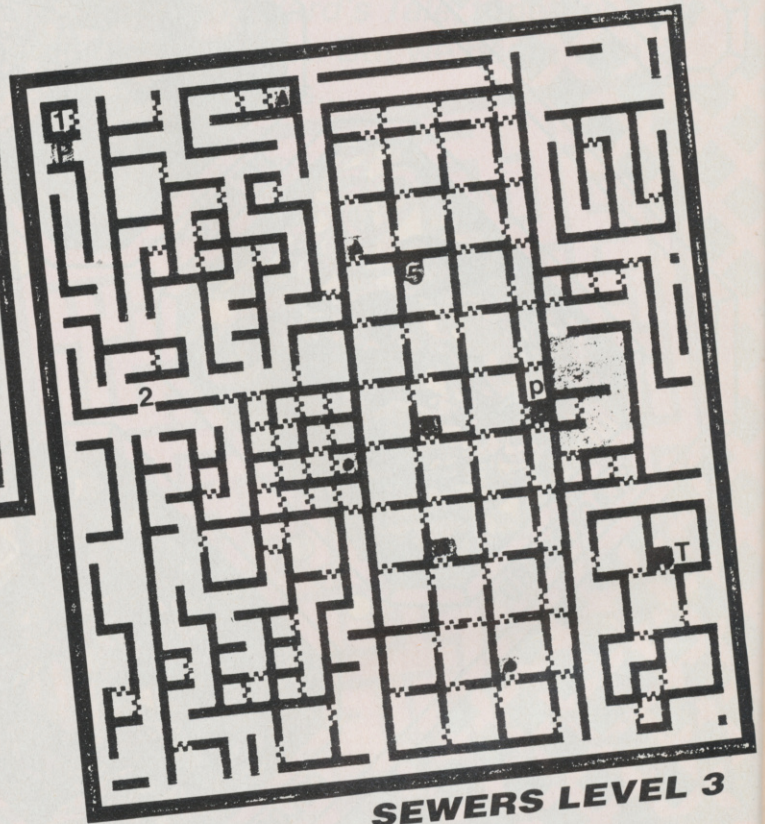
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# Bard's Tale Key to Maps



**SEWERS LEVEL 2**



**SEWERS LEVEL 3**

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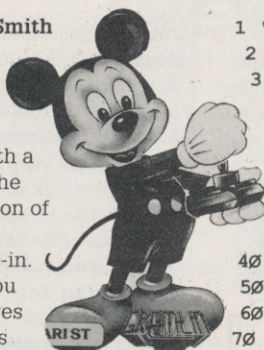
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- 7) Message: "Thor is the mightiest son of Odin..."

**Sewers 3**

- 1) Message: "Seek the snare from behind the scenes..."
- 2) Message: "The hand of time writes and cannot erase..."

Graham Smith of Street continues the rodent theme with a poke for the tape version of Gremlin's Disney tie-in. It gives you infinite lives and makes you invulnerable to ghosts and bubbles in the sub-games and also you have infinite water, slow, lightning and birds heads in the towers. To use the latter three you must first collect the relevant object. (Method 1.)



```

1 ' Mickey Mouse-tape
2 ' By Graham Smith
3 ' Amstrad Action
  Christmas 88
10 CLS:FOR j=0 TO
54:READ a$
20 POKE
j+5632,VAL("&"+a$)
30 NEXT j:CALL 5656
40 DATA 3e,c9,32,c6
50 DATA 52,af,32,e7
60 DATA 53,32,f9,64
70 DATA 32,69,61,32
80 DATA 80,61,32,b8
90 DATA 61,c3,00,32
100 DATA 06,00,11,70
110 DATA 01,cd,77,bc
120 DATA cd,ff,bb,3e
130 DATA 09,32,98,01
140 DATA 0e,c0,cd,89
150 DATA 01,3e,7d,32
160 DATA 9d,02,0e,6b
170 DATA c3,a8,01
    
```

# JACK THE NIPPER... II

The naughty nipper gets some assistance in his jungle adventures thanks to Graham Smith of Street. The poke gives you infinite lives. (Method 1.)

Christmas 88

```

10 CLS:FOR j=0 TO 28:READ
a$
20 POKE j+224,VAL("&"+a$)
30 NEXT j:CALL 232
40 DATA af,32,5c,70
50 data 7c,fe,01,c9
60 DATA 06,00,11,00
70 data 01,cd,77,bc
80 DATA 21,c3,e0,22
90 data 3a,02,af,32
100 DATA 3c,02,cd,ff,bb
    
```

```

1 ' Jack the Nipper II
2 ' By Graham Smith
3 ' Amstrad Action
    
```

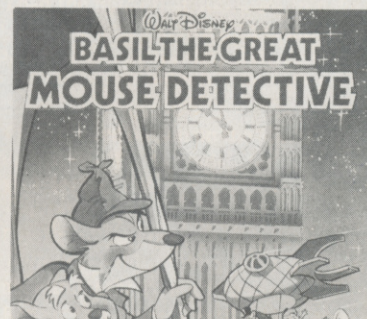


# BASIL THE GREAT MOUSE DETECTIVE

Graham Smith. Infinite energy and time are yours in the cassette version of Gremlin's detective arcade game. (Method 1.)

```

1 ' Basil-tape
2 ' By Graham Smith
3 ' Amstrad Action Christmas 88
10 CLS:FOR j=0 TO 43:READ a$
20 POKE j+96,VAL("&"+a$)
30 NEXT j:CALL 108
40 DATA 3e,c9,32,46
50 DATA 8e,32,d0,90
60 DATA af,c3,00,80
70 DATA 06,00,11,70
80 DATA 01,cd,77,bc
90 DATA cd,ff,bb,3e
100 DATA 09,32,98,01
110 DATA 0e,c0,cd,89
120 DATA 01,21,0b,6b
130 DATA 22,13,02,0e
140 DATA 6b,c3,a8,01
    
```



## POKE METHODS ON TAPE

Here's how to input most Cheat Mode tape pokes - the instructions for each poke tell you which of the two to use. 664 and 6128 owners: first type | tape.

### METHOD 1

Rewind the game tape to the beginning, type in the poke listing and then type RUN and press the Enter key. (Don't use the key marked CTRL or Control, or the poke won't work.) Press the Play key on the cassette deck, then any key on the main keyboard - spacebar does nicely. The tape should now play through as normal.

### METHOD 2

Skip the first bit of the game program. To do this, rewind the game tape to the beginning; type in the listing; now type CAT and press Enter. Start the tape by pressing Play and then any key. Soon you'll see the message: "Found something Block 1". It doesn't matter what the something is, and it varies from game to game. If the Cheat Mode instructions just tell you to skip the first block, stop the tape here.

If the instructions tell you to skip things, stop the tape when the "Found" message comes up for the last thing you're trying to skip.

Once you've stopped the tape, press Escape, type RUN and press Enter. Now press Play on the tapedeck and any key on the keyboard to start the tape.

## Shorten the odds

- We receive dozens of pokes, and the ones published tend to be on cassette or disk, unless they're very short (get the hint?).
- Include an SAE if you want your disk or tape returned.
- Make sure your name and address is on everything you send us!
- Very important, this: let us know whether you'd like your Mastergame on tape or on disk.

# YOGI BEAR

Graham Smith of Street appears to have joined the Society for the Protection of Animal Cartoon Characters this month. His poke for the ever hungry bear gives you infinite lives and a choice of no geysers or animals. (Method 1.)



```

1 ' Yogi Bear-tape
2 ' By Graham Smith
3 ' Amstrad Action
  Christmas 88
    
```

```

a$
20 POKE
j+296,VAL("&"+a$)
30 NEXT j:a=297:b=0
40 PRINT "Infinite
lives? ";
50 GOSUB 80:a=302:b=201
60 PRINT "No geysers or
animals? ";
70 GOSUB 80:CALL 309
80 a$=UPPER$(INKEY$)
90 IF a$="N" THEN PRINT
"N":RETURN
100 IF a$<>"Y" GOTO 80
110 PRINT "Y":POKE
a,b:RETURN
120 DATA 3e,01,32,67
130 DATA 84,3e,16,32
140 DATA 85,75,c3,fb
150 DATA 98,06,00,11
160 DATA 48,01,cd,77
170 DATA bc,3e,c3,21
180 DATA 28,01,32,8e
190 DATA 01,22,8f,01
    
```



**SWORD SLAYER**

You'll probably be surprised to find that this poke for Player's hack-em-up is by none other than **Graham Smith**. With it you'll get infinite health which will make life considerably easier. (Method 1.)

```
1 ' Sword Slayer-tape
2 ' By Graham Smith
3 ' Amstrad Action Christmas 88
10 FOR j=0 TO 13:READ a$
20 POKE j+6BE30,VAL("&"+a$)
```

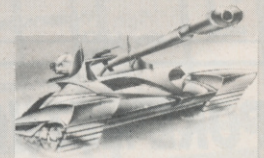
```
30 NEXT j:MODE 1
40 MEMORY &3FFF:LOAD"
50 POKE 16767,143
60 POKE 16844,179
70 POKE 18025,129
80 POKE 18026,45
90 POKE 18027,168
100 CALL 16389
110 DATA 3e,3c,32,a8
120 DATA 14,32,b6
130 DATA 14,21,00,c0
140 DATA c3,f4,ac
```



**Arctic Fox**

Another poke from **Tony Jones**: this time Electronic Arts' Rave game gets the treatment. Infinite shields are at your disposal. Run the program with the *Arctic Fox* disk in the drive.

```
1 'Arcticfox-Disk
2 ' by Tony Jones
3 'Anstrad Action Christmas 88
10 MODE 0:BORDER 0
20 FOR i=0 TO 15:INK i,0:NEXT i,0:NEXT
30 LOAD"openi",&C000
40 INK 1,6:INK 2,11
50 INK 3,5:INK 4,26
60 MEMORY &176F
70 LOAD"main",&1770
80 POKE &A300,0:CALL &1770
```

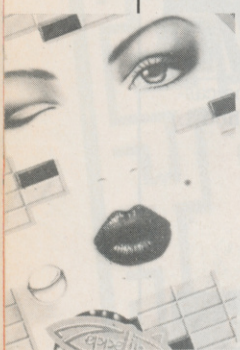


**Mazie**

D+D Hackers third contribution this month is for Zeppelin's bat and ball game. (Method 1.)

```
1 ' Mazie-tape
2 ' by D+D Hacking
3 'Amstrad Action Christmas 88
10 MODE 0:BORDER 0
20 FOR x=0 TO 15:READ d
30 INK x,d:NEXT
40 LOAD "!HEADING.SCR"
50 MEMORY 10743
60 LOAD "!pics.bin",10744
70 LOAD "!screens.bin",&37A8
```

```
80 LOAD "!pics2.BIN",&A178
90 LOAD "!mazie.bin",&7380
100 FOR z=11175 TO 11211
110 READ a$:a=VAL("&"+a$)
120 POKE z,a:NEXT
130 POKE &8800,0:CALL &7380
140 DATA 0,3,26,6,20,13,16
150 DATA 15,24,18,2,14,4,8
160 DATA 17,7,44,2b,44,20
170 DATA 48,41,56,45,20,44
180 DATA 4f,4e,45,20,49
190 DATA 54,20,20,41,47
200 DATA 41,49,4e,2e,2e
210 DATA 2e,2e,48,4f,20
220 DATA 48,4f,20,48,4f
230 DATA 20,20,20,20,20
240 DATA 20,20,20,20,20,20
```



**Dizzy**

Issue 37's cover tape gets nacked by **Matt Cawley** to do just about anything. If you don't want some of the features then simply delete the DATA statement following the appropriate REM. (Method 1.)

```
1 ' Dizzy-tape
2 ' by Matt Cawley
3 ' Amstrad Action Christmas 88
10 MEMORY &3000:addr=5bf00
20 READ byte$
30 IF byte$="CM" THEN 70
40 byte=VAL("&"+byte$)
50 POKE addr,byte
60 addr=addr+1:GOTO 20
70 LOAD"":CALL &3ab0
80 LOAD"!",&3040
90 CALL &BF00
100 ' The Key
110 DATA 01,c8,01,11,37,bd
120 DATA 21,2d,bf,ed,b0,01
130 DATA ee,01,21,40,30,11
140 DATA 40,00,ed,b0,21,40
150 DATA 00,e5,21,00,bb,e5
160 DATA 21,ee,01,e5,21,07
170 DATA b8,e5,21,bb,02,e5
180 DATA f1,f3,c9,af
190 ' the pokes
195 REM Infinite Lives
200 DATA 32,c2,9b
205 REM Fast Game
210 DATA 32,b3,8f
215 REM Fast Music
220 DATA 32,8d,9c,32,9f,9c
225 REM Slow Music
230 DATA 32,ad,9c
235 No Nasties
240 DATA 3e,c9,32,72,80
245 REM Game Completed
250 DATA 3e,c9,32,97,80
260 REM Leave
270 DATA 3e,cf,32,37,bd,3e
280 DATA 88,32,38,bd,32,39
290 DATA bd,c3,37,bd,CM
```



**Cybernoid II**

Nicholas Dodd of Woodthorpe has found Raff Cecco's built in cheat.: go to the redefine keys option and type in O, R, G and Y as the controls. Go back again and choose some more appropriate keys and you can then play it with infinite lives.



**VINDICATOR**

Kojo Elliman of London has sent in the passwords to allow access to level two and three of Imagine's game of alien slaying.

**Level Two:  
Oppenheimer**

**Level Three:  
Enolagay**

**2088**

D+D Hacking has done the dirty on *2088* to give you a choice of how many lives you have and invulnerability to snakes. (Method 1.)

```
1 ' 2088-tape
2 ' by D+D Hacking
3 'Amstrad Action Christmas 88
10 INK 0,0:INK 1,16
20 PEN 1:BORDER 0:CLS
30 MEMORY &11FF
40 LOAD"code.bin"
50 INPUT"no of lives";a
60 POKE 4961,a
70 INPUT"invincibility against snake (y/n)";a$
80 IF a$="y" THEN 90 ELSE 100
90 POKE &348D,255
100 MODE 0
110 CALL &1200
```

# Nebulus

Tony Jones of Bristol has hacked into the disk version of Hewson's *Mastergame* to give you infinite lives. Type in the program and run it with the *Nebulus* disk in the drive.

