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PLUS BETRAYAL AT KRONDOR, ROBOCOD, PRINCE OF PERSIA 2

August 1993
Issue 5
£3.95
ISSN 0967-8220

MicroProse

Presents

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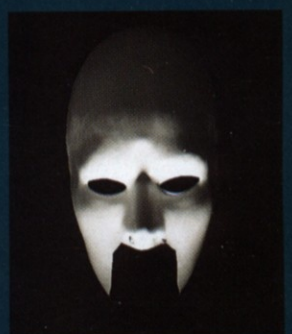


MICROPROSE
Seriously Fun Software

MicroProse Ltd. The Ridge, Chipping Sodbury, Avon BS17 6AY. UK. Tel: 0666 504 399

Paul Lakin *The Editor*

August 1993
Issue Five

PC ZONE

100% GAMES

dir.ectory

The always fast moving computer leisure market seems to be putting on a real sprint at the moment. Towards the end of last year the speculation centered around how many software houses would be producing games for the 286 by the middle of '93 and if this would finally be the year when CD ROM took off. Mid way through the year and it's not the 286 that's looking shakey but the 386. As for CD ROM, well it might not have set the public on fire yet (either figuratively or literally) but the software houses love it to bits. Not only are some games starting to appear on CD before they appear on floppy but, if the talk at the CES is to be believed, by next year some fairly major companies are going to stop releasing their games on floppy disk entirely. It'll be CD or nothing, which is rather what happened in the music industry where public choice was dictated by product availability. Free market economics in reverse.

So what should we do faced with the prospect of our PC's being out of date before we've got the wrapping off and feeling bullied into the world of CD? There's only one thing for it. Put a Jam album on the record player, get out that ZX81 and load up *Othello*. That'll show 'em whose boss.

REVIEWS

24 Syndicate

TAKE FREE MARKET economics to the very limit in this game of corporate murder and destruction in a futuristic world. Big business was never so much fun.

30 Betrayal At Krondor

RATHER THAN WRITE the next novel of his Riftwar series, author Raymond Feist decided to make a computer game out of it. Rather than produce another flight sim, Dynamix decided to produce their first RPG.

34 Ishar 2

TIME ONCE MORE to strap on you sword, enroll some trusty chums and indulge in a bit of mythical adventure.

38 Robocod

LICENSED TO MAKE A thousand fishy puns, James Pond, the world's first aquatic agent surfaces on the PC.

43 Prince Of Persia 2

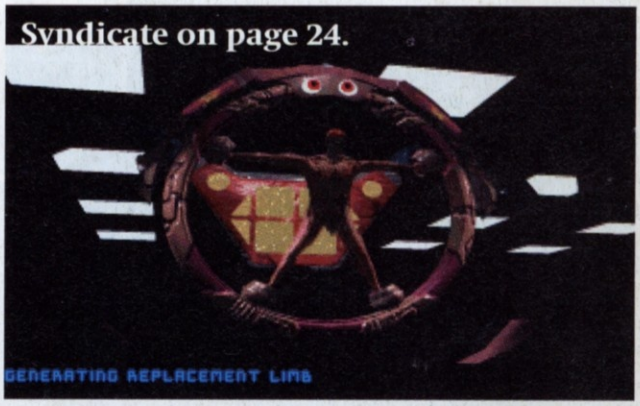
THE RETURN OF A legend. The Prince is back in another adventure of platforms and skeletons. More moves, more levels, and more locations but still the same old trusty pyjamas.

46 Premier Manager

PREPARE FOR THE new season with the first of this month's football management games.

48 War In The Gulf

THE SUCCESSOR TO *Team Yankee* and *Pacific Islands* allows you to indulge in the alternative form of Middle Eastern diplomacy by taking command of a unit of tanks in one of the world's literal hot spots.



54 Air Bucks

COLLECT REAL AIR miles by building up your own airline from scratch then wait to be nobbled by one of the big boys.

58 Chess Maniac 5 Billion

THE MATURE, sensible world of chess has a head on collision with the distinctly silly world of National Lampoon. A lot of people get killed in the process.

60 Worlds Of Legend

IN THE BIGGEST court case in world history, *Worlds Of Legend* is accused of being an isometric, 3D adventure. The defence stresses the importance of spells. Read on for the jury's verdict.

62 Protostar

DABBLE IN DIPLOMACY and destruction in your bid to save dear old planet Earth. Yup, it's space strategy/action time again.

66 Championship Manager '93

SPOOKILY ENOUGH, the updated version of last years *Championship Manager*. More football wheeling and dealing and not a sheepskin jacket in sight. ☞

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Betrayal At Krondor on page 30

Sail into the past with Lost In Time on page 14.

Win this blast from the past and some fab Empire wargames on page 53.

PART 2

dir.ectory

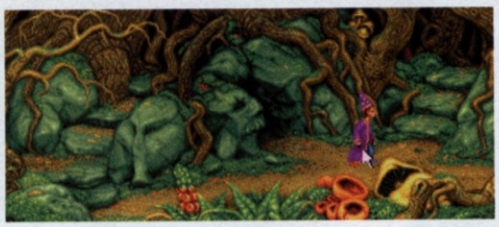
BLUEPRINTS

14 Lost In Time

THE CROSS FERTILISATION between film and game takes another leap forward in Coktel Vision's graphically superb adventure of murder, mystery and time travel.

20 Return Of The Phantom

FOLLOWING ON FROM the success of *Rex Nebular*, MicroProse dabble in weird goings on in the Paris Opera House complete with a beautiful soprano, a deformed composer and a sharp detective. (Or should that be A# ho ho.)



74 Simon The Sorcerer

IF YOU FANCY MIXING your adventuring with something seriously funny then you'll be more than interested in what PDQ are working on at the moment. This could turn out to be one of the best adventure games of the year, no monkeying about.

79 Cyberace

THE WORLD OF Sid Mead *(Blade Runner, 2010)* and the world of racing are combining to produce a futuristic race game that's high on style.

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83 CD ROM Guide

YOU CAN'T PUT IT off any longer. Before the year's out you're going to have to buy a CD ROM drive. First check out our guide to some of the best on the market.

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THIS MONTH OUR news section is given over to a special report from the Computer Entertainment Show in Chicago.

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DON'T LOAD YOUR cover disk without reading these pages... Woops too late.

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WIN A SMART Spirit of St Louis radio and some PC games, courtesy of Empire Software.

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LUMBAGO, SLIPPED DISK and old issues of *PC Zone*. Only one of these areas is covered in our back issues section.

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IN ITS NEW REVISED format, this month's guide is concerned with driving and platform games.

114 Mr Cursor

PANIC STRICKEN RAMBLINGS from the man who lives in fear of his PC (and just about everything else on the planet.)

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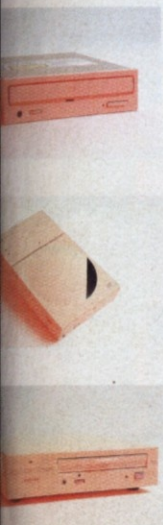

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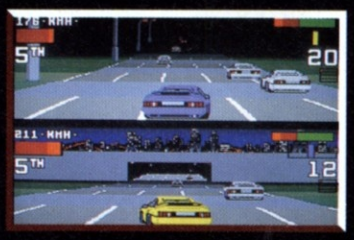

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Bulletin

The CES (Computer Entertainment Show) in Chicago is one of the biggest, if not *the* biggest, leisure computing shows of the year. It's the essential place to be to catch all the latest developments in the PC games market and gain a first glimpse of what's in the pipeline. *PC Zone* was there in the form of Tim Ponting, our man in the Show Hall with a forged name tag and bag full of free T-shirts.

The voice of Bernard in Day Of The Tentacle, and he's famous. Truly.

LucasArts

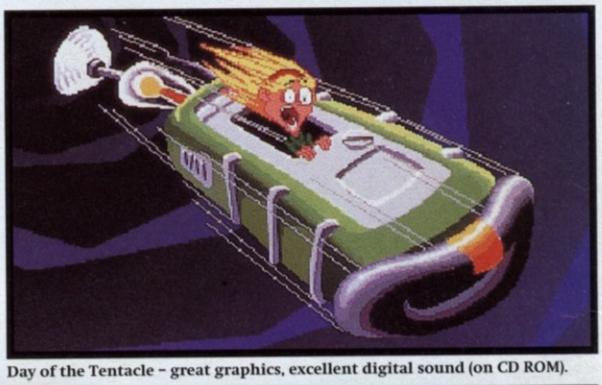
Okay, so there has to be a prize for the girlie swots of the show, and it goes to LucasArts. Every product shown in their private suite was trouser-achingly smart. The long awaited sequel to *Maniac Mansion, Day Of The Tentacle* is from the designers of *Monkey Island*. The graphics are sharply drawn, superbly and humorously animated and the CD ROM version is a 'full talkie'. Watch out for a full review soon.

Continuing in a cartoon vein, *Sam & Max Hit The Road* is an adventure based on the Steve Purcell comic books. Hunt down a missing Bigfoot via such sites as the World's Largest Ball Of Twine, the Celebrity Vegetable Museum and the Mount Rushmore Prehistoric Bungee Cavalcade. Release is slated for the autumn.

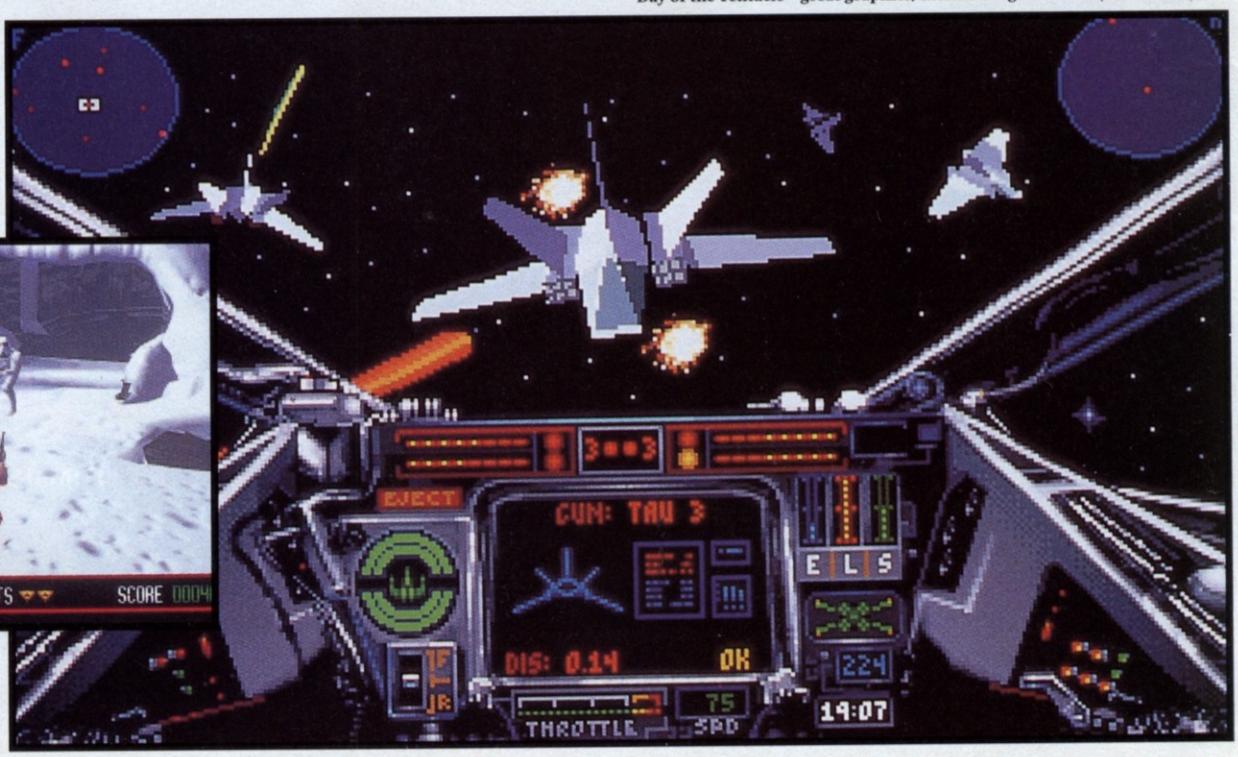
Star Wars provides most of the rest of the LucasArts action, and every title is breathtaking. *Imperial Pursuit* is the most pedestrian – a new tour of duty for *X-Wing* – but watch out for *Rebel Assault*, to be available on every CD format under the sun, including PC. It features camera-perfect, fully rendered 3D terrain which, coupled with a soundtrack sampled from the film – including inter-pilot comments – makes this potentially the game that makes CD ROM ownership compulsory. Fly Skyhoppers, Snowspeeders, X- and A-Wing fighters in three tours encompassing rocky planet surfaces, snowscapes and the Deathstar trench itself. The third *Star Wars* game, *Tie Fighter*, due in the Winter, allows you to fly for the Empire in those peculiar spaceships that sound like kettles being scraped across a garage door. The graphics will be updated from *X-Wing* ('guru' shading and all that) and the mission structure will be more flexible. Oh, and there's a second *X-Wing* mission disk on the cards which will introduce the B-Wing. If you couldn't ever come to terms with Carrie Fisher's 'twin dog turd' haircut, then these games probably won't be your cup of tea.

Sam and Max Hit the Road – and a parking meter too, by the look of things.

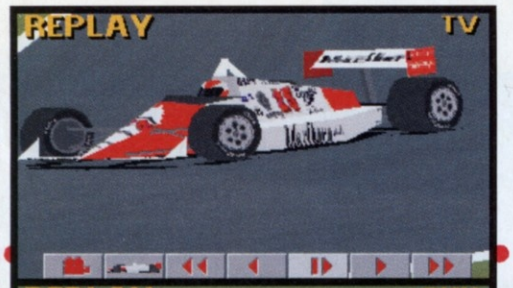
And through the letterbox shaped window, children, is Rebel Assault.



Day of the Tentacle – great graphics, excellent digital sound (on CD ROM).



(Above) Rebel Assault – do the Hoth-ice-planet-CD ROM shuffle.
(Right) Imperial Pursuit is the first mission disk for X-Wing. More of the same only different.



IndyCar — PC Zone's Game Of The Show. Move over F1GP?

Virgin Games

Virgin's PC presence was dominated by a stunning car racing simulation from Papyrus, the designers of the original *Indy 500* for EA, which held the title of best PC driving game from 1989 until the end of 1992 when MicroProse unleashed *F1 Grand Prix*. Called *IndyCar*, it wins Game of the Show from *PC Zone*, just in terms of its speed, gob smacking detail and playability. Read the full preview in next month's issue.

Other new PC titles on display included *Legends of Kyrandia II* from Westwood Associates, and *The 7th Guest*, which continued to attract a great deal of attention despite being relatively long in the tooth by CES standards!

MechWarrior II features very detailed vector graphics.

Activision

In a welcome return to form, Activision was previewing two sequels to ancient PC games. *MechWarrior II* is described as the 'ultimate confrontation in virtual simulation'. Ignore this crap; it's actually a decent vector graphics shoot 'em-up with detailed Mechs, a modem head to head option, and fast action. And if *MechWarrior II* has come on leaps and bounds from its prequel, check out the screenshots of *Return to Zork!* Infocom, shedding its ancient text adventure trappings, presents a photorealistic graphic adventure that captured a great deal of attention at the show. Featuring a cast of well known actors (in the US at least), *Return to Zork* is available on CD ROM and hard disk versions. Let's hope the gameplay is as good as the visuals. If the original *Zork* plot's complexity is matched, it should be a corker. Expect both these titles in the autumn.

Return to Zork, all pictures and no text. What will the adventure punters think?

Forgotten Castle – The Awakening. Faster than Wolfenstein, smother than UUW. Honest.

Twin Dolphin Games

ACTUALLY, NEWCOMERS Twin Dolphin have to receive a nod for joint Game of the Show as well as Virgin for *IndyCar*. *Forgotten Castle: The Awakening* is yet another *UUW/Wolfenstein* 3D scroller, but this time with a difference. The 3D rendered graphics are awesome, making *Ultima* look like a text adventure and *Wolfenstein* like a rather shite piece of BBS junkware. Static screens don't do the game justice. You can look around you freely, the rooms are any shape, and have split levels, and the walls don't look crap when you stand too close. Thanks to all the tiny details and depth-of-view scaling, the feeling of walking around a 3D world is totally convincing. A VR version of this will be on TV one day, mark my words. Watch out for a full exclusive preview shortly. TD also have some 'rather weak' Windows games, just in case you think they slipped me a 50 dollar bill.

Origin

+ Origin was showing several new games based on existing technology. *Privateer* (a space trading/piracy epic adventure/shoot 'em-up) is still bubbling under, now delayed until Christmas, but *Wing Commander Academy* will arrive in the autumn. Take *Wing Commander*, lose the disk hungry story bits, plug in a couple of new ships and a mission builder, and a new, stand alone shoot 'em-up is in your hands. *Pacific Strike* was receiving a top secret trade-only airing: take *Strike Commander*, replace the jets with Wildcats, Corsairs et al and you have much the same game but flying by the seat of your pants in the war in the Pacific. Finally, Origin was showing an *Ultima Underworld*-style game called *Shadow Caster*, an action packed, form changing, RPG romp.

DISPATCHES

+++ DYNAMIX STOP PRESS – a sneaky news snippet – watch out for a *MechWarrior* style game called *Metal Tech* from Dynamix in 1994. With dark *Terminator 2* feel graphics, the company is excited about its prospects. It features texture mapped 3D in a real time combat setting.

+++ SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE appears to have fingers in just every format's pie, including 3DO, as well as its 'native' PC. Add-ons for *Falcon 3.0* included an excellent *MiG-29* bolt-on that allows you to fly the Fulcrum on missions and head to head against the Falcon itself. Also on show was the *Warthog A-10* add-on, almost a game unto itself with up to six Warthog wingmen in Korea, Poland and Kuwait. There's even an option to fly co-operative missions with Falcon jocks!

+++ ANOTHER PARTICULARLY attractive Speccy Holo project is *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, an SVGA graphic adventure in early development. It has ex-Trekkie designers and writers involved, so expect a game true to the licence. The interface looks clean and easy to use and the graphics are stunning. Due for release around Christmas time.

+++ MICROPROSE HAS *Masters Of Orion*, a space strategy game, slated for a summer release. The company describes it as *Civilization* in space. *Secret Of The Seventh Labyrinth* is a fantasy RPG along the similar lines to, yes, you guessed it, *UUW/Wolfenstein*. They're all at it.

+++ DRAGONSPHERE (YET another MicroProse title) takes the *Rex Nebular* game system and plonks it in a fantasy setting. King Callash versus the evil sorceror Sanwe. You know the gig. Alternatively there's futuristic submarine warfare in *SubWar 2050*: dogfighting at 20,000 fathoms. *MPS Labs Football* is MicroProse's foray into the American football arena. It certainly sounds fully featured enough to keep the ever-critical PC sports fans happy.

+++ MICROPROSE STOP PRESS – a couple of sneaky mentions from the dim and distant future. Rumour has it that Jim Day is working on a tank simulation; and that work is under way on *Flat-Top*, a carrier-based follow up to *Task Force 1942*. You heard it here first, and that's the last of the MicroProse CES news. Period.

Bulletin

DISPATCHES

+++ THREE NEW MULTIMEDIA titles from Broderbund included the CD ROM adventure *Myst* which, with its 3D rendered graphics, could prove a bit of a must.

+++ IBM EDUQUEST WAS showcasing its CD ROM conversion of the coin-op classic, *Mad Dog McCree* – you know, the one where you shoot it out with life-size cowboys in a real time interactive video. The conversion looks great – watch for a full review shortly in this very mag.

+++ THE AMERICAN SPORTS network ESPN has teamed up with Sony Imagesoft to produce a series of PC-based CD ROM products 'that will set the standard in the interactive gaming business'. Sony also was showing off its new toy – the game company Psygnosis – which was demonstrating its own new toy, the CD ROM version of *Dracula*.

+++ *DARKSIDE OF XEEN* IS New World Computing's fifth *Might and Magic* game: the last of the present generation. Keep an eye open for it if you liked number four in the series. *World Of Xeen*, a CD ROM double whammy of *Clouds of Xeen* and *Darkside*, will soon be available. NWC is also working on a new 3D engine for the new *Might and Magic* game. This is likely to be called *Might and Magic Arena*, and is a self confessed *UUW/Wolfenstein* imitator.

+++ COMING ATTRACTIONS from Capstone software include *Honey D. Clown*, 'a computer game with attitude' in which you wander round New York in a clown suit (Shyeahh! Rightt!), *Surf Ninjas*, an all action surfing adventure with plenty of babes (Schwing!), *Discoveries of the Deep* (An easy game of submarine exploration. Not!) and *The Beverly Hillbillies* (We are not worthy!). Not to mention *Wayne's World*, a most excellent video game about Wayne and Garth and their fight to stay on air.

+++ KOEI, UNPRONOUNCEABLE as ever and with games looking desperately dated but remarkably playable, announced *Ghenghis Khan II: Clan Of The Grey Wolf*, pencilled in for January 1994, and another sequel, *Romance Of The Three Kingdoms III* for Christmas. And possibly the last commercial EGA game ever, *Liberty Or Death*, in which the Brits take on the American Colonists, is also on the drawing board.

MicroProse

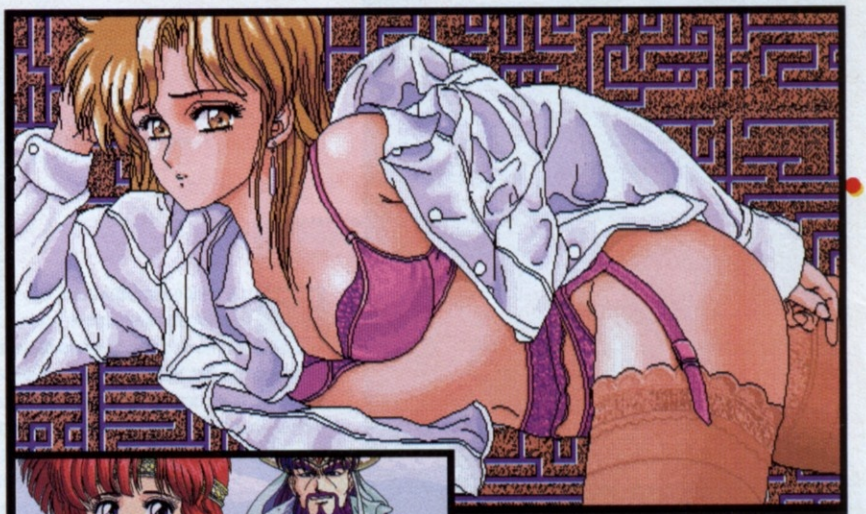
For a company at the cutting edge of simulations, the late 1993 line-up from the US end of the MicroProse game machine seems rather lacklustre. But it was certainly the most prolific software house at Summer CES. (See Dispatches for further details.)

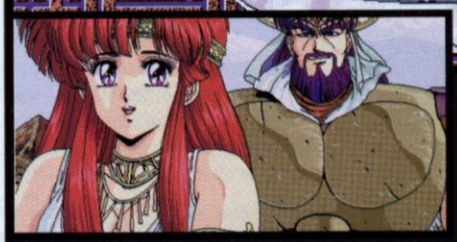
One of its more interesting titles on show, *BloodNet*, is a cyberpunk gothic horror story that features graphics similar to those seen in *The Legacy*. The cut scene animations are very surreal and beautifully rendered in loving 3D. It's an interesting, atmospheric thriller that should appeal to cyber fans. One of the strongest contenders in the MicroProse camp – apart from Mike Singleton's invisible but desperately awaited *StarLord* – is from the UK office: *Jugannath, Engines Of War*. Described as a 'flight sim inside a robot', it sounds like a title to rival

Vampire meets cyberpunk in BloodNet.

Activision's *MechWarrior II*. It won't appear until 1994, however.

The two big name products for the autumn are *Fleet Defender* and Sid Meier's *Civil War*. FD is an F-14 Tomcat flight sim that uses the *F15III* game engine but concentrates on air to air combat. Presumably there will be enhancements over *F15III*. Sid's *Civil War* looks set to be to his usual high standard, and is dripping with his highly personal views on the course of the war. The AI routines will make or break the game – but the smart money's on it proving rather a smasher.



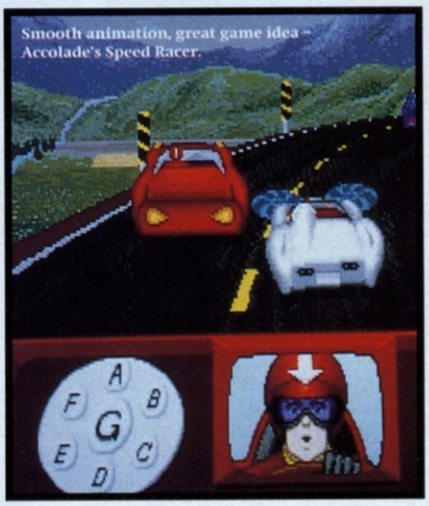


(Above) Metal and Lace: Battle of the RoboBabes. More lace than metal... (Left) Medieval adventure in Dragon Knight III.

MegaTech

Anime – Japanese style animation, something of a craze in the UK at the mo' – has been spread liberally through Japanese-centric console games for years. The PC punter hasn't seen much of it, until MegaTech stepped onto the scene. I should point out that Japanese animation is for adults, and is particularly violent and sexist. Which is more or less what the MegaTech experience is all about – adult orientated graphic adventures with stunning hi res anime art. Dodgy it may be, but well drawn and genuine anime art it certainly is.

Last year's 'tecs and sex' *Cobra Mission* is joined by *Metal and Lace: The Battle of the Robo Babes* – a scantily clad arcade beat 'em-up – shortly to be followed by *Dragon Knight III:* a somewhat more serious RPG with a hero called Desmond who hacks, slashes and smooches his way across a mythical land. Strictly top shelf stuff, but of great interest to anime freaks who'll be used to the sex and violence anyway.

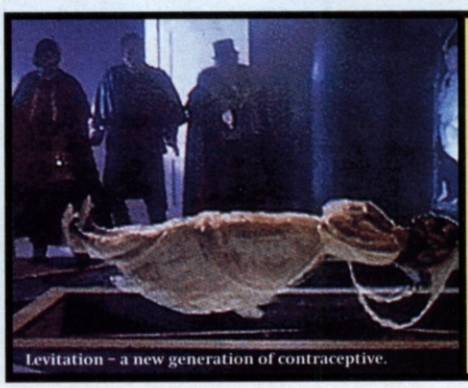


Smooth animation, great game idea – Accolade's Speed Racer.

Accolade

A surprise star of the show was tucked away in a quiet corner of Accolade's stand: the company's only home-grown PC title is a licence of the cult Japanese anime cartoon series, *Speed Racer*. Currently being rerun to massive audiences in the States, *Speed Racer* is tipped to appear on UK TV soon. Otherwise the game will be a bit obscure over here, won't it? The graphics look fast and colourful, and if the playability is there, this could be the best arcade style driving game available on PC. On the other hand, it might turn out to be a prize turkey.

Tsunami, one of Accolade's affiliate labels, was demonstrating Jim Walls' latest action adventure, *Blue Force*. You're a rookie cop investigating the murder of your parents ten years ago. Then you get run over and it triggers a chain of events. It'd be a pretty boring game if it didn't.



Levitation – a new generation of contraceptive.

Icom Simulations

RIDING THE VAMPIRE bandwagon following the blockbuster movie, *Dracula* is another bloody game, *Dracula Unleashed*, from CD ROM veterans Icom Simulations. Atmospheric, and rather CD ROMish, expect much the same as in its earlier best-selling *Holmes* games. Also upcoming from Icom is the first CD-based golf game for the PC, though there are several on other CD formats. It sounds interesting: 200 pre-rendered images per hole over 18 holes over several courses. Now do you see the point of CD ROM? (Shut up about gameplay, God, you're all Philistines.)

(Top) SimCity 2000 – 3D isometric town planning. (Bottom) SimFarm. Dig the dirt Maxis style.

Maxis

Not many products on the Maxis stand, but one of them was very special indeed. I used to lie awake at night working out where I was going to build my new highway. This winter, I'll be able to dream it in super-detailed, isometric 3D glory in *SimCity 2000*, a quantum leap beyond its seminal forbear. The 1993 terrain is fully 3D, with mountains and valleys, and you have a whole myriad of new variables to juggle. Is your city well educated enough to attract the right industry? Will you build museums as well as stadiums? And are you sure you want to build a 12-lane highway over a 17 mile bay because it'll look nice?

From a quick preview, *SC2000* looks to be a worthy successor to *SimCity*. You can even load your old cities! Hundreds of new building types, underground rail networks, new power plants, hospitals, brand new disasters… HND Town Planning will never be the same again. *SimFarm*, in case you were interested, is a game about running a farm. It's very similar in style to the original *SimCity*, and is for serious weeders and breeders only. Arriving on the back of a muck spreader some time in the autumn.

(Top Left) Aces Over Europe. New planes, new flight models. (Top Right) Front Page Sports Football Pro. (Bottom Left) The stunning Graue Wolfe. (Bottom Right) Pinball for Windows.

Dynamix

Dynamix was touting a nicely ripened product portfolio, with a mixture of old and new. *Aces Over Europe*, yep, it's like *Aces Of The Pacific* but with different planes, improved flight models (and they are improved, I flew a Spittie and spun out in a stall), and better aircraft detail, including the much requested squadron insignia. Release is imminent. The hottest property in the Dynamix stable is enough to make you puke. Become the commander of a German U-Boat in *Graue Wolfe*. Look out of the periscope and feel extremely sick as you watch the superbly animated swell. This user-friendly, graphically sophisticated simulation features torpedoed ships that behave like, er, torpedoed ships. Some break in half, some sink end-first, but they all look fantastic on the way down. Sorry about the crew, but it's just a game. Isn't it?

***Front Page Sports Football Pro* is a facelifted, improved version of *FPSF* – now licensed by the NFL Players' Association – with the AI tweaked heavily. There's also a viewed-from-above blimp perspective in the new version. Also upcoming from Dynamix includes a Windows *Pinball* game, a couple of sequels to *The Incredible Machine* and some splendid educational software.**

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Bulletin

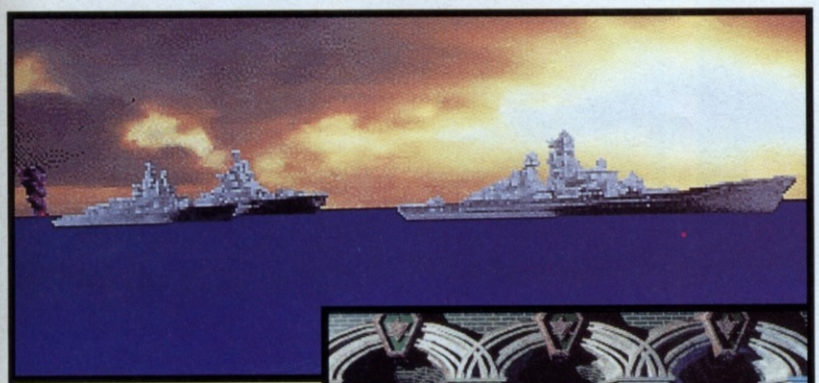
(Top) StoneKeep is inhabited by very, very thin people. (Bottom) Be a capitalist pig in Rags to Riches.

Interplay

Most of the PC products on offer from Interplay in its tenth anniversary year consisted of enhanced CD ROM versions of earlier games: *Battle Chess, Star Trek: 25th Anniversary, Lord Of The Rings, Sim City,* even a version of *Star Trek* with voice activated sound card control (utilising the Aria Listener). But for the fat capitalist exploiters of this world comes *Rags To Riches,* a DIY nouveau riche simulation set in the hotbed of financial intrigue: Wall Street. This morally bankrupt title features SVGA graphics and will come with a free blow up Michael Douglas doll. Or then again, it might not.

There is also a completely new Trekkie game on its way for the autumn – *Star Trek: Judgement Rites.* 'Is that truly an ancient WW1 triplane heading straight for you at warp speed nine?' asks the press release. Sounds like a question for Spock.

The jewel in Interplay's crown comes in the form of *StoneKeep,* another *Ultima Underworld*ey RPG with cinematic graphics and 3D rendered dungeons. The screenshots don't do it justice. Nor will your hard drive, unless you have 30Mb free. Watch out for more information on this as it becomes available.



(Above) Drown your sorrows and a few sailors in SeaWolf; (Right) Immerse yourself in Labyrinth.

Electronic Arts

EA AND ITS LITTLE village of affiliate labels had probably the highest density of new titles per square foot, with PC competing with current consoles and the hot CD format of '94, 3DO. New IBM games included a conversion of *NHL Hockey,* one of the finest console ice hockey sims, and *Labyrinth,* EA's first CD ROM product. It's a mind-bending time travelling game which people with an IQ of over 145 will undoubtedly understand. I got lost when it was explained that you had to set chains of events in motion to influence actions in later historical eras using 'hot buttons'. And there was I thinking it looked like an SVGA CD ROM graphic adventure...

Strategically placed for greatest punter-pull was *SSN-21 SeaWolf,* follow up to best selling submarine sim *688 Attack Sub.* It's another 'high IQ' affair, with Sonar Pings and submariners' pongs very much in evidence. The periscope views look great and the game is set for success among the strategy brigade.

Finally, tucked away between *Syndicate* and *Labyrinth* was *Kasparov's Gambit,* a chess game in which you, er, play chess. It features the *Socrates II* engine, which shafted all-comers at the 1993 International Computer Chess Championship. Stop those knees from trembling.

Bethesda Softworks

This small US publisher has a chequered history, with games ranging from okay to terminal. The products for the end of '93, however, are looking excellent. *Delta-V* is a futuristic trench racing game featuring graphics so smooth, fast and detailed I still think the chap demonstrating was telling porkies when he said this was indicative of the gameplay. It should be out in the winter, as should a new RPG series, beginning with *The Elder Scrolls, Chapter One: The Arena.* A bit of a *UUW/Wolfenstein* clone, but smooth and crisp. A little earlier in the year we should see *NCAA Basketball 2,* a fully 3D sports sim with smoothly rotating playing field.

Finally, Bethesda wouldn't be Bethesda without at least two new Termie games, the first of which is a mission disk for the recent *Terminator 2029* game called *Operation Scour,* the second of which being a completely new game, *The Terminator: Rampage.* Due in October, it is *Wolfenstein* on steroids. Totally unoriginal in every sense, but likely to be great fun nonetheless. The 'dugga-dugga' machine gun sample is a killer.

Terminator: Rampage – hello Wolfenstein...

DISPATCHES

+++ **A BIT OF A *PC ZONE* SCOOP** here: we can reveal that Steven Spielberg has teamed up with LucasArts to turn one of his unpublished stories into a game. 'It's something I've always wanted to do, it's a story I've had in my head for years, and I thought it would make a better game than a film. As a matter of fact, we couldn't afford to make it as a film.' *The Dig* is a graphical space adventure in which a team of astronauts sent to investigate an asteroid on a collision course with Earth stumble into an alien trap.

+++ **NOVALOGIC, APART FROM** frowning threateningly at certain games at the show with graphics remarkably similar to *Comanche,* were crowing about the second mission disk for *Maximum Overkill* which includes over-water action plus *Armored Fist,* which uses the same Voxel Space technology, but puts you in command of twenty-first century tanks.

+++ **SIERRA HAS A NUMBER OF** follow on products, all enhanced from previous game systems. *Police Quest 4* features new photorealistic graphics, *Gabriel Knight* is a new adventure introducing a family where all males die at 33. What a bummer. *Quest For Glory 4: Shadows Of Darkness* is much the same as *QFG3,* but with improved combat and graphics. There's also a new high res *Leisure Suit Larry* game due: 'Ten women, still no plot,' says Sierra. *King's Quest VI* CD is about to ship, complete with a video history of the *KQ* Series. Get real, guys. Finally, a distant project was secretly previewed: a space strategy game in which you build a future for mankind in space. It's based on feasible technology rather than sci-fi and looks very interesting.

+++ **THREE-SIXTY HAS A BUSY** release schedule for its high-tech, complex war simulations. *Victory at Sea,* draws on the *Harpoon* experience and covers all aspects of the war in the Pacific. *High Command: Europe 1939-45,* is an SVGA grand strategy wargame covering the whole European theatre, to be followed by the next *V For Victory* battleset, *Gold-Juno-Sword,* which places you at the beachhead in Normandy, 1944. There's also a new series of American Civil War games called *Drums Of Glory.* Finally from Three-Sixty is the mouth-watering *Harpoon II,* a fully 32-bit game with fuzzy logic AI and features too numerous to mention.

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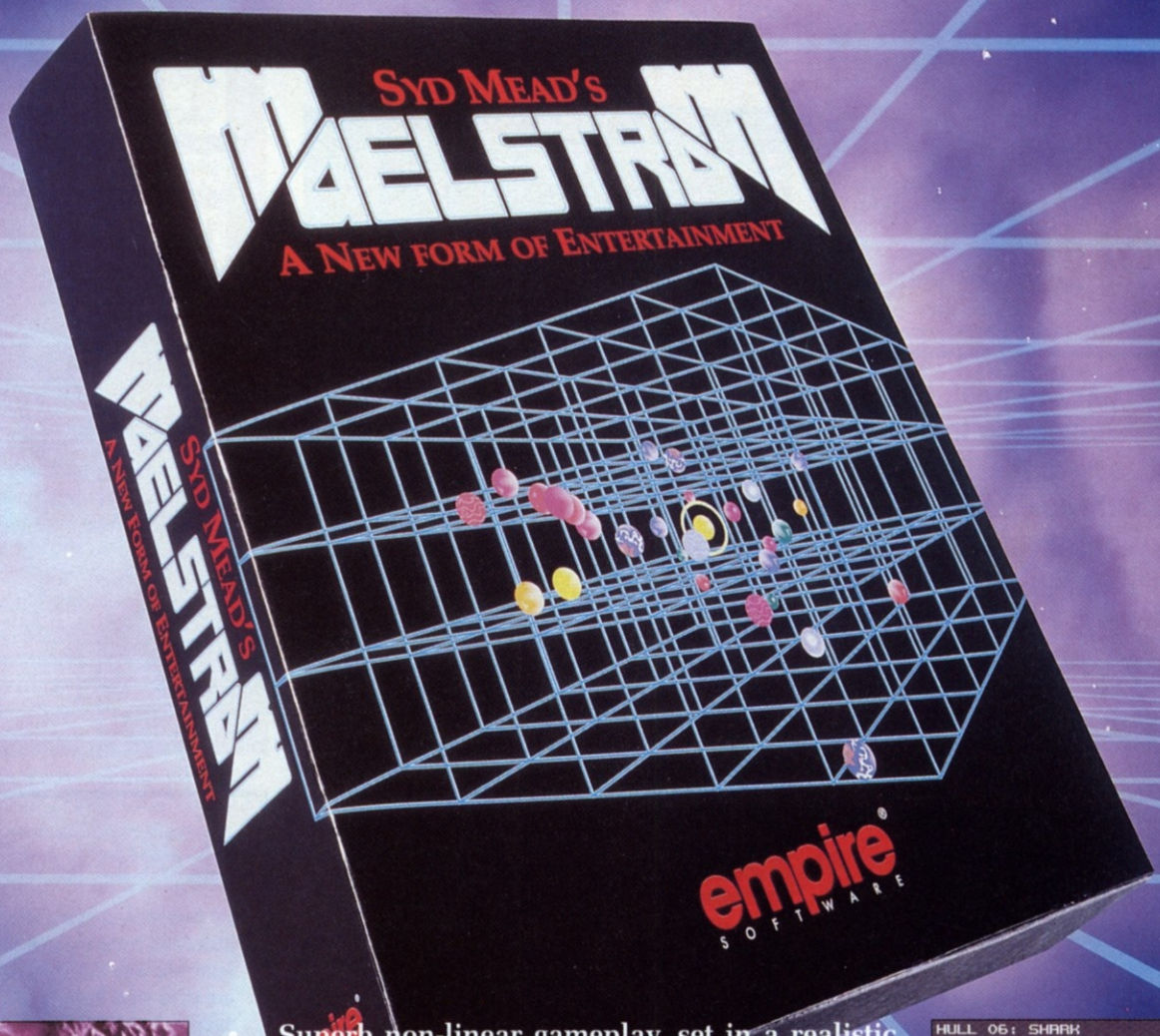

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IBM PC and Amiga

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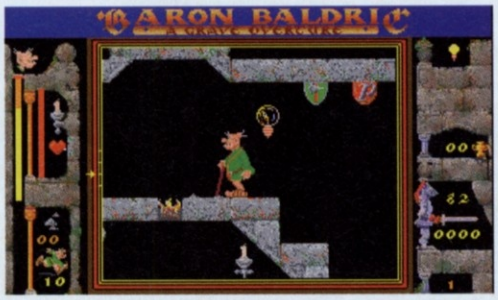
COVER DISKS

Rather than one big treat, this month we've given you lots of little goodies from the wonderful world of shareware and a powerful, professional set of virus tools. So now you can enjoy safe shareware, without worrying about those nasty STDs (Shareware Transmitted Data-errors?). Tuck in!

DISK 1

BARON BALDRIC



Baron Baldric – a fabulous senile dementia sim.

IMAGINE, IF YOU WILL, a daft old git, half-blind, half-deaf, incontinent, flatulent, senile, intolerant, sexist and racist... but that's enough about the British judiciary, let me tell you about *Baron Baldric*.

The silly old codger has to find his way out of his stately home. The only way he can do this is by collecting ten treasures on each level and tapping on the door with a stick. Like all stately homes, this one is haunted, largely for tax purposes, so the Baron must also avoid the ghosts that roam his home, led by a large wolf (bizarre!).

Full playing instructions and a demo are available when you start the game. Joystick and Sound Blaster are optional but supported if you have them. You must have a VGA display or better.

To install and play *Baron Baldric*

Insert your cover disk into a free drive, change that drive and type `INSTALL`. Follow the on-screen instructions. To play the game, change to the drive and directory in which the game is installed and then type `PLAYME`.

** HELP !**

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If, having called the Helpline, you are advised that the disk needs returning, please place it in a padded envelope with a stamped, self-addressed envelope for the replacement disk, and send it to **PC Zone Issue 5, Disk Replacements, TIB PLC, TIB House, 11 Edward Street, Bradford, BD4 7BH.** Please *do not* return faulty disks to *PC Zone*. We do not stock replacement disks, and will be unable to respond. (Besides we'll probably lose your letter in the mess on Paul's desk.)

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DISK 2 This disk also includes ***CD-Man***, ***U-Life*** and a **Joystick Calibration Utility**.

TO INSTALL THESE PROGRAMS

Insert your disk in a free drive, and change to that drive, then type `DISKZONE` and follow the instructions that are shown on screen.

CD Man: Pacman returns with a vengeance.

Defender: a blast from the past.

DISK 2

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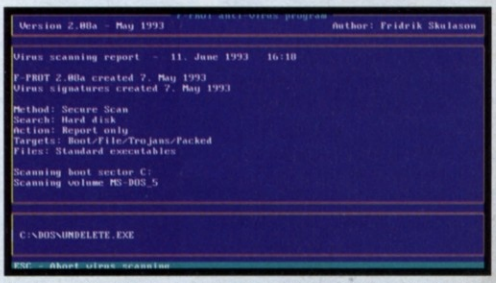

Practice safe software with the help of Frisk Software's F-Prot Professional Anti-Virus Utilities.

YOU CAN'T BE TOO careful these days. You know how it is. You and a few friends have been sharing some shareware. You get back home with the disk, it's late, you've had a great night, and, frankly, you're on the boil. You'd always meant to be careful, but you simply can't help yourself. Without thinking of the consequences, you jam the disk in your drive and blast away. What happens? Before you know it, you've got a *Cascade* on your hands, or something equally yucky.

Now you can put an end to those virus blues with Frisk Software's Anti-Virus Utilities.

How to install and use F-Prot

Write protect your cover disk and insert it into a free drive, change to that drive, and type `F-PROT`.

F-Prot first performs a self-check, to ensure it hasn't been infected by a virus, then it checks the memory for known viruses before presenting the main menu.

The Main Menu

Scan: See the Scan menu description below.
Install: Provides other language options (where available), set-up customisation, an install routine for copying *F-Prot* to a hard disk and customising the intercept message that appears when a virus is detected, and an installation option for the Virstop memory resident utility. You should select this option and install the program to your hard drive, and then install Virstop if you want to use the memory resident utility.
Viruses: Virus descriptions are provided, together with a facility that allows users to introduce new virus signatures.
Program: Shows information on the performance of the program and the author.

To select an option from this and other menus, use the cursor keys and RETURN, alternatively just tap the initial letter of the option you require, then press RETURN.

The Scan Menu

This menu lets you scan for viruses in a number of different ways.
Method: There are two scanning methods, Secure Scan and Heuristics. Secure Scan should normally be used. It employs two different signatures to identify each virus, and it also searches for the signatures in a large block of data, thus improving the chances of detecting any virus created by the modification of an older one. It also provides positive identification, which is the key to successful disinfection.

Heuristics uses a set of rules to detect virus-like behaviour and dangerous code in a computer program. Unlike the Secure Scan, it is not limited to 'known' viruses: it is also effective at detecting previously unknown viruses.

Search: You can opt to search a hard drive, diskette drive, network, or a user-specified device.
Action: The 'Report Only' option would normally be chosen, but you can also choose 'Delete', which overwrites the infected files so that no trace of the virus code remains, 'Disinfect', which attempts to remove the virus code and restore files to their previous state, or 'Rename' which changes the extension of infected COM and EXE files to VOM and VXE respectively. These options can be applied automatically, or on a file by file basis.
Targets: You can opt to search for Boot Sector Viruses, File Viruses, Trojans and Joke Programs, User Defined Strings and Packed Files.
Files: Normally you would choose to search Standard Executables (COM, EXE and SYS files), but the first time you use *F-Prot* and during any clean up operations, you should select 'All Files'.

Scanning

Once you are ready to scan, select 'Begin Scan'. *F-Prot* immediately displays its findings, checking through the areas designated and delivering a file by file report followed by a summary.

If a virus is detected, please refer to the Virus Descriptions option to determine the appropriate course of action.

If you need continuous monitoring, you should install Virstop. A program called *F-TEST.COM* is supplied to test if Virstop is installed and active.

Documentation

More detailed documentation and ordering information is included on the cover disk. To install these files, insert your cover disk in a free drive and change to that drive, then type `DISKZONE`. Select 'F-Prot Documents' and follow the on-screen instructions. You can read the documents by typing `TYPE FILE.DOC | MORE`, where FILE.DOC is replaced by the name of the document you want to view. To print the documents, switch on your printer and type `COPY FILE.DOC PRN`, where FILE.DOC is replaced by the name of the document you want to print.

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Blueprint

Lost In Time

PUBLISHER: Coktel Vision	PRICE: tba
TELEPHONE: 0276 684 959	OUT: Late September

'Ce ci est une preview d'un jeu Français.' Paul Presley's 'French For Tourists' manual seemed to be in good working order, so we set him loose on Coktel Vision.

FRENCH GAMES ARE NOT WEIRD. They are very classy, exquisitely programmed (most of the time), full of originality and usually a joy to play. They are not weird. Okay?

In case you were wondering, I have, in the past, been accused of being very unfair to our French cousins by declaring that all their games are a little odd. I played *Another World* from Delphine and thought it had a bizarre story. I dabbled with *Sliders* from Silmarils and thought it an odd concept and I delved into *Inca* from Coktel Vision and became lost in its... unique style. All these definitions were misinterpreted as me calling them weird, something that Coktel Vision has been particularly keen for me not to do with their latest offering, *Lost in Time*.

Une varieté des styles

So let me set the record straight by saying right now that *Lost in Time* is definitely not weird. If anything, it is one of the most intriguingly presented adventure games I've seen to date. It uses 3D rendering (à la *Inca*), it uses full motion video clips (à la *The 7th Guest* – only clearer), it uses professional cartoon illustrations (à la a French comic book) and it uses state-of-the-art filming techniques (à la Hollywood).

The reason for such a heady mixture of differing styles is that, as you might expect from the title, the player spends most of the game zipping around from one era to another. Therefore each setting is given its own identity, its own look, style and feel. 'For the sake of realism we decided that scenes happening in our time period would be in full-motion video,' explains Frederic Chauvelot, graphics designer for the game. 'The scenes set in the Caribbean island should have the bright, dream-like quality seen in Segur's drawings (a famous French cartoonist brought in to help illustrate the game), while the feeling of motion and travel in the boat seemed best represented by a 3D environment, similar to the one seen in *Inca*.'

The central figure behind the scenes is Muriel Tramis, author and project manager of *Lost*. 'The creation of a game like Lost requires the meeting of two different worlds – software and audio/visual. I have to make sure that the people of the different professional worlds communicate well. The video specialist, concerned with the filming and video sequences will require the creation of special programming tools created by the programmer. Unfortunately, because of constraints such as memory space and display speed, it isn't always easy to transcribe the wishes of a graphic artist or a musician into computer terms.'

'The whole development of the game is akin to a Hollywood movie.'

To this end Coktel Vision has a separate office in Bordeaux used for research and development of specific programming tools for each game. Philippe Lamarque is the main programmer of *Lost* and has had to create complete sequencers and animation tools from scratch. 'A game as large as *Lost*, requiring complete interactivity made up of space-consuming video scenes and 3D pre-calculated graphics, cannot be programmed without previous research and a clear understanding of how the graphic aspect can be integrated to the programming. The main role of the tools we create is to simplify the integration of the graphics.'

'Lights, camera, action'

Of course the main development of *Lost in Time* is in the filming. Professional studio and location techniques have been used to create all the full motion video scenes, and the whole development of the game is akin to a Hollywood movie.

(Above Left) One of Segur's illustrations for the game. (Above) Not only an example of the variety and quality of the graphics in Lost but also of the hazards of sailing too close to shore.

1

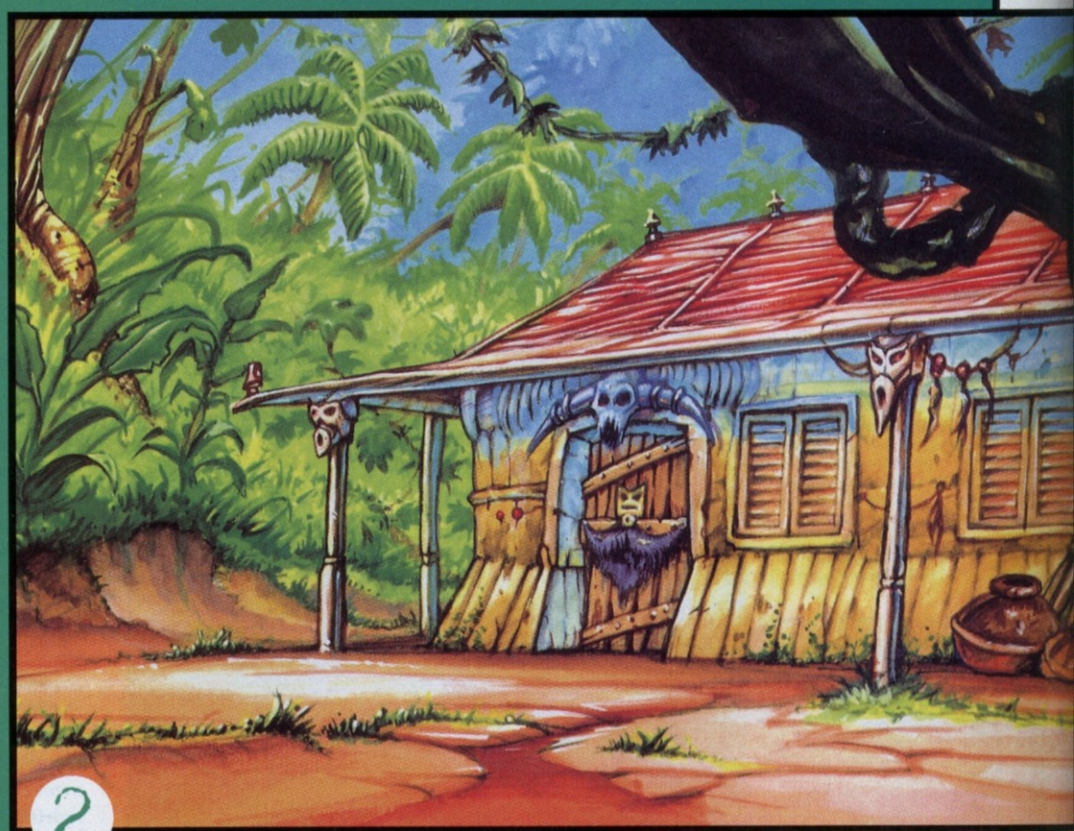
You've either got or you haven't got... style!

No one can accuse French games of lacking a certain, shall we say, Je ne sais quoi (ALL: Je ne sais quoi. Thank you *Police Squad*), but *Lost in Time* is positively brimming over with style. The three different 'worlds' you can visit are all depicted quite differently as seen here:

1 Full-motion video is used to depict the modern day scenes. Real locations, in and around France, were used for the settings, such as this lighthouse in Brittany.

2 French cartoonist Segur was brought in to illustrate the scenes on the Caribbean island. These are mixed with the video images of the characters and objects to produce a very unique effect.

3 Finally, 3D rendering was used to depict the scenes on the boat. Similar techniques were used in Coktel Vision's previous game *Inca*. To imagine it moving, think of a cross between *The 7th Guest* and *Ultima Underworld*.



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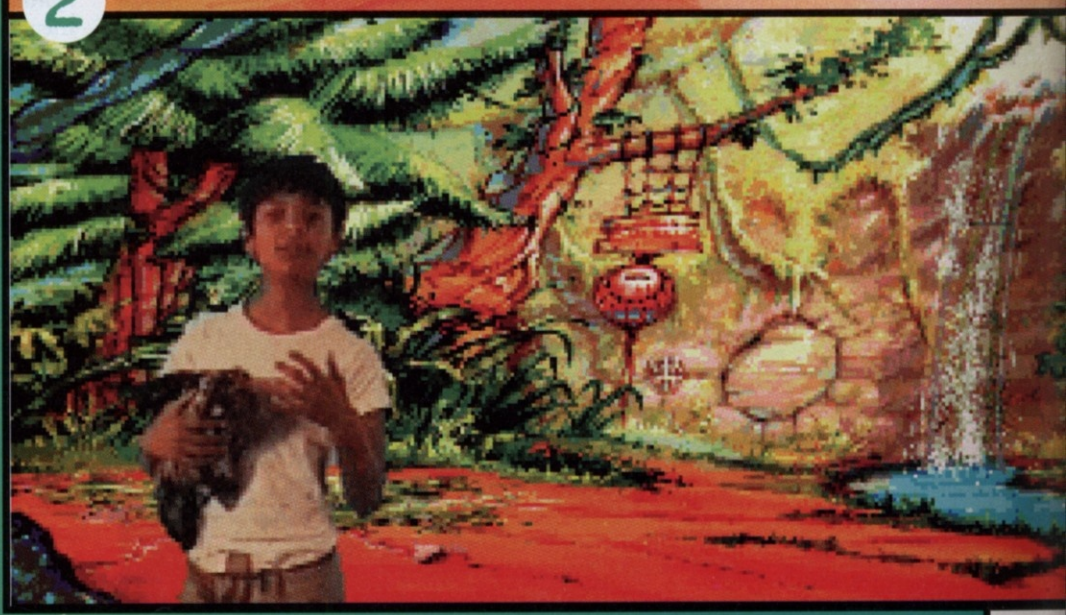

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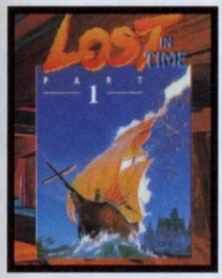
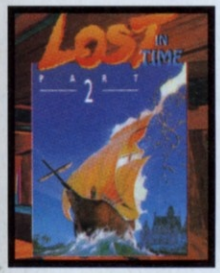
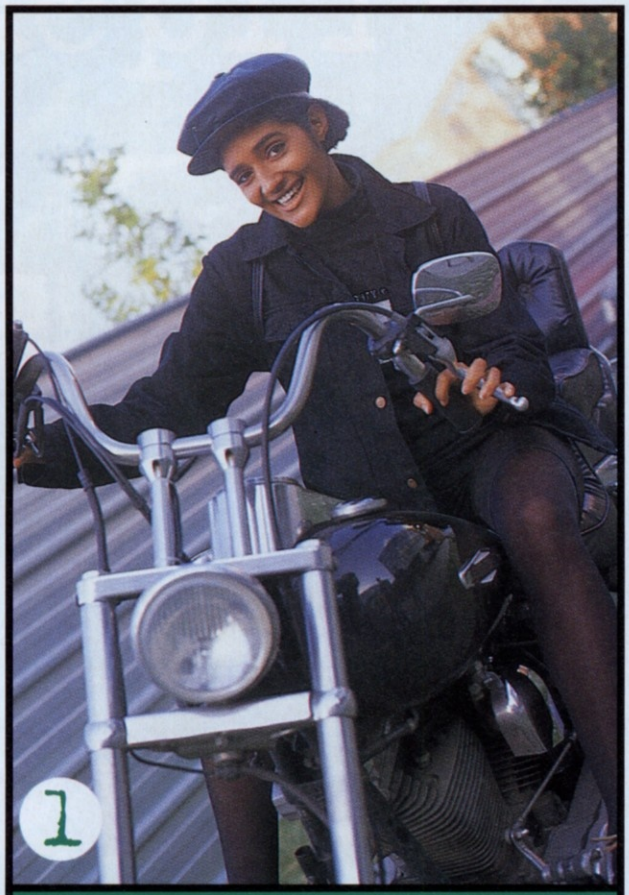




This really is a 'game of two halves'. As they say.



TO BE HELD RESPONSIBLE...

1. **Dominique:** The actress who portrays Doralice takes time out between filming scenes to look hard.
2. **Philippe Lamarque:** The chief programmer for *Lost in Time*. Quel speccy.
3. **Muriel Tramis:** The author and project manager. It took her one and a half years to finish the game.
4. **Fred Chauvelot:** The graphics designer for the game stays close to his pet triffid Albert.

'Each game will be sold for about half the price of an ordinary game. If you buy the two together it will be just like buying a single product.'

☞ 'I think the two worlds of film and game are becoming closer each day,' muses Tramis. 'An interactive movie such as *Lost in Time* resembles a film in most aspects – the classical rules of script writing, the production with camera positioning, lighting, the storyboard, the soundtrack, the casting of actors and the search for the best locations.

'The main difference between games and films can be seen in the interactivity. In the game the player is not passive but has the main role in the progression of the story. It is a study in ergonomics, the science that looks for the best way of communication between humans and machines. All this makes the interactive movie a very individual and innovative genre with its own artistic rules.'

The initial filming on *Lost* was done in studios, using professional actors and the much heralded 'blue background' techniques seen in so many science fiction films and TV shows. Once the preliminary filming was completed, Chauvelot and Tramis started to scout for background locations. 'A large part of the filming was done in Brittany,' says Chauvelot. 'We first went looking for a country manor with gardens, and a lighthouse suitable for the story. Once the manor had been found we had to meet the owners and managed to rent it for a week. For the lighthouse we had to rent an entire island, relying on the friendliness and hospitality of the inhabitants.'

The whole process of scouting, travelling, filming and integrating the video into the game has taken approximately eight months. Add to that the one and a half years that Tramis has spent developing the game from scenario to finished product and it all adds up to a pretty big investment for Coktel Vision. 'I first took a month to write the story,' says Tramis, 'Then another few months to split it into plans, create logical outlines and describe the mechanics. The story comes completely from my own imagination, but I have been inspired by certain sci-fi authors such as Asimov for their scientific justifications of avant garde theories. The worlds of Spielberg *(Indiana Jones, ET* etc.), Ridley Scott *(Blade Runner)*, Cronenberg *(The Fly)* and Hitchcock also fascinate me. I aimed at creating an original science fiction story, full of suspense and with paradoxes all along the way.'

Niveaux de difficulté

'The difficulty of a game is very important,' says Tramis, 'Even more so as the perception of difficulty differs from country to country.' This is all too true. Who can forget the *Loom* scenario for instance; a game with a perfect story and just the right length, but one that was far too easy to solve. Compare that to Delphine's *Cruise For A Corpse*, a game that had a limited number of locations, but had even the most experienced of adventurers up until the wee small hours.

So will *Lost* follow the traditional French themes? 'We don't want our games to be too difficult,' explains Tramis, 'As getting stuck too often in one go can put the player off. A subtle way to increase the difficulty is to propose a non-linear progression. Give the player a certain amount of freedom that spreads out to a larger space. Of course, too much freedom also disconcerts. These are all different criteria that one has to juggle with.

'I have tried to create a game accessible to beginners, but at the same time interesting for the real pros.' Many games have tried this in the past though and almost always stray too far in one direction or the other. How does Tramis deal with this? Anyone remember the on-screen help from *Gobliins*? 'We have installed Jokers (the help system) to make things easier. The game was tested by players and when a certain level of difficulty was detected we decided to put in a Joker.'

Deux pour le prix d'un

One of the other problems that has to be solved when making an adventure game is the question of length. How do you make a game big enough to provide value for money, but not so long-winded that the player gets bored long before the end? *Lost in Time* solves this in a rather unique fashion. 'We've split the games into two parts,' explains Emmanuelle Kreuz, PR Manager at Coktel Vision. 'Because the game was so large, we had to separate it into two completely independent products. You can buy each game individually or possibly both, as a sort of compilation package.'

Won't this put the price up, though? According to Ms. Kreuz, 'Each game will be sold for about half the price of an ordinary game. If you buy the two together, it will be just like buying a single product.' There are other reasons for buying both parts, namely an after-sales competition. 'In France we are running a contest. If you complete the game you simply get in touch with Coktel Vision, describe the end sequence and you get to choose a free game from our recent catalogue.' It's still to be finalised whether this competition will run in Britain too, but all the current signs look good. Of course, whether this is a good deal or not depends on your view of Coktel Vision's recent games. But with titles such as *Inca, Ween* and *Gobliins 2* on offer, it doesn't look too bad.

Qu'est-ce qui viendra après?

Everything about the creation of *Lost in Time* says that the world of film will soon be closer to the world of computer games than anyone can imagine. This isn't the first time the a games developer has used movie techniques to create a game and it certainly won't be the last, but Coktel Vision has really dived in with a vengeance. Tramis is still a little cautious though, 'You could say that different genres will appear in interactive films (thrillers, comedies, westerns etc.), but if we talk in cinema terms, I would say that we are still in the age of silent movies as we are not yet familiar enough with the professional techniques that evolve very rapidly in order to concentrate fully on the creation and match the tastes of the public.

'We are entering the age of home interactivity. After TV, video and the hi-fi, there is now the interactive film. The more we progress through the years, the more technology will offer high quality leisure for all tastes. The twenty-first century will be a civilisation of high technology. Just look at today's modern theme parks and things like Futuroscope and American interactive museums. I am just proud to contribute to all this in my own way.' Z

(Above) Further examples of the public information service at work – an item on the care and repair of both garden hoses and dentures.

(Below) A lot of the filming took place in Coktel Vision's own studio, where the 14 actors and actresses performed all the actions possible in the game against a blue background. Similar principles are used in motion pictures when adding special effects.

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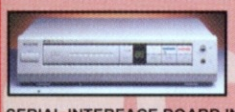

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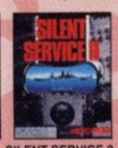
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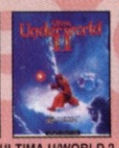
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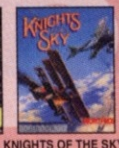
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Blueprint

Return Of The Phantom

PUBLISHER: MicroProse	PRICE: tba
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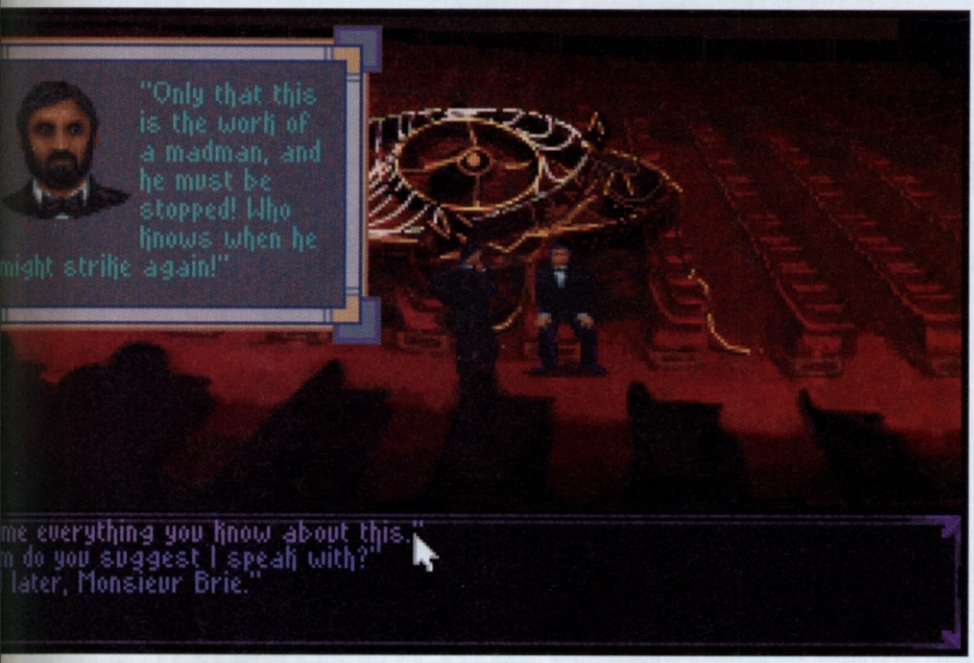
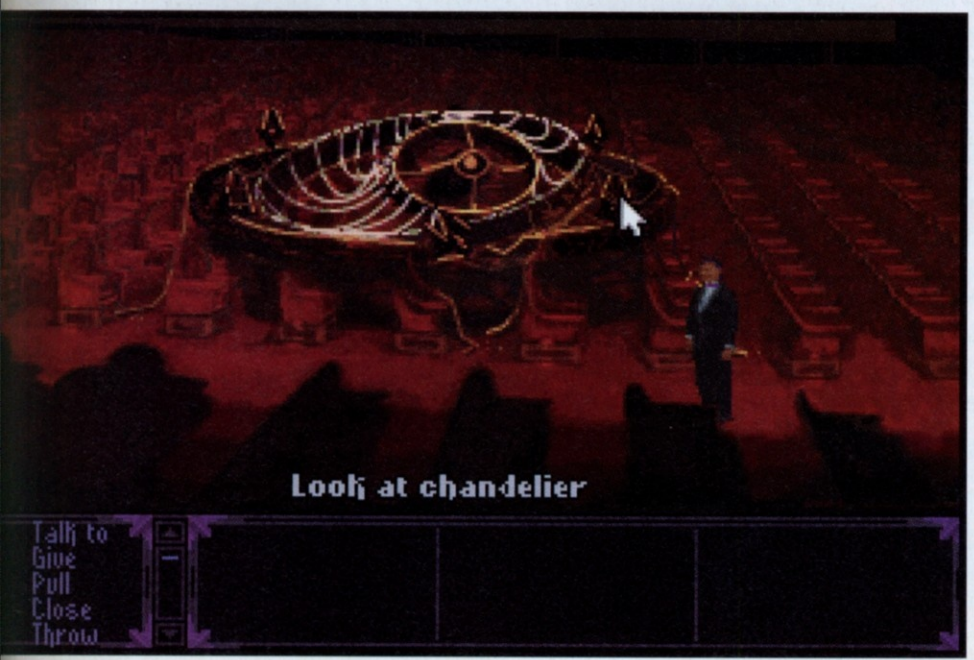
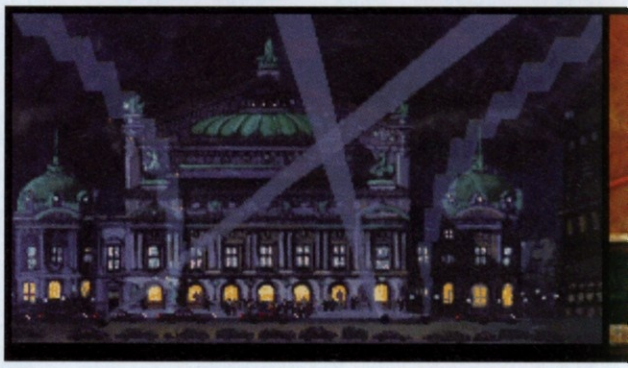


Monsieur Brie is cheesed off, ho ho. (Sorry.)