- 1 ' Nebulus-Disk
- 2 ' by Tony Jones
- 3 ' Amstrad Action Christmas 88

```
1Ø MEMORY &8ØFF:LOAD"nebload", &81ØØ
2Ø POKE &8165, &5Ø:POKE &8166, Ø
3Ø FOR n=&5Ø TO &64:READ a$
4Ø POKE n, VAL("&" + a$) :NEXT
5Ø MODE Ø:CALL &81ØØ
6Ø DATA af, 32, ef, c5, 32, f6, c5
7Ø DATA 32, f7, c5, 32, f8, c5, c3
8Ø DATA ØØ, cØ, ØØ, ØØ, ØØ, ØØ, ØØ
```

And Sam Walker of Minchinhampton has sent in some tips to get to the later stages of Hewson's *Mastergame*. Simply press the combination of keys during play to get you to the appropriate level first press Return and CLR and then:

<b>Level</b>	<b>Keys</b>
Slippery Slide	E, D
Swimmers Delight	R, F
Edge of Doom	U, J

# Tanium

Anyone suffering from severe life loss in *Tanium* has nothing to fear anymore due to the efforts of **Graham Smith** of Street. The poke gives you infinite lives. (Method 1.)

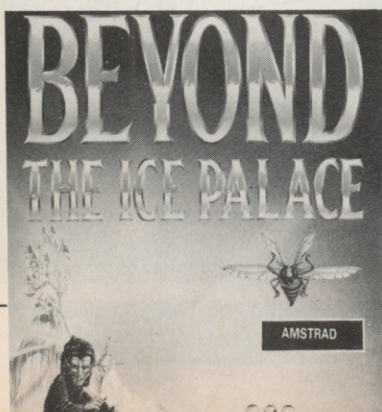
- 1 ' Tanium-tape
- 2 ' By Graham Smith
- 3 ' Amstrad Action Christmas 88

```
1Ø MODE 1:MEMORY &3FFF:LOAD"
2Ø POKE 16767, 143
3Ø POKE 16844, 179
4Ø POKE 18Ø16, 2Ø
5Ø POKE 18Ø17, 252
6Ø POKE 18Ø18, 99
7Ø POKE 18Ø19, 132
8Ø CALL 16389
```

# Beyond the Ice Palace

Wally and Baker from the Belgium Hackers Federation have sent in this poke for the tape version of Elite's chop-em-up arcade game. It gives you infinite lives and spirits and invulnerability. (Method 1).

```
1 ' Beyond the Ice Palace-tape
2 ' by Wally
3 ' Amstrad Action Christmas 88
1Ø MODE 1:FOR n=&82ØØ TO &821B
2Ø READ a$
3Ø POKE n, VAL("&" + a$)
4Ø NEXT
5Ø POKE &82Ø1, &A7
6Ø POKE &82Ø6, &C9
7Ø POKE &82ØB, Ø
8Ø POKE &821Ø, &C9
9Ø POKE &8215, Ø
1ØØ PRINT"Insert tape"
11Ø FOR n=1 TO 1ØØØ:NEXT
12Ø MEMORY &7FFF
13Ø MODE 1
14Ø LOAD "!", &8ØØØ
15Ø POKE &8Ø76, Ø
16Ø POKE &8Ø77, &82
17Ø CALL &8ØØØ
18Ø DATA 3e, 3d, 32, 38, Ød, 3e
19Ø DATA 21, 32, 34, ff, 3e, 3d
2ØØ DATA 32, 75, e7, 3e, 3a, 32
21Ø DATA d3, Øe, 3e, c8, 32, 29
22Ø DATA cf, c3, ØØ, Ø1
```



# Black box

- > Most games are heavily protected these days, resulting in longer pokes.
- > Many of you have one of the infamous black boxes that can be used to stop programs - the Multiface 2 from Romantic Robot for example.
- > Often the only thing that they're used for is transferring games from tape to disk, but they can also be used to hack games for infinite lives etc.
- > This occasional section is for owners of the Multiface 2 and similar devices so that they can poke games without typing in huge listings.
- > Here's how you enter them:
- > Plug the Multiface into the expansion slot at the back of your keyboard. (Multiface 2 owners: make sure that the switch on the front is in the up position.)
- > Load the game that you want to poke in the usual manner following the instructions supplied with it. (Multiface 2 owners: move the switch to the down position after it has loaded.)
- > Press the red button on the Multiface and a menu appears at the bottom of the screen. Press 'T' for tool and then 'H' to change input to hexadecimal.
- > Press the spacebar and type in the number under the Addr column. Next type in the number under the Poke column.
- > Repeat this process until you've entered all of the pokes that are listed for the game and then press 'ESC'.
- > Press 'R' to return to the game. It then runs with the pokes that you've just entered.

Game	Addr	Poke	Effect
Rasputin	ØeØc	c9	infinite life force
	Øe18	c9	infinite sword strength
	Øe1b	c9	infinite shield strength
Nightshade	7ed3	ØØ	infinite lives
Jack Nipper II	7Ø5c	ØØ	infinite lives
Head Over Heels	26c3	ØØ	infinite lives
Basil, Mouse Dick	8e46	c9	infinite energy
	9ØdØ	c9	infinite time
	52c6	c9	invulnerability in sub-games
Mickey Mouse	53e7	ØØ	infinite lives in sub-games
	64f9	ØØ	infinite water
	6169	ØØ	infinite slow
	618Ø	ØØ	infinite lightning
	61a1	ØØ	infinite shield
	61b8	ØØ	infinite bird
	61c5	ØØ	infinite glue
	5157	ØØ	infinite lives against Ogre King (only enter this poke when you get to tower five)

# ROMANTIC ROBOT

present

## 1988 - THE YEAR OF THE ROBOT

RESET

# Multiface two

STOP

If you wish to be able to STOP any program at any time and COPY it to disk or tape, fully automatically, at a touch of a button, then MULTIFACE 2+ is the ONLY answer. There are no other comparable hardware devices, and the software copiers simply cannot compete.

Firstly you cannot compare the SUCCESS ratio of any tape copier with the MULTIFACE - you get what you pay for (and we throw in a lot more with the MULTIFACE . . .).

TAPE COPIERS always need to be loaded first, whilst MULTIFACE has all software in ROM for instant use. TAPE COPIERS can only attempt to copy a program as it stands, before it loads - there are various protections in the way and not enough memory for both the program to be copied and the copier. MULTIFACE is different: you can load any program from TAPE or DISK, run it as you wish and activate the MULTIFACE whenever you need it. Once you SAVE a program, be it to DISK or TAPE, you can CONTINUE it, SAVE it again if you wish, etc. In fact, you can play games as never before: there is no need to start from the beginning each time you play a game (as you would with a tape copier - if it could copy in the first place . . .). Since you can SAVE a program at ANY TIME and continue it, you can actually SAVE as you progress through a game. If, eventually, you loose all your lives, you can just load the latest saved version and continue from there! That is, if you do not manage to get INFINITE LIVES to start with: MULTIFACE has a built-in TOOLKIT which allows you to STUDY and ALTER anything in any program; you can thus POKE in infinite lives, ammo, etc.

MULTIFACE is extremely simple to use, friendly, idiot-proof, menu-driven with on-screen instructions, fully automatic - PURE MAGIC. It can be used on any CPC, comes with a cable and an extension bus for £47.95 ONLY! By the time you buy 10 programs on tape instead of disk - MULTIFACE will put them on disk for you - you will have saved some £50 which is more than the cost of a MULTIFACE. The money you save on further tapes is all yours!

**MULTIFACE - WORTH EVERY PENNY, SAVES YOU POUNDS!**

**NOW AVAILABLE: MULTIFACE 2 PLUS - THE INVISIBLE ONE.**

Tape-to-disk at the touch of a button. Ridiculous, you may say, but it works every time. Multiface can stop any program in its tracks and save the program from memory to either tape or disk. It's completely fool-proof. Similar products have had problems with screen size, colour and even sound. Multiface can handle all these without a second thought.

That alone would have satisfied many people, but Romantic Robot has gone one step further, incorporating a memory editor. No program is safe with this everything is out in the open, including the Z80 registers, CRTG data and any part of memory.

Don't be fooled into thinking this will result in mass piracy, however. The Multiface unit itself must be plugged into your Amstrad to allow reloading of a program it saved.

Multiface II must be the cleverest hardware device at present - a necessity for disk owners who thought they were stuck with loading from tape every time.

AMSTRAD ACTION JANUARY 1987

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# THE BARD'S TALE

Part two

Gary Barrett finds himself in the cellars...

## All for a bottle of wine

Last month we began our guided tour of the picturesque city of Skara Brae by helping you take those first few steps out of the **Adventurers' Guild** and onto the bustling streets filled with monsters (a bit like Bath only our monsters are the tourists, motto: 'If it doesn't move, photograph it; if it does, get in its way'). After gaining a few levels and learning your way to the important buildings we dealt with a Samurai statue and went into a tavern for a quiet drink, only to find that we had to fetch our own bottle of wine from the cellar. Can't get the staff you know.

A word of warning before you continue: once inside the cellars your magic points will not regenerate, so it's advisable to wait outside until they're charged up fully. It's also worth casting some long duration spells before you enter.

## The dark side

Once you've taken those first tentative steps into the cellars you'll come to a startling conclusion: 'Dark in here innit?'. If you have a torch or lantern then you can use that, otherwise it's time to use one of the light giving spells like **Mage Flame**, Sabhar's **Steelight** or if you have a fifth level Conjuror use **Lesser Revelation**, because it'll show up any secret doors.

Another useful precaution to take is Kiel's **Magic Compass** which helps considerably in finding your bearings. If you

*The Bard's Tale* is not published by US Gold (as we said last month). In fact, as you well know, it's by Electronic Arts, at £8.95 (cassette) and £14.95 (disk).



cast **Scry Sight** you'll find that you're on level 0, 0 squares north and 0 squares east of the entry stairs. If your party is badly beaten up later on then head back to these co-ordinates and make for the 'safety' of Skara Brae. The cellars aren't really that difficult to escape from, all you need to do is find either the north, south, east or west walls and then follow them round until you get to the **south western corner** of the cellars which is where the stairs are.

Inside the cellars you'll encounter more than one group of foes to fight. Only the front two rows of foes can fight you, but any rows behind them can still cast spells at you. If you come across three or four groups then you're better off running for it, but if there are only two then you can use your front row of hack and slayers to take on one group and spell casters (or the **Bard** with his **Fire Horn**) to deal with the other. **Warstrike** and **Starflare** are good spells to use if you have a high enough level (fifth) conjuror or magician respectively.

## Delve deeper...

If you defeat the enemies then you'll either get the usual treasure and experience or find a chest. Chests are often trapped and these must first be dealt with. Rogues are an unreliable way of dealing with traps: it's much better to use the conjuror spell **Trap Zap** instead. You don't have to open the chest - you'll still get the experience but none of the treasure - and down in the cellars you may come across some magic items.

After you've explored the Cellars fully and been for several visits you might feel ready to delve deeper and head for the sewers. The stairs down are located at **18 squares north, 7 squares east** and if you take them things begin to get much more dangerous.



Next month we continue our underground tour of Skara Brae, entering the labyrinthine sewer system and meeting some of the interesting inhabitants. Nose plugs are recommended.

## Cheat Mode winners and would-be winners take note!

We've decided to change our prize awarding system for *Cheat Mode*. The reason is that some games have proved difficult to track down - September's *Mastergame*, for example, US Gold's *Heroes of the Lance*, has been slow to appear, and it's not the only one. This has resulted in a backlog of winners who have been waiting for a while to receive their rewards. And that's hardly fair, so we're simplifying things somewhat: each month, six contributors receive the month's *Mastergame*.

When there's a problem they'll be sent a list of alternatives to choose from.

To win a copy of the current *Mastergame*, all you have to do is produce an excellent map, poke or playing tips. Please specify whether you want your game on tape or on disk.

This month's *Mastergame* winners are Graham Smith for his multiple pokes; Tony Jones, Sam Walker, D+D Hacking, Matt Cawley and Wally and Baker.

# TYPE-INS

Give your CPC a Christmas Present Courtesy of AA!

## Mapping

Richard Coton of Walsall is a wargamer. Rather than go to the trouble of drawing free-hand the scene of his battles, though, he uses this program. It allows you to edit a map, and print out the result on any Epson compatible printer.

The screen is split in two – you edit the map in one half,

and messages are presented to you in the other. A menu of options is displayed when the program runs. These are save, Load, Graphics, Typing and Print. The first two are fairly obvious, saving and loading various battlefields. Graphics let you place a particular graphics block anywhere on

the map.

These graphics blocks have been set up to display fantasy locations, but by suitable tinkering with the DATA statements, others can be placed on the screen as graphics.

Full instructions are included, and the program is public domain.

```
10 ' Fantasy map designer - PUBLIC DOMAIN
20 ' By Richard Coton
30 ' Amstrad Action Christmas 88
40 ' Look at DMP 2000 or DMP 2160 printer
50 ' manual for printing any maps
70 GOSUB 630
80 SYMBOL AFTER 32
90 PEN #1,1:PAPER #1,0:MODE 1:DIM map(39,18):GOSUB
  770
100 MODE 1
110 GOSUB 1090
120 ' SCREEN LAYOUT
130 WINDOW 1,40,20,25:WINDOW #1,1,40,1,18
140 ' MAIN PROGRAM
150 xp=20:yp=10
160 CLS #1:CLS
```

```
170 WHILE INKEY$<>"" :WEND:PRINT "[Sve [Lad
  [G]raphics [T]yping [W]pe [Print]":PRINT:
  PRINT"Make your choice";
180 i$=UPPER$(INKEY$):IF i$="" THEN 180
190 IF i$="S" THEN 250
200 IF i$="L" THEN 290
210 IF i$="G" THEN 350
220 IF i$="T" THEN 420
230 IF i$="W" THEN 490
235 IF i$="P" THEN GOSUB 1100
240 GOTO 180
250 ' [Sve map
260 n$="":CLS:PRINT"Enter filename":PRINT:INPUT n$
270 OPENIN n$+".MAP":FOR x=1 TO 39:FOR y=1 TO 18:
  WRITE #9,map(x,y):NEXT:NEXT:CLOSEOUT
280 CLS:GOTO 170
290 ' [Lad map
300 CLS:PRINT"Enter filename":PRINT:INPUT n$
310 OPENIN n$+".MAP":FOR x=1 TO 39:FOR y=1 TO 18:
  INPUT #9,map(x,y):NEXT:NEXT
320 CLOSEIN
330 FOR x=1 TO 39:FOR y=1 TO 18:LOCATE #1,x,y:
  PRINT #1,CHR$(map(x,y)):NEXT:NEXT
340 CLS:GOTO 170
350 ' [G]raphics position
360 CLS:PRINT"Use CURSOR keys then press SPACE":
  GOSUB 560
370 CLS:FOR i=1 TO 45:a$=STR$(i)+CHR$(i+144):PRINT
  a$;:NEXT
380 WHILE INKEY$<>"" :WEND:INPUT g
390 IF g=128 THEN LOCATE #1,xp,yp:PRINT #1," " :map
  (xp,yp)=128:CLS:GOTO 170
400 IF g<1 OR g>45 THEN CLS:GOTO 170
410 LOCATE #1,xp,yp:PRINT #1,CHR$(g+144):map(xp,
  yp)=g+144:CLS:GOTO 170
420 ' [T]yping position
430 CLS:PRINT"Use CURSOR keys then press SPACE":
  GOSUB 560
440 CLS:PRINT"Enter one word of text only":PRINT:
  INPUT text$:PRINT:PRINT"Please wait":xp1=39-xp
```

### Program notes

**IMPORTANT:** The program as it stands will *not* print out anything yet. You must find a printer dump routine that works with your computer – there's one in *Hot Tips* for Epson compatibles. The megadump in AA22 can be used to produce a huge map area to actually fight the battles on.