'Look at chandelier?' Well you could hardly miss it.

'All the gloomy back stage scenes and the glitter and glitz of the front of house are beautifully captured.'



We managed to persuade the far from brave Paul Lakin to take a peep at MicroProse's *Return Of The Phantom.* If only we could have persuaded him to wear the mask as well.

QUESTION: WHY IS IT that suddenly everyone is doing games based on late Victorian horror and mystery stories? Answer: No idea... apart from the obvious answer that people seem to want to buy them. The hype surrounding the film *Dracula*, and the run away success of *Alone In The Dark*, obviously have something to do with this but were they the cause or symptom of this new interest in the darker world beyond our understanding? Who knows and, frankly, who cares? Let's leave the speculation for the feature writers and turn our attention to the game.

MicroProse have already had one foray into the world of mystery with *The Legacy*. Now they're at it again with *Return Of The Phantom*. Not that *Phantom* should in anyway be connected with *The Legacy*, in game style it's much closer to *Rex Nebular*. The game starts out in the present day in the Paris Opera during the premiere of *Don Juan Triumphant*, the opera that had been written by the Phantom himself a century before. Unfortunately, Opera lovers' enjoyment of the evening's performance is somewhat reduced by a large chandelier falling on their heads. This sort of thing is not good for publicity – though it does wonders for a hang over – but, fortunately for the management, that starleading light of the Surete, Inspector Raoul Montaud, happens to be present. Isn't it lucky that, whenever there's some catastrophe, a leading detective just happens to be around? Bit of a bind for them though, I guess.

The gallant Gaul (and I don't mean Asterix) is soon on the trail of the mysterious Phantom of the Opera whose love for Christine, one of the stars of the Opera, has tortured him for a century. Mind you it's not been a bundle of laughs for her either, being kidnapped, carried off to the catacombs and forced to listen to the Phantom's interminable singing. 'Listen darling, this is one Andrew wrote for me. He thinks it'll be a hit. He got that nice Mr Stilgoe, who used to sing funny songs on *Nationwide*, to do the words for him.'

Inspector Montaud's attempts to uncover the mystery surrounding the 'accident' not only lead him into the heart of the theatre but also back in time itself. You see, it all gets rather complicated and I don't want to spoil it by giving away too much of the plot. Let's just say that events in the present are mirroring events in the past (rather like in Eastern Europe really) and are being influenced by them. So to go forwards the good detective must go backwards. Oh yes, there's more to police work than just filling in forms.

If only a visit to the opera was always this exciting.

The magic of the theatre

Some of the best graphics around at the moment can be found in the world of the graphic adventure, probably because these games rely heavily on drawing you into a story. MicroProse are aiming to beat the current high standards with *Phantom*. All the gloomy back stage scenes and the glitter and glitz of the front of house are beautifully captured. And on the version I saw it all scrolled pretty smoothly too. Unlike *Rex Nebular*, the sprites in *Phantom* are scaled so that the leedle man over there becomes a bigger man as he walks towards you, rather than either looking like a midget in the foreground or a giant in the background. It's these little touches, folks, that make games more realistic.

Obviously no game could be set in an Opera House and not contain a bunch of stuff-shirted Etonians called Rupert having loud conversations about 'rugger' in the bar at the interval. Sorry I'll read that again. Obviously no game could be set in an Opera House and not have some pretty impressive music. Once again *Phantom* seems to be getting along very nicely in this department. One of the disadvantages of a magazine preview is that you can't hear the music. However if I tell you that one piece goes: 'Da-de-da-da-dim-diddley-dah', and there's another bit which has a 'Dum-do-de-dum-do-de-dum-dum-de-do' section, I think you'll get some idea.

It's rude to point

The Gallic detective may be new to the world of back stage shenanigans but we are all familiar with the world of point and click adventures which form the core of *Phantom*. MicroProse have used their MADS system which has little to do with 'Mutually Assured Destruction' (now there's a blast from the past, if you pardon the pun) and a lot to do with MicroProse Adventure Development System which is 'An intuitive interface allowing you to control specific actions of the character'.

Despite being set in only one location there's no shortage of things to do. The Opera House itself not only exists in two time zones, it also has a maze of catacombs to be explored before the Phantom is finally tracked to his lair. The response of the various characters you interview will vary depending on who you've seen and what you've done beforehand. Many characters will have to be interviewed on more than one occasion before the whole truth is finally wheedled out of them, which is true of most real life police work.

One of the other features of the system used in *Phantom* is that the player is able to use an advanced user set-up screen to customise various aspects of the game. This, combined with the promised wide range of skill levels, means that even I might get further than the first screen. Yes I know it sounds incredible, but stranger things have happened. Tune in next month to find out.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Erik – The Phantom Of The Opera

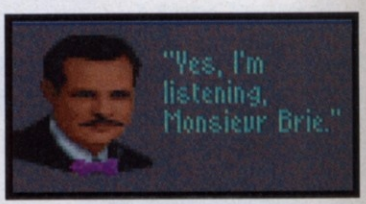
The villain of the piece did not exactly get the best start in life. Born with a hideously deformed face his parents made matters worse by christening him Erik. With a name like that there was little he could do with his life except become Norwegian. Erik refused to accept this terrible fate and wandered through Persia learning many ancient skills (the architecture of traps and mazes and how to do potato prints without smudging the paint). He used these skills, well the architectural ones at least, when he returned to France and got the job of designing the foundations of the Paris Opera House. Within these foundations he lurked, composing opera and falling in love with Christine Daaé.

Christine Daaé

Of Scandinavian origin, (and hence likely to be attracted to a man called Erik) Christine had come to Paris to sing in the Opera. Like all great artistes she had about as much common sense as a tin of tuna and allowed herself to be convinced that the Phantom was the Angel Of Music that her dead father had promised would guide her career. The fact that he was using all his powers to get her the prima donna's role in the next production probably went some way to helping her gullibility. However Christine had a lover and he was not called Erik. (Don't you just love these stories?)

Inspector Raoul Montaud

Our modern day hero. A man who can solve a murder over a pre-dinner Pastis and round up all the criminals before the cheese course. (Mind you, have you seen how long it takes the French to get through a meal?) However with the Opera case even this latter day Maigret might have bitten off more than he can chew. Is his presence in the theatre entirely fortuitous or his he somehow too caught up in his own past? What a story – someone should make a musical out of it.



PC ZONE specs

Minimum Memory: 2Mb
Minimum Processor: 286
Minimum Speed: 16MHz
Installation: Essential
Minimum Hard Disk: 8-9Mb
Minimum Graphics: MCGA/VGA
Sound Cards: Sound Blaster, Roland, Ad-Lib, Covox
Controls: Keyboard, Mouse

PC ZONE rev

You wouldn't play a game without reading the instructions (Let's pretend heh?) so don't read a review without reading these pages. Our guide to how the reviewing system works. Or doesn't as the case may be.

PC ZONE CLASSIC

ZONAL

Who guards the guards themselves? More pertinently who reviews the reviewers? Teachers of course. So let's look at what sort of reviews our aesthetically challenged bunch were getting at school.

THE SCORE

All games receive an overall mark out of 100. So by definition that's a percentage but if you want to call it 'Out of a hundred' then you go ahead and call it 'Out of a hundred'. You can even call it 'Ernest' if you like.

As a rough guide to interpreting the scores here's the guidelines we give to reviewers. (Not that they ever read them mind you. It can be quite heartbreaking at times…)

90+ (*PC Zone* Classic) Highly original idea or an exceptional, near 'definitive' version of an old idea. Flawless in all departments and crammed to overflowing with long-term playability. Alternatively the software company took the reviewer to Paris for the weekend.

80–89 (*PC Zone* Recommended) Extremely well executed strong in all/all but one department. High degree of originality.

70–79 Strong idea, well executed. Not necessarily very original. However, weaknesses do not seriously impair playability. and it has a reasonably long life.

60–69 Games falling into the 'If you like this style of game you'll like this if not you won't' category. Plus games strong on idea but weak on presentation or vice versa.

50–59 Seen it all before, take it or leave it. Nothing special to recommend, but not abysmal either.

40–49 Dodgy. Still playable but probably only the once.

30–39 Seriously weak in idea and execution

20–29 The game is hopeless or the software company forgot the £50 cash bribe.

10–19 Bin jobs

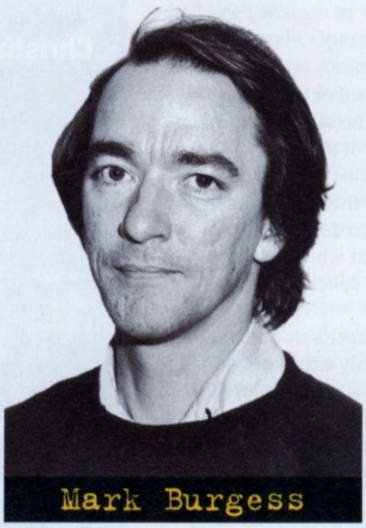
0–9 It didn't work. It crashed the PC and got jammed in the disk drive.

Paul Lakin

HISTORY: Displays a deep if somewhat specialist knowledge of Eastern European history. However his obsession with the Family Tree of the Bulgarian monarchy and tendency to refer to its members as Great Uncle Boris or Cousin Romena is not going to help him pass any exams.

Laurence Scotford

DRAMA: Despite insisting on being called 'Dear, dear Larry', there's no doubting Laurence's theatrical skills. His performance in removing Gloucester's eyes in King Lear was unnervingly convincing. It is hoped that little Jimmy South will soon be out of hospital.



Mark Burgess

METALWORK: I wouldn't like to smother Mark's undoubted enthusiasm. However, his gas driven moon rocket is becoming something of an eyesore in the playground and his last test ignition caused severe damage to a number of buildings in the vicinity.

Duncan MacDonald

HEADMASTER'S COMMENT: Who is this MacDonald character? I've seen his name on many class lists but no one in the school can recollect seeing him. If I do manage to find him I shall be forced to dismiss him since, according to my records, he has been enrolled at this school for 23 years.

Views

PC ZONE score

A game of truly monumental averageness with very little character.

50

Price: £35.99 **Out:** Now
Published: Dennis
Telephone: 071 631 1433

THE SPECS

Is there anything worse than buying a game only to find it's not compatible with your machine? Well yes, coming home and finding your cat on fire for instance, but we can't do anything about that. With this technical box we can at least make sure you know what memory, graphic and sound support you will need (or can use) with each game.

PC ZONE specs

Minimum Memory: 565K
Minimum Processor: 286
Minimum Speed: 20MHz
Installation: Essential

IN PERSPECTIVE

Often all that a review is saying is that a game is as good as that one but not quite as good as the other one. 'In Perspective' attempts to illustrate this visually by rating the game in terms of similar examples. The 'scores' given in this graph are relative to each other i.e. all examples might score highly in their own right but not against each other. Well it seemed a good idea in the pub last night. Let us know what you think.

A Better Game

The Game Being Reviewed

A Worse Game

What's On Our Hard Disk?

Some games get installed, reviewed and then deleted. Others hang around a lot longer. This (In no particular order) is what's currently nestling on our hard drive. Not necessarily the best games around, but the ones we keep coming back to.

1. **Space Hulk**
2. **X-Wing**
3. **Champ. Manager '93**
4. **Prince Of Persia 2**
5. **Star Control 2**

David McCandless

MUSIC: Frankly, David's performance at this year's school concert was a disappointment. Despite a promising showing in orchestra rehearsals, on the big night he shuffled to the front of the stage, stared at the audience for half an hour before throwing his recorder down and storming off.

Patrick McCarthy

BIOLOGY: A keen student whose active interest in the animal kingdom should be encouraged. The unfortunate incident with the puma and the first year infants can simply be put down to enthusiasm. I believe that it should be used as a positive learning experience.

Andy Clerkson

FORM TUTOR: When I first met Andrew I was struck by his attitude. He's never late and his work is always in on time. However I do feel he is getting a little carried away. As school prefect he has introduced, amongst other things, a quality control check on the school bus.

Andy Butcher

ENGLISH: Although initially promising, Andy's love of creative writing is becoming a little tiresome. He must try to write compositions of less than 500,000 words, and if I read one more story about Nordrarin and his quest for the missing crown of Arntoriar I'm going to throttle him.

PC ZONE CLASSIC

True child of the '80s Andy Butcher donned a double breasted suit and dark glasses before entering the world of *Syndicate*, the latest offering from the dangerously talented Bullfrog team.

DO YOU EVER find yourself enjoying something that, when you think about it, you really shouldn't? Something that, on reflection, is completely amoral and gratuitous, but great fun nonetheless? *(Er, are you sure we want to know what you're talking about? Ed.)* Well, that depends – I'm talking about *Syndicate*. *(Thank God. I thought you were going to start on about the 'whipped cream' incident again. Ed.)*

A short history lesson

In the near future the multi-national corporations gain so much power and wealth that they effectively become world governments. Eventually there are only three left – one based in America, one in Europe and one in the Far East.

Then the European corp made a huge breakthrough, introducing CHIP. Implanted in the neck, CHIP allowed people control over their perceptions, making them blissfully oblivious to the misery of their lives. Millions were sold with the slogan: 'Why change your world when you can change your mind'. Control of CHIP technology ultimately meant control of the people. Inevitably, the mega-corps went to war. Human nature, eh?

The world's crime syndicates saw their chance. Engrossed in their efforts to destroy their competitors, the corps were open to infiltration. Using money from pirate CHIP technology and good old fashioned murder, the syndicates soon controlled the remnants of the corps, shattered by the war.

Hostile take-over

You are a young executive in a small European syndicate. Your aim is to take over the territories controlled by the other seven syndicates, until your corporation alone controls the entire world. There's nothing like a healthy dose of ambition, after all, is there?

But how do you go about taking over a territory controlled by a competitor? Better advertising? Huge media blitzes? Lower pricing? Nah. You use a team of agents, controlled via

(Above) Your airship, from which you view and control your agents. Just why the baddies never catch on that it's you up there and blow it to bits is never explained.
(Left) If it was up to me this guy would be out on his ear – I'd never employ someone with red hair.

the CHIP circuitry imbedded in their necks, to perform destabilising missions that usually involve an enormous amount of gratuitous violence.

Business as usual

The world of *Syndicate* is split into just over 50 territories. As you conquer territories adjacent areas become available for take-over attempts. Once a territory is under your control you can tax the population to provide funding for further missions, but if the rate is set too high the people will eventually rebel and you'll have to send in your agents to 'pacify' them. Once you have selected the area you are interested in acquiring you are given a briefing on the mission, and can see a rough map of the city where it will take place. The briefing info and map can both be increased in accuracy by paying for espionage reports (there are few things as useful as a good spy).

If you accept the mission you go to the agent selection screen. Your team can consist of between one and four agents, and each can be assigned various cybernetic modifications (see 'We Have The Technology') and equipped with assorted bits of equipment and, of course, huge guns (see 'Contractual Enforcement' and 'Designer Accessories'). From this screen you can also access your R&D department and decide on the area for them to work on and assign funding – the more money there is available, the shorter the time taken to develop a new weapon, piece of equipment or modification.

When you're happy with your band you enter the mission area. This is viewed from an isometric perspective supplied ☞

BETTER KILLING THROUGH CHEMISTRY

The responses of your agents can be modified at any time by manipulating their CHIP implants to inject them with three different drugs. These drugs control Adrenalin, Perception and Intelligence (API) levels. By administering different amounts of these drugs your agents can be tailored to the job at hand.

ADRENALIN: An agent's Adrenalin level controls his speed of movement and reaction. I suppose it's a bit like an injection of incredibly strong coffee.

PERCEPTION: The perception drug increases the range at which agents become aware of threats and their firing accuracy.

INTELLIGENCE: Intelligence drug injections make the agent more… er, intelligent. *(I can see you're pushing yourself. Ed.)* Intelligent agents have more independence when left on their own.

Unfortunately you can't just whack all the levels to maximum and forget about them. Firstly the doses wear off after a while. Secondly, after a big dose the agent's tolerance increases, and further doses have less effect. On top of that, agents with maximum API levels tend to walk around blowing every baddie they see to bits, which can limit your options for stealth.

The trick to API control is to only use the drugs you need, and at other times lower the dose to lower tolerance. A sniper just needs Perception. Haring across a city just needs Adrenalin, and so on. Of course, when the doo-doo hits the fan, just whack 'em all up and leave 'em to it.

(Below) A handy building provides the ideal vantage point from which to blow enemy agents to bits. Sorry about the cars, by the way, but I got bored waiting.

(Top) The highly unpleasant and not very sterile seeming environment in which your agents are 'prepped' for action. (Above) Oh well, looks like another hard day's slaughter for you and your boys. Sigh.

IN PERSPECTIVE

Syndicate **is a relatively unique game, so any comparisons tend to be concerned with only certain aspects. However, *Space Hulk*, *Laser Squad* and *Shadow Worlds* all have elements in common with it. Remember, though, that these are *comparative* scores, not marks in their own rights...**

Laser Squad

Shadow Worlds

Space Hulk

Syndicate

WE HAVE THE TECHNOLOGY...

Your agents are well under control, slaves to the CHIP circuits imbedded in their necks. You could just issue them some guns and send 'em on a mission. But why use 'off the rack' flesh and blood when you can rebuild them – stronger, faster, more murderous than before? Every aspect of an agent's performance can be improved by the simple application of some cybernetic spare parts, which come in levels from 1 to 3. At the beginning of the game you only have access to level 1 improvements, but by throwing some cash to the R&D boys the higher levels can be acquired.

LEGS

As everyone knows, bionic legs mean that you can run faster. Aside from the obvious applications in most professional athletic events, this means that your agents will be able to travel from one blood bath to another at much greater speed.

ARMS

Having arrived at the massacre of your choice, your agents aren't going to be much use if they're not laden down with huge pieces of offensive armament. Replacing an agent's arms allows a greater number of these to be carried without slowing him or her down.

CHEST

They've got there fast, carrying enough weaponry to shame a modern tank. Unfortunately so have the baddies. Life insurance policies are expensive for Syndicate agents, so it's probably wise to invest in a chest modification, which vastly lessens the damage caused by hostile objects moving at great speed (i.e. bullets). At levels 2 and 3 the chest modification also contains a self destruct charge, just the thing for when you've run out of ammo and the opposition hasn't.

HEART

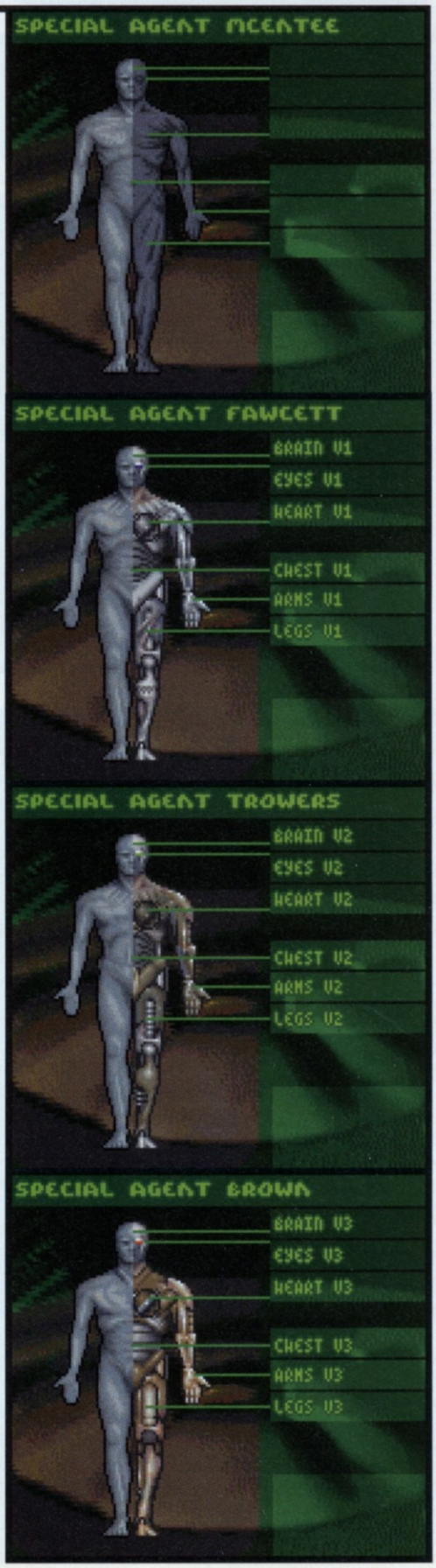
As well as allowing its recipient to eat as much fatty food as he or she likes, the heart mod is more efficient and powerful than the standard human issue. This has the effect of prolonging Adrenalin boosts given via the CHIP.

EYES

No good cyborg killing machine is complete without glowing red eyes. They just add a certain 'je ne sais quoi' that can't be achieved in any other way. They also sustain a CHIPed Perception boost for longer periods, and increase shooting accuracy thanks to handy built-in range finders and targeting systems.

BRAIN

An impressive IQ is less important in Syndicate agent selections than an impressive degree of cold-hearted brutality. So supplement your operatives' limited mental powers with implanted computer circuitry. The brain mod acts in a similar way to eye and heart upgrades, but affects intelligence boosts (surprise).



CONTRACTUAL ENFORCEMENT

No killer cyborg is complete without something to kill with. In *Syndicate* you begin with a choice of three weapon systems (pistol, shotgun and persuadertron) and by the judicious funding of your R&D department can develop many, many more...

Pistol

Pistols are virtually useless – semi-automatic and not very damaging. They're also very small. In fact I found that they fitted rather neatly down my new Marks and Spencers frillies.

Shotgun

Shotguns are much more fun than pistols, doing far more damage over a wider area and making a much more satisfying 'boom' sound. Their only problem lies in their lack of range.

Uzi smg

The Uzi is the first automatic weapon you can develop, and allows you to spray bullets everywhere with riotous abandon, which is good fun until the ammo runs out. Longer range than shotguns, but not as much 'boom' factor.

Mini gun

My personal fave. Six barrels of stupidly high rate of fire mayhem, the mini gun makes an absolutely superb screaming whine and causes hideous damage. It carries loads of ammo, has a decent range and is *big*.

Long range rifle

Feeling sneaky? Fancy picking off the baddies before they even see you? The long range rifle is great for sniping, but not much good up close due to its low rate of fire and damage.

Laser

With a *very* long range and causing stupid levels of damage, the laser is the best sniper weapon and also ranks as one of the top anti-vehicle weapons. Unfortunately it only has five shots.

Flame thrower

Impressive to look at, but largely useless due to its pitifully short range. Good for destroying vehicles and causing 'accidental' collateral damage, though, and there's no more impressive way of lighting your fags.

Gauss gun

Or, as most people would call it, the missile launcher. Great range, huge explosions, horrendous damage, only three shots. Save it for large groups of baddies, vehicles or showing off.

Persuadertron

The Persuadertron injects the target with a drug that causes the victim to follow your agent around like a sheep. It's used to 'kidnap' targets, and allows enemy agents to be 'recruited'.

☞ by your airship that floats above the city, masquerading as an advertising gimmick.

In the bottom left is an overhead scan of the area surrounding the current agent. In the top right there are icons for each of your mindless psychos. The vertical white bar represents their health – when it runs out, so does their life. Below the icon of each agent are their current API levels (see 'Better Killing Through Chemistry'). Beneath these is a row of icons representing the equipment carried by the currently selected agent. Control of your agents is simple. Select the agent you want by left clicking on either the icon or the actual agent in the main view (or all of them as a group using the cunningly named 'group' icon) and left click on the area of the city you want them to move to. Right clicking on an agent's icon moves your view to where they are. You can use either the main view or the scanner to direct movement. Equipment is selected by left clicking on its icon. Most items are automatically used when selected. Selected guns are fired by aiming with the cursor and right clicking.

Audit time

Syndicate's graphics and sound are uniformly excellent. The graphics are clear and atmospheric, the people are incredibly well animated considering their size, and a lot of thought has obviously gone into the look and feel of the game, from the excellent explosions to the amazing intro sequence. The sound, too, is very atmospheric, and this is one of the few games where the music can be turned off but I left it on. Right, now that's out of the way, onto the game itself.

Syndicate plays very well. It's relatively easy to get to grips with, but takes a bit of time to master. Once control of your agents and their API levels are understood it allows for many different techniques.

Where the game succeeds most is in its flexibility and its feel. Most of the missions can be tackled in various different ways, allowing for many different approaches. For example, in one mission you have to assassinate someone who is initially in a house. You could blaze in the front door, mow down the guards and kill the target. You could set yourself up on a roof-top and wait for the target to leave the house, then kill her with a well aimed sniper shot and be away before ☞

'The enjoyment to be had from striding through a city, casually mowing down anyone who gets in your way and blowing up the odd car if you get bored is actually quite worrying.'

(Below) There's nothing quite like a nice big explosion to lighten up your day and warm your soul. Especially if a few enemy agents just happened to be caught in the middle of it. Shame.

DESIGNER ACCESSORIES

CHIP implants, cybernetic parts, big guns – your agents are almost ready to hit the streets. Just kit them out with a few of these little bits and pieces for that vital finishing touch…

Scanner

If at least one of your agents is carrying a scanner the over-head view in the bottom left of the screen is zoomed out, allowing you to see more of the surrounding area and pin-point threats at a greater range.

Medikit

A medikit will totally replenish the life bar of an agent, so it's always a good idea to carry at least one, just in case something goes wrong and one of your operatives suffers from some nasty kinetic energy poisoning.

Access card

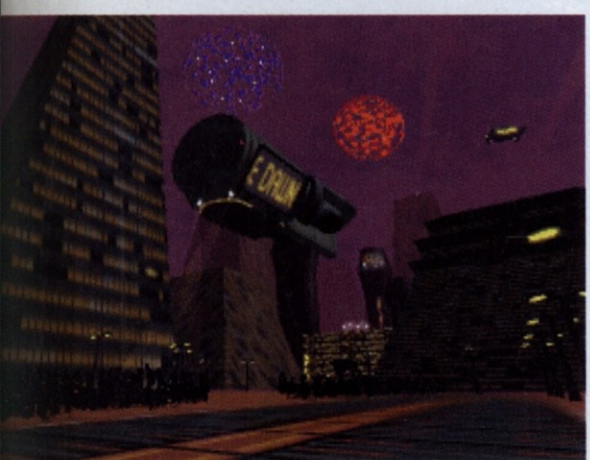
The access card fools police officers into thinking that you're working with the authorities, and allows you to continue the slaughter of innocent bystanders without interruption. It also opens some security doors.

Time bomb

Activated by dropping it, the time bomb waits for a while and then blows itself to kingdom come, along with anything nearby. Beware enemy agents carrying them – on their death the bomb is automatically dropped along with the rest of their gear.

Energy shield

The energy shield surrounds the user with a glowing field that's impervious to bullets. Unfortunately they have a limited duration, and you can't shoot while the shield is activated.

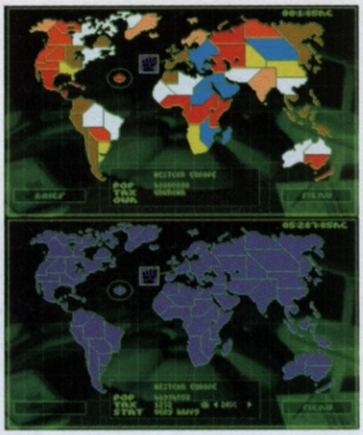


☞ the guards could react. Or you could sneak in the back door, drop a time bomb and run like hell. It's up to you. And the game 'feels' brilliant. It's hard to explain, but you quickly become totally absorbed in the proceedings. And the enjoyment to be had from striding through a city, casually mowing down anyone who gets in your way and blowing up the odd car if you get bored is actually quite worrying. *Syndicate* is a game with no moral qualms, and no real good or bad – you're on one side, everyone else is on the other, it's as simple as that.

Corporate paradise?

Well, not quite. The only real problem with *Syndicate* lies in its difficulty. The game initially adjusts itself to your playing ability for the first missions, and then after a while just lets you have it. Unfortunately I didn't find it *quite* hard enough. Part of the problem lies with your ability to save after every mission, and part of it with the R&D system. The saving means that you can keep trying a mission until you crack it, and re-load if you don't, and the R&D seems to give you all the technology too quickly. Also, although I had territories revolt, I never lost one I'd captured to one of the computer controlled opponents. They seem to attack each other, as the map changes with time, but they never grab one of yours. What makes this particularly sad is that Bullfrog actually made the game easier, as they thought it was too hard and the computer corps too nasty.

But *Syndicate* is still an utterly smart game, and if you play it without constantly saving, the above criticism can be ignored. It is the only criticism I can make, and it may just be because I'm such a ninja gamesplayer. *(Cough, splutter. Ed.)* PZ



(Above) Before and after – world domination in two easy steps. (That's quite enough gratuitous egotism from you, Butcher. Ed.)
(Left) Street corner life in Syndcate, No.1: The personal approach.
(Bottom) Street corner life in Syndcate, No.2: The 'if it moves, blow it to bits, if it doesn't move blow it to bits, and if it's an innocent civilian, blow it to bits' approach; often simply refered to as the 'Blow It To Bits' method. I'll let you guess which is my personal fave.

PC ZONE score

Incredibly violent, completely amoral and brilliant fun.

90

Price: £44.99 **Out:** Now
Published: Electronic Arts
Telephone: 0753 549442

PC ZONE specs

Minimum Memory: 3Mb
Minimum Processor: 386
Minimum Speed: 20MHz
Installation: Essential
Minimum Hard Disk: 12Mb
Minimum Graphics: VGA
Sound Cards: Sound Blaster, Ad-Lib
Controls: Microsoft mouse or compatible
Comments: Needs DOS 3.3 or higher

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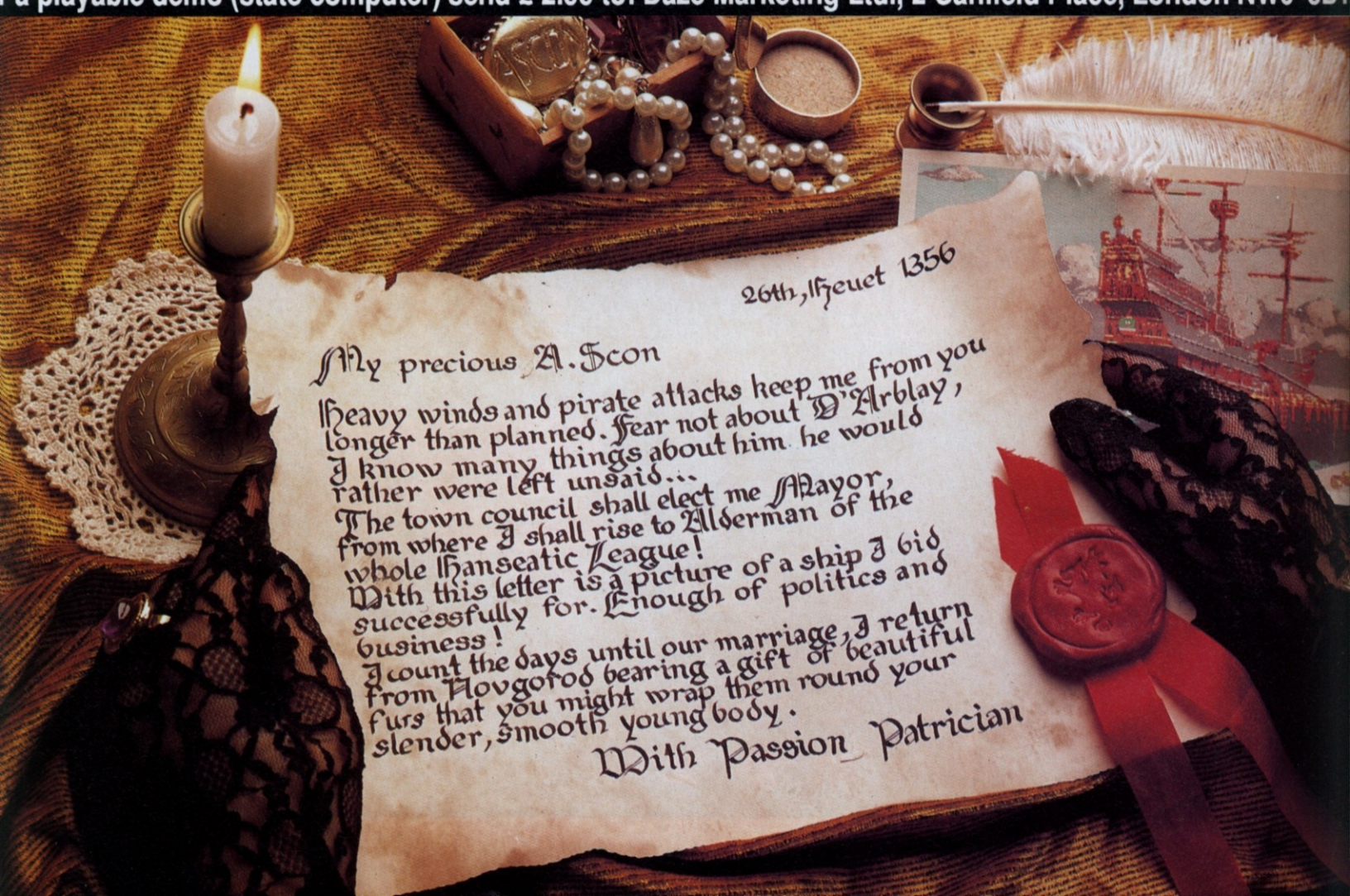


PARTY FOUR

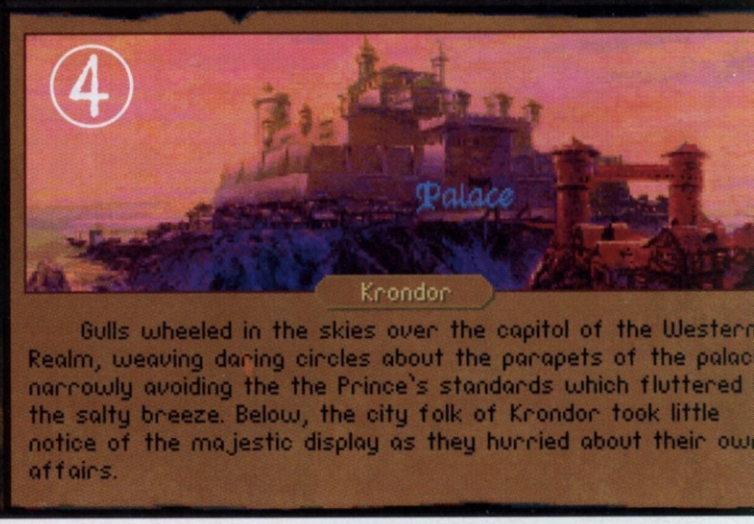
To go lolling around in a game this big you need a posse – and in any respectable fantasy game that means a group of characters including an up-front, boy-next-door nobleman, a sneaky alien type who's super strong, super ugly and not 100 per cent trustworthy, and a magician who could be an old bloke, could be a young kid; the only criteria being that they're weedy, useless in a punch up but good with their hands. So here's your team (there are four, but you can only party with three at a time).

SEIGNEUR JAMES

Also known as Jimmy the Hand, James was once a top pool hall hustler. Then he was dropped down a sewer in Krondor but managed to come up smelling of roses. Not joining the party until the Second Chapter, he's just a little too cocky for his jodhpurs.

PC ZONE CLASSIC

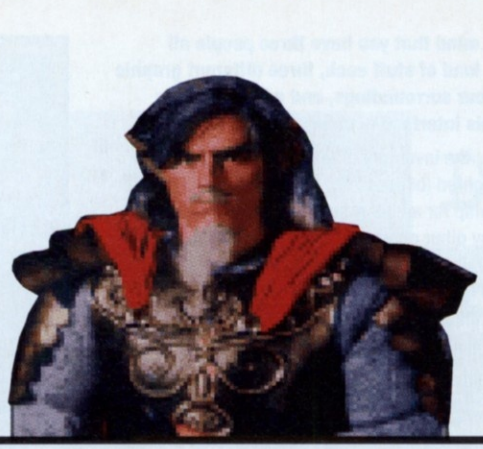
BETRAYAL



Gulls wheeled in the skies over the capitol of the Western Realm, weaving daring circles about the parapets of the palac narrowly avoiding the the Prince's standards which fluttered the salty breeze. Below, the city folk of Krondor took little notice of the majestic display as they hurried about their ow affairs.

SEIGNEUR LOCKLEAR

Dashing and debonair, this Seigneur is known to his pals as Locky (it's true). He's noble and a hearty chum of Jimmy. According to the manual he sports a healthy tan year round'. It looks like he also got a bit sporty with a gerbil and stuck it to his upper lip.



GORATH

Strong-silent-pointy-eared-type with a proper fantasy adventure name – none of your Jimmys and Lockys. Needless to say he's not marvellous at embroidery.

OWYN BELEFORTE

Poor Owyn – he's young, naive, blue-eyed, has wispy glam rock blonde hair, and Locky asked him along for the ride. He can't fight too well – Locky wouldn't want him getting hurt – but he can weave a nice French plait.

AT KRONDOR

THE WORLD OUTSIDE YOUR WINDOW

The kingdom map gives you an overview of Midkemia in all its splendour.

1. From the very start of the game you can move anywhere on the game map – provided you are prepared to walk there that is.

2. The aerial view of your immediate vicinity. You can move via this view – but then you'd miss all the intricate details of the Midkemian countryside. You'd also miss hidden boxes and could well get taken by a surprise attack.

3. The near enough standard wrap-around first person perspective offers picture postcard beauty. Click on the compass to move the characters.

4. You've travelled millions of square feet of rogue infested plains, been beaten, mauled, mugged, spat at, insulted and you finally make it to the big city. Sadly, this graphic is all you are treated to – you can go in but you can't take in the sights.

Raymond E. Feist is a legendary author of fantasy fiction who has licensed his stories to Dynamix. Everyone we know has read all his books, except Andy Clerkson. Needless to say, he got the part.

LET THERE BE NO DOUBT, the Riftwar is truly a saga of epic proportions. Raymond E. Feist already has five novels relating to the Riftwar in the bag as well as a good few other connected pieces. But now, for fantasy frazzle heads everywhere, it seems the saga is set to run and run, not on the page but on the PC. Feist and the Dynamix team have worked on an entirely new story for *Betrayal at Krondor*, one that continues where the last of the Riftwar books, *A Darkness at Sethanon*, left off. Feist is a self-confessed computer RPGer, so his interest in collaborating with Dynamix is obvious. It's a stranger choice, however, for Dynamix, best known for its flight sims, to indulge itself in a fantasy game. But its debut has created a compelling game that incorporates its 3Space technology (originally developed for the aforementioned flight sims) to give wrap-a-rama 3D visuals, and the estimable literary ability of one Mr Feist.

'Betrayal at Krondor is one of the best thought out games of this kind...'

Get your money's worth

The first thing to say about *Betrayal at Krondor* is 'whoa, it's so big, it's scary'. 1,000,000 steps (depending on the size of your steps) covering 224,000,000 square feet (depending on the size of your feet I suppose): that's 12 cities, 21 villages, a myriad of assorted isolated houses, farms and temples, a dirty great big forest, mountains, sewers, mines, caves, you name 'em. You can go outside, inside, underground, upside-down (not really), by day, by night, under a beating sun, in the snow. Basically, this all adds up to about 10Mb of hard disk, a lot of gameplay and a hell of a lot of walking around.

Ah ha, just like a book

The gameplay is split into nine chapters; each chapter presents your three-man exploring party with a new mission that is a part of the whole scheme of things. The whole scheme of things is to help thwart the Moredhal forces, led by the evil Delkhan, from taking over the Kingdom of Midkemia... or so you think. I can't say that is definitely, 100 per cent, honest-to-God the ultimate scheme of things because that would be telling. Or it might be because I haven't got that far in the game yet. I can't quite remember.

Of course there is not only one aim to the game. As with most of the hulking RPGs of late, en route through Midkemia you unfurl sub-plots on top of super-sub-plots, getting to know the complex characters of Midkemia and their many troubles – for instance, why is the town of Eggley deserted, why are the people of Lyton so depressed about their taxes, how do you rid Silden of the seaweedy girl ghosts, and so on ad infinitum. If you want to detour from your main plan for a bit you could solve these mysteries and help a few people out along the way. If you are a bastard, leave them to it. But it's worth the effort to meet the locals; it is in peeling back the layers of the storyline that brings out the depth of this game.

Krondor's greatest asset is this totally non-linear format – as the nature of your quest unfolds progressively you can follow it to the letter or think: 'Nah!, I'll go off and fight some witches in the forest for a laugh.' Naturally, you will come across gangs of rogues, ghosts and monsters that you are not strong enough to kill early in the game but you can at least try to go anywhere and everywhere. There's no need to be a seasoned RPGer to get your texture maps ☞

THE EASIEST COMPLEX INTERFACE EVER

Bearing in mind that you have three people all carrying a load of stuff each, three different graphic views of your surroundings, and a host of other options, this interface is child's play.

1 This is the inventory of the party member that is highlighted (bottom left). Any money and keys are put into a whip for all the group to share. To pass any object to any other character, simply drag and drop it on their icon. To investigate an item, for example the lute (highlighted in red), right-click on it and a description appears on the screen.

2 To switch to any other character, simply left click their sphere for their inventory and right click for their health status and skill ratings.

PC ZONE score

The licence makes a lot of difference – great story, great game.

91

Price: £44.99 **Out:** Now
Publisher: Dynamix
Telephone: 0734 303322

PC ZONE specs

Minimum Memory: 640K + 2Mb RAM and EMM
Minimum Processor: 386SX
Minimum Speed: 16MHz
Installation: Essential
Minimum Hard Disk: 8-10Mb
Minimum Graphics: VGA
Sound Cards: Sound Blaster, Soundblaster Pro, Ad-Lib, Roland MT32/LAPC1
Controls: Mouse

WHAT'S THIS RIFTWAR ALL ABOUT, THEN?

If you've read the books, you know. If you haven't, you don't. And it's just too complicated to go into on the precious pages of *PC Zone*. But for the uninitiated, a brief *(Please God let him be brief. Ed)* run down of the story so far commences now:

There's two worlds – Midkemia and Kelewan – and there's two likely lads, Pug and Tomas, both from Midkemia. Pug and Tomas discover a magical gateway – called a Rift – that opens between the worlds allowing the Tsurani from Kelewan to start a war with Midkemia. This is the Riftwar. Tomas is given golden armour by a dying dragon, Pug is captured and taught spooky magic skills and then escapes. The two worlds make peace and a sorcerer closes the rift. Bit of peace, royal weddings, etc. Next thing, a load of Moredhals (lowly types) decide they will follow a prophecy that will give them power in Midkemia when Prince Arutha is dead – so they try to kill him. Pug and Tomas reunite to help Arutha and think an old terror called the Enemy (really, it is) is behind the plot and is trying to re-open the rift. They discover all life on Midkemia is tied to a Lifestone in a place called Sethanon which dated back to some old Chaos War between Dragons and the rest of the universe. Unfortunately the Moredhals are marching to Sethanon and their evil leader, Murmandamus, is gonna do terrible things when he reaches the Lifestone. All hell breaks loose – Murmandamus fights Arutha while Pug tries to keep the rift closed from the Enemy. Finally Arutha wins the fight but the rift opens a little and an ancient evil dragon lord swoops in. Tomas is mind-linked to the good dragon (who gave him the armour when he was a boy). So he's the best bet to fight the evil dragon. He does so, wins and everyone is happy. Peace ensued – until now. The Moredhal are peeved about losing their leader. It was fine for a while because Moredhals went in for much in-fighting and no uniting, but then a leader called Delekhan seized control, rallied the forces and it seems as though the battle is back on in *Betrayal at Krondor*. Phew!

rolling – just explore, see what you find, and if you come unstuck, take another route.

Looking forward

The non-digitised graphics are good but life on the road can get a bit samey after a while. The houses look boxy and a village is a village is a village (it's like being stuck on a road that keeps taking you to Brookside Close). Before you know it, you can find yourself running around the road map in the hope of happening upon somewhere a bit more interesting soon. But (philospophical bit) that's life I suppose. The first person perspective seems to work far better in the underground sections, where the claustrophobic nature of the mazes creates a tenser atmosphere.

I've got a problem with digitised characters

This is not just directed at *Krondor*, but any game that uses digitised characters. Why? Do they make the game more realistic and give the feel that you are playing in an interactive movie? Not likely. Take a look at the characters in *Krondor* – the first time these popped up I thought it was the same bloke in every shot with different comedy wigs on. Then I read that they were *real actors*. I know there has to be some way that actors who are 'in between jobs' can make a living but whatever happened to good, old fashioned, fringe theatre.

What else do you need to know

With the amount of gameplay, digitised speech and characters involved in *Krondor*, the 10Mb of disk space it takes from your hard drive is quite a let off in these troubled times of million terabyte monsters – *Ultima VII* now sits in a hefty wad of 23Mb. And on a 386sx, disk access was just the right side of tiresome. So, verily the programmers have done well.

Betrayal at Krondor is one of the best thought out games of this kind that I have seen. If an RPG is going to keep you fretting for over 100 hours about elves, runes, glyphs and all those brown corduroy-trousered things, it needs to stand tall on atmosphere and spin a good yarn. *Betrayal at Krondor* fits this bill perfectly. And I haven't even mentioned the interface yet which is so simple I think it was developed by Fisher Price. PZ

IN PERSPECTIVE

Ultima Underworld II

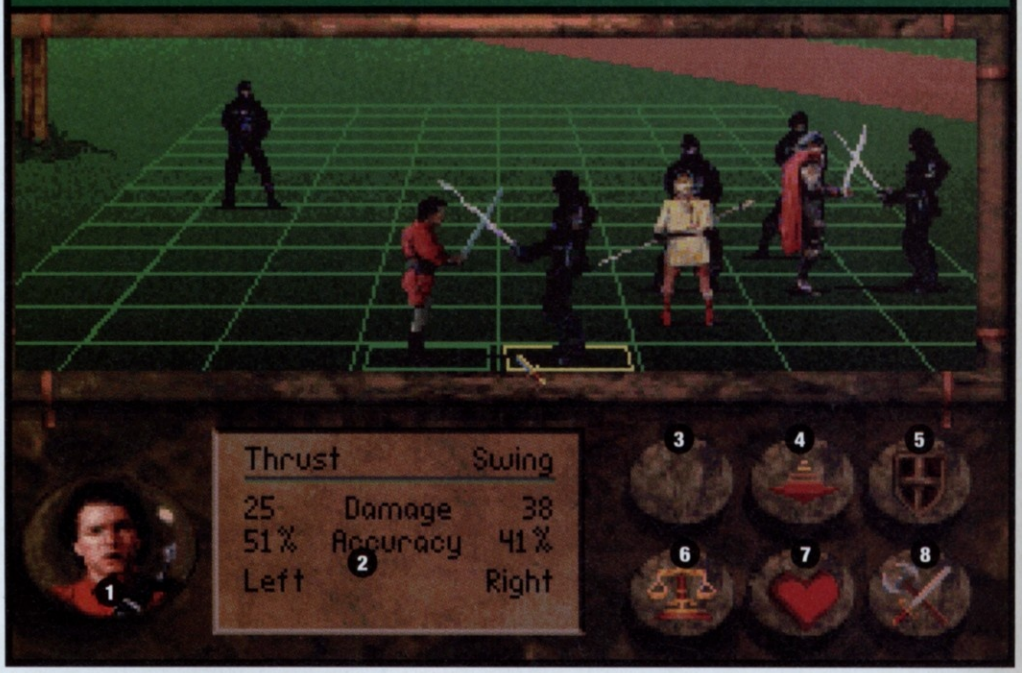
Betrayal at Krondor

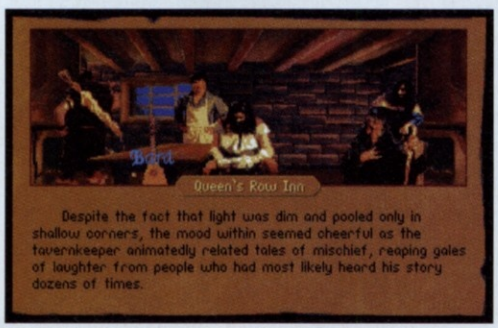
Ultima VII Part I

DUFF 'EM UP

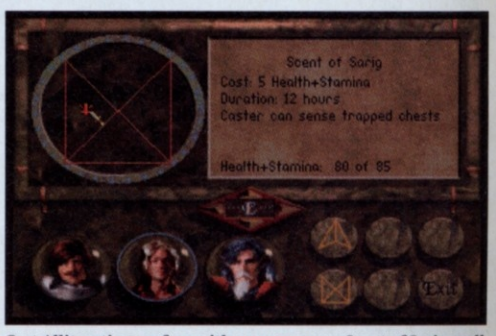
Forget the poncey RPG stuff for a minute – no more wanderinging around asking frightfully polite questions. You've just been attacked by a gang of Ninjas. What do you do? Duff 'em-up. Battles are fought on a grid basis, with characters' speed, stamina and health ratings dictating how far they can move and how hard they can hit.

1 Character sphere: combat is turn-based, so this highlights the character currently fighting.
2 Damage that can be inflicted and the accuracy.
3 Arrow: where the arrow icon would be if this character was more than two steps away from all opponents.
4 Retreat: always a good option but the game hardly ever allows you to run away.
5 Defend: parry a blow for one of your turns.
6 Assess the enemy: lose one attacking turn but suss out the abilities of one of your opponents.
7 Rest during combat: fatal move this. In the middle of a broadsword rumble, you wouldn't say, 'Leave me out while I have my packed lunch'. It's just silly.
8 Automatic combat: use this if you're bored.





A tavern is a great place to meet haggard, out of work actors.



Cast Alliteration on foes with a super, saucy Scent of Sarig spell.

As I see it, this is a good action sword-pointing on map bit.

'Get out from underfoot.' Come on, who would say that, really.

Having already experienced the smooth-scrolling wonders of *Underworld II* and *The 7th Guest*, Paul Presley really didn't want to go back to a flick-screen affair. But since a freelancer's motto is 'Never refuse a job; never refuse a pay cheque', he was rather easily persuaded.

Ishar 2

Messengers Of Doom

(Right) Ah, the perennial fave beastie for a fantasy game. This is how dragons should appear – big, mean, breathing fire and impossible to kill without an ice cooler to hand.
(Below) One of the items on sale in this splendid place of purveyance, is a formal evening gown. Now, I ask you. Big strong adventurers like us, with huge swords and blood-stained axes hanging from our belts. Why in our right mind would we want evening gowns? This game just gets more and more bizarre.

'How much would you charge for playing in the sewers?', 'Just the cover charge', 'Well that's okay, you'll probably clean up.' (Old Marx Brothers routine, circa 1934).

ONE OF THE best parts of this job is when you are given a really awful game to review. Finding new and ever more eloquent ways to say you hate a game is one of the most pleasing pastimes a young writer can have. For instance: I hated this game so much that I wished it were a tortoise, just so I could have the pleasure of tipping it over on its back on a hot summer's day, propping a magnifying glass over its stomach and watching it slowly fry to a burnt cinder.' Or: 'To list the reasons why I so disliked *Game X* would take considerably more time than you, I or this magazine has to spare. Suffice to say if you were to look up the word enjoyable in the dictionary, it would say "Not *Game X*".'

Which puts me in a bit of a quandary. You see, *Ishar 2* is by no means an enjoyable game, I wish to make that perfectly clear. The trouble is, it is so inoffensive that to be rude to it would make any half-decent person turn and say: 'You're a very nasty man Presley', and very probably spit on me. There's nothing fundamentally wrong with it – the graphics are fine, the control system is perfectly usable and the basic premise is fair enough – it just isn't very interesting. It therefore makes it a bit difficult for me to discourage you from buying it.

First the good news

Let me start by accentuating *Ishar 2*'s positives before I communicate the negatives. Probably the strongest aspect of the whole game is the comprehensive, yet easy to use control system. The character management is easily amongst the best I've seen in a role-playing game, with the only black spot being the lack of a sleep/camp command. Each character has a portrait on the main screen from where you can access vital statistics, currently held objects or weapons, magic spells and team actions such as first aid and map reading. All without having to look away from the main screen. ☞

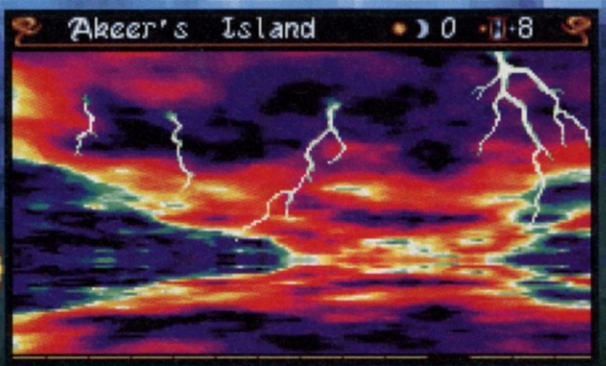
IN PERSPECTIVE

Try to imagine the Aylesbury Sunday League reserve team playing Manchester United. You get the idea.

Eye Of The Beholder II

Ishar 2

Ultima Underworld II



(Far left) It's the Edmund Hillary simulator. Be the almost-first man to the top! Drag a load of native sherpas along with you! Deny they ever existed, let alone beat you to the summit!
(Left) The trouble with a game that encourages the mixing of different herbs to make strange potions is that it lends itself to certain abuses.
(Below) What do you do if, whilst walking through the streets of a city, you are set upon by masked banditos brandishing knives? Call the police? Run away? Nonsense, you lay into them with your own ten foot blades of steel.
NB Pictures are from pre-prod copy of game, hence slightly wobbly text, which will be corrected in the final version.

Democracy In Action

One of the more intriguing moments in *Ishar 2* is when your party decides to do anything that affects it as a whole, such as recruiting new members, dismissing old ones or assassinating unwelcome guests. (Yes you can actually assassinate team members if you want! Why? Don't ask me.) Whenever you want to perform such an act each party member has to cast a vote in favour or against with the majority ruling deciding the actual result. The other strange bit is when administering first aid. Each character in your group has an individual attitude towards each of the others and if you ask one member to help patch up someone he or she doesn't really like, they'll probably refuse.

It really is the most bizarre form of character interaction I've ever seen in a role-playing game and once or twice led to the situation where I'd run away from a fight after taking a bit of a beating, set up a temporary camp and tried to heal a few injuries before going back. Unfortunately my group would be rife with internal squabbling and everyone would refuse to heal each other! There I am, zombies abungo, and my group is busy fighting with itself. With friends like these, eh?

☞ Calling up the full character screens allow you to delve even further. Objects can be swapped between members at will and, best of all, there's an 'Identify Object' icon. So many times I've played RPGs, picked up an object and, due to less than clear artistry, not had a clue as to what it is. To be able to identify at a glance what something is makes me happier than a man that's been called away from a hot date with a very sexy blonde, just to be told that he's won a million pounds on the pools. (Sorry, politically what?)

Other bright spots in the game include some (definately not all) of the graphics, the combat controls which, while not being the most interactive or strategic ever seen, are at the very least the best of the standard flick-screen role-player systems and the magic system which, in my mind, is second only to *Dungeon Master.*

And now the bad news

But all this is just very pretty icing on a very stale cake. *Ishar 2*'s main problem is that, when you get right down to it, it just isn't very interesting to play. I know it's hard to come up with original ideas these days but almost everything in *Ishar 2* has been seen before. (I say almost because there is a nice bit in a tree city – like the Ewok village in *Return of the Jedi.)* All the while I was playing it I just kept getting the feeling I was going from one separate encounter to another. Never did I get the feeling that this was all one big plot and everything I ran into was just a small part of the puzzle.

Plots are all important to fantasy games, and what we have here is just a pretty looking world with some random encounters thrown in. The loose story of having to find pieces of a map in order to explore the seven islands is rarely enough to keep you interested in what's going on and serves really as a poor excuse for a scenario. As the Great Mage Onirin once said: 'A collection of loosely linked encounters do not an epic quest make.' But then he was always a funny bloke.

As though *Ishar 2*'s future wasn't already edging slowly over the chasm, along comes the manual to give it a real push forward. Now to be fair I did not see the finished version of the manual and there may be a lot more to be added before the game is released. I hope so. It isn't nearly comprehensive enough for a fantasy RPG manual. And more than any other game an RPG stands and falls by its manual.

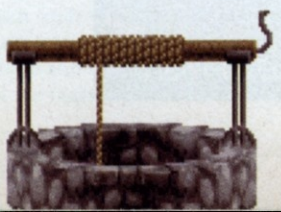
Now perhaps I've been spoilt by all the American products that come with three or four separate booklets, covering everything you could possibly see and do in their worlds, but the thing is this kind of detail really helps to create that most fabled of things for an RPG (see if you can guess the next word kids) – atmosphere. *Ishar 2* is not only devoid of atmosphere, it's devoid of excitement, interaction, realism and any other role-playing ingredient you can think of.

So, to sum up

Essentially *Ishar 2* is like being taken on a tour of a sewage farm by Robin Williams. No matter how many jokes or one-liners, no matter how many crazy antics or silly voices he uses, it's still just a sewage farm and nothing will change that. That said, it would be a shame if Silmarils don't attempt a more ambitious follow-up as, like I said, the control system is one of the best I've seen for ages. That, if nothing else, is worth persevering with.

The end

Oh, hang on. I've just thought of a way to insult *Ishar 2* without being cruel. *'Ishar 2's* most endearing aspect is that it sets itself extremely low standards and then admirably fails to live up to them.' There, that wasn't too bad, was it? *(You're a very nasty man Presley, PTOOIE. Ed.)* ZZ



Well, well! (Very Poor. Ed.)

PC ZONE specs

Minimum Memory: 640K
Minimum Processor: 286
Minimum Speed: 16MHz
Installation: Essential
Minimum Hard Disk: 3Mb
Minimum Graphics: VGA
Sound Cards: Ad-Lib, Sound Blaster
Controls: Mouse, Keyboard, Joystick

PC ZONE score

Would have been a real contender if it had been released a year or two earlier.

50

Price: £32.99 **Out:** July
Published: Silmarils
Telephone: 071 328 2762

(Above) One of the few moments of originality in Ishar 2 comes with this Village in the Trees. I say original, of course it was first seen in Return of the Jedi but that's a film so we don't count that, do we?
(Below) Pint spilling is not the best of things to do in a role-playing game.

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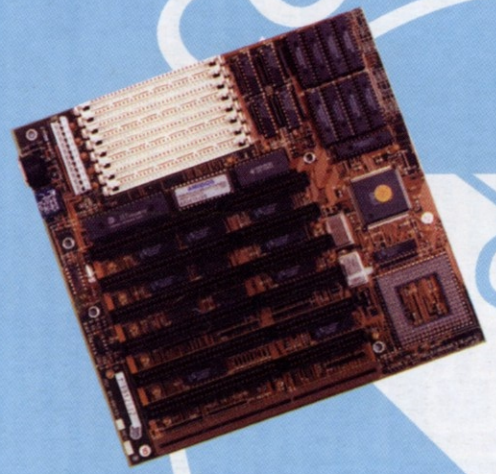

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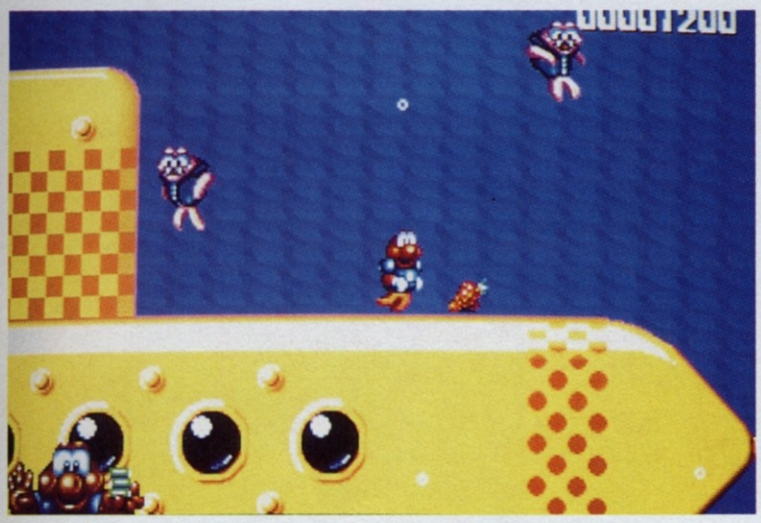
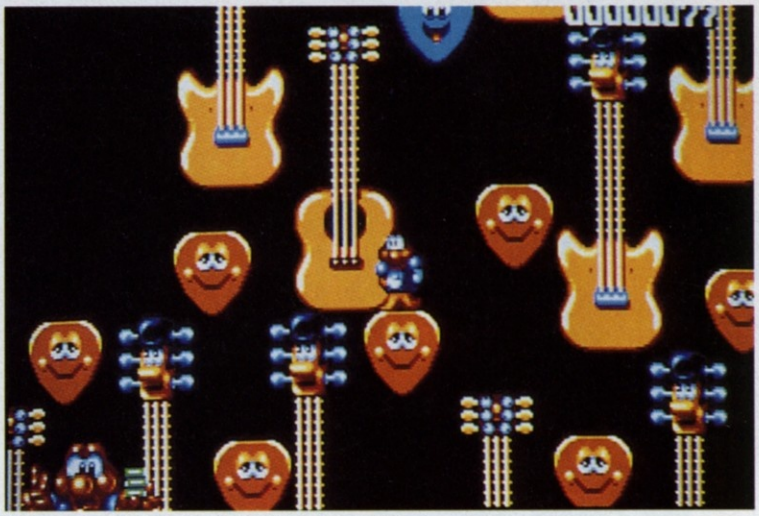


We all live in the multi-coloured rainbow world with lots of drug-taking programmers.



Bounce from plectrum to plectrum in guitar land.

James Pond 2:

CODENAME ROBOCOD

'Schnooky-land' isn't a phrase David McCandless uses very often. Neither for that matter is 'cutsie nooky schnap'. But faced with *James Pond 2: Codename Robocod*, the latest in multi-coloured cutso platformers, there really weren't any other words he could use. Bar 'nagy lookie pip' of course.

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

CHOCCY WORLD. Cake land. Toy realm. Biscuit planet. Teddy Bear city. Do any of these places ring a bell? I doubt it. Well, let me tell you – I've been there. It's a nightmare; one Salvador Dali believed 'too weird' to put on canvas, one Jeff Minter would have 'trouble with'. Yellow and mauve backgrounds, cycling through crimson and fluorescent orange. Mounds of footballs and suspended bars of chocolate overhanging floors made of raisins and bananas, topped with fluffy rhino walls, bubbles, and playing cards, plus a few lego bricks and sand castles (for good measure). When faced with such a landscape, plan A is obviously: drink a lot of mineral water and lie down in a dark room. Plan B, unfortunately, is: take control of Robocod (aka James Pond Underwater Agent: Licence to Gill) and direct him through 85 rather 'loud' levels.

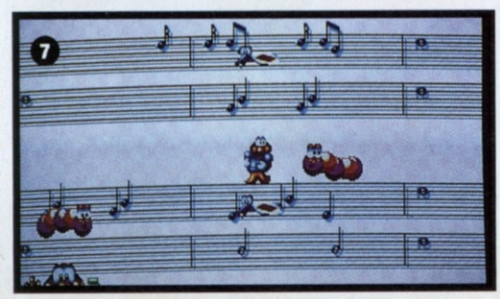
'Fluffies often need to be slapped botty.'

The levels make up the sections of (cough – embarrassed voice) Santa's toy factory, containing a year's supply of toys for all the good boys and girls around the world. Doctor Maybe has taken over the factory (or Schnooky-dom as we like to call it) and has turned all the toys, elves, and stuff into manic killing machines. Even more heinously, the Doc has planted loads of (squeamishly) penguin bombs on each level which are primed to blow up and destroy the entire factory. 'Good,' you think. 'It'll stop all those want-want spoiled little middle class brats from revelling in Christmas.' Ah, I reply, it's just a game and it won't really end Christmas. It's up to the best agent of F.I.5.H to traverse the nine platform maze 'worlds', based around the different types of kids' entertainment (Circus, Toyland, Teddy Bears, Bathtime, Clip Round The Ear etc.).

Robocod is aptly suited for this environment. His immense jumpy-jumpy skills enable him to span huge gaps and spike pits to reach those high-flying choccy platforms and ledges. Bouncing up and landing on naughties (such as snakes, birds, gingerbread men) slaps their botties. Fluffies often need to be slapped botty several times before they explode into stars. Also, jumpy-jumpy allows you to reach yum-yums. These provide bonus points (sweets, hamburgers, lollies), or special abilities (wings for flying, shields etc.) or extra lives (ankhs). Dotted around are mystery squares which may contain anything from extra naughties (bad) to cars, planes and bathtubs (good). Drive cars to double your speed and slap botty power; planes for flying and reach secret bits; and bathtubs to just float around, minus gravity.

Robocod also has an amazing telescopic body which can be sent upwards (à la *Inspector Gadget)* so you can grab a platform or ceiling and then monkey-bar across. Another heaven-sent ability is the bomb effect, where 'Cod can crawl into his metal 'shell' to protect him from long falls and double his slap-botty rating.

I know this all sounds ridiculous and embarrassing. It *is* ridiculous and embarrassing – can you imagine a 40 year old man/woman entering Schnooky Niggy World to slappy botty some fluffies to reach some choccy yum-yums. But while the graphics may be a low 'U' rating, the gameplay is definitely an '18'. It's an addictive blend of 'Argh, I missed that platform and died on the spikes *again!* ' frustration and, 'Cor, I wonder what the next level's got to offer' style longevity. The gameplay is plumped up with excellent scrolling (easily as good as the MegaDrive's hardware equivalent), huge levels riddled with secret passages and yum-yum rooms, well-staged easy levels leading to 'mutha-bast' later ones, and a very shiny polish to the whole game. The Fisher-Price soundtrack is a little grating and the schnookyness will bring green flourescent bile to your throat, but at least it's fun. PZ



THE A TO Z OF SCHNOOKY LAND

❶ SPORTS WORLD

The first level, packed with the schlappiest nook you've ever schiggled. It's a basic starter level for the uninitiated, based around competitive leisure activities (i.e. huge footballs, baseball bats, table tennis rackets, and rugby balls all over the place).

❷ TEDDY LAND

Lots of cute bears and fluffy rhinos await you here, including a star appearance from a screen-high mega-teddy. Probably the most embarrassing level to be playing if one of the 'lads' looks over your shoulder (with a pint in his hand).

❸ SWEET CITY

Yeah, Crunchie walls, chocolate floors, and Liquorice Allsorts platforms make up the sickeningly gooey level three. Gingerbread men abungo and lots of yum-yums.

❹ INDUSTRIAL REALM

Lots of jets with grins, cars with smiles, and tyres with Dunlop written on them are the naughties on this level. Beware the low flying bombers and leaded petrol cans (sigh). Also features the continuous non-stop scrolling level – get trapped behind an obstacle and be squished (ouch).

❺ BATH PLANET

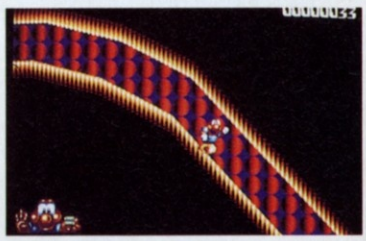
Pilot a tub through your worst bathing nightmares. Falling plugs, lethal bubbles, slippery bars of soap, walruses and a yellow submarine (man).

❻ CASTLE WORLD

Toy soldiers, beanstalks, leaping triffids, and lego blocks. What else can I say?

❼ ART WORLD

A serious of eight levels culturally exploring art and British post-modernist tripping. Witness a musical stave level, huge stack stereos, giant smiley-faced plectrums – easily the hardest level.



(Top) Big snowman, big trouble.
(Below) Stuck in a long tube shaped bonus level in Industrial World.