How to do it: simply type in your dump program. Instead of the END statement, type RETURN (the word itself, not the return key). If the program does not have an END statement, then type in a RETURN as the

last line of a program. So if your program ended at 200, then line 210 would be:-  
210 RETURN

Once you have a suitable printer dump program, then type RENUM 1100,10,10. SAVE it, load in the map designer, and MERGE the printer dump program. Now save the combined, finished program.

If you want to alter the graphic designs, the data statements to look at are held from 780 to 1070. *The Look* next month will offer a few tips on how to do it.

```

450 IF LEN(text$)>xp1 THEN PRINT"Too long":FOR i=1
    TO 2000:NEXT:CLS:GOTO 170
460 xp1=xp:a=33:FOR i=1 TO LEN(text$)
470 IF MID$(text$,i,1)=CHR$(a) THEN map(xp1,yp)=a:
    a=33:xp1=xp1+1:NEXT ELSE a=a+1:GOTO 470
480 xp1=xp:FOR i=xp1 TO xp1+LEN(text$):LOCATE #1,i,
    yp:PRINT #1,CHR$(map(i,yp)):NEXT:CLS:GOTO 170
490 ' [Wpe
500 CLS:PRINT"Are you sure (Y/N) ?"
510 i$=UPPER$(INKEY$):IF i$="" THEN 510
520 IF i$="Y" THEN CLS #1:GOSUB 1090:CLS:GOTO 170
530 IF i$="N" THEN CLS:GOTO 170
540 GOTO 510
550 ' Cursor movement
560 LOCATE #1,xp,yp:PEN #1,0:PAPER #1,1:PRINT #1,
    CHR$(map(xp,yp))
570 IF INKEY(0)=0 AND yp>1 THEN LOCATE #1,xp,yp:
    PEN #1,1:PAPER #1,0:PRINT #1,CHR$(map(xp,yp)):
    yp=yp-1:GOTO 560
580 IF INKEY(2)=0 AND yp<18 THEN LOCATE #1,xp,yp:
    PEN #1,1:PAPER #1,0:PRINT #1,CHR$(map(xp,yp)):
    yp=yp+1:GOTO 560
590 IF INKEY(8)=0 AND xp>1 THEN LOCATE #1,xp,yp:
    PEN #1,1:PAPER #1,0:PRINT #1,CHR$(map(xp,yp)):
    xp=xp-1:GOTO 560
600 IF INKEY(1)=0 AND xp<39 THEN LOCATE #1,xp,yp:
    PEN #1,1:PAPER #1,0:PRINT #1,CHR$(map(xp,yp)):
    xp=xp+1:GOTO 560
610 IF INKEY(47)=0 THEN PEN #1,1:PAPER #1,0:LOCATE
    #1,xp,yp:PEN #1,1:PAPER #1,0:PRINT #1,CHR$(map
    (xp,yp)):WHILE INKEY$<>"":WEND:RETURN
620 GOTO 560
630 ' OPENING SCREEN
640 PEN 3:MODE 1:LOCATE 10,1:PRINT"FANTASY MAP
    DESIGNER":LOCATE 10,2:PRINT STRING$(20,208):
    PEN 1
650 PRINT:PRINT" The screen is split into two
    areas, themap window and the option window.
    You make your choice of action and follow
    any instructions."
660 PEN 3:PRINT:PRINT"SAVE":PEN 1:PRINT:PRINT"
    This option allows you to save the map which
    is currently on screen."
670 PEN 3:PRINT:PRINT"LOAD":PEN 1:PRINT:PRINT"
    This option allows you to load a map
    previously saved on tape.":PEN 2:LOCATE 15,24:
    PRINT"PRESS SPACE":CALL &BB18:PEN 3:CLS
680 PRINT"GRAPHICS":PEN 1:PRINT:PRINT" This option
    allows you to move a cursoraround the screen
    to the desired place. You press space and you
    are given a selection of graphics to choose
    from."
690 PRINT" Enter the number which is next to the
    graphic you want."
700 PRINT:PRINT" The first 15 graphics are used for
    routes available to the adventurer. The next 7
    are used as rooms, then there is a tree, a
    pit, a hut, 2 lots of steps."
710 PRINT" The next ones are 2 graphics used for
    rivers, bridges, marsh or swamp,
    mountains, hills, an arch, a portculis, 4
    graphics used for rivers and 4 graphics used
    for dead ends."
720 PRINT" If you type the number 128 then a
    spaceis placed at the current cursor
    position.":PEN 2:LOCATE 15,24:PRINT"PRESS
    SPACE":CALL &BB18:PEN 3:CLS
730 PRINT"Typing":PEN 1:PRINT:PRINT" This option
    allows you to place the cursor anywhere on
    the screen and then asks you to type in one
  
```

```

word only. It then puts the word on the map.
":PEN 3:PRINT:PRINT
740 PRINT"WIPE":PEN 1:PRINT:PRINT" This option
    allows you to clear the whole map from
    memory and the screen.":PEN 3:PRINT:PRINT
750 PRINT"PRINT":PEN 1:PRINT:PRINT" This option
    allows you to dump the map currently on screen
    , to a printer. This is done by pressing CTRL
    and COPY at thesame time. [[[THIS SHOULD
    ONLY BE DONEWHEN THE OPTION WINDOW IS CLEAR]
    ]]:PEN 2
760 LOCATE 15,24:PRINT"PRESS SPACE":CALL &BB18:
    PEN 1:RETURN
770 ' GRAPHICS SET UP
780 SYMBOL 160,255,129,129,129,129,129,129,255
790 SYMBOL 161,255,165,189,129,129,189,165,255
800 SYMBOL 162,255,129,231,165,165,231,129,255
810 SYMBOL 163,255,165,189,129,129,129,129,255
820 SYMBOL 164,255,129,135,133,133,135,129,255
830 SYMBOL 165,255,129,129,129,129,189,165,255
840 SYMBOL 166,255,129,225,161,161,225,129,255
850 SYMBOL 167,24,60,24,126,24,255,24,24
860 SYMBOL 168,24,36,102,129,102,36,24,0
870 SYMBOL 169,24,60,102,66,153,165,165,231
880 SYMBOL 170,36,60,36,60,36,60,36,60
890 SYMBOL 171,0,0,255,85,85,255,0,0
900 SYMBOL 172,0,0,231,24,0,195,60,0
910 SYMBOL 173,36,36,34,18,18,34,36,36
920 SYMBOL 174,0,24,60,60,60,52,60,60
930 SYMBOL 175,66,36,36,36,36,36,36,66
940 SYMBOL 176,0,129,126,0,0,126,129,0
950 SYMBOL 177,0,0,0,0,165,165,90,60
960 SYMBOL 178,0,0,8,20,20,34,99,129
970 SYMBOL 179,0,0,0,0,0,24,102,195
980 SYMBOL 180,56,108,254,170,254,170,254,170
990 SYMBOL 181,36,100,196,8,16,224,0,0
1000 SYMBOL 182,0,0,224,16,8,196,100,36
1010 SYMBOL 183,0,0,7,8,16,35,38,36
1020 SYMBOL 184,36,38,35,16,8,7,0,0
1030 SYMBOL 185,60,66,129,129,129,129,129,129
1040 SYMBOL 186,0,0,32,224,224,32,0,0
1050 SYMBOL 187,0,0,0,0,0,60,24,24
1060 SYMBOL 188,0,0,4,7,7,4,0,0
1070 SYMBOL 189,24,24,60,0,0,0,0,0
1080 RETURN
1090 FOR x=1 TO 39:FOR y=1 TO 18:map(x,y)=128:NEXT
    :NEXT:RETURN
  
```

Layout of the AA offices

11	2-	3^	4	5	6,	7+	8-	9	10-	11+	12,
13^	14+	15+	16□	17□	18□	19□	20□	21□	22		
23^	24^	25^	26□	27□	28□	29□	30^	31	32		
33^	34^	35^	36□	37^	38^	39^	40^	41^	42		

● Mapping - the results you should get!

# Isotopes

Remember Jeremy Fox-Geen's simple, short line drawing game Trapper (AA38)? Now he's gone one better and produced a longer and furiously addictive game for you to savour.

The theme of the game is that you control a robot, which must, for the common good, 'eat' radioactive spillages and render them harmless. Avoid the rocks, which cause you to crash. The main problems are, however, first that when you dispose of some debris you grow bigger (eating yourself is bad news); and second that the edges of the screen are outside your territory, and you explode if you hit them.

What raises the game, though, is the multicoloured mode 1 graphics, the controllability of the snake, and the (variable) speed of the game. It's public domain too!

```

1 REM Isotopes - PUBLIC DOMAIN
2 REM By J.Fox-Geen
3 REM Amstrad Action Christmas 1988
10 RANDOMIZE TIME
20 FOR a=5 TO 11:POKE &A400+a,INT((RND*100)*2):
NEXT
30 GOSUB 450
40 REM Title Screen
50 PEN 3:PAPER 2
60 LOCATE 13,7:PRINT "-----"
70 LOCATE 13,8
80 PRINT "I S O T O P E S"
90 LOCATE 13,9:PRINT "-----"
100 LOCATE 28,11:PEN 3:PAPER 1
110 PRINT "By J.Fox-Geen"
120 WINDOW #1,10,31,16,22
130 PAPER #1,1:CLS #1:PEN #1,2
140 WINDOW SWAP 0,1
150 LOCATE 1,2:PRINT "1...Play Isotopes"
160 LOCATE 1,4:PRINT "2...Instructions"
170 LOCATE 1,6:PRINT "3...Change Speed"
180 IF INKEY(64)=0 THEN GOTO 220

```

```

190 IF INKEY(65)=0 THEN GOTO 870
200 IF INKEY(57)=0 THEN CLS:INPUT "New Speed
(0-500):",sp%:IF sp%<0 OR sp%>500 THEN GOTO
40 ELSE GOTO 220
210 GOTO 180
220 MODE 1
230 sc%=0:d%=1:se%=3
240 x%=16:y%=17:POKE nxc%,x%:POKE nyc%,y%
250 POKE dir%,d%:POKE seg%,se%:CALL &92C2
260 GOSUB 640
270 REM Main Loop
280 SOUND 2+128,300,5,10,0,30
290 i%=PEEK(chk%)
300 IF i%=1 THEN GOTO 760
310 IF i%=2 THEN sc%=sc%+10:se%=se%+1:POKE seg%,
se%:LOCATE 7,1:PRINT USING "#####";sc%:SOUND
1+128,50,0,1,1
320 IF se%=250 THEN GOTO 1010
330 IF INKEY(28)=0 THEN d%=1
340 IF INKEY(30)=0 THEN d%=2
350 IF INKEY(71)=0 THEN d%=3
360 IF INKEY(63)=0 THEN d%=4
370 IF d%=1 THEN y%=y%-1
380 IF d%=2 THEN y%=y%+1
390 IF d%=3 THEN x%=x%-1
400 IF d%=4 THEN x%=x%+1
410 IF y%=2 OR y%=24 OR x%=0 OR x%=39 THEN GOTO
760
420 IF i%=3 THEN GOTO 760
430 POKE dir%,d%:POKE nxc%,x%:POKE nyc%,y%
440 CALL &9000:FOR i%=1 TO sp%:NEXT:GOTO 270
450 REM Initialise
460 addr=&A400
470 hi%=0:se%=3:sp%=100
480 ENV 1,7,2,2,2,0,2,15,-1,3
490 ENV 2,7,2,3,20,0,5,15,-1,20
500 ENT 1,10,3,3,10,-4,3,10,5,3,10,-6,3

```

## Author, author!

- Jeremy Fox-Geen, author of 'Isotopes', talks about his program

'I bought my CPC 6128 about three years ago, upgrading from my much used Speccy. I'd tried programming on the Spectrum but its 'button' keyboard and poor BASIC didn't help, so my CPC was valuable on both scores. During those three years I learnt how to program proficiently in both BASIC and machine code - which was tricky but not impossible.

I wrote 'Isotopes' as the first test of my new machine code skills, but I didn't want to write it all in machine code. I wanted the mundane bits, such as the scoring and key testing routines, in BASIC because I find it easier just to use machine code for the routines requiring speed. I had to use some

variables in both the machine code and BASIC sections - for instance in the number of segments in the robot, seg%. After a bit of fiddling I found that the easiest way to do this was to use the command POKE to put the variable values into a specific area of memory set up at the beginning of the program (510-550).

Line 20 is interesting. I needed a random number generator in the machine code to decide whether to print an object on the screen. After a quick call to a friend I converted a 6502 assembler program into Z80 mnemonics. It needs six bytes of random numbers to start from, which need to be changed each time the game is run, otherwise the

objects appear in the same positions on the screen every game. This is because no random number routine is truly random: the numbers just follow a complex pattern, so if the seed isn't changed the pattern recurs.

'I've always had trouble with title screens (40-210), sound effects (480-500) and graphics (machine code), so I was pleased with how they turned out. Sound is hardest, and there's no easy way round it.

'I wanted the robot to keep moving in the same direction even



▲ 15 year old Jeremy Fox-Geen, author of 'Isotopes'

when a key had been released - as in Atari's PacMan - so I gave the variable d% a value from 1 to 4 (330-360), depending on which key had been pressed, and moved the robot according to the value of this variable (370-400).

Because the variable keeps its value after a key has been released, the robot continues moving in the same direction.

Finally I provided a change speed option (200), so 'Isotopes' should provide lasting entertainment for all ability levels. Hope you enjoy it!