SCHNOOKY DICTIONARY

choccy [chok-kee] *n.* yum-yum (in my tum).
cutso [kyoot-zo] *adj.* a general term for any game which makes you puke.
icky bits [ik-ee-bitz] *n.* body parts (often flying).
jumpy-jumpy [jumm-pee-jumm-pee] v. the skill of being able to jump (e.g. he really jumpy-jumpied that naughty).
fluffies [fluff-ees] *n.* like naughties but er, naughtier.
naughties [norr-tees] *n.* aliens, robots, Russians, anything which moves which isn't yellow, blue, green or red.
night-night world [nite-nite-wurl-de] *n.* where the naughties go when slapped botty.
nudge-bucket [nudd-ge-buk-ett] *n.* just an amusing name I thought up.
primary colours [prime-ary-coll-urrs] *n.* the colour palette for most cute games, designed to leave bright teddy-bear shaped after-images on your retina for at least four hours after playing.
rainbow juice [rayn-bo-jewz] *n.* the blood of naughties and fluffies.
slappy botty [slapee-bot-tie] *v.* to kill a naughty (e.g. I really slapped botty that sixteen foot smiling fire engine).
schnooky-dom [sh-nook-ee-dum] *n.* a generally scrolling, lurid world dotted with Christmas presents and small monkeys, rife with platforms and ladders and gaps.
water bombs [war-ter-bomms] *n.* death dealing missiles.
yum-yums [yhum-yhums] *n.* power-ups or collectable 'sweeties'.

PC ZONE specs

Minimum Memory: 570K
Minimum Processor: 286
Minimum Speed: 16MHz
Installation: Essential
Minimum Hard Disk: 1-2Mb
Minimum Graphics: VGA with 256K memory
Sound Cards: Sound Blaster, Ad-Lib
Controls: Keyboard, Joystick

PC ZONE score

'Nifty scrolling, great gameplay,' is your first remark on playing *Robocod*, closely followed by: 'Has anyone got a pair of sunglasses?'

87

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Compatible To:			
AdLib & Sound Blaster	YES	YES	YES
Sound Blaster Pro II	YES	NO	NO
Microsoft Windows Sound System	YES	NO	NO
Covox Speech Thing	YES	NO	NO
Walt Disney Sound Source	YES	NO	NO
Panasonic CD ROM Interface (AT BUS)	YES	YES	NO
Mitsumi & Sony* Interface	YES	NO	NO
CD-ROM Interface (SCSI)	YES**	NO	YES
Upgrade option to 16-Bit Wave-Table Synth	YES	YES	NO
FM Synthesizer using OPL3	YES	YES	YES
Bass & Treble Adj. & Stereo Digl/Analog Mixer	YES	YES	YES
16-Bit Stereo Playback & Recording	YES	YES	YES
MIDI Interface & Dynamic Filtering	YES	YES	YES

* Special adapter req ** Option to upgrade

THE FACTS : Business Audio Board vs Microsoft Windows Sound System

	Business Audio Board	Microsoft Windows Sound System
FM Synthesizer using OPL3	YES	YES
8/16-Bit p'back & rec. using CODEC chips	YES	YES
Stereo Digital/Analog Mixer	YES	YES
Panasonic CD-ROM Interface (AT-BUS)	YES	NO
Mitsumi CD-ROM Interface	YES	NO
Sony CD-ROM Interface*	YES	NO
CD-ROM Interface (SCSI)**	YES	NO
Stereo CD Audio In	YES	NO
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* Special adapter req ** Option to upgrade

THE FACTS : NX PRO vs Sound Blaster Pro II

	NX PRO	Sound Blaster ProII
Compatible To:		
AdLib & Sound Blaster v2.0	YES	YES
Sound Blaster Pro II	YES	YES
Covox Speech Thing	YES	NO
Walt Disney Sound Source	YES	NO
Panasonic CD-ROM Interface (AT BUS)	YES	YES
Mitsumi & Sony* CD-ROM Interface	YES	NO
CD-ROM Interface (SCSI)	YES**	NO
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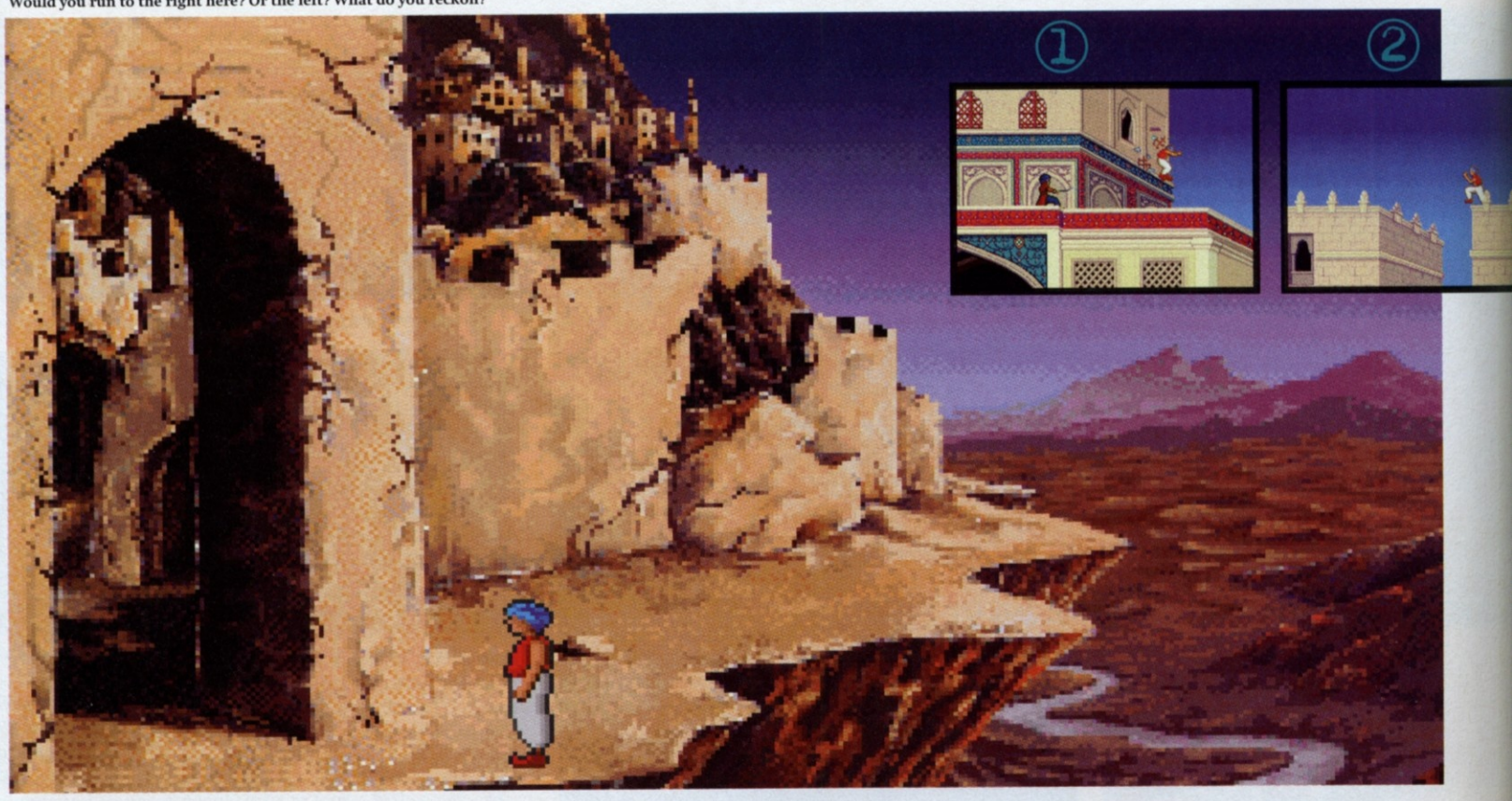
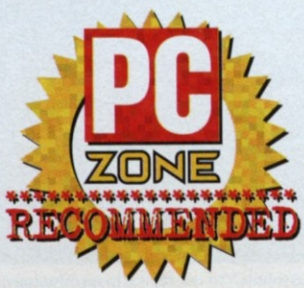


Prince Of Persia 2:

THE SHADOW AND THE FLAME

When is a Flightstick a useless control device? How do you kill an invisible 'skelington'? Where is Salman Rushdie? All these questions and many, many more are answered in Duncan MacDonald's review of *Prince Of Persia 2* from Broderbund/ Electronic Arts.



IN THE BEGINNING, of course, there was *Prince Of Persia 1:* and lo, the people of the world saw that it was rather skill. Videotaped footage of a real bloke running, jumping, climbing and swordfighting, transformed into a fully animated computer sprite which, in turn, was scrunged into a platform game. Countless thousands of folk purchased the game without a moment's hesitation. 'It was so real I soiled my slacks,' said Mrs Glenys Thridwell of Sutton. 'I was convinced I was actually watching a film in the cinema until I remembered I wasn't,' said Mr Gareth Plunk of Birmingham. 'The devil knows all the best tunes, and this appears to be one of them.' said the Rev Jeremy Whitesnade of Hull. Yes, *Prince Of Persia* was an award winning game.

That was then... and this is now

He's back, back, back! Yes the Prince with a slightly poncey walk is with us once again in the long awaited sequel. But now it's not only his *walk* that's poncey, because he's got a new move to add to his collection. In fact he's got two, come to think of it. New move number one is the crawl... yup, in certain circumstances the Prince can drop from his crouch position and snake along the ground (beneath any nastiness or through tunnels) at about one pico-metre an hour. New move number two is the 'shaking off his shadow' move... if the Prince moves quickly enough from side to side, his shadow comes away from his body, leaving him free to wander around (as the shadow) and explore otherwise inaccessible regions. This latter move, however, can't be executed until the Prince has more than eight units of life, and, as in the first game, he only starts with three.

I just don't understand...

Yes, I am rather running off at the mouth, and of course it's possible that you don't know anything about the original *Prince Of Persia*. You're jiggered, aren't you. Okay then, here's a quick recap of the first game followed by a more in-depth view of the new one, outlining any differences along the way.

Prince Of Persia

The Cast: The Prince of Persia, The Grand Vizier Jaffar, The Princess, The Princess's Pet Mouse, Loads of Palace Guards, Loads of 'Skelingtons', Loads of Traps, Several Other Things.

The Plot: The evil Jaffar had kidnapped the Princess and was intending to 'marry' her. She was locked up in the highest room in his castle. The Prince (who wasn't actually a Prince yet, but I'll get to that later) had been thrown into the deep, deep dungeons of the same castle. He had one hour to reach the top and save the Princess.

The Game: A very clever blend of platform game, maze game and beat 'em-up (or swordfight 'em-up if you want to

(1) The very start of the game... the Prince crashes through the window without even getting cut.
(2) Now he must escape.
(3) Should he quickly buy a rug from the market? He decides against it... after all, the palace guards are in hot pursuit.
(4) 'Come on then, try it!'
(5) Wahay-up! Into the ferry.
(6) Blimey, Calais almost looked pleasant back in those days.

Tree o'clock

Prince Of Persia 1 had a clock in it, one which was continually ticking down. Every so often a message would pop up saying '30 minutes left', '20 minutes left', and so on. _Prince Of Persia 2_ has a clock in it as well. Although it's not actually a 'clock'. It's a tree. The falling leaves signify the passing of time. How very 'pretty', eh?

The 'clock', telling you you've got lots of time.

Oh no, someone's hit the 'clock' with a football.

Joystick alert! Joystick alert!

The manual seems to suggest that you play *Prince Of Persia 2* using the keyboard. However, my DNA contains several anti-keyboard genes, and so I plumped for the joystick. Dodgy move. If you've got a similar anti-keyboard genetic makeup then take heed of this warning: your joystick might be totally unsuitable for *Prince Of Persia 2*. The problem is in the Prince's standing jumps. Or, to use joystick positional speak, the 'up-diagonals'. Can you get them when you want them? No, you can't. Can you get them when you *don't* want them? Yes, you can. That was what happened with my CH Flightstick, anyway... great for *Grand Prix*, great for *Star Control II*, great for lots of other things but crap for *Prince Of Persia 2* (and just about any platform game, come to that). Luckily for me, I'm in the position of being able to blag joysticks from work (ho ho), and eventually settled on a Quickshot. *(So that's where it went. Ed).* If you find yourself in the same boat as I was, are unable to blag a workable stick, and don't want to buy another just for this game, then you might find it wise to adopt the following strategy during those moments when you have to get the standing jumps right: press 'Alt K' for keyboard mode, do the jump, and then quickly press 'Alt J' for joystick mode again. It'd be nice if Broderbund had thought to add a couple of 'hot keys' that pulled off the standing jump from the keyboard even while you were in joystick mode. But they didn't think of it.

☞ be pedantic). Highly addictive, and a game which was worthy of the old cliché: 'Blimey guv, it's even better than the sum of its parts and no mistake.' (Because it was.)

The Animation: As I mentioned earlier, it was all taken from videotaped footage. The Prince moved like a real Prince, the guards moved like real guards and the 'skelingtons' moved like the skelingtons from *Jason And The Argonauts* (seeing as real skelingtons don't actually move).

The Interaction: And this is what made a good game an *especially* good game, because there were so many moves available: Walking, running, crouching, standing jumps, running jumps, jumping straight up, hauling yourself up onto ledges, lowering yourself down from ledges, grabbing hold of ledges after jumps which didn't quite come off, picking up potion bottles, drawing your sword, thrusting, parrying. All animated perfectly, with loads of not too hard logic problems thrown in along the way.

The Addictiveness: Virtually unsurpassable, with a sense of urgency injected by a clock continuously ticking down, and a sense of danger injected by all the booby traps waiting for anyone who was moving too quickly.

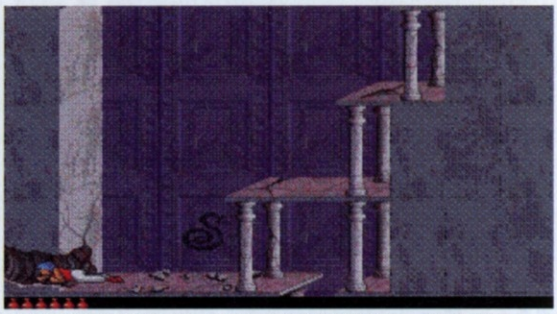
Verdict: Smart.

Prince Of Persia 2

The Cast: The Prince of Persia, The Grand Vizier Jaffar, The Sultan, The Princess, The Princess's Pet Mouse, Loads of Palace Guards, Loads of Skelingtons, Loads of Weird Spinning Bitey Head Jobbies, Loads of Snakes, Loads of Traps, Literally Billions of Other Things, A Magic Carpet, A Giant Horse, Etc.

The Plot: Having defeated Jaffar in the previous game, the Prince of Persia now really *is* the Prince of Persia, because he's married to the Princess. And everyone lives happily ever after. Except they don't. One morning, the Prince enters the throne room and finds his place by the

One of the reasons why the Prince of Persia is now able to crawl should be painfully obvious even to the terminally stupid.

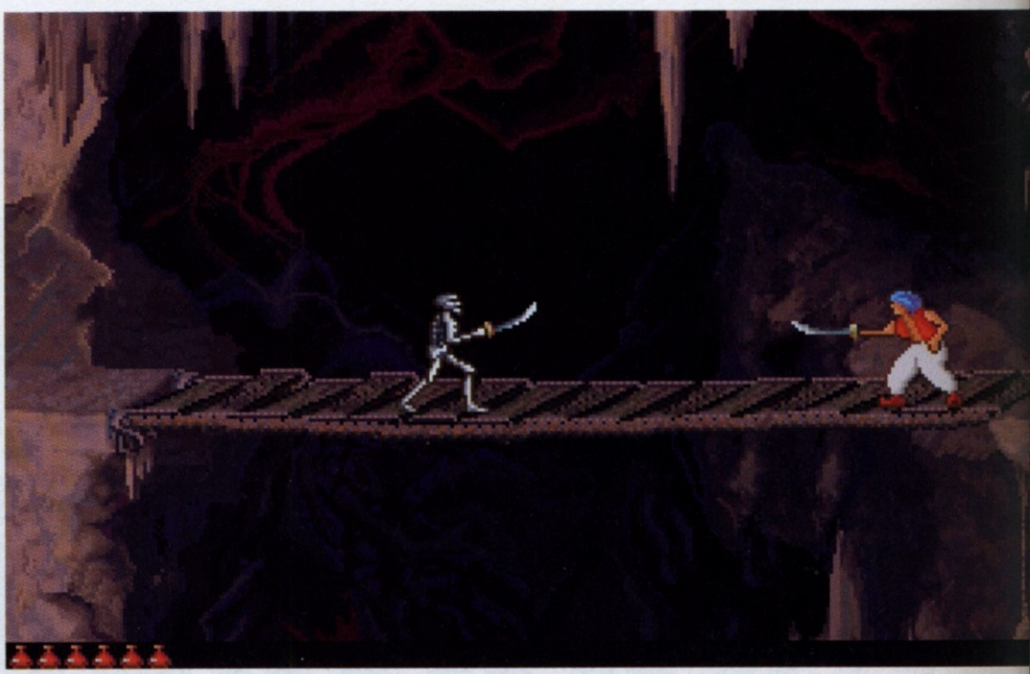


The other reason why he can now crawl should be equally obvious.

A spinning bitey ninja head jobbie. (To use the Latin terminology).

Run away! Run away! Run you ponce, run for your lily livered life!!!

Er, actually maybe you should have stood your ground and fought.



Still, you're not going to be able to run past this one, you big jessie: the skelington taunts you over your blue-rinse hairdo.

Princess's side taken by somebody else. It's the Grand Vizier Jaffar, who's been up to his magic tricks again, having disguised himself as the Prince. The real Prince (nobody recognises him now) is grabbed by the Sultan's guards and things suddenly start to look a little dicey... so, breaking free, the Prince leaps through the stained glass window onto the Palace rooftop. Everyone is in pursuit, and this is how the game starts.

The Game: The graphics have greater diversity than the original *Prince Of Persia*. There are exterior scenes (as you'll have seen from the screenshots), and the five environments contained in the game are totally different to one another (in a samey sort of a way though, if you know what I mean). And there are 15 levels as opposed to 12. Where *Prince Of Persia 2 really* differs from the original game, however, is in the fighting department: the Prince's foes follow him from screen to screen, and there's often more than just one nasty at a time to be disposed of. (At one point I found myself being chased by six skelingtons.) Another difference is in the scene setting. There's a brilliantly rendered intro with changing static screens and digitised narration – a bit like an American *Jackanory*. Throughout the game, at certain key points, it comes back to let you know what's going on elsewhere. And there are dream sequences too. And the acting? Not bad actually: certainly better than Lord British's 'We must... send them... *through* [the pillars]' speech at the beginning of *Ultima VII Part 2*. (Mind you, none of this will be of interest to you if you haven't got a Sound Blaster).

The Animation: Just as good as its illustrious predecessor with one exception. Now, I wasn't totally sure about this fact (because I'd played the original game on every single format, from PC to Game Boy, and had become a bit muddled as to which was which), but my very first thought was 'Eh? It seems a bit slower.' But like I said, I wasn't sure. However, on loading the game in the office, Laurence (Dep Ed) immediately said: 'It's slower'. So there you go. Confirmation. But it's not nightmarishly slow, and anyway, I suspect the slow-down was necessary due to the fact that there's often a hell of a lot going on one screen (the designers may have set a minimum frame rate to avoid the animation speed irregularities that occasionally cropped up in the last game. Or something). *(I don't actually think he knows what he's talking about. Ed).*

The Interaction: The same as before, but with the two new moves I mentioned earlier and slightly harder logic problems. Also, worth mentioning, there are often many routes to the same goal.

The Addictiveness: While it's still bloody addictive, I'd have to conclude that *Prince Of Persia 2* isn't *quite* as addictive as the original. Or for me it's not, anyway. Why? It's a tricky old one, and that's for sure. Let me think. Um. Well, maybe it's because *Prince Of Persia 2* is much harder, so there are loads more points at which you get killed. What this means, of course, is that you're forced to restart levels far more frequently. In the original game the forced restarts happened at a frequency which nurtured that doggedly determined feeling of 'I'm going to get that bit right if it takes me all year'; frustration never quite gave way to annoyance, and so you were addicted. In *Prince Of Persia 2*, however, annoyance does occasionally creep in. Let's put it this way, whilst playing *Prince Of Persia 1* I very often used the 'F' word. Whilst playing *Prince Of Persia 2* I graduated to the 'C' word. Know what I mean? Still, one man's meat is another man's poison and all that, and seeing as tolerance levels for these things vary greatly it's even possible that you'll actually find this second offering *more* addictive than the first. I didn't. PZ

Where is Salman Rushdie?

A question many a Muslim would like answered... and I am now in the morally dubious but quite enjoyable position of being able to grass him up. He's in this game. He has a new identity, but he's fooling nobody. He is, to be totally specific, the Grand Vizier Jaffar! Go gettim, boys... he called your God a poof!

Salman? Salman? We've got some Cat Stevens records for you.

Hey, there he is! Quick! Okay, read him his rights, Mohammed!

PC ZONE specs

Minimum Memory: 2Mb
Minimum Processor: 286
Minimum Speed: 10MHz
Installation: Essential
Minimum Hard Disk: 6.5Mb
Minimum Graphics: VGA, MCGA
Sound Cards: Sound Blaster, Sound Blaster Pro, Pro Audio Spectrum, Ad-Lib, Roland, Disney Sound Scource
Controls: Keyboard, Joystick
Comments: Requires DOS 3.1 or higher

PC ZONE score

I reckon they could have done more with it, but it's a corker nevertheless.

89

Price: £39.99 **Out:** Now
Publisher: Broderbund/ Electronic Arts
Telephone: 0753 549442

PREMIER MANAGER

Patrick McCarthy, his face red as a beetroot, staggered into the office in a green sweatshirt and started jumping up and down, pointing violently around the room and kissing strangers. That's Method Reviewing for you.

Good to see that in the lower divisions teams are cultivating the skills and strategies for which English football is justifiably famous: packing the defence and hoofing the long ball into the opponent's 18 yard box.

IN PERSPECTIVE

Championship Manager 93

Football Manager 2

The Manager

Premier Manager

PREMIER MANAGER is an unashamed attempt to entertain, at the expense of any great depth in the statistical and strategic departments. They admit as much in the introductory section of the manual. This doesn't explain why they have 'The most comprehensive and sophisticated football strategy game ever' written on the box. Perhaps they're just confused.

First impressions aren't favourable; the intro-screen music is a candidate for the worst ever. Combined as it is with a difficult-to-read code wheel with security numbers printed in gloss black on matt black, it seems likely to provoke a massive increase in domestic homicides, as frustrated families batter helpless gamesplayers to death in frantic attempts to silence 'The Tune From Hell'. It's graphically simplistic, and as basic tactically as it is visually: players are graded in just four areas – handling, tackling, passing and shooting – and there are only four playing styles – attacking, defensive, passing and long ball. It says much that selecting 'long ball' will usually reap the most success.

Premier Manager is a straight copy of an old Amiga game, and has had no new features added. The depiction of the match itself is woeful. A still picture takes up 75% of the screen, while a slider-bar at the top shows the ball's progress. To the right of this, a small box displays a series of static footballers, obviously produced by the artist whose work has previously been wisely restricted to the windows of betting shops.

Apart from the odd instruction to coaches, you largely play the game in an isolation bubble. Power is a lonely thing. Either that, or power is but a temporary camouflage for the inevitability of mortality – I can never decide. Anyway, other managers supposedly contact you from time to time on the 'phone, but I've been playing for nearly two seasons and nobody's rung me yet.

There's no interaction with players. I was horrified to find a message to the effect that 'Scargill has retired to a country pub'. He was 24 years old, we were five games from the end of the season and eight points clear at the top of the table when he left. Promotion to the football league was very much in our sights. I was sick as a proverbial, I can tell you. I made that lad. He was nothing when he came to this club. And not so much as a word when he left – just an anonymous message on my fax machine... we could have *talked*. (Sob.)

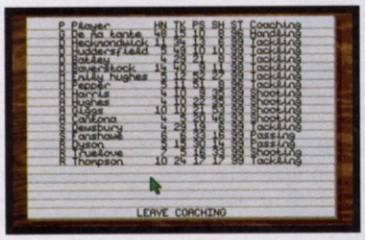
The financial side is simplistic, too. Your only task is to add advertisements to hoardings whenever they become vacant, and not spend too much. If you do well on both footballing and financial fronts, you might be offered a job with another team at the end of the season.

There's a distinct 'Monopoly Chance Card' element which enlivens your otherwise sedentary managerial existence. So far, my clubhouse has been broken into, a director has left, along with his £18,000 and I've been fined for bringing the game into disrepute. In addition, a large scale fraud has resulted in the loss of £22,000, and the police have informed me that they suspect arson was the cause of last night's fire. I really had no idea life was so action-packed.

Up to four players can play at once, but you have to take it in turns to play. There's nothing worse than having to wait around while an indecisive twerp faffs around pointlessly with a crap team that doesn't have a hope of improving; conversely, there's nothing worse than a loudmouthed cretin sitting behind you whining about how long you're taking when you're making the brilliant tactical changes that will tweak your crack squad into a perfectly balanced side. And watching multiple games on-screen at the same time is a complete nightmare – any time one player stops the game to make a substitution, everyone else's games stop, too.

'If you want a quick dabble with little or no realism but a fairly high affection factor, buy this. Or wait to see if it becomes a budget game.'

After all that, you probably think I'm going to say I hated it. Strangely, I didn't. This is obviously down to a serious personality defect on my part, but of the two football games reviewed this month, this one edged it on the fun front, though this is undoubtedly because it's easier to do well. It's tactically and graphically simplistic, and it has a glaring error in the gameplay – you can re-substitute substitutes – but I still grew to love my Conference team, and got genuinely excited during big cup wins against Manchester United and Crystal Palace. Of the two games reviewed in this month's issue, I'd say if you want an in-depth battle with intangibles and slow-paced realism, buy *Championship Manager '93*. If you want a quick dabble with little or no realism but a fairly high affection factor, buy this. Or better still, wait a while and see if it becomes a budget game, because it's not really worth the full price.



HANGING ON THE TELEPHONE

This telephone, with realistic dialling action, is your contact with the rest of the football world – or rather, a number of pieces of lined paper inscribed in identical handwriting (visual ingenuity isn't the game's strong point). The first time you click on it you'll be faced with the bare minimum of staff to ring. You can add specialist coaches as you see fit.

Club Directors

Only call these chaps if you want to resign, or 'take the Kenny' as it's known in the trade.

Head Team Coach

Ring your head coach to decide what form of 'specialist' training you want your players to undertake – handling, tackling, passing or shooting. You may employ other coaches later – it's best never to ring them, thus instilling in them a healthy fear for their worthless hides.

Physiotherapist

The more you pay your physiotherapist, the more players he (or more likely she, if statistics are anything to go by) can treat at the same time. If the injury is particularly bad, this is where you decide either to send them to Lilleshall, which is very expensive, or have them shot, which isn't.

Scout

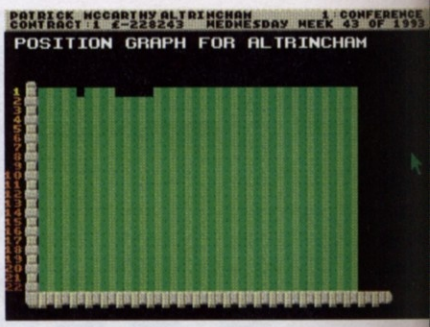
The scout looks for players for your team. You can only specify one skill you'd like them to be good at, how good you'd like them to be, and what division he should search for them in. The more you pay him, the more divisions he can search – but you aren't allowed to buy anyone more than one level higher than you. There's no way of storing players you like the look of for future reference, which is a bit crap.

Job Centre

You use the job centre to take on staff – somewhat illogically, you also ring it to raise or lower their wages once they work for you. You can take on specialist coaches and a youth team coach, who you'll use about as often as Victoria Gillick uses contraceptives.

Other Coaches

Other staff are hired through the job centre. Although these scum are not worth talking to, the more you pay them, the quicker your players will improve in the areas in which you wish them to train. They still won't improve quickly enough, making buying better players a preferable option.



You can say what you like about the McCarthy regime at Altrincham (and many people have) but there can be no questioning its faultless, almost mind numbing consistency. Conclusive proof that despite Taylor's set-backs and the fall of Beck there's life in the long ball yet.

PC ZONE score

Not recommended as a full-priced game – but it would make a good, fun budget game.

59

Price: £29.99 **Out:** Now
Published: Gremlin
Telephone: 0742 753423

PC ZONE specs

Minimum Memory: 640K
Minimum Processor: 286
Installation: Essential
Minimum Hard Disk: 1.4Mb
Minimum Graphics: VGA
Sound Cards: Ad-Lib, Sound Blaster, Roland
Controls: Keyboard, Mouse

WAR IN THE GULF

Here's sand in your eye, Saddam. Andrew Wright heads for Iraq in Empire's *Pacific Islands* sequel.

HERE'S A WARGAME based on the Gulf War they said. Well, there's a challenge said I, trying to sound interested. No, it's quite hard they said – the Iraqis actually fire back. Oh, yeah? Let's face it, in order to get any semblance of play balance you'd have to remove the guns from the American tanks and make the Allied soldiers walk. Or perhaps let the odd Iraqi plane get up into the air. And bang goes the realism.

Actually I was dead wrong – *War In The Gulf* is about the *second* Gulf War and it doesn't take place until 1995. If my first half dozen attempts at the first scenario are anything to go by, the Iraqis won't do too badly in the replay either.

We're talking about a follow up to a follow up, of course. The original game in the series was *Team Yankee*, based on a Soviet invasion of Europe (those were the days), and that was followed by *Pacific Islands*. *Islands* had much the same game play but with many more scenarios and a slightly different colour scheme. Both worked in much the same way too – you take your 16 strong mixed force of tanks and mechanised armour through a series of well-designed scenarios, with varying objectives and enemy counter-attacks. If you fail one scenario, you have to do it again until you get it right. No such luck in real life, I fear.

Nothing much has changed in the third part of the trilogy, which probably isn't a bad thing. In terms of appearance, the only way *War In the Gulf* differs from its ancestors is the new colour scheme; the tanks are all decked out in a tasteful sand colour, the ground is, well, sandy, and the hills are yellow. Oh and we mustn't forget the flaming oil thingies. You know, the big pipes with fire coming out of the top? Couldn't find the right word in my thesaurus – or even the manual for that matter – but you can't miss them, especially when you're using infra-red sights.

War In The Gulf runs on any PC, even XTs, which is a refreshing change for those who can manage to live quite happily without the latest hi-tech hardware. It runs straight from the single high density disk that it's supplied on so you don't need to scrape around for hard disk space. I don't know about you, but I'm fed up with throwing CorelDRAW! off my hard disk every time something a bit tasty comes along. What's more you don't have to strip down your AUTOEXEC.BAT file every time you want to play the game. It doesn't need expanded memory and it only needs 550K of free conventional memory so you can keep half a dozen TSRs in memory and still play the game quite happily.

I know what some of you are thinking, though. In these days of bigger and bigger games and rapidly expanding hard disks, I'll bet the first thing you look at is the number of disks you get for your money. Well, I've got news for you – it is perfectly

LET 'EM ROLL

This is a scenario from the first island. The objective is to support the village to the South where other US armoured units are stationed. Unfortunately there's an air strip with choppers and several roadblocks...

The four units are assigned various roles in map mode.

THERE'S INTROS & THERE'S INTROS

Considering the whole game comes on one disk, the intro isn't a bad effort. It's got animation, of sorts, digitised monosyllabic speech and some truly riveting dialogue...

(Top) Look I'm telling you, I'm in the air force now, my call sign is Red Leader and I don't talk to Muppets.

(Above Right) Me in my virtual reality suit. I'm sure I'd never say that though.

(Right) Looks like a tank to me – the long thing is probably the gun.

(Below Right) Even I can tell there are two of them. Don't they take eye tests in the US Army?

First blood – Team Kuwait Unit 1 attacks the airstrip and finds it heavily defended. The brown blob will be revealed as a chopper.

possible to get a fully animated intro with digitised speech and a good, playable game with stacks of scenarios and sound effects onto one measly little disk.

Installation is pretty basic, as you'd expect, but once the game starts, you can watch the animated intro or hit a key to consign it to electronic neverland and get straight on with the action. Animated intros seem like a lot of wasted programming time to me – the reviewer plays it once to see what it's like, the production staff take screen shots to prove it's still there and whoever buys it probably runs through it once just to see what they've paid for. Actually, what he's paid for is for some programmer to take time off the serious business of coding a game to have some fun with sound and graphics and show off to his mates. The one in *War In The Gulf* is no better or worse than a thousand others. Do yourself a favour, watch it once and forget it.

Tracks away

The first thing you do is pick your man and move on to the briefing where you can get to grips with the plot and plan your moves beforehand, with all the time in the world. You can also plan artillery strikes and lay mines in some scenarios. Next comes the vehicle recognition phase where you have to correctly identify three armoured vehicles. This is a puzzle because there are only eight types in the game (four US and four Iraqi) and it's not too hard to remember which is which after a couple of games. If it's meant to be copy protection, it's hardly worth the effort.

Then it's over to the armament screen where you can completely customise your teams (with one eye on the all-important bank balance that controls your re-supply and repair) or simply take the default set-up. You can also purchase rest and relaxation to improve morale or repair vehicles to make them more efficient. This is only useful after the first mission though. Be warned too, that once something is selected, it can't be undone.

There's a tutorial scenario which introduces you to the game control icons or brushes up your skills, depending on whether or not you've played before. After that there are 25 scenarios and five different islands to conquer.

The game centres around the quadrant screen displaying the four units at once, or the individual unit screen which has roughly the same display but for only one unit. The other three are left to fend for themselves for a while in this mode.

The quadrant screen is a bit like watching four TVs at once except worse in that you can't just watch dumbly while your armour gets recycled by the Iraqis. In unit mode things are a lot easier to operate, but it can be disconcerting to hear the sound of explosions and not know which unit is in the proverbial.

There's a strong strategic element to the game in that it's up to you to send your four teams to wherever you decide in whatever formation you decide. While they will defend themselves, they're pretty pathetic at it and if you don't help units out, there'll be a lot of letters to write.

In arcade mode you can choose normal vision or ☞

'In these days of rapidly expanding hard disks, I'll bet the first thing you look at is the number of disks you get for your money. Well, I've got news for you – it is perfectly possible to get an animated intro with digitised speech and a playable game with stacks of scenarios and sound effects onto one little disk.'

IN PERSPECTIVE

Not as technically accurate as *M1*, perhaps, but more fun than either *Battle Command* or *Sherman M4*.

Battle Command

M1 Tank Platoon

Sherman M4

War In The Gulf

☞ infra-red – the main advantage of the latter is that you can see through your own protective smokescreen but the Iraqis can't. The disadvantage is that you can't easily see where you are in relation to the various landmarks. Destroying opposing armour is pure arcade action and the mouse is definitely the best method of control. It's just point, click and boom, as the electronic gadgets do their thing and another Iraqi tank is turned neatly into scrap. The noises are good too and I just love the machine gun.