● Isotope: what it looks like when you've finished

```

510 seg%=addr
520 nxc%=addr+1
530 nyc%=addr+2
540 dir%=addr+3
550 chk%=addr+4
560 MODE 1
570 MEMORY &8FFF
580 SYMBOL 255,255,255,255,255,255,255,255,255
590 FOR I%=0 TO 3:READ A:INK I%,A:NEXT
600 DATA 0,14,6,24
610 PRINT "Please wait...":GOSUB 1780
620 FOR i%=&93E2 TO &9400:POKE i%,16:NEXT
630 CLS:BORDER 1:RETURN
640 PEN 2:PAPER 0:CLS
650 LOCATE 1,3:PRINT STRING$(40,255);
660 FOR i%=3 TO 25
670 LOCATE 1,i%:PRINT CHR$(255);
680 LOCATE 40,i%:PRINT CHR$(255);
690 NEXT
700 LOCATE 1,25:PRINT STRING$(40,255);
710 LOCATE 1,1:PRINT "SCORE:";USING "#####";sc%
720 LOCATE 28,1:PRINT "HIScore:";USING "#####";hi%
730 LOCATE 16,1:PEN 3:PRINT "ISOTOPES"
740 LOCATE 16,2:PRINT "-----":PEN 2
750 RETURN
760 REM Dead Routine
770 SOUND 2,500,0,1,2,1,31
780 SOUND 4,500,100,10,0,1,25
790 FOR a=1 TO PEEK(seg%):FOR b=1 TO 35:NEXT:CALL
&9000:NEXT
800 LOCATE 16,15:PRINT "GAME OVER"
810 LOCATE 9,25:PRINT "Press <SPACE> to continue"
820 IF sc%>hi% THEN hi%=sc%:LOCATE 36,1:PRINT
USING "#####";hi%;
830 FOR i%=1 TO 200:NEXT
840 SOUND 4+128,500,0,1,2,1,29
850 WHILE INKEY(47)<>0:WEND
860 CLS:GOTO 40
870 REM Instructions
880 WINDOW SWAP 0,1
890 PAPER 0:CLS:PEN 3:LOCATE 8,2
900 CLS
910 PRINT:PRINT:PRINT "The keys are:"
920 PEN 3
930 LOCATE 14,7:PRINT ";.....up"
940 LOCATE 14,9:PRINT "/.....down"
950 LOCATE 14,11:PRINT "Z.....left"
960 LOCATE 14,13:PRINT "X.....right"
970 PEN 2
980 LOCATE 9,25:PRINT "Press <SPACE> to play"
990 WHILE INKEY(47)<>0:WEND
1000 GOTO 230
1010 REM Completed
1020 CLS
1030 PEN 1
1040 LOCATE 15,3:PRINT "WELL DONE!"
1050 LOCATE 15,4:PRINT "-----"
1060 PEN 2
1070 LOCATE 6,25:PRINT "Press <SPACE> to play
again."
1080 i%=1

```

```

1090 WHILE INKEY(47)<>0:INK 1,i%:i%=i%+1:FOR o%=1
TO 50:NEXT:IF i%=27 THEN i%=1
1100 WEND
1110 INK 1,14
1120 CLS:GOTO 40
1130 DATA CDDA90CD3E90CD1391CD7090CD7DD
1140 DATA AA90C9F321539143232310FC4E5DE
1150 DATA 234621E29409422310FD77FBC93A01A460B
1160 DATA F321539143232310FC4E234621465
1170 DATA E29409422310FD77FBC93A01A460B
1180 DATA 573A02A45FD5CD10903204A4D1583
1190 DATA 3E01CD27902100003A00A46F01332
1200 DATA E293092B562100006F01DC9209407
1210 DATA 2B5E3E00CD2790C9CD9B9257FE663
1220 DATA 02F8FE27F27090CD9B925FFE0476C
1230 DATA FA7C90FE18F0D5CD1090D1FE0081D
1240 DATA C03E02D5CD2790D1CD9B92FE07729
1250 DATA FA9790FE0BF29790626BCD5B927CA
1260 DATA C9CD9B92FE05F8FE6EF0CD9B92914
1270 DATA FE02F8FE27F057CD9B92FE04F8858
1280 DATA FE18F05FCD1090FE00C03E03CD69E
1290 DATA 2790626B3E0BCD5B92C9F33A0057D
1300 DATA A42100006F01E293092B477E233C6
1310 DATA 772B2B10F93A00A42100006F01345
1320 DATA DC92092B477E23772B2B10F93A49A
1330 DATA 01A421E293773A02A421DC9277598
1340 DATA FBC93AE293673ADC926F3A03A46D2
1350 DATA CD5B923A00A42100006F01E29349E
1360 DATA 092B562100006F01DC92092B5E31B
1370 DATA 626B3E00CD5B9221E293237E57553
1380 DATA 21DC92237E5F626B3E05CD5B92559
1390 DATA C928050007800A000C800F000411
1400 DATA 1801400168019001B801E001082F6
1410 DATA 02300258028002A802D002F802386
1420 DATA 2003480370039803C0039B91AB416
1430 DATA 91BB91CB91DB91EB91FB910B9284A
1440 DATA 1B922B923B924B920000000000314
1450 DATA 0000000000000000000000000000
1460 DATA 020406063CC37EE736C6138C01412
1470 DATA 080108138C36C67EE73CC3066641C
1480 DATA 020400000108038C16CE10E310285
1490 DATA E316CE038C01080108130C3786344
1500 DATA 7C807C803786130C0108018830396
1510 DATA C070E0F8E178F170E030C011087AB
1520 DATA 000601088708011F01088F080115F
1530 DATA 1E0108008F408F91FFFF8FFF8F631
1540 DATA 91FF408F008F7003F786F3C8F178A
1550 DATA C9F1CAF3C8F78670031000008647
1560 DATA 01008A0A0515000801000080911C9
1570 DATA 9851A821C041C234C1214851A85CC
1580 DATA 919831C47368D750BC90E8F0B07F4
1590 DATA B0506030C0F5CD1ABCF1E51183752
1600 DATA 91FE00CA719213133DFE00C2695E8
1610 DATA 9206020E08626B5E2356E1C51A414
1620 DATA 77132310FAC1C52B10FD0C13E0857C
1630 DATA 84673006C50150C009C10DC5C2555
1640 DATA 7C92C1C93F2105000105A4097E42E
1650 DATA 4F2B7E472B2B7E88893205A442A
1660 DATA 2104000105A40906057E23772B226
1670 DATA 2B10F9C921E19401E8032336004D8
1680 DATA 793D4FFEFFC2C892783D47FEFF817
1690 DATA C2C892C91717171717170000386
1700 m=&9000:f=0
1710 FOR i=1130 TO 1690 STEP 10
1720 READ p$:c=0
1730 FOR o=1 TO 26 STEP 2
1740 b=VAL("&"MID$(p$,o,2))
1750 POKE m,b:m=m+1:c=c+b:NEXT
1760 chk$=RIGHT$(p$,3):chk=VAL("&"chk$)
1770 IF c<chk THEN PRINT "ERROR IN LINE:"i:f=1
1780 NEXT:IF f=1 THEN END:ELSE RETURN ●

```

# Solar System

This hefty program from Graeme W Porteous, an astronomy student at Glasgow University, may well inspire you in the extraterrestrial. After entering a time and date into the computer, a scale model of the solar system is drawn. Right ascension and declination figures are also displayed to indicate where to look in the sky for a particular planet. Before you credit the programmer with genius, he would like it pointed out that he got the methods from 'Practical astronomy with

your calculator' by Peter Duffett-Smith.

Because of the size of the subject matter, the author regrets that the information is presented on two screens. Now there's an understatement... Pressing C after the first screen will lose it for 64K machine owners. However, lucky 128K owners will have this screen preserved (if BANKMAN has been run).

The second screen is then drawn, and pressing S toggles between them.

```

5 'Solar System
6 'Graeme Watt Porteous
7 'Amstrad Action December 1988
10 DATA 1,114.7122,102.972,0.016773,1.000018,0,0
20 DATA 0.24085,209.6643,77.434,0.205629,0.387099
,48.350,7.0059
30 DATA 0.61519,67.1413,131.70,0.006772,0.723326
,76.723,3.3947
40 DATA 1.8807,11.8733,335.942,0.093298,1.523638
,49.604,1.8509
50 DATA 11.861,300.3429,15.662,0.048058,5.20248
,100.467,1.3047
60 DATA 29.57,227.2512,93.444,0.050916,9.56329
,113.713,2.4846
70 DATA 84.746,249.2488,177.048,0.047285,19.2937
,74.056,0.7746
80 DATA 166.57,272.2648,357.07,0.006851,30.2743
,131.8,1.7693
90 DATA 249.98,217.4574,224.499,0.252786,39.6823
,110.421,17.1313
100 PEN 1:INK 0,0:BORDER 0,0:DIM D(9,13)
110 FOR H=1 TO 9:FOR L=1 TO 7:READ C:D(H,L)=C:NEXT
L:NEXT H
120 MODE 1:LOCATE 11,2:PRINT"PLANETARY POSITIONS"
:GOSUB 2100
130 PRINT:PRINT"YEAR ";Y:Y$=STR$(Y):Y$=MID$(
Y$,2,LEN(Y$))
140 INPUT"MONTH ";M:WHILE M<1 OR M>12:GOTO 140:
WEND:MN=M:MN$=STR$(MN):IF LEN(MN$)=2 THEN MN$=
"0"+MID$(MN$,2,1) ELSE MN$=MID$(MN$,2,2)
150 INPUT"DAY ";DA:WHILE DA<1 OR DA>31:GOTO 150:
WEND:DA$=STR$(DA):IF LEN(DA$)=2 THEN DA$="0"+
MID$(DA$,2,1) ELSE DA$=MID$(DA$,2,2)
160 INPUT"HOUR ";HR:WHILE HR<0 OR HR>23:GOTO 160:
WEND:HR=HR*(1/24):HR$=STR$(HR):IF LEN(HR$)=2
THEN HR$="0"+MID$(HR$,2,1) ELSE HR$=MID$(HR$,2,2)
170 INPUT"MINUTE";MI:WHILE MI<0 OR MI>59:GOTO 170:
WEND:MINUTE=MI*(1/1440):MI$=STR$(MI):IF LEN
(MI$)=2 THEN MI$="0"+MID$(MI$,2,1) ELSE MI$=
MID$(MI$,2,2)
180 IF M=1 OR M=2 THEN GOSUB 1000
190 A=INT(Y/100):B=2-A+INT(A/4):C=INT(365.25*Y):
D=INT(30.6001*(M+1))+B+C+DA+HR+MINUTE-
725085.75
200 MODE 1:DEG
210 LOCATE 9,1:PRINT"MERCURY/VENUS/EARTH/MARS"
220 LOCATE 1,4:PRINT"DATE:";DA$;"/";MN$;"/";Y$:
LOCATE 1,6:PRINT"TIME:";HR$;"h ";MI$;"m"
230 ORIGIN 435,160:FOR AN=1 TO 360 STEP 12:PLOT
2*COS(AN),2*SIN(AN),1:NEXT
240 INK 2,10:FOR AN=1 TO 50:PLOT 195+AN,0:NEXT AN
250 FOR P=1 TO 9:GOSUB 700:NEXT P
260 FOR P=2 TO 9
270 T=SIN(D(P,8)-D(P,6))*SIN(D(P,7)):D(P,11)=ATN
(T/SQR(-T*T+1))
280 Y=SIN(D(P,8)-D(P,6))*COS(D(P,7))
290 X=COS(D(P,8)-D(P,6))
300 F=ATN(Y/X):GOSUB 1010
310 D(P,12)=F+D(P,6):D(P,13)=D(P,10)*COS(D(P,11))
320 NEXT P
330 FOR P=2 TO 3
340 A=ATN((D(P,13)*SIN(D(1,8)-D(P,12)))/(D(1,10)-
D(P,13)*COS(D(1,8)-D(P,12))))
350 L=180+D(1,8)+A:IF L<0 THEN L=L+360
360 IF L>360 THEN L=L-360
370 B=ATN((D(P,13)*TAN(D(P,11))*SIN(L-D(P,12)))/
(D(1,10)*SIN(D(P,12)-D(1,8)))):GOSUB 1210
380 PEN 1:IF P=2 THEN LOCATE 1,9:PRINT"MERCURY":
L=10:GOSUB 650
390 PEN 1:IF P=3 THEN LOCATE 1,13:PRINT"VENUS":L=
14:GOSUB 650
400 NEXT P
410 P=4:GOSUB 670:GOSUB 1210
420 PEN 1:LOCATE 1,17:PRINT"MARS":L=18:GOSUB 650
430 S=100
440 FOR P=1 TO 4:GOSUB 1500:GOSUB 800:NEXT P
450 PRINT CHR$(7)
460 A$=INKEY$:IF A$<>"S" AND A$<>"s" AND A$<>"C"
AND A$<>"c" THEN GOTO 460
470 IF A$="S" OR A$="s" THEN |SCREENSWAP,1,2
480 MODE 1:DEG:ORIGIN 380,160:PEN 1:LOCATE 1,1:
PRINT"EARTH/JUPITER/SATURN":LOCATE 1,2:PRINT
"URANUS/NEPTUNE/PLUTO":FOR AN=1 TO 360 STEP 36
:PLOT 1*COS(AN),1*SIN(AN),1:NEXT
490 FOR AN=1 TO 360 STEP 36:PLOT 1*COS(AN),1*SIN
(AN),1:NEXT
500 FOR AN=1 TO 25:PLOT 250+AN,0:NEXT AN
510 PEN 1:P=5:GOSUB 670:GOSUB 1210:LOCATE 1,5:
PRINT"JUPITER":L=6:GOSUB 650
520 PEN 1:P=6:GOSUB 670:GOSUB 1210:LOCATE 1,9:
PRINT"SATURN":L=10:GOSUB 650
530 PEN 1:P=7:GOSUB 670:GOSUB 1210:LOCATE 1,13:
PRINT"URANUS":L=14:GOSUB 650
540 PEN 1:P=8:GOSUB 670:GOSUB 1210:LOCATE 1,17:
PRINT"NEPTUNE":L=18:GOSUB 650
550 PEN 1:P=9:GOSUB 670:GOSUB 1210:LOCATE 1,21:
PRINT"PLUTO":L=22:GOSUB 650
560 S=5:P=1:K=28
570 GOSUB 800
580 S=5
590 FOR P=5 TO 9
600 GOSUB 1550:GOSUB 800
610 NEXT P:PRINT CHR$(7)
620 A$=INKEY$:IF A$="S" OR A$="s" THEN |SCREENSWAP
,1,2:GOTO 620
630 IF A$="e" OR A$="E" THEN END
640 GOTO 620
650 LOCATE 1,L:PEN 2:PRINT"R.A. ";B$;"h ";B1$:
"m":LOCATE 1,L+1:PEN 3:PRINT"DEC. ";S$;C$;
"d ";C1$;"m"
660 RETURN
670 L=ATN(D(1,10)*SIN(D(P,12)-D(1,8)))/(D(P,13)-D
(1,10)*COS(D(P,12)-D(1,8)))+D(P,12):IF L>360
THEN L=L-360
680 IF L<0 THEN L=L+360

```

Solar System continues on page 80

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Once the programs has been transferred to disc IT WILL RUN ON ANY CPC.

**SPEEDTRANS PLUS2** now handles the VERY LATEST Speedlock types automatically. No need to hold a key down at anytime during loading. **SPEEDTRANS PLUS2** also saves 99% of opening screens and saves them in their full colours

FULLY AUTOMATIC - JUST ONE KEYPRESS \* ONLY ONE PROGRAM TO RUN WHICH FINDS THE SPEEDLOCK TYPE AUTOMATICALLY \* WILL TRANSFER ORIGINAL AND MANY OF TODAY'S SPEEDLOCK PROGRAMS \* NO FIDDLING OR MIDDLING - WRITTEN WITH THE AMATEUR IN MIND \* AUTOMATIC DISC FILENAMES \* NO WASTED DISC SPACE - SAVES THE CORRECT AMOUNT OF GAME CODE \* SAVES 99% OF OPENING SCREENS \* SCREENS SAVED IN THEIR CORRECT COLOURS \* COMPRESSES SCREEN CODE TO SAVE EVEN MORE DISC SPACE \* FASTER LOADING TIMES FROM DISC BECAUSE OF SHORTER FILE LENGTHS

**SPEEDTRANS PLUS2** transfers over 200 programs to Disc, some of the latest it will do are MADBALLS, FREDDY HARDEST (both games) BASKET MASTER, MATCHDAY II, PHANTOM CLUB, GRYZOR (main program), SUPER HANG ON.

These latest Speedlock types can be identified by the whole screen flashing with horizontal bands of colour immediately after the first file has loaded. Do remember that **SPEEDTRANS PLUS2** does not save all the memory in the hope of having saved all the game. It saves exactly the right length of code. All screens are saved in compressed form - some as little as 4K (Basket Master) - thus saving even more disc space.

**SPEEDTRANS PLUS2** is the most sophisticated Tape-to-Disc transfer utility for SPEEDLOCK protected programs ever published. It will certainly transfer more games than any other Speedlock transfer program on the market and with much greater ease. Other transfer programs require you to know how long the game code is so that you may run an alternative program for the long games which does not save the loading screen. This is done because they do not make use of the extra memory available on the CPC 6128 or from the use of an extra RAMPACK (DK Tronics 64K or greater.) This program is highly intelligent in that it first reads the loader from the tape and establishes which type of protection is in use from 6 alternatives. At the end of the loadit then finds out how long the code is and if it is too long to be saved to one file it will move the excess code into the banked memory and save the game in two parts and write the appropriate loader program. The screen will also be moved into a bank and compressed before saving. This can mean screen files as small as 4k (Basket Master) depending on mode and content. All this adds up to a lot less disc space being used than with other transfer programs and you will nearly always get the loading screen saved. The exception to this is when there is no loading screen (as in SCRABBLE) or when the screen is blanked out and more code is loaded into the screen memory, as in BMX SIMULATOR and MADBALLS for example. Try getting a screen with Multiface or any other imager. These imagers are only capable of saving what you have in memory at the time the button is pressed. What happens in multi part games? you have to press the button for each part thus wasting precious disc space. They also save far too much code and therefore waste even more space and saving too much code means longer loading times from disc. Programmers are now checking to see if you have an imager plugged in an if you have the program will not load. Imagers also have to be in place before you can reload your program and saved programs can only be reloaded into the machine in which they are saved. **SPEEDTRANS PLUS2** creates totally stand-alone files and if you have nother CPC even without extra memory they will run perfectly. It also displays the saving name on screen at the start of the load with all except the very latest games. In all cases the disc saving name is displayed while the save is carried out. To run the transferred game just RUN this name. Another intelligent feature of **SPEEDTRANS2** is that the very first thing it does is to find out which drive it is in. This means that if you have a two drive system you may run the program from drive B by typing RUN "B:DISC" or "B:RUN"DISC. However the saving will ALWAYS be to DRIVE A so with a single drive you must change the disc when prompted on screen.

DISC:- UK £14.99 - EUROPE £16.25 - REST OF WORLD £17.00

Upgrade your **SPEEDTRANS PLUS** - send your disc together with: UK £2.00 - EUROPE £3.25 - REST OF WORLD £4.00  
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## \* LOW LOW PRICES \* ARNOR SOFTWARE \* LOW LOW PRICES \*

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	UK	Disc	Europe	Disc	World	Disc	Epron	
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PROTEXT	20.00	30.00	21.25	31.25	22.00	32.00		
PROSPELL	19.00	27.00	20.25	28.25	21.00	29.00		
PROMERGE (ROM=PROMERGE PLUS)	19.00	27.00	20.25	28.25	21.00	29.00		
MAXAM *THE BEST!*	20.00	31.00	21.25	32.25	22.00	33.00		
MAXAM 1 1/2 *NEW*	N/A	23.00	N/A	24.25	N/A	25.00		
UTOPIA	N/A	23.00	N/A	24.25	N/A	25.00		

**ROMBO ROMBOARD** UK - £28.00 EUROPE - £30.00 REST OF THE WORLD - £31.00

### DMP 2000/2160/3000/3160

The printer buffer presently in the DMP 200/3000 series is a 2K RAM. Most of this RAM is used by the printer's operating system leaving an average 1/2K as buffer space. Our upgrade kit contains a new static RAM chip which will increase the printer buffer by 6K (about 4 pages of text). This upgrade allows all Download Characters to be re-defined allowing the user to design special characters for use with scientific and other programs. The kit is supplied with full pictorial instructions to allow the amateur to carry out his own modification (the DMP2160 takes about 7 minutes). If you don't think you are up to it your local TV shop can do the job in approximately 15 minutes

UK £12.50 - EUROPE £13.75 - R. of W. £14.50

### FIRETRANS

This utility will transfer a number of FIREBIRD programs from tape to disc automatically including most opening screens in full colour. FIRETRANS will work equally well from tape but will be more convenient to use if converted to disc with SAMSON/Transmat. It will transfer WILLOW PATTERN, RUNESTONE, CHIMERA, GUNSTAR, PARABOLA, REALM, SPIKY HAROLD, BOOTY, DON'T PANIC, GUNFRIGHT, STARGLIDER, NINJA MASTER, HELICOPTER, and some version of THRUST, HARVEY HEADBANGER and BOMBSCARE.

TAPE:- UK £5.00 - EUROPE £6.25 R. of W. £7.00  
DISC:- UK £8.50 - EUROPE £9.75 - R. of W. £10.50



### COMPACTOR



COMPACTOR will allow you to load a standard 17K screen, set the mode, border and ink colours and then save it as a compressed screen containing its own mode and ink colour information. Most screens compact down to an average of 9K which is an enormous saving on disc space. Loading time of compressed screens is also proportionately reduced.

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DISC:- UK £8.50 - EUROPE £9.75 - R. of W. £10.50

### TRANSIT

TRANSIT is a disc-to-disc file copier which handles file upto 40K in length in one pass. It will copy from drives A-A, A-B, B-B and B-A making an ideal utility for use with 5 1/4" second drive.

TAPE:- UK £4.50 - EUROPE £5.25 - R. of W. £6.50  
DISC:- UK £8.00 - EUROPE £9.25 - R. of W. £10.00

### UTILITY DISC No. 1

This utility disc contains 5 programs, all menu driven. They are SAMSON, TRANSIT, QCLONE, VIEWTEXT and the fast disc FORMATTER.

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DISC:- UK £14.99 - EUROPE £16.25 - R. of W. £17.00



### SHAREPLAY



THE STOCK MARKET SIMULATION  
(All CPC's)

This is a serious educational program for 1 to 6 players and provides all the enjoyment of playing the stockmarket without any risk of personal bankruptcy!! Each player can buy and sell shares and the target is the first to reach £1,000,000. The program includes a stockholding portfolio listing the shares purchased, their number, cost and market value. Bank balances are also shown. Graphical representation of market fluctuations are given in the form of a bar graph. Also included is a high score table. Scores are automatically saved at the end of each session.

DISC:- UK £12.00 - EUROPE £13.25 - R. of W. £14.00



### WORDSEEK



THE WORDSEARCH PROGRAM  
(All CPC's)

This educational program will tax even the most agile mind. The aim is to find the hidden words in a 15 by 15 puzzle within a set time limit of 30 seconds. The time limit is extended for every correct letter of the current word found. You may create your own puzzle consisting of up to 10 words which can be saved to disc and used at any time. You may only retain one puzzle at a time but if you choose not to use your own puzzle then the program will randomly select one form the library of 50 on the disc. All of the puzzles in the library are made up of 10 words each consisting of 1x8 letter, 1x7 letter, 2x6 letter, 3x5 letter, 2x4 letter and 1x3 letter words. This ensures equal difficulty regardless which one is randomly loaded. The program contains a print option (for Epson compatible printers) allowing a hard copy to be made of any puzzle created. Keyboard/Joystick options are also available.

DISC ONLY - U.K. £12.00 - EUROPE £13.25  
REST OF THE WORLD £14.00



### TUNESMITH



TUNESMITH is a simple to use sound utility which allows you to use the keyboard to play and record your tunes. No knowledge of music or Amstrad sound commands is required all you need to be able to do is whistle the tune you play or record. The octave and period of notes is variable and the program includes synthesizer and vibrato effects. TUNESMITH will save any tune as a basic file which can be RUN, CHAINED or MERGED into your own program.

DISC:- UK £12.00 - EUROPE £13.25 R. of W. £14.00

### SAMSON

SAMSON has been developed by us to transfer not only the normal programs but also many of today's where the code is much longer. SAMSON differs in many ways from other Tape-to-Disc utilities, the main differences being: \* SAMSON retains original file suffixes (SAMSON.SCN will be saved as SAMSON.SCN) \* Improved file relocation method \* Elaborate Tape-read/Disc-write system which reduces Tape Motor, Slave Replay and Disc Drive Motor wear substantially. \* A large reduction in tape transfer time is also achieved in all but a few cases \* NEW "SPLIT" option for todays longer games (we will be using this option in future routines) \* All file information is displayed on screen and can be echoed to your printer if needed. SAMSON also transfer itself to disc.

TAPE:- UK £7.50 - EUROPE £8.75 - R. of W. £9.50  
DISC:- UK £11.50 - EUROPE £12.75 - R. of W. £13.50

### CHARACTER DESIGNER

(All CPC's)

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\* REDEFINE ANY/ALL KEYBOARD KEYS (ASWERTY)  
\* DESIGN SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC CHARACTERS/FONTS

Takes all the hard work out of character designing making it a pleasure. The printer part of the program will only work if your printer is capable of DOWNLOADING and is EPSON compatible - see your printer manual. Works with 7-bit or 8-bit output (8-bit port). All the designing is done "On-Screen" so you can see exactly what you are doing. You can save your newly designed characters to disc and reload them at any time into a basic program and into most Word-Processors. The program also allows the user to redefine any or all of the keys on the keyboard. This feature will be useful for those who require an ASWERTY keyboard. The disc also contains twelve sample fonts for experimentation

TAPE:- UK £7.99 EUROPE £9.25 - R. of W. £10.00  
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### FAST FORMATTER

The FASTFORMATTER will format one side of a disc in approx. 30 seconds with the choice of DATA, VENDOR or SYSTEM and its much easier then using your CPM disc.

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# PILGRIM

All adventurers welcome!

Welcome to the last Pilgrim column of 1988, and the last in the current series. Next month, we'll be launching a whole new column, featuring regular features and the exclusive *Amstrad Adventurer of The Year* competition. Meanwhile, feast your eyes on *Corruption* (converted for us at last), the *Paladin's Players' Guide to Gnome Ranger*, the Pilg's awards for Best Game of 1988, and much more....

## CORRUPTION

Magnetic Scrolls ● 01 631 5373  
£19.95 ● 6128 only

It's here! Those of us dying to indulge in a spot of insider dealing, detective work and derring-do in the City can at last get down to a game of *Corruption*. We've already covered the game itself in our preview (AA35), but now the CPC version is finally here. And what do we find?

Sadly, it doesn't seem quite up to the standard we might have hoped for. To be fair, perhaps we shouldn't be complaining at all, since any conversion of a major game for the Amstrad is welcome: yet there are one or two reservations that must be voiced about this here *Corruption*.

First of all, the graphics. Unlike *The Pawn*, which had tremendous pictures on the CPC, *Corruption* uses a Mode 1 colour display that doesn't have the resolution to do justice to the famous Magnetic Scrolls artwork. You might think that colour was preferable in any case, but since many adventurers play their games in 80-column format (6128 owners in particular), it seems that a really state-of-the-art Mode 2 mono display might have been more impressive. The pictures aren't bad, but they're not up to the usual brilliance we have come to expect from this company.

The other problem is the speed and the way the program has been



▲ *Corruption*: a Yuppie's fantasy – or nightmare?

organised on the disk. There are frequent – no, let me rephrase that: very frequent disk accesses, and the program seems to go into this suspended animation for brief but intensely irritating periods after almost every entry. You also have to do a fair amount of disk-flipping, which doesn't help.

On the other hand, it must be admitted at once that *Corruption*, despite these grumbles, is still one of the best games for the CPC in recent months, ranking alongside *Ingrid's Back* as that rare item, a truly compelling game. Experienced adventurers may find the scenario somewhat limited – the map isn't that large and there aren't many major juicy puzzles you can really get your teeth into – but there are lots of diversions and a strong sense of atmosphere to keep you going.

All in all, then, *Corruption* is a worthy rather than a classic release from Magnetic Scrolls. Perhaps this is an instance of what



▲ Not quite a classic perhaps, but a welcome conversion to the CPC anyway

might be term a 'problem of success': produce work such as *The Pawn* and *The Guild of Thieves* and people start expecting high quality games every outing. *Corruption* doesn't quite match those adventures: but then, it's by no means a poor game. ●

ATMOSPHERE	92%
INTERACTION	90%
CHALLENGE	82%
AA RATING	89%

# 1988 - TRICKS AND TREATS

THE PILGRIM takes a brief backward glance, and points the way forward for 1989 – but not at the same time, you understand. That would be silly.

Goodbye 1988 and good riddance! Well, really! What other year brought such delightful news as:

- Infocom announcing that they weren't going to continue releasing Amstrad versions of new products.
- Electronic Arts, although converting *Bard's Tale* to the CPC's, announcing that they would probably not be repeating the exercise with *BTII* and *BTIII*.
- GAC+ vanishing, to be replaced by STAC for ST users.
- the number of top-quality adventures released for the CPC steadily dwindling?

Let's face it. We Amstrad adventurers are getting angry!

Calm down now, Pilgy. Let's be a little more circumspect. Was it really as bad as all that? This year also brought us *Guild of Thieves*, *Jinxter*, *Ingrid's Back*, and a host of better-than-ever home-brew games such as *The Mixed-Up Shymer* and *Jekyll and Hyde*. That can't be too bad, can it?

What's more, the games we play are undoubtedly reaching new levels of lasting interest and technical complexity. Take characters for example. *Ingrid's Back* really does enter new realms of character command for Amstrad owners. Level 9 will never abandon the Amstrad format as long as we go on buying their games, and they can still weave a great story.