But if the shooting is relatively easy, at least within reasonable ranges, the strategy isn't. It takes at least half a dozen attempts at a scenario before you realise which way the enemy are coming from and, although this tends to remove some of the surprise element, there's nothing easy about it. There is more depth to the gameplay too. Destroy objectives quickly and fewer reinforcements arrive, making it easier to complete the mission. Good strategy pays twice over and it's this that offers the lasting appeal.

Team Yankee was a bit too easy so *Pacific Islands* was made much harder and *War In The Gulf* is harder still so you'll have plenty of long-term action for your money. There is much more scenery, from grounded helicopters to flaming oil wells that you have to cap. All the buildings can be destroyed but 'collateral' damage isn't rewarded and your funds can suffer if you're too gung-ho with the high explosives.

Empire have built another excellent game on a solid foundation. They've added plenty of new features without overcomplicating the tried and tested game system. It takes a bit of time and patience to master but it's well worth the effort. The graphics don't quite stand up against those in newer games but that's a small price to pay for a game that runs from a single disk and offers a month or more of late nights. Z

PC ZONE specs

Minimum Memory: 640K
Minimum Processor: XT/AT
Minimum Speed: None specified
Installation: Optional
Minimum Hard Disk: 1.5Mb
Minimum Graphics: EGA/VGA
Sound Cards: Sound Blaster, Ad-Lib, Roland or PC speaker
Controls: Keyboard, Mouse, Joystick
Comments: DOS 3.0 or higher

PC ZONE score

Another great set of blood-thirsty missions for one of the most playable 3D battle sims ever.

81

Price: £34.99 **Out:** Now
Published: Empire Software
Telephone: 081 343 9143

Quadrant view shows what each unit is up to – provided your brain's capable of pre-emptive multitasking.

Normal vision is clearer but no good if there's smoke. Unit 3 blew this roadblock away in no time.

Most of the action is behind us now.

SOUND GALAXY

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8-bit COMPARISON

	MONO			STEREO	
	AZTECH SOUND GALAXY BX II	CREATIVE SOUND BLASTER VERSION 2.0	AZTECH SOUND GALAXY NX II	CREATIVE SOUND BLASTER PRO II	AZTECH SOUND GALAXY NX PRO EXTRA
No Of Sound Standards	2	2	4	3	5
AdLib	●	●	●	●	●
Sound Blaster Version 2	●	●	●	●	●
Sound Blaster Pro II				●	●
Covox Speech Thing			●		●
Disney Sound Source			●		●
FM Synthesiser - OPL2	●	●	●		
FM Synthesiser - OPL3				●	●
Manual Volume Control	●	●	●	●	●
Digital Software Volume Control			●	8 STEPS	16 STEPS
Digital Bass & Treble Control			●	●	
Sampling Rate, Recording Up To:	23KHz	15KHz	23KHz	44.1KHz	44.1KHz
Sampling Rate, Playback Up To:	44.1KHz	44.1KHz	44.1KHz	44.1KHz	44.1KHz
Game Port, With MIDI Option	●	●	●	●	●
Dynamic Filtering For Better Sound	●		●		●
CD Audio In	●		●		●
Can Use Microphone And CD During Digital Playback	●		●	●	●
SMT Board For Better Reliability	●		●	●	●
Free Speakers	●		●		●
CD-ROM Interface (AT-Bus)					
Panasonic Interface			●	●	●
Mitsumi Interface					●
Sony Interface					●
CD-ROM Interface (SCSI)					OPTION
Microphone AGC Amplifier	●		●	●	●
Stereo Microphone Input					●
Software Selectable IRQ, DMA & Address Setting Configuration Retained When Power Off			●		●
Mixer Support From More Than One Source During Recording	●		●		●
Built-In Amplifier	●	●	●	●	●
Stereo Lines In And Out				●	●

16-bit COMPARISON

	STEREO				
	AZTECH SOUND GALAXY NX PRO 16	CREATIVE SOUND BLASTER 16 ASP	MEDIAVISION PRO AUDIO SPECTRUM 16	AZTECH BUSINESS AUDIO BOARD	MICROSOFT M'SOFT WINDOWS SOUND SYSTEM
No Of Sound Standards	6	2	2	2	1
AdLib	●	●	●	●	
Sound Blaster Version 2	●	●	●		
Sound Blaster Pro II	●				
Microsoft Windows Sound System	●			●	●
Covox Speech Thing	●				
Disney Sound Source	●				
FM Synthesiser - OPL3	●	●	●	●	●
Digital Software Volume Control	●	●	●	●	●
Digital Bass & Treble Control	●	●	●	●	●
CD Quality Sampling Rate, Record & Playback Up To:	44.1KHz	44.1KHz	44.1KHz	44.1KHz	44.1KHz
Game Port, With MIDI Option	●	●	●		
Dynamic Filtering For Better Sound	●	●	●	●	●
CD Audio In	●	●	●	●	
Can Use Microphone And CD During Digital Playback	●	●	●	●	●
CD-ROM Interface (AT-Bus)					
Panasonic Interface	●	●		●	
Mitsumi Interface	●			●	
Sony Interface	●			●	
CD-ROM Interface (SCSI)	OPTION		●	OPTION	
Microphone AGC Amplifier	●		●	●	●
Stereo Microphone Input	●			●	●
Software Selectable IRQ, DMA & Address Setting Configuration Retained When Power Off	●				
Mixer Support From More Than One Source During Recording	●	●	●	●	●
Option For Upgrade To 16-bit Wave-Table Synthesis	●	●			
Stereo Lines In And Out	●	●	●	●	●

8-bit MONO
2 SOUND STANDARDS

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- *2 Sound Standards*
  AdLib, Sound Blaster v.2
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- *Dynamic Filtering:*
  For Better Sound Reproduction
- *CD Audio In:*
  Direct Audio Connection from your CD-ROM into the Card
- *Mixer Support:*
  Recording and Playback from Multiple Sources
- *Built-In Amplifier*
- *MIDI Interface*
- *FREE Dynamic Microphone from Silica*

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8-bit MONO
4 SOUND STANDARDS

SOUND GALAXY NXII

- *8-bit Mono Sound Card with CD ROM Interface*
- *4 Sound Standards*
  AdLib, Sound Blaster v.2, Covox Speech Thing, Disney Sound Source
- *FREE Speakers*
- *CD-ROM Interface (Built-In) For:*
  Panasonic Drives
- *Software Configuration Settings in Eeprom:*
  Card Doesn't Reset on 'Power-Off'
- *Software Control of Volume, Bass & Treble*
- *Built-In Amplifier & MIDI Interface*
- *FREE Dynamic Microphone from Silica*

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Ref: SOU 1024 +VAT = £92.83

8-bit STEREO
5 SOUND STANDARDS

SOUND GALAXY NX PRO EXTRA

- *8-bit Stereo Sound Card with CD ROM Interface*
- *5 Sound Standards*
  AdLib, Sound Blaster v.2, Sound Blaster Pro II, Covox Speech Thing, Disney Sound Source
- *FREE Speakers*
- *CD-ROM Interface (Built-In) For:*
  Panasonic, Mitsumi & Sony Drives - Optional Upgrade to SCSI
- *Software Configuration Settings in Eeprom:*
  Card Doesn't Reset on 'Power-Off'
- *Software Control of Volume, Bass & Treble*
- *Built-In Amplifier & MIDI Interface*
- *FREE Dynamic Microphone from Silica*

8-bit STEREO + CD ROM INTERFACE **£99**

Ref: SOU 1046 +VAT = £116.33

16-bit STEREO
2 SOUND STANDARDS

SOUND GALAXY BUSINESS AUDIO BOARD

- *16-bit Stereo Sound Card with CD ROM Interface*
- *2 Sound Standards*
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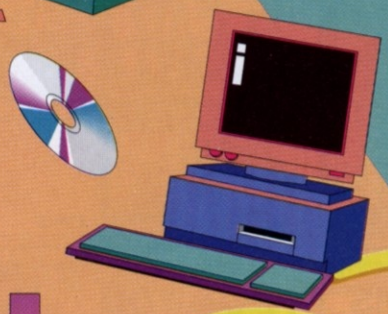

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PLUS 10 SETS OF *TEAM YANKEE, PACIFIC ISLANDS, WAR IN THE GULF*

TUNE IN FOR some great sounds and some even better software. To celebrate the launch of *War In The Gulf*, (reviewed on page 48) which is the third in their series of tank sims, Empire are offering some pretty smart prizes.

For the winner there's this truly stylish field radio. Resplendent with FM, LW and MW this radio is designed in the style of the golden age of adventure when heroes were gentlemen, stereos were gramophones, radios were wirelesses and everyone spoke out of the corner of their mouths on account of their stiff upper lips.

Ten so-lucky-it's-untrue runners up will get their hands on all three of Empire's excellent tank games. That's a copy of *Team Yankee, Pacific Islands* and *War In The Gulf*; enough action to keep you busy for hours.

Young guns (go for it)

So how do you get one of these fab prizes? Well you have to win the competition don't you? And to do that you have to enter. Simply fill in the answers to the following three questions on the form below and send it to:

Radio Days, *PC Zone*, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

1. Empire's first tank sim, *Team Yankee*, was named after:
a) A film
b) A book
c) An evening in the pub

2. The codename for the military operation in the Gulf was:
a) Operation Desert Storm
b) Operation Desert Song
c) Operation Oil Company

3. The FM in radio wavelengths stands for:
a) Free Modules
b) Frequency Modulation
c) Frequent Modules

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Answers: 1 ☐ **2** ☐ **3** ☐

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Rules

- **Employees of Dennis Publishing or Empire will get little in the way of tanks if caught entering.**
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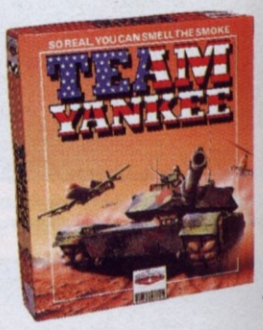
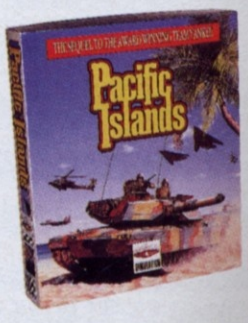
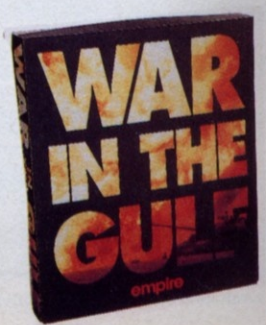
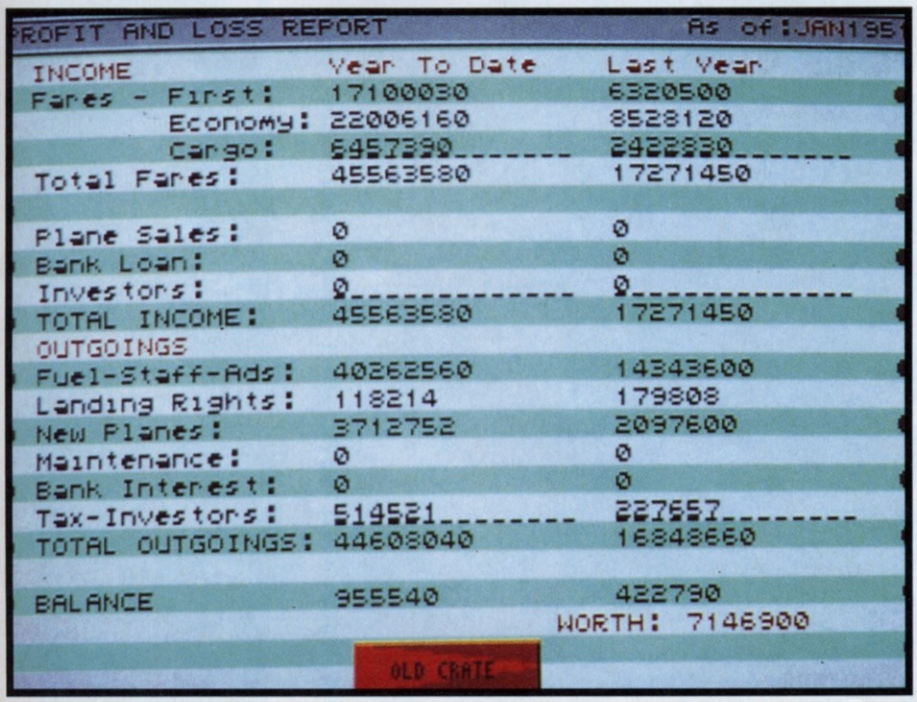






Air Bucks v1.2

Ah the airly days, only a couple of planes, a handful of airports and flying each journey as if it was our last. We were poor, our in-flight food was appalling but we were happy.



An accountant's idea of intense eroticism.

If Toby Finlay was a penniless American, this introduction would contain an amusing jokette relating *Air Bucks* to his condition (of having only air for bucks, you see). Sadly he isn't, which makes for a frankly substandard intro.

AIR BUCKS V1.2 IS, not very surprisingly, a kind of enhanced version of *Air Bucks*. So what is *Air Bucks*? Well it's a sort of Richard Branson/Freddie Laker (or whoever) simulator. A strategy game based on setting up an airline in 1946 and running it through until the present day. (Or going broke in the process.) The original version was fairly stuffed with charts, numbers and stats, but not enough for the American market. This enhanced version has more numbers, more trading and an all round more corporate feel.

Luton airport

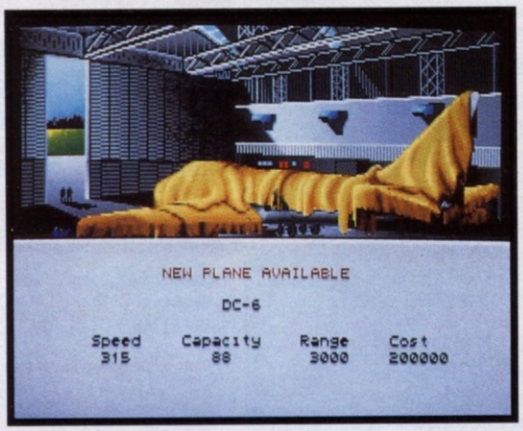
Let's get one thing straight from the start. If you don't feel even the slightest hint of excitement at the sight of a balance sheet, or if your sap doesn't even start to rise at the sight of a ledger, you're not going to get far in this game. It's a business sim without very much in the pick up and go, instantly playable stakes. It loads, and you're presented with a map-screen. The map, however unsexy, is fundamental to the game. It is here that you can peruse the airports to which you have landing rights and indulge in an assortment of other aviation-related activities. When you begin the game, you possess landing rights to only one airport – Miami – and control one of four airlines who also have their bases at Miami. The other three companies can be either human or computer controlled but, because the game runs in real-time and there are no 'turns' as such, human players have to decide amongst themselves when each gets a go of the mouse. This option obviously requires consideration for others, patience, and a calm, selfless nature, which made it pretty redundant as far as I was concerned.

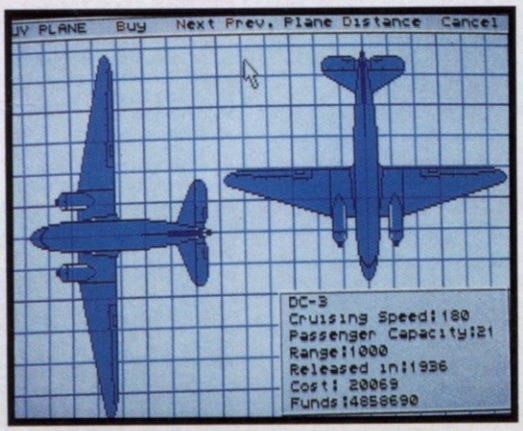
The first course of action, regardless of the number of participants, is to procure some more landing rights, since no landing rights means no landing, and if you can't go anywhere except from Miami to Miami, you're going to have a bit of a crappy airline (then again, it would certainly save money on fuel). Seeing as the DC-3 you have at the outset is to aviation what the wheelbarrow is to Formula One racing, you have to choose a destination within 1000 miles. Having chosen a site you cough up the dosh and, after a month or so, the deeds come through provided your bid was successful.

I'm Mandy, fly me

The rest of the game goes something like this:

1. Decide on ticket price for your destination.
2. Realise you're losing several thousand dollars per flight.





PC ZONE score

A potentially interesting variation on a theme which fails largely due to being more than a tad unexciting.

49

Price: £34.99 **Out:** Now
Published: Impressions
Telephone: 071 351 2133

PC ZONE specs

Minimum Memory: 640K
Minimum Processor: 386
Minimum Speed: 16MHz
Installation: Essential
Minimum Hard Disk: 3Mb
Minimum Graphics: VGA
Sound Cards: Ad-Lib, Sound Blaster
Controls: Keyboard, Microsoft Mouse

Some of the life and death issues with which you must grapple in Air Bucks. Buying landing rights, dealing with inclement weather (whilst struggling to think up satiric political captions) and buying new planes. Notice how the plane, having seen the storm clouds over Brussels, has sensibly invested in a nice sensible waterproof coat.

3. Choose a new price.
4. Repeat steps two and three about 50 times until your predicted income is no longer preceded by a large minus sign.
5. Wait.
6. When some moolah starts rolling in, buy a new plane.

> 'For those who love the world of business so much that they want to spend their leisure hours indulging in it.'

7. Think briefly that building an airline fleet from scratch might constitute a fun idea for a game.
8. Realise that the amount of number juggling involved in pricing tickets and buggering around refitting planes, only to have to alter all the pricing again, constitutes a feasible alternative to medieval east European torture devices.
9. Buy some more landing rights, foolishly thinking that the game will become more interesting as your aerial empire expands. Watch your accounts get redder than a particularly brightly hued rooster submerged in three gallons of scarlet fine emulsion paint.
10. Decide you're really not cut out for the airline industry. Think 'sod it' and get a job at MacDonald's.

You might think I'm being rather harsh, but compared to the likes of *Sim City* and *Civilisation*, *Air Bucks* is rather inaccessible. It does have a few nice touches – including the ability to write your own slogan (but since this has no effect on the game it's a completely pointless nice touch) and the historical accuracy of the events which occur between 1946 and the present day (like the release of new planes) – but whereas in *Sim City* one could glean a certain sense of achievement from creating a metropolis from a patch of mud (or a patch of mud from a metropolis in my case), it's just not the same when all you're staring at is a nest of red route lines. Due to an extremely sluggish menu system and pretty lacklustre visuals and sound, unless you're a total aeroplane fetishist and love the idea of being around to see the release of the DC-4, you should go so far out of your way to avoid this game that you'll probably end up in Luxembourg.

747 strangers in the night

According to the manual, much of *Air Buck*'s appeal and 'fun' is in deciding 'Whether you wish to try a cheaper price with less luxuries, or go for the best in quality with less passengers'. Hmmm. It's probably not the best way to woo would-be players, is it? After all, there can't be that many people who would instantly say, 'Cheaper price? Less passengers? Wowee! Saturday nights will never be the same'. (Actually, our good editor probably would.) That's the whole problem with the package: after the initial thrill of reaching the first year and being told that your fleet is of ample size and so on, the game continues and becomes repetitive jolly quickly. There isn't even an option for inciting dirty tricks campaigns – even the laughably bad *Oil Imperium* offered that. For those who love the world of business so much that they even want to spend their leisure hours indulging in it, then there is quite a lot of game here. Plenty of aspects to keep an eye on. However for the casual browser this lacks both accessibility and any real excitement. Although a die-hard fan might argue that the sense of prosperity and development can rival that of *Sim Earth* et al, the crucial sense of conquest and achievement is more missing than a rattlesnake. *(That's hissing you idiot. Ed.)* Z

IN PERSPECTIVE

Mega-Lo-Mania is more fun, *Sim City* and *Sim Earth* are more interesting, *Railroad Tycoon* is better executed and all of the above are considerably more fun.

Air Bucks v1.2 [redacted]
Mega-Lo-Mania [redacted]
Railroad Tycoon [redacted]
Sim City [redacted]

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(Right) Chess Maniac will try to distract you while it steals your pieces. Here's an amusing chappie with a bomb.
(Right Centre) Pawn takes pawn in stunning action sequence. Not.
(Far Right) Bishop takes queen – the scene is unsuitable for a family magazine.

Chess Maniac 5 Billion & 1

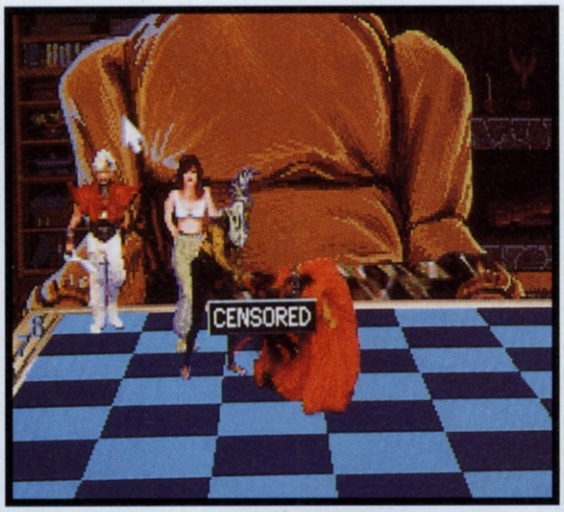
Mark Burgess on the Chess program where Ruy Lopez meets Russ Meyer.

CHESS PROGRAMS used to be so simple. Chess players had a reputation for wearing Oxfam jackets and having a cavalier attitude to personal hygiene. The programs respected this and were generally graphically undistinguished but with a lot of power. They were written, after all, for and by people who thought that DOS was self-explanatory.

Things changed with *Battlechess*. There was animation and even humour. People murmured 'not quite the place for that sort of thing' as if someone had worn a *Viz* T-shirt to a funeral. The latest incarnation of *Battlechess* came on eight HD disks. I said at the time (Issue 2) that I thought this was over the top. Silly me. *Chess Maniac* comes on 12 HD disks and needs 27Mb free on the hard drive. It also makes serious demands on your system; you need a 486 with at least 3Mb to get anywhere with this program.

Installation from disks takes half an hour and decompressing the files takes another 30 minutes. Not something to load up if you just want a quick game.

Never mind, you can while away the time by reading the manual – you know, the one that's 'so funny you might read it'. 'Our Mighty War Machine is turning aside its craving for destruction', I read, as adverts for Spectrum HoloByte's other programs *Falcon 3* and *A 10 Warthog* came on the screen. 'We've learned to embrace our former enemies... rainforests are being preserved... You, as a member of this great nation, have the opportunity to make a profound difference.' I'm not a member, but I read on anyway: 'Stop software piracy'. Eh? I read back to see if I'd missed a crucial link, or even a paragraph. No. Boy, I thought, this *is* wacky.



The waiting game

During the hour it took for the game to install my PC had attracted quite a crowd. Eight people, with differing senses of humour, watched the 'hilarious' opening sequence without even a smile. I set up the computer to play itself, so we could all enjoy the 'sizzling video animation' that accompanies every capture. We watched the pieces go through their small repertoire of moves. Not a giggle. And this group included people like Mr Cursor who laughs when he hears the phrase 'number twos'.

People soon began to drift away, muttering '20, definitely 20' under their breaths. Just Laurence and I were left to watch an end game with the kings, a white pawn and a black rook. The rook didn't attack either of the white pieces and the pawn didn't try for promotion. The kings minced from square to square until, sick of it, we pressed ALT X to end the game. It dumped us back into DOS.

'People soon began to drift away muttering "20, definately 20".'

The animation is digitised video. It is not as clear or smooth as that of *Battlechess 4000* – which was based on stop animation of clay models. Although running in SVGA, the definition was not good. Faces were particularly ill-defined. The combat sequences between the two sides – Persian and Medieval – are the selling point of the game. No one in the office thought these very funny and the extreme graphic violence of some of the capture sequences was too much even for me. Call me a wimp if you like, but I don't like watching a woman being stabbed repeatedly in the back.

Carry on Capablanca

Before you start, the program will ask if you'd rather be on a desert island with a 'beautiful, voluptuous woman' a 'gorgeous hunk of a man' or a 'long haired Tibetan mountain goat'. This affects the game slightly, in that your chosen companion congratulates you when you win.

The other difference the choice of sex object makes is whether the game says: 'I slept with your wife last night, Dan', or 'I slept with your husband last night, Dan'. (It doesn't say: 'I slept with your goat last night, Dan' – this is specist.) Why does the computer call you Dan? Well, this is part of its wacky, kooky sense of humour. Do you remember an American Vice President called Dan Quayle? Yes, I know it was ages ago. Anyway, the game's habit of always, I mean always, calling you 'Dan' is a reference to Quayle. Not very topical and not very funny.

Clocks and blindfolds

I invited Andy Butcher for a quick game. He prefers to play the 3D view, so we opted for that. It took him a quarter of a minute before he clicked on the magic pixel that enabled him to move his piece. Fortunately, you can rotate the board in all directions. I found that I had to move it to a bird's eye view to use it easily. From the menu you can open up a small board – in 2D – and move from that. Or you can switch to the full 2D display – in which case you will lose the animation.

You can configure the screen anyway you want – up to a full 'war room' set up with clocks, captured pieces and move record. Notation can be algebraic, co-ordinate or descriptive. The voice will tell you what's going where in any of them. I liked this bit.

Other options are fairly standard, allowing you to load and save games, set up problems and so forth. There is a mate finder (which couldn't find fool's mate) and a blindfold option where the pieces of the other side (or both sides) are hidden.

A dekko under the bonnet

Here's a surprise. The chess engine, by Intelart, is a good and powerful one. There are ten levels of difficulty ranging from 'Beginner's Luck' to 'Tie Me Up and Whip Me!' I chose the last. It was a tough game and the computer spent ages thinking of its next move. In fact it spent so long thinking of its *first* move – a reply to my modest E4, the King's Gambit, the commonest opening move in Chess – that I used the 'Force Move' option. In fact, I used it frequently, as I had an appointment later on in the week.

Although the engine is good there is no database of games, or even a library of openings.

Learn from the manual

The manual opens with this hostage to fortune: 'So, you bought the ad. copy. You bought the hype. And now you done screwed up and bought the game. It's too late, you know.' Well, it's not too late for you, reader. Be told. Z

PC FOR THE PC

You should know what to expect; the box says: 'Warning Immature Content'. For once, the box tells the unvarnished truth. The programmers find big breasts and gays hilarious – just the idea of them.

The manual insults just about every nationality except the Americans – surprise – and the Chinese. Why the Chinese? I don't know. Ask the editor of the manual, Marisa Ong.

PC ZONE score

Falls between two stools – and I'm being very nice here.

60

Price: £44.99 **Out:** Now
Published: Spectrum HoloByte/ Microprose **Tel:** 0666 504326

PC ZONE specs

Minimum Memory: 560K base RAM plus 2Mb RAM with 1Mb EMS
Minimum Processor: 386
Minimum Speed: 25MHz
Installation: Essential
Minimum Hard Disk: 27Mb
Minimum Graphics: VGA
Sound Cards: Ad-Lib, Sound Blaster, Roland, Audio Spectrum, Disney and Tandy DAC.
Controls: Keyboard, Mouse – mouse recommended.
Comments: DOS 5 or higher.

Worlds Of Legend

'This is going to be a tricky game to review,' thought Duncan MacDonald, mainly because he couldn't find anything actually wrong with it. However, on the minus side he felt that... well, you'll find out, because we're going to have a court case: The Crown versus *Worlds Of Legend* (from Mindscape).

(Top left; exhibit one) The screen on which you choose, equip and name your four adventurers. (Top right; exhibit two) One of the spell mixing screens... the hand animates when you stir your potions. (Below, exhibit three) Bundle! Xthenion seems to be doing well, but then again people with silly names are often rather good at fighting.

Scene one: the prosecution

PROSECUTION: May I call the only witness in this travesty of justice? Mr Ranahaaan K'kaaanda (son of Zenehan).

RANAHAAAN: *(After being sworn in)*. Yes, I am Ranahaaan K'kaaanda, son of Zenehan, of the dark tribe from beyond the mountains (and beneath the waterfall).

PROSECUTION: Also known – correct me if I'm wrong – as Barry Buckworth... of Kent?

RANAHAAAN: Aye, I have been known by many names and have travelled to places such as ye couldst not even dream.

PROSECUTION: And you claim to be the most boring fantasy RPG computer games playing fanatic in the entire country?

RANAHAAAN: Aye. In this land and perhaps in others too. 'Tis no idle boast. Many have attempted to usurp me. They are now vapour in the mists of time.

PROSECUTION: Er, quite... your honour, if the witness may be shown exhibit A?

THE JUDGE: Proceed.

PROSECUTION: Ranahaaan K'kaaanda, do you recognise the article I am now holding?

RANAHAAAN: Aye, I do. 'Tis *Worlds Of Legend* from Mindscape... or 'tis its box, at least.

PROSECUTION: And you are familiar with the game itself.

RANAHAAAN: None are more so. I played the original *Legend* game while the sun rose and set a score times and ten. I did not eat for the duration. Nor did I sleep.

PROSECUTION: Excellent. Then perhaps you would explain to the jury why, in 1993, *Worlds Of Legend* still uses a simple isometric viewpoint: a viewpoint which, some might say, has had its day. A viewpoint, furthermore, which...

DEFENCE: Objection, your honour. My learned friend is leading the witness.

THE JUDGE: Objection sustained. Don't lead the witness.

PROSECUTION: I apologise, m'lud. Ummm. Mr K'kaaanda, let me put it to you that the point'n'click system within the dungeons is less intuitive than it might have been...

DEFENCE: Objection, m'lud.

THE JUDGE: Objection overruled.

PROSECUTION: ...And that the graphical content is of, shall we say, a limited nature?

RANAHAAAN: It is sufficient for my fantasy requirements. Besides, all characters within the game move along at a merry pace.

PROSECUTION: Yes, the character animation is very good. But let me put it to you that on opening (for instance) a chest – a chest which to the eye looks full of treasure – a search will often reveal nothing inside.

RANAHAAAN: Nought of *importance* I'll concur. However, 'tis only the impatient who wish all to be explained by pictures alone. The true journey should be in the mind.

PROSECUTION: But the interface, as I said, is not all it might have been. For instance, consider a switch on the wall that you want one of your party members to operate. Pointing *directly* at it will have no effect. Why? Because the program only deals in floor tiles, Mr Ranahaaan, only in floor tiles.

RANAHAAAN: And this is not palatable to you?

PROSECUTION: Indeed not. It is confusing.

RANAHAAAN: It takes an ounce of intelligence to follow a picture of a switch down from its isometric position and locate the floor tile upon which 'tis placed. I *have* this ounce of intelligence. You are underweight, it would seem. *(Smug RPG player's chortle)*.

PROSECUTION: *(Annoyed that Ranahaaan thought anybody would find his joke funny)*. The game is small.

RANAHAAAN: No! The game comes on one disk. This does not mean it is small. The locations are too numerous to mention. There are also interactive text screens, where one may banter with strangers... and trade.

PROSECUTION: Have you ever played *Ultima Underworld?* And do you not think that such a game has altered the aspirations of fantasy RPG players for ever.

(Left; exhibit four) Zothan has opened a chest which is clearly full. However, he informs you that he 'Sees nothing there' and that he 'Finds no treasure'. So, if an item is not treasure, it doesn't exist? Fair enough. In that case my car doesn't exist – and I'm glad, to be frank with you, because it was about to fail its MOT.

RANAHAAAN: Pah! Mere programming trickery. I refused to sully my computer with it. It is not real.

PROSECUTION: I conclude the prosecution m'lud.

Scene two: the defence

DEFENCE: If I may cross examine the only witness, m'lud?

THE JUDGE: Of course.

DEFENCE: Ranahaaan, you are a wizard of some note.

RANAHAAAN: That I am.

DEFENCE: And you would be aware if the spell section of a game were lacking in any way.

RANAHAAAN: So it is said.

DEFENCE: Then talk the jury through the spell section in *Worlds Of Legend*.

RANAHAAAN: Aaaaah, the spell section. Yes. Of your party of four explorers, one is a wizard. He requires ingredients, such as wing of bat, brimstone and mandrake (to name but three). He also requires runestones. All can be bought, or found. Once equipped with stones and mix, yon wizard can begin to prepare spells of all natures. He uses a bowl.

DEFENCE: A bowl.

RANAHAAAN: Aye, that is what I said. A bowl. The mage has several screens all of his own where his magical experiments can be carried out.

DEFENCE: And what spells can he 'invent'? In his 'bowl'?

RANAHAAAN: Anything he wishes of course – from a simple missile of Damage to... to... an example is necessary.

DEFENCE: Then please supply one. Address the jury though, not me.

RANAHAAAN: So be it. Using the correct mixing ingredients (which I shall keep a secret), a mage may use these runes in a spell: Heal, Antimage, Surround, Paralyse, Continuous, Damage, Missile and again Damage. When cast, this spell would heal the caster, award him temporary immunity from magic and transfer the effects of the latter part of the spell to the eight surrounding floor tiles, where continuous paralysis and damage would inflict themselves on any who were present. Furthermore, missiles of Magical Damage would be fired away from the eight floor tiles in directions directly away from the caster's location.

DEFENCE: It sounds like a complex spell.

RANAHAAAN: I am a complex adventurer. To me it is a simple spell.

DEFENCE: And while all this magic was... er, 'happening'. The other members of your party, they would be doing *what* exactly?

RANAHAAAN: They would be fighting in the way each knew best. My ninja would be ninja-ing, my berserker would be berserking and my bard would be singing a song... a song which would give heart to his gay fellows. Together they will become legends.

DEFENCE: I rest my case, m'lud.

Scene three: the summing up

THE JUDGE: Members of the jury. We have heard, ahem, both sides of the argument. We have learnt that *Worlds Of Legend* is a fantasy RPG with appealing, although perhaps basic, graphics. We have learnt that *Worlds Of Legend* is not the most modern of games, but have been assured by Mr Ranahaan K'kaaanda (son of Zenehan) that a game such as this appeals to folk who care little for mere 'technical trickery'... or indeed for the twentieth century. He assures us that for a game which comes on but one disk, *Worlds Of Legend* is not only large, but has a definitive spell section with scope for much experimentation. There are shops. There are battles. There are logic problems. Apparently there are amusing touches too. In short it would appear that, to a person of Mr K'kaaanda's disposition, *Worlds Of Legend* is an engrossing product with which one could while away many a moon. Others, however, may find it simply 'old fashioned'. Members of the jury, consider these facts and then pass your judgement. May the court please be upstanding.

'...an engrossing product with which one could while away many a moon.'

Scene four: the sentence

THE JUDGE: May the court be seated. Members of the jury, have you reached a verdict on which you are all agreed?

THE FOREMAN: I, Thorann Gandalf of Xantala, say that aye, we have reached agreement.

THE JUDGE: Then how should *Worlds Of Legend* be scored?

THE FOREMAN: We suggest you give it about 99 out of 100.

THE JUDGE: I will give it 73.

PC ZONE score

Perfectly reasonable but rather old fashioned fantasy RPG jobbie.

73

Price: £25.99 **Out:** Now
Published: Mindscape
Telephone: 0444 246333

PC ZONE specs

Minimum Memory: 560K
Minimum Processor: 8088
Minimum Speed: 10MHz
Installation: Essential
Minimum Hard Disk: 4Mb
Minimum Graphics: VGA, EGA, CGA
Sound Cards: Ad-Lib, Sound Blaster, Roland
Controls: Microsoft Mouse
Comments: Needs DOS 3.3 or higher

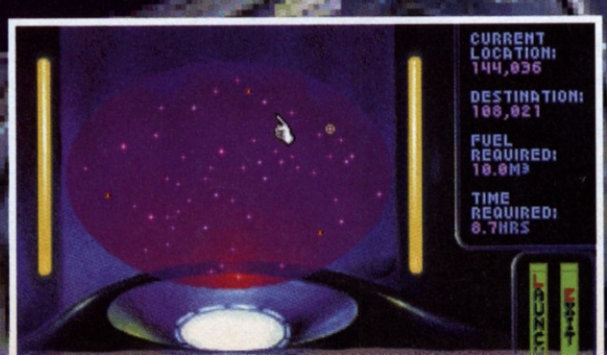
In the great tradition of baddies everywhere, the Skeetch attack you on sight, pausing only for a well-timed threat or two...

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

PROTOSTAR

In a world of chaos and uncertainty, it's nice to know that there are some things you can rely on. Such as if a space based game of knee trembling complexity comes into the office then it's going to end up in the hands of And, 'Ooh that looks boring, can I review it?' Butcher.

(Above) In orbit around one of the three Trading Outposts. Open fire for a laugh? Sadly you're not allowed to. (Right) The Sector map used to move from system to system.



IN PERSPECTIVE

Elite Plus is an obvious comparison for the 3D combat and trading, but it does show its age, and lacks any real direction. *Star Control 2* has more character interaction and a definite plot, but doesn't use 3D. *Wing Commander* was the first game to use the 'scalable bitmap thingies' style of graphics. Remember, though, that these are only comparative scores, and not ratings in their own rights.

Elite Plus

Protostar

Star Control 2

Wing Commander

IT'S ALWAYS THE SAME, isn't it? Somehow we manage to make it through all the petty wars, the threat of nuclear weapons, the environmental nightmare that our planet is becoming and *Take That*, only for some conquering alien race to decide to wipe us out. It's enough to make a grown man cry.

The aliens in question are the Skeetch, and they've rather nastily laid siege to the Gaea Sector (where Earth is). The fleets of the Human Alliance are managing to hold off the rampaging scum for the moment, but the other races that make up the Alliance are beginning to lose confidence, and if they desert humanity, then things could take a step towards racial genocide.

Luckily for everyone concerned, the defence forces have come up with a daring, bold and insanely dangerous plan. The Skeetch fleets' supply line runs through the frontier sector of Thule, home to four unallied alien races. If those races could

be convinced to join forces with humanity the supply line could be cut, the Skeetch forces destroyed and everyone would be invited to an absolutely monstrous party.

But how to go about this plan? Should they send their best ambassadors, alien contact specialists and negotiators? Nah – for a start that might actually work, and for another thing it would make for a boring game. Instead they send you. Alone.

Posing as the captain of a Newfront trading ship you must contact the four alien races and convince them to join with the Human Alliance. Along the way you have to make as much money as possible so you can divert cash to the needy defence forces. Getting a crew and upgrading your ship might also be good ideas.

So that's the plot out of the way. Now to the actual game. *Protostar* is a combination of many styles. The majority of it involves *Elite*-style 3D space flight and trading, but there ☞

THOSE ALIENS IN FULL

In addition to humans there are five main species involved in *Protostar*, varying from evil slimy scum to short, vaguely cute and endearing. It's always vital to know your alien...

THE SKEETCH

Every game needs its baddies, and the Skeetch fit the bill perfectly. They're vicious, ugly, slimy, two dimensional and totally set on galactic domination. It probably all goes back to some nasty childhood experience, and could have been easily solved if someone had just taken the time to talk to them and understand their desires. But that's tough, because the only way to deal with them now is from the firing end of a large gun.

THE GHEBRAANT

The Ghebraant are big insects with a 'hive mind' – each of them is merely a part of one huge consciousness. Imagine telepathic cockroaches with spaceships, and you're getting the rough idea. They tend to be a bit hard to get on with and rarely string more than three words together at a time. This is no doubt due to their 'alien thought processes'. Or at least it would be on *Star Trek: The Next Generation.*

THE VANTU

You know the kind of really smug, arrogant person that you take an instant dislike to? The kind of conceited basts who firmly believe themselves to be far better than everybody else alive? The Vantu are a whole race of 'em. Unfortunately they happen to be incredibly intelligent and one of the oldest races still in existence. Keeping them happy involves a level of crawling and subservience which would be hard on a worm's pride.

THE DERESTA

Looking something like a cross between a smurf, a muppet and George from *Rainbow*, the Deresta have all the social aptitude and self confidence that this mix would tend to suggest. They're shy, cowardly and insecure. They're also incredible scientists. In short, they're a race of swotty nerds. Having said that, they're easy to deal with – just be nice. And they're sort of endearing in a sick kinda way.

THE KAYNIK

The Kaynik are much more fun. A bunch of near-psychotic blue-furred carnivores, they're not really into trading or organised government or anything like that. What they do like is piracy. 'Why buy when you can take?' is their motto. Obviously this tendency to steal first and not talk at all (apart from the odd threat or two) makes them difficult to win over to your side, but life wouldn't be any fun if everything was easy.

☞ are elements of point'n'click adventure, strategy and role-playing thrown in. The game is controlled with the mouse – right-clicking cycles through the various actions possible (indicated by different cursors) and left-clicking on something performs the action chosen.

Protostar has a lot going for it. The interface is easy to use, and flying from place to place is simple to achieve, with no long hours of nothing happening. Graphically it's a very slick game, for the most part, with some excellently drawn aliens and atmospheric 'between section' screens. The sound ranges from adequate to really-quite-good-actually, and the music volume can be controlled independently of the sound effects – why all games don't have this feature I have no idea.

> 'The attention to detail is excellent throughout, and the game is full of "neat" touches'

Where it succeeds most is in its size and attention to detail. It's a big game, and there's no time limit to the main plot – as long as you keep sending enough dosh, the defence forces keep fighting. you can happily zoom around all over the place for ages. More importantly, though, it's obvious that a lot of thought has gone into it. The attention to detail is excellent throughout, and the game is full of 'neat' touches – the companies you deal with even have

their own little logos and jingles and the ability to discover and name new planets and life forms is a great idea. When talking to aliens the conversations are well written and believable, and the bartering section can be quite amusing, with you and your customer trading Arthur Daley-like pitches back and forth. The plotting is good, and the tasks you have to perform to gain the aliens' help are well-balanced and varied. And the final climax to the game is suitably... er... climactic

There are problems, of course. The main one is more a question of attitude – *Protostar* requires a good deal of patience. It's quite a slow-moving game, and will take time to play. The documentation takes the form of 'this is how the game works, everything else you have to discover for yourself', and so it takes a while to get into. There are long periods where you just fly around trading and making money, and it can be quite some time before you manage to get involved in the main plot. Even when you do, often you know roughly what you've got to do, but have no idea of how to go about it, which can be quite frustrating. Even the combat is slow, and not very sophisticated. If you want non-stop action and excitement, then you'll probably get bored quite quickly, so buy *X-Wing*. However, if you're willing to put some time in *Protostar* is a very well made game, and has a lot to it. It'll certainly keep you busy for a while. ZZ

GUNS, GUNS, GUNS (AND OTHER STUFF)

There are various ship systems that can be upgraded in *Protostar*, each with a rating from one to three. In the great tradition of daring heroes everywhere, your ship starts out with rating one in everything.

Engines

Well, they're engines. *(Really. I'd never have guessed. Ed.)* The bigger your engines, the faster you go, and the more efficiently you use fuel.
Interchangeable between Explorer and Starship.

Wave gun

A gun that waves at the enemy, overcoming them with neighbourly feelings. Okay, I'm lying. It fires in a big wave, and thus is easy to hit baddies with. It also does a lot of damage, but recharges slowly.
Starship only

Accel cannon

The opposite of the Wave Gun – rapid fire but harder to hit with and less damage.
Starship only

Pursuit pod

Or guided missile, as everybody else would call them. Not upgradable, but a guaranteed hit, and loads of damage. Uses 10 cubic meters of fuel, though.
Starship only

Particle gun

Quite fast to fire and moderately damaging, the particle gun is the only weapon able to be carried by the Explorer. **Explorer only (obviously).**

Energy shield

Protects against Accel Cannon and Particle Gun hits, or at least it's supposed to.
Interchangeable between Explorer and Starship.

Dampening field

Absorbs attacks made by Wave Guns. **Starship only.**

INSTRUMENT

In *Protostar* you spend the majority of your time on either your Newfront starship or your planetary explorer. They may look confusing, but never fear, because we now present the *PC Zone* annotated guide to both. Are we good to you or what?

1. **Date:** This displays the date. See, I told you they weren't as complicated as they looked.
2. **Location:** When on board your starship this displays the co-ordinates of the star system your vessel occupies within Thule Sector. On planetary surfaces it refers specifically to your location on the current world.
3. **Fuel:** Both your ship and your lander are fuelled by 'Stabilium'. This readout displays how many cubic meters of this futuristic petrol you have left.
4. **Main viewscreen:** As well as showing the view ahead of you this screen also displays incoming messages from other craft, and is used to issue orders to your crew.
5. **Scanner:** Displays a graphical representation of the closest object ahead of you and within range. In combat it displays the damage status of the enemy – ships start off green, and then sections turn progressively darker shades of red as you pound hell out of 'em.
6. **Crew station status display:** Shows the damage status of each crew station (the grey bar) and any crew member assigned to it (the orange bar).
7. **Cargo indicator:** Your starship's cargo bay has a capacity of $1000m^3$ – this bar gives a rough idea of how full or empty it is.
8. **Control pad:** This pad is used to manually control the vessel in combat or on a planet's surface.
9. **Secondary viewscreen:** Normally displays a radar image of the area around you. The blue dot in the centre is your ship, other vessels are displayed in different colours around you. The bright dots are above you, darkened ones beneath you. The panel is also used when talking to your crew.
10. **Speed controls:** These two buttons are used to control your speed. the A and D keys may also be used.
11. **Speed:** Bar gauge that displays your current speed.
12. **Temperature:** The current temperature outside your explorer – largely useless, as the ship is incredibly resistant to extremes.
13. **Altitude:** Current height of the planet's surface beneath your explorer. Minerals are common at high altitudes, whereas life-forms and cities thrive lower down.

Crew stations

Your vessels both have seven crew stations including your own command station. The others are selected with these buttons. If a station is crewed, any orders given are carried out at the crew-member's level of skill, otherwise they are performed at yours.

- **A Tactical:** From here you can raise and lower shields, and arm/disarm weapons. Other ships will regard armed weapons as a hostile act, so don't switch them on unless you want a fight.
- **B Navigation:** Used to set destinations for Hyperpath travel (hyperspace jumps) and to land on and leave planets.
- **C Engineering:** Allows transfer of ship systems between cargo, starship and explorer, lets you keep track of your current cargo and also allows you to assign your repair droid to specific stations.
- **D Contact:** Used for communication with other vessels or crew members, viewing of crew files and assignment of crew stations. This is also where you surrender to enemies, if you're feeling noncey.
- **E Biotech:** From here you can scan planets or ships for life forms, analyse new organisms and assign your medical droid to specific crew members.
- **F Science:** Allows you to scan vessels or planets for data other than life forms, and is very useful for keeping track of the status of enemy ships in combat.

PANELS THE FINAL FRONTIER

NEWFRONT STARSHIP

PLANETARY EXPLORER

(Left) A poor pirate ship seems to have fallen foul of your ship's Accel Cannon. What a shame. (Chortle, chortle.)
(Below left) There are few things more satisfying than plundering an alien ecosystem for profit. Just ask the settlers of North America.

PC ZONE score

A slick game that's full of nice touches and good ideas, but if you're not patient, don't bother.

80

Price: £39.99 **Out:** Now
Published: Tsunami
Telephone: 081 877 0880

PC ZONE specs

Minimum Memory: 640K/590K Free
Minimum Processor: 386
Minimum Speed: 25MHz
Installation: Essential
Minimum Hard Disk: 7Mb
Minimum Graphics: VGA
Soundcards: Ad-Lib, Sound Blaster
Controls: Microsoft mouse or compatible
Comments: MS-DOS 5.0 or above

After a disappointing season, Derby adopt the cunning tactic of not picking a number 10.

Hmm... Hammered into the corner... surely there's a clever footballing joke in there somewhere.

CHAMPIONSHIP

'Now is the (Aaron) Winter of our discontent made glorious (Nicky) Summer(bee) by this son of York (City),' said Patrick McCarthy, footballingly. Nobody else thought it was at all clever, though. How right they were.

THE BOARD

Like all managers, you're responsible to the club's board of directors. They will drop you terse messages from time to time, usually after a match, and along the lines of: 'A good result,' or 'A disgraceful result.' The best so far has been just after my team had won 'Performance Of The Week' for winning a local derby game 3-0 away from home. This was straight after a 1-0 away win. The Board's message? 'We find your current team selection somewhat questionable.' I spit on your Board.

UNLIKE IN *Premier Manager*, also reviewed in this issue, (see page 46) in *Championship Manager 93* you don't, as a complete newcomer, have to start with a team from the Vauxhall Conference and prove your managerial skills before hopefully hitting the big time. *CM93* club chairmen are all too ready to entrust their multi-million pound squads to incompetent, bumbling buffoons – which, of course, is far more realistic. In addition to being able to jump straight in as the manager of the likes of Liverpool, Manchester United or Sheffield Wednesday, you can opt to have computer-generated fictional players or use the real 1993 squads of players, all individually rated. Setting either of these up takes some time (about half an hour on an average machine) as the computer generates every team in the league, along with a collection of johnny-foreigners for you to dip into willy-nilly in the transfer market. (Of course, they're all very skilful and all that, but...) There's also a quick start option for the MTV generation who can't be bothered to waste half an hour to do things properly. As a new manager, the first thing you have to decide is what your personality is. I really can't quite see the point of that – and unfortunately there's no 'stupid' option.

It's one of the more in-depth of the countless football management games around, but largely concerns itself with the football side of things – buying and selling players, negotiating contracts and transfer fees, fining them if you don't like their haircuts, and so on. Unlike in *Premier Manager*, you don't have to spend half your time pasting up advertising hoardings, and can devote yourself to the real priority tasks for a manager: drinking vodka, lying on sunbeds and having an affair with Miss Wycombe.

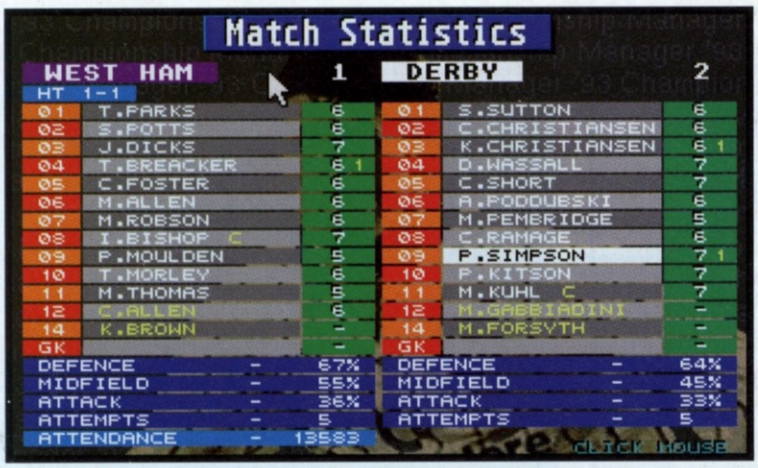
The pre-game tactics screen is more specific than most. You can choose your team formation and playing style, and position players with some refinement, being able to push certain ones up, have others playing anchor roles, and so on. You can even draw up an order for penalty-takers in the event of shoot-outs. You're not able to mark opponents man-to-man, unfortunately, and there's also no hit-man option, enabling you to 'do a Vinny' on potential enemy match-winners. The downside to all this sophistication is that, with so many variables, it's more difficult to decide the right combination for your team. But then working this out is part of the fun. (Allegedly – having one of the best teams in the country and being stuck in the bottom three can wear a little thin after a while. But then there's always alcohol to dull the pain.)

> 'Sometimes the game is reassuringly realistic – Manchester United wouldn't even consider letting me purchase Ryan Giggs or Peter Shmeichel.'

Each player is given a performance rating out of ten after every game, and both their season and career averages are kept by the computer. As soon as players start under-performing on a regular basis, of course, any manager worth his salt will dive into the transfer market and blow the club's money on an overpriced, over-rated donkey to replace him.

The transfer market is well catered for. As well as simply looking at all the players listed for transfer, you can get your scouts to seek out specific player types for your squad. You can specify their required age, whether they must be left or right-sided, and how much you'll spend. Where *CM93* then scores over *Premier Manager* is that you can keep a record of any players you like the look of by storing them in a shortlist for future reference. If they're based in Britain, you can get a scout to watch them and provide you with weekly reports. There's little feedback when *you* put someone on the transfer list, though – you can wait for weeks with absolutely no offers at all, which may be realistic, but doesn't have the instant gratification given by immediately dumping someone who has annoyed you.

Sometimes the game is reassuringly realistic – Manchester Utd wouldn't even consider letting me purchase Ryan Giggs or Peter Schmeichel for my own benighted team. This is probably a good thing, because I already had too many unhappy players. Yes, you actually get unhappy players – usually because they feel they should be getting regular first-team games, but sometimes because they went out



Two teams who've known better times, but only one which has known promotion this season.

A screeen to bring a tear to many a Portsmouth fan's eye. The play-offs heh lads? Bit of a choker.

MANAGER '93

PC ZONE score

An undoubtedly 'serious' management game that's involving, but occasionally unnecessarily slow

75

Price: £29.99 **Out:** Now
Published: Domark
Telephone: 081 780 2222

PC ZONE specs

Minimum Memory: 640K with 580K available
Minimum Processor: 386
Installation: Essential
Minimum Hard Disk: 2Mb
Minimum Graphics: VGA
Sound Cards: Sound Blaster, Ad-Lib, Roland
Controls: Keyboard, Mouse recommended

with Miss Wycombe before your superior tan won her over. On the unrealistic side, Tottenham are leading the Premier League and Chris Waddle has been called up to the England squad.

The game's not without its annoyances, though. The worst is the Latest Results service: after each match you have to sit through a pretend videprinter service. Results come ticking across the screen slower than the forward progress of a magazine editor who finds himself first through a pub door. No amount of button-clicking, keyboard bashing or monitor head butting will speed it up or quit out of it. On a slow PC it takes an absolute age. What makes it worse is they also appear after mid-week European cup ties, Anglo-Italian Cup ties, and so on, that you aren't even involved in. After four of these in a row I was on the verge of monitorcide. Rather than adding atmosphere, as it's presumably intended to do, all it does is slow the game down. Never has my hard disk worked so hard to so little effect.

Taken overall, *CM93* has enough to get you interested, even though, like most management games, the depiction of the match itself is its weak point. Unfortunately its most visual element is that team names are in team colours, and the football-speak messages used to describe incidents in the game soon pall. Ideally, these games should have a proper arcade football game of *Sensible Soccer* quality with which to play the match yourself. You could always switch it off if you wanted, and it could then be used to show highlights of the game like in US Gold's *The Manager*. I can dream. Z

CLUB INFORMATION

Clicking on 'Another Team' from within the 'Club Details' menu will display the entire football league. Select the team you want, and you can find out everything you could ever want to know about their professional lives, and probably one or two things they'd probably rather have kept secret about their private lives.

TRNS A record of this season's dabbling in the transfer market.
STAF Their coaching and scouting staff.
LEAG Their league progress and position in the form of an attractive graph.
FIXT This season's fixture list.
ACCS For some reason they won't let you have a quick peer at their accounts. Probably something dodgy going on.
INFO General team information (including their history in this game and their club records).
RSRV Their reserve team squad information, of interest only to paedophiles.
GOAL Their leading goal scorers – usually bad news.
DISP Their disciplinary record – note unrealistic lack of D. Batty.
AV R Their players' average performance ratings for the season to date (invariably better than your own).
TEAM The tactical display screen, along with all its vital information on their playing style and preferred formation.

If you have the original *Championship Manager* you can get an upgrade for £7.99 plus £1.00 p&p. Write to Interlek, PO Box 1738, Bournemouth, BH4 89Y.

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Captain Scotford launches an unprovoked attack against an unarmed promontory.

688 Attack Sub

THIS WAS THE FIRST serious attempt to simulate submarine warfare and is still the only simulation of modern submarine warfare (although other games, like *Harpoon*, feature submarines as part of a broader view of modern naval warfare). So, *688* scores straight off for having no competition. Yes, yes, I know, there's *Silent Service II*, and it blows *688 Attack Sub* out of the water, but it is a simulation of submarine actions in the Pacific during the Second World War, while *688* concerns itself with the capabilities of modern nuclear submarines.

Having said that, you should take the word 'simulation' with a pinch of salt. The designers have placed the emphasis firmly on fun rather than accuracy. The most telling aspect of this leaning towards fast gameplay is the limiting of the torpedo ranges to ten nautical miles. While this doesn't quite force vessels into the extremely close combat of World War 2, it does take a lot of the subtleties out of modern submarine warfare.

Although you are cast in the role of captain, you don't just sit in the con and shout orders, you are expected to manually take over particular jobs at crucial moments. This means that you will have to initially load torpedo and missile tubes yourself, plot your own course, and take charge of your sonar capabilities. It seems like far too much to do at first, but the layout has been designed well enough to enable you to move quickly from one station to another, with some essential controls, like the launch button and the target aquisition button, being duplicated at several stations.

It has to be said, that, while it is showing its age in graphical terms, in all other respects *688 Attack Sub* has stood the test of time very well (I mean it even has a modem link option, something that is still lacking in lots of new games). Provided that you aren't looking for nuts and bolts accuracy, you can't go far wrong at this price. *LS*

Sub-standard? Definitely not!

SCORE 78

Specs **Minimum Memory:** 512K **Minimum Processor:** 8086 **Minimum Speed:** 10MHz **Installation:** Essential (Hard or floppy disks) **Minimum Hard Disk Space:** 1Mb **Minimum Graphics:** Hercules **Sound Cards Supported:** Ad-Lib, Covox Speech Thing **Controls:** Keyboard, Mouse

Price: £14.99 **Out:** Now **Publisher:** Hit Squad **Telephone:** Ocean 061 832 6633

10 Intelligent Strategy Games

OXFORD SOFTWORKS ARE the team behind *Chess Champion 2175* and *The Complete Chess System*. Their latest offering is a compendium giving you ten strategy games for about £3.50 each. This puts them in the Shareware bracket, or would if you could buy the games separately.

The games fall into four categories:

Chess: the 'European' and the Chinese version – different pieces and tactics, as well as a strange board divided by a 'river'.

The Go family: Go is probably the oldest game in the world with the object of capturing your opponent's territory. *Gomuko* is a faster and simpler variant of Go, played on the same board. *Renju* is a Japanese version of *Gomuko* which is far more testing and played on a 15 x 15 grid.

Gambling: *Bridge*, a game of complicated strategies and pure bluff. *Backgammon*, the Sloane's old favourite.

Simple games: *Othello (Reversi)*: the game no one had heard of until people discovered it was the only game you could fit on a ZX80. *Four in a Line* is a computer sim of the favourite Connect Four. One of those games where the person to move first should always win. Last is *Draughts*, which probably dates from 6000 BC in Egypt.

You've probably heard of, and played, these games before. That is just as well because I don't think anyone could understand Bridge, for instance, from the necessarily brief introduction in the manual.

The different programs share as many of the same options as they can and the menus are pulled down by clicking the right hand mouse button at the top of the screen, or working from the keyboard, press F1 and use cursor keys, Del and Insert to mimic the mouse.

Individual games have extra options. In *Backgammon* these are: change the style of the game, double the bet and toggle notation. In *Bridge* you can play all hands yourself or concentrate on being South. Options are: change your hand and cheat by looking at your neighbours'. *Go* has autoplayer and supervisor functions. *Chess, Chinese Chess, Othello* and *Gomoku* have these as well as swap sides, set-up, level, hint and move now. You can also change the pieces in *Chinese Chess* and toggle between 2D and 3D in *Chess*.

The games are fully featured and good tutors. The displays are in rather chunky EGA graphics and the Chess, in particular, suffers, although remaining playable.

Chess – same as on the right, but in 3D.

This compilation is a cheap tour of the strategy games of the world. But several of them have superior counterparts in Shareware games and you should think about whether you need all of them. You have to pay for the lot, after all. *MB*

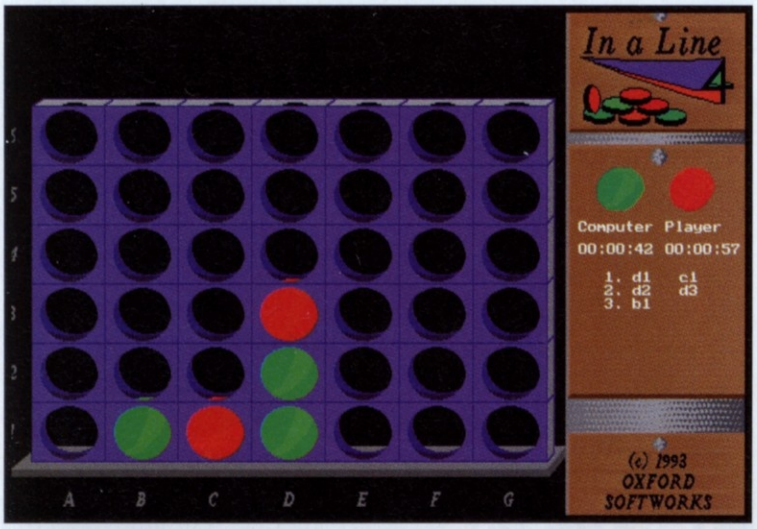
Good sampler and cheap if you need them all

SCORE 60

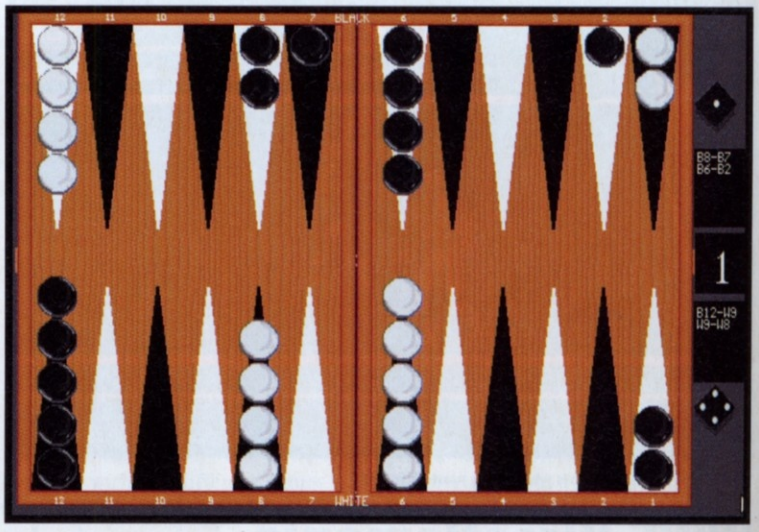
Specs **Minimum Memory:** 1Mb **Minimum Processor:** 286 **Minimum Speed:** 12MHz **Installation:** Essential **Minimum Hard Disk Space:** 3Mb free **Minimum Graphics:** EGA **Sound Cards Supported:** None **Controls:** Keyboard, Mouse

Price: £34.99 **Out:** Now **Publisher:** Oxford Softworks **Telephone:** 0993 822799

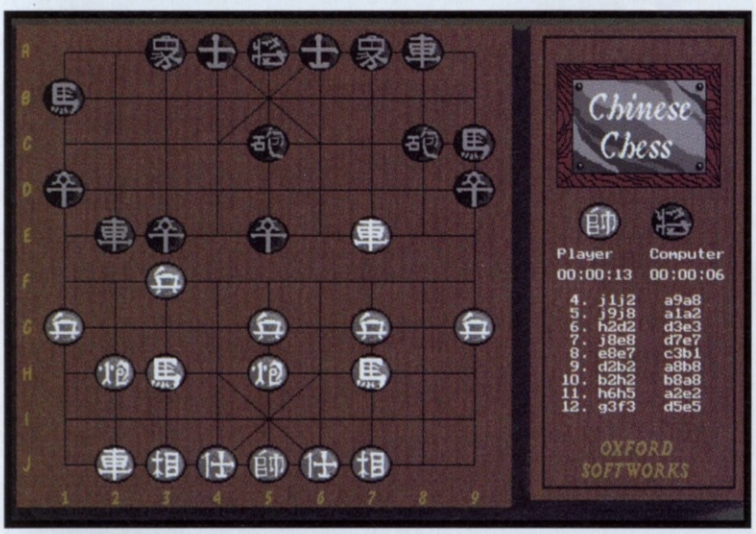
Having blown their earnings on a 35-1 dead cert in the 3:20 at Doncaster (thanks, Duncan) our reviewers attempt to economise by spending some time in the world of budget games.



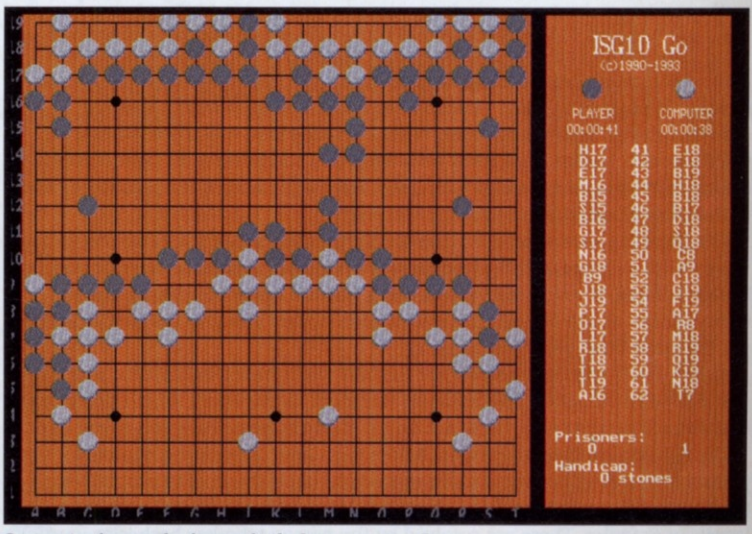
Four in a Line – simple and addictive as they say.



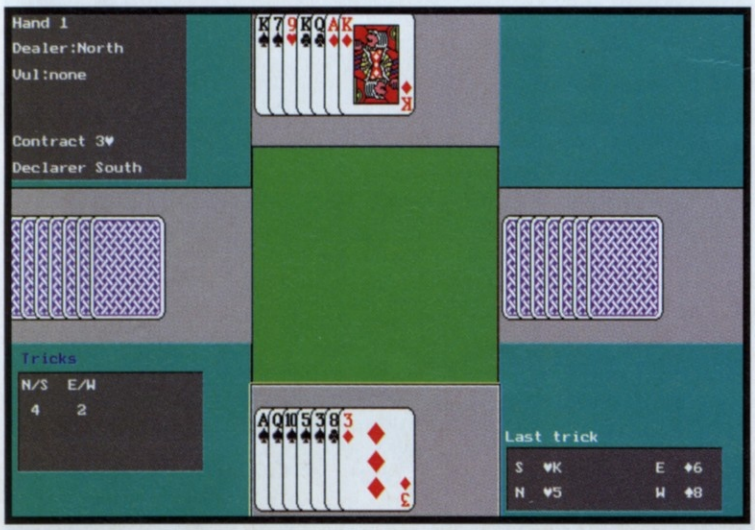
Another Sloaney game I can't play.



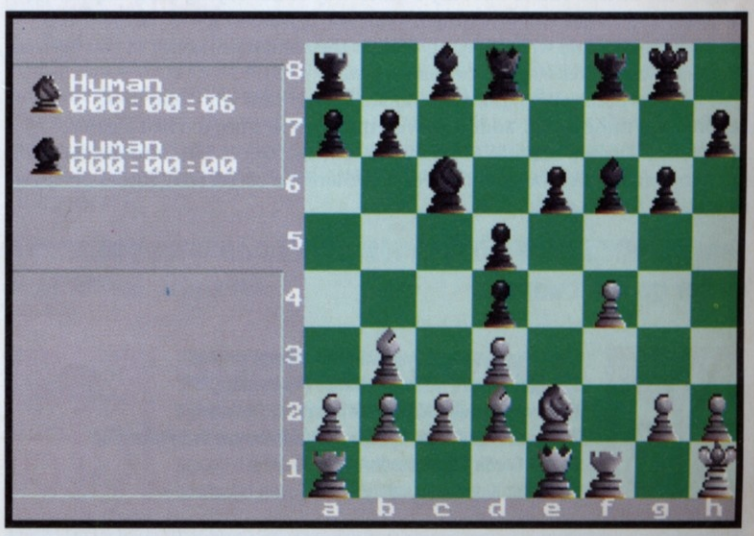
Chinese Chess – rook on E3 threatening everybody.