And graphics. Although you can sample Magnetic Scrolls product only on a 6128, the standard of graphics generally has been rising dramatically. Even the Austins are now getting their act together and games are getting prettier to look at every month.

Nope. If you're feeling down about adventures, cheer up! The Pilg is prepared

to bet that next year's column will be fuller and brighter than ever. We're going to start the New Year with a whole new column-style, bursting with features on a regular basis. There'll be

prizes for letters, hints and tips, and gossip galore – not to mention the latest reviews of the greatest games.

Not only that, but we'll also be running the stupendous AMSTRAD ADVENTUR-

ER OF THE YEAR competition, exclusive to the Pilg's column and AA readers. Whatever you do, don't miss it!

And now..ahem... for this year's nominations...

## ❑ DISAPPOINTMENT OF THE YEAR

Runner up: *Mindfighter*, which could have been so much better.  
*Bards Tale II* – because it never appeared for the Amstrad.

## ❑ GRAPHICS OF THE YEAR

Runner up: *Bard's Tale*, for the on-screen presentation and excellent cameo portraits.

*Guild of Thieves*, without a doubt. With pics like these, who needs reality?

## ❑ PARSER OF THE YEAR

Runner up: Level 9, for their increasingly sophisticated character command.

Magnetic Scrolls. Anything that lets you put the blue thingummyjig in the red thingummyjig and then shove everything under the table can't be all bad.

## ❑ ANNOYING PARSER OF THE YEAR

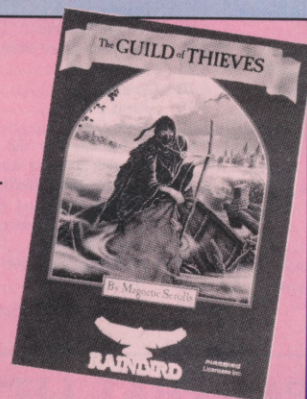
Runner up: Level 9, for their increasingly sophisticated character command that makes all those increasingly infuriating character puzzles possible!

Magnetic Scrolls. Anything that lets you put the blue thingummyjig in the red thingummyjig and then shove everything under the table is going to drive you nuts! Especially when you can't walk through a door without *banging your nose on it!*

## ❑ RPG-INFLUENCED GAME OF THE YEAR

Runner up: the Pilg Programming Course, which showed a number of interesting character attributes, but has still to find the space in this column to do combat on a regular basis!

The winner has to be *The Bards Tale*, because there weren't any others!



## ❑ ADVENTURE OF THE YEAR

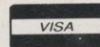
Runner-up: *Guild of Thieves*. Great atmosphere, great puzzles, and brilliant graphics.

But the clear winner is *Ingrid's Back*. Awarded for sheer excellence in the character handling department, and for managing (almost) to bring gnomes into the 20th century. If only other companies would support the Amstrad with adventures of this quality!





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## The complete guide to *Gnome Ranger*

### The second of The Paladin's three part solution

● Part 2 finds you in another cottage's garden. As usual Ingrid has messed things up. To make recompense for what Ingrid did to the tea bush, you must grow another an make the alchemist that cup of tea he wanted. Of course this isn't quite as easy as it would first appear...

● To begin with, peruse the alchemist's library to gain an insight into the game to come, and the story behind 'privetisation'. Plant everything you find in the kitchen (within reason) in the garden. Collect the new grown telelilies and pick leaves and berries etc from the garden plants. Take these to the kitchen.

● To get help from the Greenslave you've grown, you must make an animate potion, the ingredients for which you've just collected. If the potion goes wrong, eat the gunge - and let that be a lesson to you! You can then go and pick some more berries

etc and try again.

● At the north end of the road there is a cave and in it is a Stinkwort plant, an ingredient for an antidote to the air plant's poison. Don't enter the cave yourself, as the cave is not as inanimate as it should be, and it isn't a vegetarian either. Instead get someone to hold open the cave's mouth - first remembering plants need compost to grow in and can't stand on bare rock - and send in someone else with the blue telelily to pick a shoot.

● To explore the hilltop to the east, you must wear some Odour le Weedkiller, to get past the hedge (that's something else to make). There's an ingredient to collect on the hill. Use the telelilies you grew to water the beanstalk. If you can't get back past the hedge, get some satisfaction, roll a stone. (Push the rock in other words, with a little help from your friends).

● Once you've produced

your potion make sure that you immunize yourself by drinking it. Then send the Treehouse to the air flower, because if you go yourself, your ugly mug frightens the plant out of reach.

● Now make the fertiliser potion with the air flower and then put it on the tea bush. then finally make a nice fresh cuppa. The brew is made with the obvious, a berry, a leaf, and finally a flower...



Join the Paladin next month for the final part of the solution

## CLUE POT

Get those tips coming in! We want to kick off next issue with a really superlative collection, so pop off a postcard now with your clues to *The Pilgrim*, 4 Queen Street, Bath, BA1 1EJ. Don't be shy, be famous!

This month's tips come from: David Liddell, Lanarkshire, Gary Bruce, Glasgow, and - of course - The Pilg.

### Wolfman pt 1

The numbers by the lock are linked to letters of the alphabet and read INSERT KEY AND PUSH.

Smell the blue bloom.

Search pool and take bullrush.

Throw flint at skeleton.

### Rigels Revenge

Stun gun needs charging - insert plug and pull lever

Fire the flare at the monster

Get past the android by shaking the can and spraying the camera

Examine the documents for a pass card. Use it to open the gate.

The patch is a red herring.

### The Big Sleaze

To defeat Kong, take the battery out of the flashlight, make sure you have the model airplane from the corner shop. Take the plane and the battery to the top of the ESB. Insert battery into plane and see what happens.

## NEXT MONTH

Be sure not to miss February's new-look *Pilgrim*. And remember, you can write to the Pilgrim c/o AA, or leave a message via BT Gold on 83:JNL251

## The Lords and Ladies of Adventure

Once again the undying ones come to the help of those less fortunate than themselves. Remember - if you want to make friends around the world, you can apply to join the Lords and

Ladies by writing to:

*Pilgrim (Lords and Ladies)*, Amstrad Action, 4 Queen Street, Bath, BA1 1EJ

Forest at Worlds End, Gremlins, Heroes of Karn, Midnshadow, Message from Andromeda, Never Ending Story, Red Hawk, Spy Trek, Seabase Delta, SubSunk, Warlord, Spellbound, Knight Tyme, Storm Bringer.  
**Robert Weir, 87 Burnside Rd, Gorebridge, Midlothian, EH23 4ET**

Berhunter, Heroes of Karn, Never Ending Story, plus limited help on Redhawk and Rigels

Revenge.  
**Andrew MacDonald, Brookhouse Farm, Eccleshall, Staffs, ST21 6NE**

Never Ending Story, The Hobbit, The Boggit, Warlord, Enchanter, Forest at Worlds End, Marsport, Spellbound, Knight Tyme, Souls of Darkon, Return to Eden, Emerald Isle, Jewels of Babylon, Fantasia Diamond, Seabase Delta, Adventureland, Return to

Eden.  
**Tim Gurney, Lords Hill, Shamley Green, Guildford, Surrey, GU5 0TJ**

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**Alistair McBain, 52 Fox Covert Avenue, Corstorphine, Edinburgh**

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**David Liddell, 91 Orbistion Drive, Bellshill, Lanarkshire, ML4 2LX**

Hitchikers Guide to the Galaxy  
**Ben Taylor, 5 Hope Street, Old Glossop, Derbyshire, SK13 9SB**

```

690 B=ATN(D(P,13)*TAN(D(P,11))*SIN(L-D(P,12)))/(D
(1,10)*SIN(D(P,12)-D(1,8))):RETURN
700 N=(360*D)/(365.2422*D(P,1))
710 WHILE N>360:N=N-360:WEND
720 M=N+D(P,2)-D(P,3):IF M<0 THEN M=M+360
730 RAD:M=M*PI/180:E=M:DL=1
740 WHILE DL>0.000001:J=E-(D(P,4)*SIN(E))-M
750 DE=J/(1-D(P,4)*COS(E)):E=E-DE:DL=ABS(J)
760 WEND:E=E+DE
770 X=SQR((1+D(P,4))/(1-D(P,4))):X=X*TAN(E/2):V=2
*ATN(X):V=V*180/PI:DEG:D(P,9)=V:L=V+D(P,3):
D(P,8)=L
780 R=D(P,5)*(1-D(P,4)^2)/(1+D(P,4)*COS(D(P,9))):
D(P,10)=R
790 RETURN
800 FOR AN=1 TO 360 STEP K
810 X=D(P,5)*COS(AN)-D(P,4):Y=D(P,5)*SIN(AN)*
SQR(1-D(P,4)^2)
820 X1=X*COS(D(P,3))-Y*SIN(D(P,3)):Y1=X*SIN(D
(P,3))+Y*COS(D(P,3))
830 PLOT X1*S,Y1*S,2
840 NEXT AN
850 X2=D(P,5)*(COS(D(P,9))-D(P,4))*S:Y2=D(P,5)*
SIN(D(P,9))*SQR(1-D(P,4)^2)*S
860 X3=X2*COS(D(P,3))-Y2*SIN(D(P,3)):Y3=X2*SIN(D
(P,3))+Y2*COS(D(P,3))
870 FOR AN=1 TO 360 STEP 12:MOVE X3,Y3
880 DRAW X3+2*COS(AN),Y3+2*SIN(AN),3
890 NEXT AN:RETURN
1000 Y=Y-1:M=M+12:RETURN
1010 IF SGN(X)=1 AND SGN(Y)=1 THEN Q=1
1020 IF SGN(X)=-1 AND SGN(Y)=1 THEN Q=2
1030 IF SGN(X)=-1 AND SGN(Y)=-1 THEN Q=3
1040 IF SGN(X)=1 AND SGN(Y)=-1 THEN Q=4
1050 IF F<0 THEN F=F+360
1060 GOSUB 1160
1070 IF Q1=Q THEN RETURN
1080 F=F+180
1090 GOSUB 1160
1100 IF Q1=Q THEN RETURN
1110 F=F-360
1120 GOSUB 1160
1130 IF Q1=Q THEN RETURN
1140 F=F-720
1150 RETURN
1160 IF F>=0 AND F<=90 THEN Q1=1
1170 IF F>90 AND F<=180 THEN Q1=2
1180 IF F>180 AND F<=270 THEN Q1=3
1190 IF F>270 AND F<=360 THEN Q1=4
1200 RETURN
1210 E=23.441884:D=SIN(B)*COS(E)+COS(B)*SIN(E)*SIN
(L):D=ATN(D/SQR(-D*D+1)):Y=SIN(L)*COS(E)-TAN
(B)*SIN(E):X=COS(L)
1220 F=ATN(Y/X):GOSUB 1010:A=F/15
1230 IF SGN(A)=-1 THEN GOSUB 1300
1240 IF SGN(A)>=0 THEN GOSUB 1310
1250 GOSUB 1340
1260 IF SGN(D)=-1 THEN GOSUB 1320:SD$="-"
1270 IF SGN(D)>=0 THEN GOSUB 1330:SD$="+"
1280 GOSUB 1400
1290 RETURN
1300 B=ABS(FIX(A)):B1=INT((ABS(A)-ABS(B))*60):
RETURN
1310 B=INT(A):B1=INT((A-B)*60):RETURN
1320 C=ABS(FIX(D)):C1=INT((ABS(D)-ABS(C))*60):
RETURN
1330 C=INT(D):C1=INT((D-C)*60):RETURN
1340 B$=STR$(B):B1$=STR$(B1)
1350 IF LEN(B$)=2 THEN B$=MID$(B$,2,1):B$="0"+B$

```

```

1360 IF LEN(B$)=3 THEN B$=MID$(B$,2,2)
1370 IF LEN(B1$)=2 THEN B1$=MID$(B1$,2,1):B1$="0"+
B1$
1380 IF LEN(B1$)=3 THEN B1$=MID$(B1$,2,2)
1390 RETURN
1400 C$=STR$(C):C1$=STR$(C1)
1410 IF LEN(C$)=2 THEN C$=MID$(C$,2,1):C$="0"+C$
1420 IF LEN(C$)=3 THEN C$=MID$(C$,2,2)
1430 IF LEN(C1$)=2 THEN C1$=MID$(C1$,2,1):C1$="0"
+C1$
1440 IF LEN(C1$)=3 THEN C1$=MID$(C1$,2,2)
1450 RETURN
1500 IF P=1 THEN K=1 ELSE IF P=2 THEN K=3 ELSE IF
P=3 THEN K=1.5 ELSE IF P=4 THEN K=0.7
1540 RETURN
1550 IF P=5 THEN K=3.5 ELSE IF P=6 THEN K=2 ELSE
IF P=7 THEN K=1.1 ELSE IF P=8 THEN K=0.7 ELSE
IF P=9 THEN K=0.6
1600 RETURN
2100 PRINT:PRINT:PRINT"Enter year(e.g.1978)":PRINT
" month(1-12)":PRINT" day(1-31)":
PRINT" hour(0-23)":PRINT" minute(0-
59)":PRINT:PRINT:RETURN

```

## Rotating Polygons

Alan and Gavin Parry bring you a most effective graphics demo. Just type in the number of sides of the polygon, wait for it to draw, then see it

whizz along with a retreating horizon behind it. Simple but effective. The option is given to load or save screens created with the program.

```

10 ' Rotating Polygons
20 ' By Alan with help from Gav '
30 ' Amstrad Action December 1988
40 MODE 1:DEG:P=1:INK 0,0:BORDER 0
50 INPUT"(L)oad / (S)ave? ",f$:f$=UPPER$(f$)
60 IF f$="L"THEN MODE 0:LOAD"!FILE.SCR",49152:spd
=200:GOTO 250
70 p=1:PRINT:spd=200:INPUT"Sides: ",sides:MODE 0
80 FOR a=0 TO 130 STEP 2:PLOT 0,a,p:DRAW 639,0
90 IF ed=0 THEN p=p+1:IF p=16 THEN p=1
100 IF ed=0 THEN ed=5-(INT(ABS(a/25)))
110 ed=ed-1:NEXT
120 p=1:ed=0
130 FOR d=190 TO -190 STEP -2:IF ed=0 THEN ed=8-
(INT(ABS(d/30)))
140 ed=ed-1:IF ed=0 THEN p=p+1:IF p=16 THEN p=1
150 PLOT 320+190,200,p
160 FOR a=0 TO 180 STEP 360/sides
170 DRAW 320+190*COS(a),200+d*SIN(a)
180 NEXT:NEXT:x=0
190 IF TEST(x,202)=0 THEN PLOT x,198,13:PLOT x,
200,9:PLOT x,202,5:PLOT x,204,1 ELSE 210
200 x=x+4:GOTO 190
210 x=639
220 IF TEST(x,202)=0 THEN PLOT x,198,13:PLOT x,200
,9:PLOT x,202,5:PLOT x,204,1 ELSE 240
230 x=x-4:GOTO 220
240 IF f$="S"THEN SAVE"!file.scr",b,49152,16384
250 ' * Rotating Colours * '
260 FOR a=1 TO 7:INK a,6:NEXT:FOR a=8 TO 15:INK a,
26:NEXT
270 p=1:o=8
280 INK p,26:INK o,6
290 p=p+1:IF p=16 THEN p=1
300 o=o+1:IF o=16 THEN o=1
310 FOR z=0 TO spd:NEXT:spd=spd-10:IF spd<0 THEN
spd=0
320 IF INKEY$="" THEN RUN
330 GOTO 280

```

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Documentation supplied is very extensive, and the built-in HELP can quickly locate the area of interest and send information to the screen or printer.

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# THE BUYERS GUIDE CHRISTMAS MEGAMIX

Whether you're looking for presents to buy or ones you're hoping to receive, this is the place to look. We've boiled down months of buyers guides to present the essential list of CPC hard- and software. Take this shopping with you and your bank manager may live to regret it...

## Printers... Printers... Printers... Printers...

### Epson LQ500

Epson ■ £803 rrp ■ AA29

Features galore – and price to match. Handles both the up-market Sans Serif/Roman styles of NLQ, for instance. And you can get a colour-printing upgrade kit. 24 pin printer, offering excellent quality printing. Control panel is to select from many available fonts (ie. the same font at different widths).

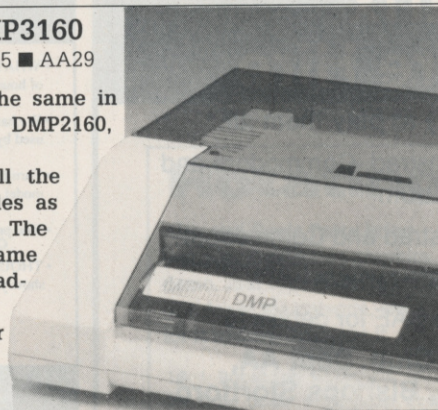
### Amstrad DMP3160

Amstrad ■ £228.85 ■ AA29

Almost exactly the same in operation as the DMP2160, but a bit faster.

Can accept all the IBM printing codes as well as Epson's. The NLQ shares the same sensible front loading system.

A good buy for the price.



### Epson LX800

Epson ■ £320.85 ■ AA29

Extremely fast for a 9 pin. Control panel for style selection, and Epson compatible.

Reverse winding sheets through the printer requires more care than usual, though.

### Amstrad DMP4000

Amstrad ■ £401.35 ■ AA20

A real text crunching machine, a halfway house for Amstrad between DMP2000/3000 home use and LQ business use. Wide carriage, and really flies across the paper, up to about 200 cps (in NLQ about 50 cps). Fonts available: standard 9 pin Pica, Elite, condensed etc. But they are different, rather than just adjusted spacing for the same characters.

### Amstrad LQ3500

Amstrad ■ £401.35 rrp ■ AA31

Cheapest 24-pin printer available. Paper is loaded from the rear, making loading more time consuming. Manages about 30 cps in letter quality mode, and 62 cps in draft. Print quality is excellent, with plenty of different type-styles are built into the printer.

Speed is nothing to write home about.

### Epson EX800

Epson ■ £458.85 ■ AA29

Epson's mid-price printer. Can be upgraded in 101 ways – cut sheet feeds, serial ports, longer life ribbons. Quiet, with respectable printing speed. Sans Serif/Roman NLQ fonts incorporated. Control panel to select fonts – just the same font with different spacings.

### Star LC10

Star ■ £263.35/£297.85 rrp ■ AA32

First price is for standard dot matrix printer, a good, no nonsense machine. Fonts selected by button, rather than typing in fiddly control code. Centronics port on the side, taking up space.

Common to both models is the plastic paper feeder.

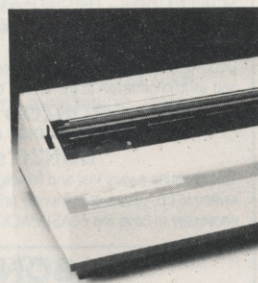
Second price is for relatively inexpensive colour model. Uses multi-colour ribbon to produce different mixes.

### Panasonic KXP3131U

Panasonic ■ £335.25 (discont.) ■ AA29

Daisywheel therefore superb quality – but can't print bit graphics (no trendy screen dumps), and if you want different fonts, you have to plug in a different Diablo-compatible one.

Not quiet.



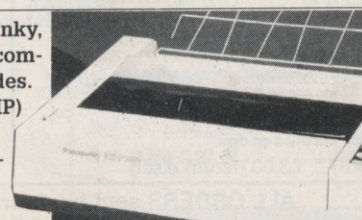
### Panasonic KXP1081

Panasonic ■ £245 rrp ■ AA29

Thorough A4 manual, good NLQ mode (better than the DMP) and a switch to select condensed, draft and NLQ modes.

Often available at discount through independent distributors.

Similar to DMP2000/2160: chunky, 9 pins, 10 inch carriage and compatible with Epson codes.



### Amstrad DMP/2160

Amstrad ■ £159.95 ■ AA6

Load through front. So printer must be above paper; but loading continuous stationery is much easier. Poor NLQ mode. £5 for ribbons. A low priced printer, rather than a bargain.

## Contacts

Amstrad ☎ 0277 230222  
Dart ☎ 0502 513707  
Frontier e ☎ 0423 67140  
Goldmark ☎ 07072 71529  
Panasonic ☎ 0753 73181  
Epson Uk Limited ☎ 01 902 8892  
KDS Electronics ☎ 04853 2076  
Seven Stars ☎ 06284 3445  
Star Micronics ☎ 01 840 1800

# Word processors

## ► Brunword 6128

Brunning Software  
 ☎ 0245 252854  
 £16.50 tape, £25 disk  
 ● reviewed AA24  
 40 or 80 column mode; in-built spell checker loaded into extra memory. Can be used by expanded 128K machines.

Superscript and subscript effects appear on-screen. Some on-screen operations such as centering and cursor movement can be slow. And files cannot be loaded into other word-processors.

## ► Pendown

Logotron,  
 £19.50 disk only  
 Reviewed AA18  
 Pendown offers a complete tutorial in the theory

## ► Protex

Arnor ☎ 0733 239011  
 £19.95 tape, £26.95 disk, £39.95 ROM  
 ● reviewed AA3  
 One of the first wp's especially for the Amstrad. Lightning fast at all tasks involving screen. True merging from separate files and disks to the cursor position is easy, and Protex supports standard CPC RSX's like DISC, TAPE, CAT etc.

Having software on ROM is excellent. Bad points: maximum file space limited to machine memory - about 22K on disk, 38K for the ROM version. Daunting: but worth the effort.



## ► Mini Office II

Database Software ☎ 0625 879940  
 £14.95 tape, £19.95 disk ● reviewed AA6  
 If you don't need full specification *Mini Office II* is the one to buy. For what is a remarkably low price you get a word-processor, database and a spreadsheet, plus other goodies such as comms software. Packaging and documentation good, and programs work in a menu environment. Worth considering if you're short of pennies (and who isn't?).

and practice of the subject. It is a very open system, owing a lot to expensive DTP packages. Generally more people learn about the subject by means of *Tasword*: but *Pendown* is a lot more fun. Built into the product are

different fonts to print with. You can't see them on screen but they make the end result much better. Even so, *Pendown* lacks many features, and one day you're going to want to move up.

## ► Pyraword

Discovery ☎ 0742 753423  
 £14.95 tape, £17.95 disk

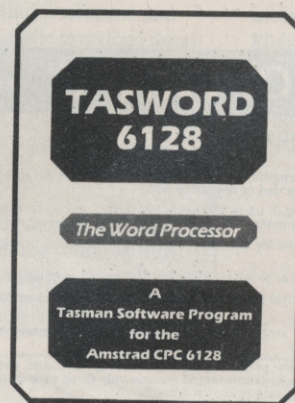
● reviewed AA18  
 This program is similar in use to Pyradev, also from Discovery. When starting up it loads a profile of inks, printer codes and the character set. Word counting, changing disk drives etc - the housekeeping tasks of any program - are handily located. The program uses the extra memory of 128K machines for spooling

printed documents and storing text.

Unfortunately true merging of files is not possible, and the control keys are a little strange at first. The margins cannot be set further apart than 80 columns, although placing a printer control character at the right hand side will allow wider documents to be printed.

## ► Tasword

Tasman Software  
 ● 0532 4388301  
 464, 464D, 6128, £19.95 tape, £24.95 disk  
 ● reviewed AA1  
 A veritable herd of different releases. 464 is the tape based version, exactly the same as Amsword. 464D has a few enhance-



ments for a disk drive. 6128 makes full use of a 6128's extra memory. The latter pair include a mailmerge facility as standard. If you are new to word-processing then this is worth a look. It is very easy to get to grips with and comprehensive help screens are available when needed.

Many people never find a need to change from *Tasword*. But the screen operations are fairly slow, and reformatting text is done one word at a time. If you want speed, look elsewhere.

## ► Wordstar

Micropro/Cumana ☎ 0483 571666 £49.95 disk only (CPM) ● reviewed AA1  
 'Pocket Wordstar' is what this really is. But anyone who has seen an incarnation of the real thing on a CPC can tell you it's a dinosaur. Be glad the faster *Pocket* version is available. One good feature: files can be as big as the space available. A fully professional program, *Wordstar* has a manual bigger than some printers and a layout reminiscent of mission control. If you want a function, it is in there... somewhere. Not fast.

# Databases

## AtLast Plus

Rational Solutions ☎ 056681 511  
 £39.95 ● CPM+, 6128 only  
 Reviewed AA30

Powerful database that's developed into what users require. Data capacity is restricted only by disk size, and splitting fields into smaller pieces (elements) is supported. Printed output is impressive. Unfortunately calculations on fields is missing. Strongly recommended for sheer processing ability.

## Masterfile III

Campbell systems ☎ 0378 77762  
 £39.95 CPM+  
 Reviewed AA30

Possesses a genuinely useful feature - parent/child records, which enable you to tie records together, saving considerable space and time.

Screen layouts and reports are menu selected and not for the fainthearted, but results are good.

## Random Access Database

Minerva Systems ☎ 0392 37756  
 £29.95 disk only ● reviewed AA6

Very good mathematical and string operations make this a database to watch for.

Random disk accessing gives speed combined with power - and you can opt for a 40 or 80 column screen.

Can be a little unresponsive to keys.

## Ultrabase

Beebugsoft ☎ 0727 40303  
 £14.95 tape, £17.95 disk  
 Reviewed AA6

Retains all data in memory, a feature giving fast search and sort options on the plus side, but reduced capacity on the minus side.

Record format is fixed, which makes entry a little tiresome. Excellent price for a database, though, and featuring 'fuzzy logic' search option.

## DEMON DEVELOPMENT CARTRIDGE

The Ultimate machine code tool. Suitable for 464/664 and 6128 machines. Demon will give you full control of your Amstrad. Stop Any program Anytime by a press of a button, the memory remains intact and can be saved to Tape/Disc, debugged, traced, moved, disassembled etc. Inline Z80 assembler, Bank switching for 6128 machines etc. etc. More functions than ANY other unit of this type on the market.

Demon Cartridge with user manual only £24.95 (note no through connector).

## EPROM PROGRAMMER

Transfer your favourite programs onto Eprom. Suitable for 464/664 and 6128 machines.

- Programs 2764 and 27128 type Eproms.
- Switchable for 12.5 or 21 volt types
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Blank 16k Eproms available phone for latest prices

## EPROM EXPANSION BOARD

Holds 4 EPROMS. Suitable for Maxam, Protek, Utopia etc, etc.  
Top quality silk screen-printed PCB measures 7cm x 12cm approx with through edge connector to allow the use of Disc (464) or other peripherals.

Complete Kit of parts, with instructions to build it yourself £16.75  
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## PCB DESIGNER III

Design double side printed circuit boards quickly and easily with this powerful software. Used by universities and government establishments. Some of the main features are:-

- Double sided 200mm x 131mm (8" x 5.25") board.
- Nine print options for standard Epson or compatible printer (DMP 2000).
- Predefined DILS, IDCs from 8pin to 64 pin, horizontal or vertical placing.
- Single pads, lines, blocks and edge connectors at the touch of a key.
- Auto Routing and common bussing.

Suitable for microprocessor and related projects.  
Minimum system requirements to run this software are:- Amstrad 464 Mono Monitor and Printer.  
Supplied on cartridge (just plug in and go) only £89.95 (note no through edge connector). Evaluation cartridge with Save & Load routines removed only £25.00 refundable against purchase of main cartridge

## PASCAL COMPILER ROM

Our Pascal compiler is easy to use, suitable for the absolute beginner and produces stand alone Machine code. Does NOT require CPM. A built in text editor and combined compiler makes the program easy to use. The user manual supplied will teach you how to write programs and contains many examples, these include games and useful utilities. The compiler produces very fast machine code for example:- BASIC PLOT x,y (10000 times) 12.46 secs Pascal Ploxy (10000 times) 2.1 secs. Supplied on Eprom with user manual only £19.95 or Cartridge £24.95

Many other items in stock including Public Domain CPM software at £2.50 per disc.



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## ZENITH SOFTWARE

### WORDBASE

An easy to use and flexible database for the Amstrad CPC 464/664/6128.

**Quick and easy to setup.** No need to define field lengths. WordBASE doesn't pad fields out to a set length but only stores the data you type in. Fields can be added or deleted at will.

**Records.** WordBASE uses variable length records with up to 255 fields per record and up to 255 characters per field. On a 128k machine you have a massive 65,000 character space to store records in.

**Data entry/editing.** Data can be entered/edited quickly and easily using the cursor keys to select the required record/field.

**View/list records.** Send records to screen, printer or to an ASCII file on disc with the minimum of fuss.

**Sorting records.** You can sort records using multiple fields (in a user-defined order) in ascending or descending order

**Search records.** Search over multiple fields or any single field using wild-cards and the greater than, less than and equal to conditions.

**Tagged records** A record can be tagged simply by the press of a key. While using WordBASE you are given several options which allow you to work on tagged/non-tagged records only these include ignore records, save records, delete records, search records and print/list records.

**Text editor.** An easy to use, no-nonsense text editor. Compatible with ASCII files from most popular word processors.

Mix database records with the text, this would allow you to define a card index template, etc. Send output to the screen, printer or to an ASCII file on disc.

**Disc Commands.** You can use all the major AMSDOS commands from within WordBASE.

**Manual.** The manual contains full instructions, a tutorial section and the relevant information for those wishing to transfer records from other databases.

Supplied on 3" Amsoft disc.  
WordBASE costs £12.95.

**Z - PACK**  
The complete machine code tool-pack

Z-Pack will not break into machine code automatically. It's up to you to do that.

Some of Z-Pack's features

**Memory Editor.** View ROM. Alter/view RAM including the extra banks on 128k machines.

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Disassemble RAM or ROM quickly and easily. send output to screen, printer or an ASCII file on disc.

**Calculator.** Enter hex., decimal and binary numbers to add, subtract, multiply, divide, AND XOR and OR.

**Powerful Block Commands** Define a block of memory simply by placing a couple of markers from within the memory editor, you can then alter Block, Move Block, Search Block, Print Block and Save Block.

What Amstrad Action said about Z-Pack. (Issue 38 Nov/88)  
"Without doubt this is one of the best disassemblers around. The screen update is fast, the disassembler can scroll up as well as down and the calculator saves messing about."

Supplied on 3" Amsoft disc, complete with a quality manual.

Z - Pack costs £10.95

All prices include P&P in the UK only  
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11, Bude Street, Appledore, Bideford, North Devon. EX39 1PS

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**Tape £9.95, Disk £14.95, Rom £24.95**

Please make cheques/PO's payable to First Byte Software. All prices include VAT & P&P.

## CAN ALL THESE PEOPLE BE WRONG?

### THE REVIEWERS:

*Friendly, packed with options... wonderfully priced. Amstrad Computer User*

*User-friendly, fast... easy to use. Amstrad Action*  
*Value for money... 10 out of 10. Computing With The Amstrad*

### THE USERS:

*I am delighted with it. Peter Asbury-Smith, London*  
*Very good value for money.*

*G Waite, Leeds*  
*Very pleased with the programs. The youngsters enjoy playing Empty Tummy.*

*GL Palmer, Rotherhithe*



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## TELE-TEXT

A world of information at your fingertips

A Microtext Adaptor turns your 464 or 6128 into a sophisticated Teletext Receiver. Giving you access to any of the hundreds of free pages from Cefax or Oracle. As well as up-to-the-minute news or football results, there's the local weather or even bargain holidays. And Teletext caters for special interests, like computing, motoring, or gardening, you'll find things to do and places to go in your area plus much much more.

But unlike a Teletext TV, a Microtext Adaptor allows you to do a lot more with the information, you can save a page to disc or cassette, perhaps to keep a watch on share prices, or print pages like what's on TV. There's free software too! Amstrad software is broadcast in a special format on Channel 4 for Microtext users to download. Plus you can access and use Teletext data from your own programs, providing endless possibilities.

The Microtext Adaptor fits neatly on the expansion port, it comes with software and is very easy to use. Just connect it with the lead supplied to the VIDEO OUT or AV socket of a video recorder and change channels with the controls on the video or, there's our own Tuner which has been specially designed to provide the signal that the Adaptor needs, plug in an aerial, it tunes itself in (!) and channels are selected from your keyboard. Tune into Teletext, a world of information at your fingertips.

*'A well thought out product that performs admirably.'*  
Amstrad Action Sept. 88

A Microtext Adaptor for use with a video is only £74.95 Adaptor and Tuner just £124.90 Prices include p/p & VAT.

Instructions are provided to transfer software to disc. Disc's are available for £5.00 extra



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**MICROTEXT**

Dept AA 7 Birdlip Close, Horndean, Hants PO8 9PW  
Telephone: (0705) 595694

## Adventures to get excited about

- **The Bard's Tale**  
Electronic Arts AA36 90% £8.95 c/£14.95 d  
£19.95 (disk: 128K RAM)
- **Gnome Ranger**  
Level 9 AA28 85% £9.95/£14.95
- **Guild of Thieves**  
Magnetic Scrolls/Rainbird AA29 89%  
£19.95 (disk: 128K RAM)
- **Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy**  
Infocom AA5 93% £19.95/£24.95
- **Ingrid's Back**  
Level 9 AA38 82% £9.95/£14.95
- **Jewels of Darkness**  
Rainbird AA23 £14.95/£19.95
- **Jinxter**  
Magnetic Scrolls/Rainbird AA30 88%  
£19.95 (disk: 128K RAM)
- **Knight Orc**  
Level 9/Rainbird AA28 84% £14.95/£19.95)
- **Lancelot**  
Level 9 AA38 80% £9.95/£14.95
- **Leather Goddesses of Phobos**  
Infocom AA1591% £24.99 (disk)
- **Lord of the Rings**  
Melbourne House AA6 85% £15.95/£24.95
- **Lurking Horror**  
Infocom AA27 94% £24.99 (disk)
- **Mindfighter**  
Abstract Concepts/ Mediagenic AA35 84%  
£14.99 /£19.99
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Magnetic Scrolls/Rainbird AA19 92%  
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- **Shadows of Mordor**  
Melbourne House AA21 81% £8.95 (cass)
- **Silicon Dreams**  
Rainbird AA17 88% £14.95/£19.95
- **Time and Magik**  
Level 9/Mandarin AA34 92% £14.95/£19.95
- **Wish Bringer**  
Infocom AA9 92% £28.70 (disk)
- **Zork I**  
Infocom AA5 86% £19.95 (disk)

## THESE WE HAVE LOVED: THE YEAR'S MASTERGAMES

- ◆ January – *Driller* (Incentive)
- ◆ February – *Bobsleigh* (Digital Integration)
- ◆ March – *Deflektor* (Vortex/Gremlin)
- ◆ April – *Advanced Tactical Fighter* (Digital Integration)
- ◆ May – *Cyberoid* (Hewson)
- ◆ June – *Nebulus* (Hewson/Gremlin)
- ◆ July – *Dark Side* (Incentive)
- ◆ August – *Target Renegade* (Imagine)
- ◆ September – *The Bard's Tale* (Electronic Arts)
- ◆ October – *Heroes of the Lance* (US Gold)
- ◆ December – *Cyberoid II* (Hewson)

# Spreadsheets

### ■ Mastercalc 128

Campbell Systems ☐ 0378  
77762  
£33 disk, 128K machines ☐  
reviewed AA4  
Can display two different  
parts of a spreadsheet at the  
same time. Includes  
notepad and calculator.  
Easy to use, but the mathe-  
matical formulae can only  
consist of the four basic  
arithmetic options. It slows  
down as more data is  
entered.

### ■ Supercalc II

Amssoft/Sorcim ☐ 0277  
230222  
£49.95 CPM+ ● reviewed AA4  
Originally this program cost  
£200, but was soon cut.  
Documentation is first class.  
Calculations can be deter-  
minative, – they will be per-  
formed on whether or not a  
cell's contents match a  
given value. Help prompts  
plentiful if needed and  
arithmetic functions excel-  
lent.

### ■ Cracker

Newstar Software ☐ 0277  
229509  
£49.95 disk CPM+ ☐  
reviewed AA9  
Spreadsheets must be creat-  
ed from scratch.  
Documentation well writ-  
ten; command sequences  
are soon learned.  
Mathematical functions  
very well catered for, and  
include random numbers.  
Files limited to 17K long –  
you soon run out of space,  
and formulae programming  
is not well implemented.

### ■ Matrix

Audiogenic Software ☐ 0734 303663  
£34.95 disk ● reviewed AA18  
Uses disk to store data – hence good capacity but poor  
speed. Graphic options on Matrix shames other spread-  
sheets. On screen prompts are rare, making it hard going  
at first. Calculating power good.

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(Colour/Mono) .....	£14.50	<b>Pontcynon Industrial Estate</b>
Mouse Mat .....	£5.95	<b>Abercynon</b>
Dust Cover (Col/Mono) .....	£7.50	<b>Mid Glamorgan CF45 4EP</b>
Plonker Box .....	£2.30	<b>Tel: 0443 740281</b>
Dexette Copy Holder		Computer
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Surge Protectors .....	£12.00	
Acoustic Boxes .....	£38.95	

**kador**

Don't miss the next **AMSTRAD ACTION**-packed issue – out on **JANUARY 12th!**

# AAfterthought

All too soon, the end of another issue is almost upon us. But before we go...

## The CPC character set

### 1. The games addict

Aged 12 and three quarters, the games addict is obsessed. Well into his third joystick and with a list of games that runs to 28 pages (most of them copied on a reciprocal basis from friends), he swaps like crazy, reads *Amstrad Action* – and especially *Action Test* – from cover to cover every month and jealously guards his almost complete set (he's missing five issues, and would willingly sell his big sister for any one of them. Come to think of it, he'd give her away if he thought anyone would have her).

He's going to be a programmer when he grows up, he says, or failing that a computer magazine writer. He often submits cheats, pokes and maps, though he sometimes forgets to put a stamp on the envelope. His room, a poster plastered tip, is a chaotic shrine to Maria Whittaker, Mike Van Wyjk and a dozen indistinguishable overdeveloped sourfaced vigilantes with blood leaking unconvincingly from numerous body wounds and wielding guns that wouldn't fire in a million years.

He wrote to AA once, asking them to send him every review of every game they'd ever received, but it still hasn't come. Must be in the post.

He's deathly pale and has bloodshot eyes because he never comes out of his room and plays in total darkness. He's partially deaf as a result of the years spent listening over his headphones to appalling game soundtracks (the latest of which he hums constantly, to his mother's intense annoyance). He has chronically overdeveloped muscles in his right wrist from joystick waggling, a bad back from leaning hunched over his CPC all evening, and a series of bad school reports complaining that when he's not falling asleep in class he's drawing disturbing images of urban violence.

So he does CPC games – no problem, he can handle it. Could give up any day he wanted. Maybe tomorrow...

Next month's member in the CPC character set is the club secretary



## Twenty things you never knew about your CPC

1. Sylvester Stallone writes all his scripts using a CPC – without turning on the power.
2. When the SAS stormed the Iranian Embassy in 1980 they used CPC power leads to tie up the prisoners.
3. Paul Hogan used profits from *Crocodile Dundee* to buy over 4,000 CPCs. And he can't even type!
4. Marilyn Munroe died before the CPC began production.
5. So did Attila the Hun.
6. Basil Fawly, proprietor of *Fawly Towers*, is seen in the sixth episode (the one with the Germans) to throw a CPC out of a third floor window.
7. In the next scene he is then shown plugging it in. And, astonishingly, it doesn't work!
8. In the latest series of *Moonlighting* (the one we haven't seen yet), David decides to throw out all those stupid Macintoshes. Maddie disagrees, and shoots herself. Then David wakes up – it was all a dream!
9. The solder used in CPCs are made from melted down fittings from the *Titanic*.
- 10 It has been discovered that CPC users rarely have bad breath.
- 11 The colours on a CPC are brighter than those on any other computer in the world, with a few exceptions.
- 12 Ghost hunters have reported a strange glow coming from the Escape key on some 464s.
- 13 Marlon Brando turned down the part of Alan Sugar in a filmed biography: 'I can't smile like that', he confessed.
- 14 *The Sunday Sport* revealed that a CPC had been discovered on the moon, and had just as mysteriously vanished.
- 15 Kangaroos are allergic to CPCs.
- 16 CPC stands for 'Clean Paper Clips'. (Is that right? Oh yes, it's well known. Really? You do amaze me sometimes.)
- 17 HRH Prince Charles is a keen *Cybernoird* fan.
- 18 There are more CPCs in Britain than there are pineapples in Switzerland, probably.
- 19 February's *Amstrad Action* is on sale on 12 January.
- 20 Apart from that, I made all this stuff up in my lunch hour.

● Next month: twenty things you never knew about the CPC's pin 27

## Avoid the queues!

Well folks, that's it for another month. There is no more. Still, hang on four short weeks and we'll be back with February's action-packed *Action*. We can promise you a free second disk drive on the cover, or we can tell you the truth, which is that we haven't got the foggiest what we'll be doing by then. But it'll be good!

By the way, if you've been having problems getting your hands on a copy, why not reserve one? Your newsagent will be glad to oblige. Just hand him this reservation slip and make life a little easier.

To the newsagent: *Amstrad Action* is distributed by Seymour Press

Dear newsagent,  
Please reserve me one copy of the February *Amstrad Action*, due out on 12 January

Name:

Address:

Telephone number:

If you're under 18, please get your parent or guardian's to sign here:



## Afore ye go!

By the way, before we run out of ideas for 'The CPC character set', why don't you send one in? 'Why?' we hear you cry: because it's £20 cash for each one we print, that's why! We want between 150 and 300 words, and although we don't expect you to do the picture as well, if you do and it's used it is worth another tenner.

Come on then, get your thinking caps on. (And since we're having a go at you, we can't really complain if you want to do the same to us.)

**HEY!**

Buy any game on this page for £6.95 on tape or £11.95 on disk. (See next page for Order Codes)

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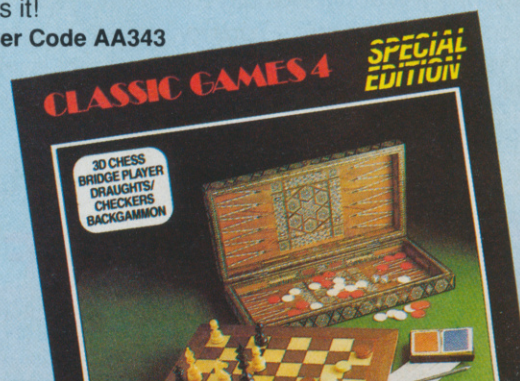
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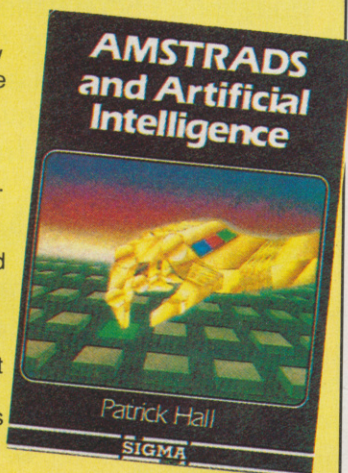
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Issues 8 and 16 may be of particular interest, as both include free cassettes packed with good software. Two series also went down very well. Andy Wilton's programming course in Basic for absolute beginners ran from issues 8-17, while a series of articles on the CP/M operating system ran from 10-17.

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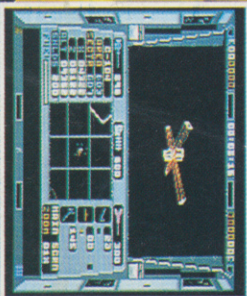
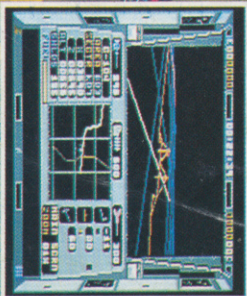
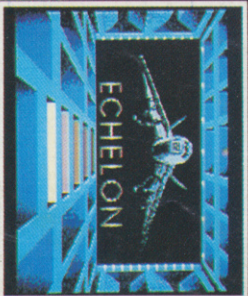
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