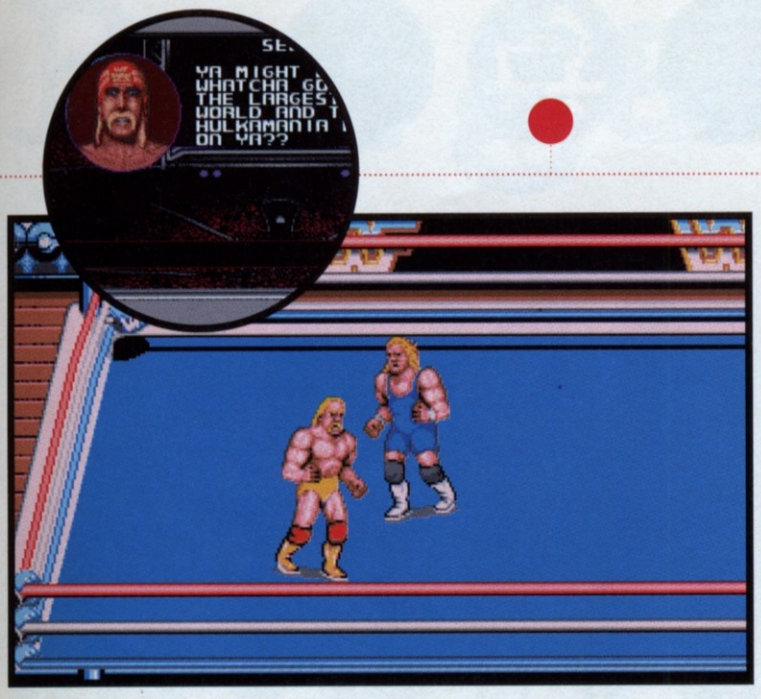
Capture territory and prisoners in the Japanese game Go.



All you need to play Bridge. Except the G and Ts and sandwiches.



Chess – Short (white) develops the Sicilian Defence against Gelfand, Brussels 1991.



WWF: with sports like this who needs pantomimes?

WWF Wrestlemania

THIS REVIEW IS something of a penance for me. If you see this game in the shops you'll notice the quote: 'You'll love it to bits' from the late and much lamented *Zero* magazine. 'What tosser wrote that?' I cried, flicking through some back issues. What tosser was it? It was this tosser.

So first things first; the excuses. What I actually said was if you liked WWF you'd love this to bits... and I was reviewing the Amiga version... and I'd been feeling run-down. But enough whinging. *Wrestlemania* isn't as appalling as all that, and as a budget game is fairly reasonable.

The game is about as basic as they get. In practice mode it's a two player beat 'em-up with a choice of three wrestlers (Hulk Hogan, Ultimate Warrior and British Bulldog, if you're interested) and a limited range of fighting moves. Fights consist of one five minute round with victory going to the first fighter to pin the other down for three seconds.

Alternatively you can compete for the belt which involves fighting your way past five 'of the toughest and meanest wrestlers in the WWF'. Which brings you to drawback number one, there ain't a lot of game here; five levels if you like.

The fighting itself is fairly basic. Before each bout there is a completely pointless 'taunting' session and then the fight itself starts. One problem with the bout is the range of moves – about six. More seriously most bouts consist largely of grapples. These are resolved by the person who key bashes/or joystick waggles the fastest. This is not only a quick way of destroying some expensive hardware and rather embarrassing if someone is watching you, but it is also virtually unwinnable when playing against the computer. As fast as you bash or waggle the computer waggles or bashes faster.

By it's very nature *Wrestlemania* is aimed at WWF fans who tend to be children. On these terms, and in view of the price, it's not too bad a game, though now I would hesitate to say even a WWF fan would love it to bits. Most of the WWF generation have got consoles and there are better WWF games on SNES, though not for ten quid. *PL*

Fairly limited beat 'em-up, which was delivered much better on the console.

SCORE 58

specs **Minimum Memory:** 640K **Minimum Processor:** 286
Minimum Speed: 12MHz **Installation:** Optional
Minimum Hard Disk Space: 643K **Minimum Graphics:** EGA
Sound Cards Supported: Ad-Lib, Roland
Controls: Keyboard, Joystick

Price: £9.99 **Out:** Now **Publisher:** The Hit Squad **Telephone:** Ocean 061 832 6633

Hmm, perhaps I've left that last minute rush to the front a tad late.

The Cycles

SUCCESSFUL MOTOR CYCLISTS, like world-class snooker players, are intuitive physicists and mathematicians. Both sports require the precise application of mathematical and physical principles to real world objects, but neither snooker players nor motor cyclists can use mathematical tables, calculators or computers to help them out, they have to 'feel' their way instead.

In the case of motor cycling, the skill comes in having an intuitive feel for the way centrifugal force, forward velocity, tyre grip and counterbalancing lean all contribute to the stability of the bike, or lack of it, at different places on a race track. Changing through a total angle of lean something of the order of 80 to 90 degrees while hurtling through a chicane at 70 miles per hour, may look like a breeze from the comfort of your armchair, but there are not many individuals capable, or even courageous enough to attempt it.

So where's all this leading? To the plain fact that a good motor cycling simulation manages to encompass both the brute force and the subtleties of the sport, while *The Cycles* does neither. To be fair, *The Cycles* is at a pensionable age now, so it's not surprising that it doesn't meet my criteria. Later games, like *Team Suzuki*, have come a lot closer.

If you are prepared to look upon *The Cycles* as an arcade game rather than a simulation, then there are some redeeming features. For starters, you can set a difficulty level ranging from 'wimp out' mode to 'Barry Sheen's a nancy cry baby' mode, so everyone should be able to find a level at which the game is quite challenging.

All of the major world circuits are included and there is a choice of 125CC, 250CC, and 500CC. You can practice any of the circuits, in which case you get the luxury of the whole track to yourself. Otherwise you can take part in a single race or a complete championship.

The Cycles is an interesting bit of nostalgia but, frankly, not worth this price, even if you're a motorcycle fan. *LS*

An overpriced and underpowered ride into the past.

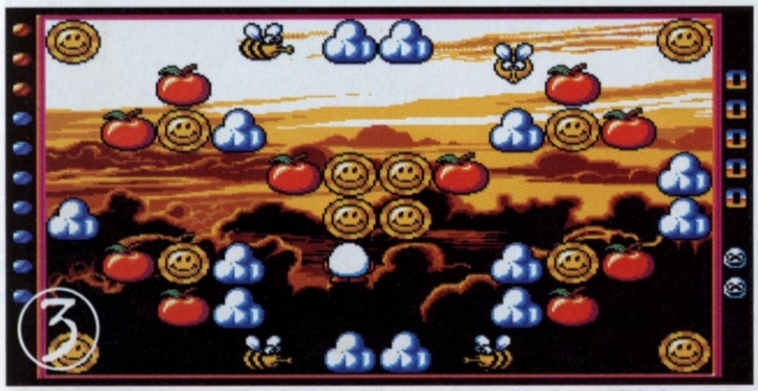
SCORE 55

specs **Minimum Memory:** 640K **Minimum Processor:** 286
Minimum Speed: 12MHz **Installation:** Optional
Minimum Hard Disk Space: 643K **Minimum Graphics:** Hercules
Sound Cards Supported: Ad-Lib, Sound Blaster
Controls: Keyboard, Joystick

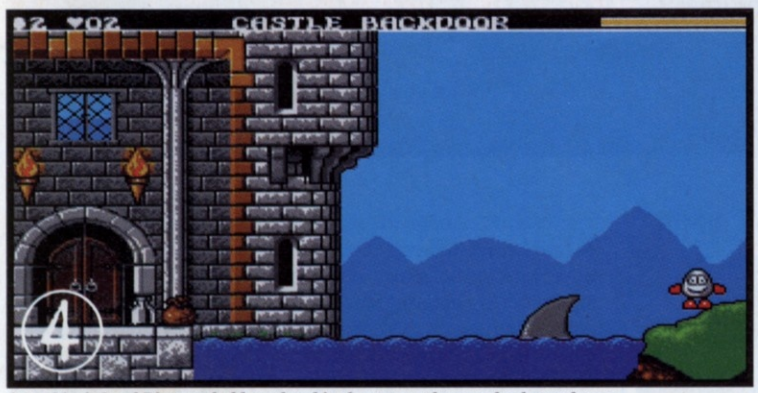
Price: £12.99 **Out:** Now **Publisher:** The Hit Squad **Telephone:** Ocean 061 832 6633

Fast Food Dizzy: he dashes around trampling all over pizzas then pulling them to pieces.

Fantasy World Dizzy, where our little egg is about to be prematurely hatched by that horn.



Dizzy's got his head in the clouds in Kwik Snax. He'd have it in the bloody oven if I had my way.



On to Magic Land Dizzy and old egg head is about to make one shark very happy.

In Dizzy Prince of the Yolkfolk, this troll eats eggs for breakfast. Smart Geezer!

Dizzy Collection

I SUPPOSE IT HAD TO HAPPEN sooner or later. PC owners, safe for so long from sugary doses of cuteness, games with platforms in and Camberwick Green soundtracks, must now dig in and prepare themselves for a barrage of egg jokes, premium rate phone-in helplines and, even worse, console style high score tables. The last item does, perhaps, merit some explanation. Consoles don't have keyboards (a well known fact, but one worth stressing again nevertheless) so it's understandable that the only way to get your name on the high score table is to select letters with a joypad. PCs do have keyboards (a fact which doesn't yet seem to have dawned on the designers of 'cute' games). Why is it then, I can't help but ask myself, when I play PC action games, that I am sitting here spending five minutes trying to construct 'LAURENCE' by painstakingly picking out letters one by one with the joystick, when I can bloody well type it in two seconds?

Anyway all this is only slightly relevant to the shocking news that the infamous *Dizzy* games are now available for perverted PC owners, in a value for money bundle of five. I know you're all dying to know how anyone can possibly come up with five different games which feature an egg as a hero, so I'll give you a quick guided tour of the offerings

1 Fast Food Dizzy

Pacman meets MacDonald's and the result is about as unappetising as a Big Mac too. Dash around maze after maze eating fast food before the monsters eat you. Dash to the bank to apologise for spending your money on this rubbish. Dash back to your PC and attempt to redeem yourself by playing something wholesome instead.

2 Fantasy World Dizzy

Hmm this looks like cracking good fun (sorry). Trot around a huge(ish) fantasy land, solving problems and rescuing friends. This one actually made its debut last year on the PC, so if you went out and bought it, you've only got yourself to blame for the rash of others that are available now.

3 Kwik Snak

Pacman meets MacDonald's and the result is about as unappetising as... hang on, hang on, haven't we been here before? Yes, I'm afraid there's more than a whiff of déjà vu in the air, only this has been spiced up with a dash of Pengo.

4 Dizzy Prince of the Yolkfolk

Okay, okay I can handle this... stay calm... A heroic egg. A troll that traps some eggs in dungeons and eats others for breakfast. A creature that is to all intents and purposes a teddy bear's head on legs! What next? *The Adventures of Frank the Fantastic Foetus?* Aaarghhh...

5 Magicland Dizzy

Ho Hum. We've seen this before. Eggs bouncing on platforms, eggs picking up objects and solving problems with them. Eggs talking to strange characters. I'm fed up of this. Somebody get me a frying pan, pllleeeease!

Seriously though, this wouldn't be bad value if it weren't for the two food games, which are both indigestible, but by way of compensation you do at least get some *Dizzy* collect-a-cards and posters in the box. Blaaaargggh!

I HATE EGGS! *LS*

A poor egg-scuse to make totally unfunny egg yolks. Just about playable.

SCORE 60

specs

Minimum Memory: 640K
Minimum Processor: 8026
Minimum Speed: 12MHz **Installation:** No
Minimum Hard Disk Space: N/A **Minimum Graphics:** EGA
Sound Cards Supported: Ad-Lib
Controls: Keyboard, Joystick

Price: £35.99 **Out:** Now **Publisher:** Codemasters **Telephone:** 0926 814132

Blueprint

Simon The Sorcerer

PUBLISHER: Adventure Soft (UK) Ltd	PRICE: £39.99
TELEPHONE: PDQ 021 625 3377	OUT: September

(Left) Michael Woodroffe is the veteran game creator who is the driving force behind Adventure Soft and Horror Soft.
(Below) The Wizard's Journal of Philosophy Volume XXVIII – The Dragon as God.
Always eager to incorporate major works of religion into their philosophy, some wizards have put forward the idea that God may, in fact, be a large red dragon. This creature is, after all, wise and omnipotent. This theory failed to achieve popularity however, because nobody is happy with the idea that their god's chief raison d'être is lying on a hoard of gold and eating nubile young virgins.

The Yanks have had it too easy in the world of graphic adventure movies. But now, as *PC Zone's* film critic, Laurence Scotford, discovers, the declining British adventure industry has found a new star.

IN THE COMPUTER game superstar stakes the likes of Mario and Sonic the Hedgehog obviously come into the Arnie and Stallone fields. There have been other, slightly lesser Tom Cruise type stars who have appealed to a slightly more intellectual audience. Perhaps topmost among these was the legendary Guybrush Threepwood, rising star in *The Secret of Monkey Island* and overnight success story in *The Secret of Monkey Island 2*.

While we British viewers always enjoy the antics of these big American names, there has been, in recent years, a noticeable dearth of British productions with British talent in the starring roles. But all that could be about to change with the advent of a new Kenneth Brannagh styled hero – Simon.

The multi-million pound production is being produced by long-standing British studio Adventuresoft and is being filmed entirely on location in Britain. And why not.

I was invited onto the set during the busy filming schedule to talk to cast and crew and find out why this production is so important to the future of adventure movies in this country. My first call was to the star's caravan. Simon was busy preparing himself for a gruelling scene with a red dragon, but while the make-up artist flustered around him, he did have time to answer a few questions.

The star

LS: Simon, you've recently reached your 14th birthday, and although you are, as yet, unknown to the public, you are already being tipped for stardom. This is such a big step for you. Are you at all nervous about becoming a household name practically overnight?
SS: Not really. Have you got a Game Boy?
LS: Er... yes!
SS: Fancy a two-player game of *Tetris* then?
LS: Erm... yeah okay, in a bit. Perhaps you could tell me a little about your rôle in the film.
SS: Okay, I play this teenage kid who really wants to be able to do magic, because his uncle did some really mega tricks for him on his 14th birthday. I really am 14 you know, and the caterers let me drink shandy.
LS: Mmm Good, good. So. Erm. About this magic then...
SS: Oh yeah... Well, one day this dog comes and he's tired and

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If you belong to the Mr Cursor 'oh no, here's something with buttons and lights, looking all clever and technical and I'm scared' school of thought, then go no further. Turn back while you still have time to save yourself. Because you are about to enter The Techie Zone (do do do do, do do do do…).

To fully appreciate the wonder that Adventure Soft has created, you have to understand just why it is that *AGOS II* is so clever.

AGOS FACT 1: Graphic adventures written with AGOS are actually text adventures in disguise. Although all the actions you need to perform can be achieved with the mouse, they are actually translated to text commands and passed to a full sentence parser which acts on them.

AGOS FACT 2: The game designers can actually type in text commands while the game is in development. These commands appear on a second monitor, while the normal game screen is shown on the first.

AGOS FACT 3: The game is constructed as a huge database in which rooms and objects are set up as tables containing flags, animation code and information that lets the game know what it's supposed to do next.

AGOS FACT 4: There is a different driver program for each machine, but the actual *AGOS* code can be ported over almost completely unchanged.

AGOS FACT 5: The game doesn't require huge amounts of memory because *AGOS* loads in graphics and data only as it requires them, and in such a way that the game never pauses or slows down.

AGOS FACT 6: *AGOS* is expandable. If it doesn't do something that the designers want it to do, they simply add another command.

AGOS FACT 7: The text from the game is all stored in a huge file and then the individual phrases and verbs are sucked into the relevant piece of code by a special utility program. This means that translations can be done without a huge reprogramming effort.

If you're the sort of person that goes squishy over puppies then be prepared to have your heartstrings firmly tugged!

The 'Ladies of the Night' at this bar are heavily armed and wear stainless steel brassières – you have been warned!

In the giant's garden, a tiny puddle becomes a uncrossable pond – or does it?

hungry so we take him in and I like him a lot and one day he goes up to the attic and what I nearly forgot to tell you was that when he came he had a book with him and my Dad couldn't understand it and my mum couldn't either and dad puts it in the attic in a box but my dog finds it and I read a bit but I don't understand it and we both fall in a hole in the roof and oh yeah that got there because I accidentally said some magic spell and the hole takes us to a magic kingdom and I'm a wizard and I have to go around this world meeting all these strange characters and solving problems and then save another wizard... and er, that's it I think. What other carts have you got then?

I.S. Erm... I think I'll go and have a word with the director.

The director

The director and producer is Mike Woodroffe. His a name is well known to connoisseurs of adventure movies. He set up Adventure Soft back in the '70s because he felt there was a need for strong British productions to rival the big American ones. In fact he cut his teeth making British versions of the famous Scott Adams adventures from American company Adventure International.

His romance with adventures took a short break when he went on to create some action productions, most notably *Gauntlet* for US Gold. But he was to achieve most acclaim ☞

Simon The Sorcerer

(Top) These frames show how even the sprites are constructed from small clips. This means that only the moving parts of the sprite have to be re-drawn.
(Above) More shades of Terry Pratchett rear their comic heads – the idea of a vicious chest on legs will be very familiar to his fans.
(Below) Some of the most beautiful locations are those in the forest.

☞ for his horror productions, created under the banner of Horror Soft: *Elvira Mistress of the Dark*, *Elvira II: The Jaws of Cerberus*, and the gore-ridden *Waxworks*.

He wanted to produce *Simon the Sorcerer* because the success of *The Secret of Monkey Island II* had shown that there was definitely a market for comic adventures and no-one was yet exploiting it.

The writer

The script has been penned by director's son, Simon Woodroffe. He admits to being heavily influenced by that master of the footnote and inspired comic, Terry Pratchett. In case you've never heard of Mr. Pratchett (in which case, where have you been for the last five years?), it might help to understand that he is the author of one of the most successful series of comic books ever written, the Discworld novels, which now run into double figures, as well as one or two other equally brilliant works. Prachett does for fantasy what Douglas Adams does for science fiction and what Robert Rankin does for the occult.

Both Woodroffes were hoping that Pratchett would become involved with the project and that it might be more of an official tribute to his novels, but for the moment the comic meister has decided not to meddle in the affairs of the men who make graphic adventures.

Even so, the production retains a strong Pratchettian leaning. Consider for example the scene in which young Simon approaches four wizards playing Mah Jongg in a bar and tells them he is looking for wizards. After several minutes trying unsuccessfully to pass themselves off as local yokels, they admit to their true profession and ask Simon how he knew. To which he responds: 'When I move my mouse pointer over you, it says: "WIZARDS".' At this moment in time hordes of Pratchett fans will be dashing to their bookshelves trying to remember where they have seen a parallel joke. (Hint: it involves Rincewind and a certain young Barbarian lady.)

> '...although Simon The Sorcerer borrows unashamedly from several sources, it is quintessentially British humour that shines through. You'll find pastiches on well known fairy tales like Rapunzel and The Billy Goats Gruff, and there's even an owl modelled on Patrick Moore.'

Simon's script has plenty original humour too, and it is consistently funny throughout. They'll have Guybrush Threepwood laughing on the other side of his face yet.

The technical director

Moving swiftly on to the special effects department, we find the Technical Director and Co-Producer Alan Bridgman. Alan and Michael between them have been pretty bloody clever. Some years ago, fed up of being at the mercy of inefficient and unreliable programming teams, they decided to cut them out of the picture. They achieved this momentous feat by designing their own game creation system called *AGOS II*. This masterpiece is so clever that a child of three could create a game like *Simon the Sorcerer* in a day!

All right then, that's not quite true, but it does make the game creation process so much easier that the team can concentrate on the gameplay and the storyline without having to expend too much energy on all the technicalities.

The art department

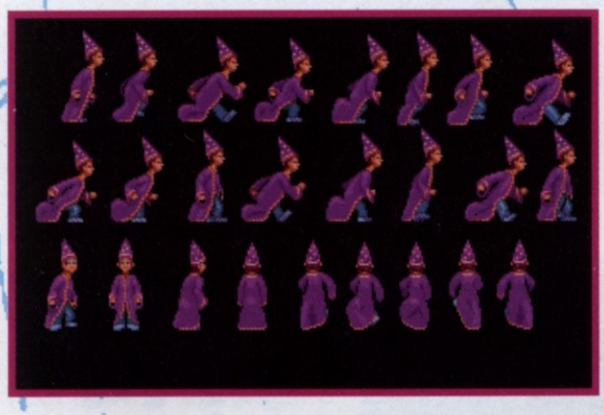
The scenery has been created by the talented team of Paul Drummond, Kevin Preston, Maria Drummond, Jeff Wall, and Karen Pinchin, all of whom are based at a Manchester studio, rather than the central Birmingham one.

They are responsible for creating the tremendous backdrops and doing such superb make-up jobs on all the main characters, not to mention the state-of-the-art animatronics for the creatures.

Whereas most adventure backgrounds are static, those in *Simon the Sorcerer* are endowed with even more atmosphere thanks to the clever addition of supplemental animations, especially in the forest scenes.

The animations are all handled using *Autodesk Animator* and its built in language POCO, which is used to build the numerous graphic utilities that the team uses.

Where the artwork for *Simon the Sorcerer* gets really clever is that, unlike Lucasfilm, Adventure Soft doesn't paint



(Left) There are separate animations for each of Simon's actions. These frames show just how good the animations are.
(Below) The background artwork is originally drawn as black and white sketches, then scanned in using a hand scanner. It can then be coloured on the computer.

background art by hand and then scan it in. This usually results in artwork which, although pretty, is usually less than crisp, and very memory hungry to boot. Adventure Soft's solution is to generate the artwork as a selection of clips (small jigsaw like sections), which are then pasted together to form the final image. Because clips can be used in more than one location, and because the colour information is stored separately from the clips and applied as and when it is needed, Adventure Soft's graphics not only take up a great deal less space, they look a lot more attractive too.

It's not doing anything new, but it's doing it bloody well... and why not

It has to be said that Adventure Soft's latest production looks a lot like recent Lucasfilm fares, but then why fight against a formula that's proved itself a winner?

It is encouraging that although *Simon the Sorcerer* borrows unashamedly from several sources, it is quintessentially British humour that shines through. You'll find pastiches on well known fairy tales like *Rapunzel* and *The Billy Goats Gruff*, and there's even a hopeless owl modelled on Patrick Moore.

Simon the Sorcerer is certainly going to be Adventure Soft's most impressive product to date, and it bodes well for future graphic adventures. There is hope that, if the game proves successful, there will be an opportunity to produce a CD version with actors speaking all the text. Let's hope it's a curtain raiser for many more. ZZ

PC ZONE specs

Minimum Memory: 640K
Minimum Processor: 286
Minimum Speed: 10MHz
Installation: Essential
Minimum Hard Disk: 10Mb
Minimum Graphics: VGA
Sound Cards: All major Soundboards
Controls: Mouse recommended

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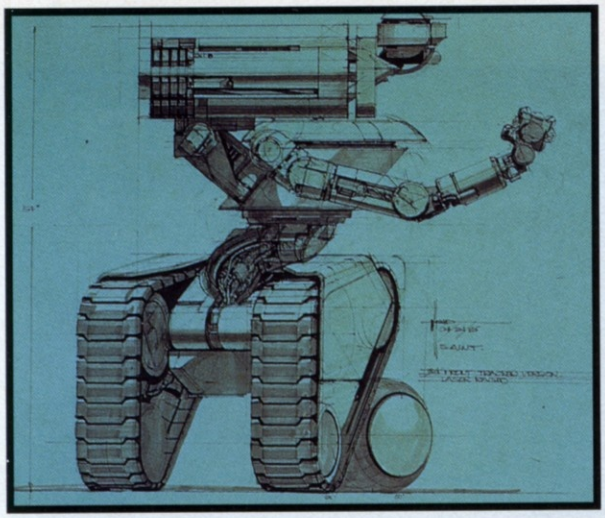


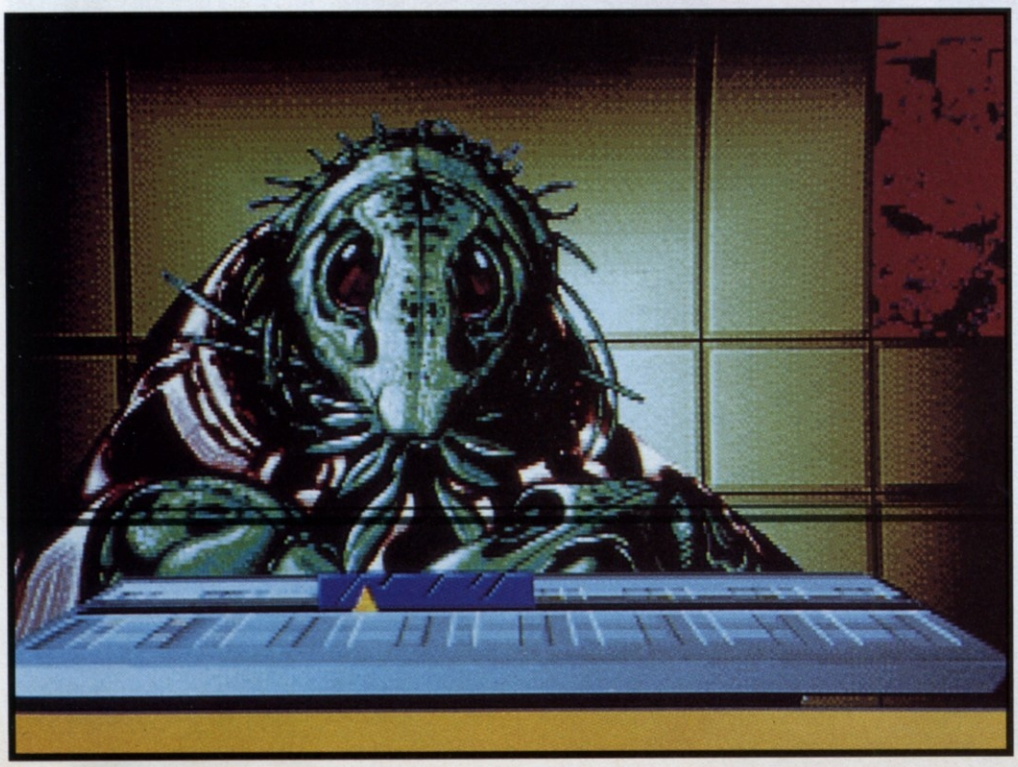
Blueprint

Cyberace

PUBLISHER: Cyberdreams	PRICE: tba
TELEPHONE: 071 328 3267	OUT: September

Picture the scene: The *PC Zone* staff sit around a poker table. It's the final hand of the game. The Ed plays a pair of tens, while the Dep. Ed reveals a full house. Luckily Paul Presley's got a Cyberace up his sleeve. (Ladies and gentlemen, I give you the weakest intro of the year. APPLAUSE.)

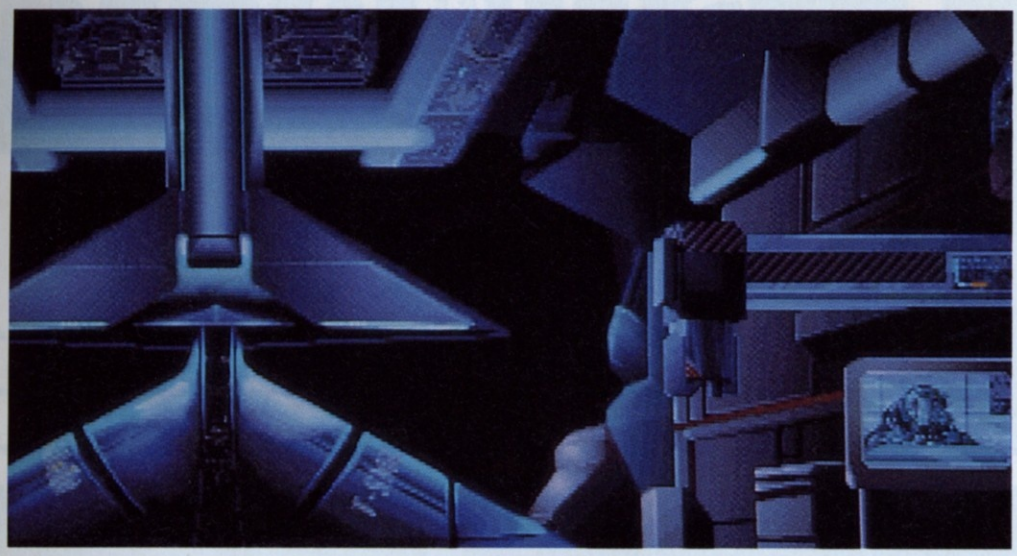
(Above) What's a futurist? A futurist is someone who designs strange robot things like the this. And gets paid for it into the bargain.
(Right) Between the idea and the game comes the poster artwork.
(Below) PC Zone's editor after a particularly rough night on the tiles.



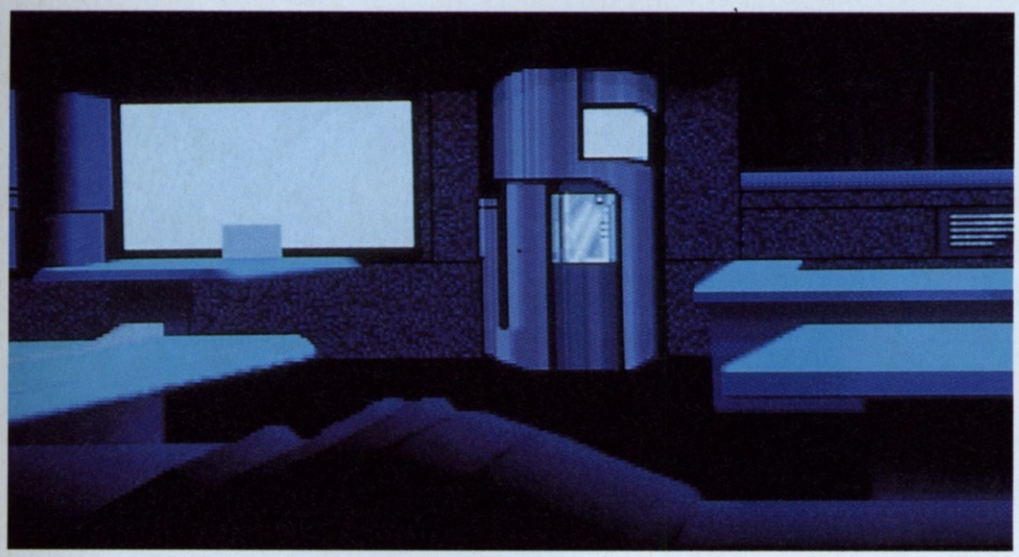
IMAGINE LOOKING AT a picture and thinking: 'That would make a great game'. That was exactly what went through the minds of Cyberdreams staff when they saw a futuristic painting by renowned futurist Syd Mead. Two years of planning later and *Cyberace* is the result; a futuristic simulation of high-speed racing and out and out combat. Making use of the much heralded Voxel graphics technology, *Cyberace* aims to be the ultimate racing game ever produced. Imagine a cross between *Comanche*, *The Terminator* and *Indy 500* and you get a close idea of what to expect.

'Our goal was to create a game that was superior in every aspect,' exclaims John Krause proudly. He is producer and one of the game's programmers. 'Our president, Pat Ketchum, had wanted to do a game with Syd Mead, but the big question was what type of game? Because my favourite game at the time was *Indianapolis 500* and because Syd is especially famous for his renderings of futuristic vehicles, we decided on a race game that takes place in the future.'

The concept behind *Cyberace* is that in the future war has been replaced by gladiatorial style races. You play the part of Clay Shaw, (don't you just hate your parents for not giving you a hard ☞



The future's a funny old place. No matter who's in charge, the cities always look like a collection of vending machines.



'For me it's incredibly refreshing to come from the Nintendo market into the world of PC because consoles are all about marketing and not about quality of product.'

☞ name like that?) a representative of the Terran empire in the battles. As with most American games, each burst of frenetic action is separated by an animated movie-style segment telling a story that changes depending on how well you perform.

'To make the game as cinematic as possible we chose two graduates from the American Film Institute to write the script (which is over one hundred pages long). We then selected professional actors to play the main characters, hired a costume designer to create the costumes for each of the characters and filmed them all at a studio against a blue backdrop, later replaced by the background art in the game.'

As with *Lost in Time* (see page 14), computer games are getting closer to films every day. 'Every game we do will involve filming live actors in a studio, recording professional voice actors for the dialogue and hiring composers to write the musical scores,' confirms Krause. 'Plus with the increasing number of CD ROM drives on the market, computer games will have to become like interactive movies. Instead of simply using a CD ROM as a low-cost method of distributing multiple-disk games, software companies will be expected to fill up the extra storage space that CD ROMs provide.

'I wish we could have done *Cyberace* for CD ROM only, as there was a lot more that we wanted to put into the between-race sequences in terms of animation and plot twists. Unfortunately the limiting factor was disk space and it's still too early for CD ROM only. Maybe for *Cyberace II*.'

Who are Cyberdreams anyway?

Well, it's a good question. Seemingly out of nowhere yet another all-singing, all-dancing American software house lands on our shores, without so much as a by your leave, and proceeds to impress upon us a game that's going to set new standards and join forces with big star names. Don't go breaking out the apple pies and baseball caps right away though, Cyberdreams UK is very much a European affair, right down to its Bristol-born Managing Director, Mark Scriven.

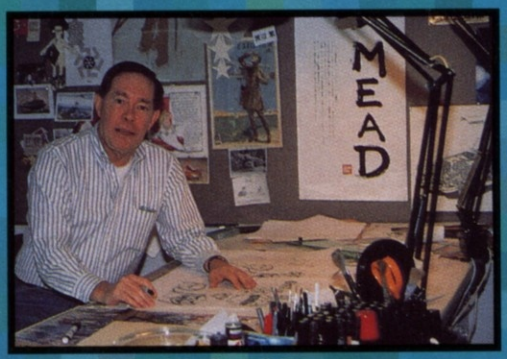
Why set up in the first place though? The answer, according to Scriven, is a simple one: 'If you are going to make the best out of the European market, you need to have an office here. You can't do it from the States. The problem with overseas markets, especially Japanese companies, is that they always see Europe as one market, one language, one taste. They think plainly in terms of Japan, America and Europe, but it's not like that at all. For Europe you're talking about over 14 different countries, ten different languages, ten different cultures, ten different economies. Everything is so different that you need to have a base here and that shows the commitment that Cyberdreams has to the European market. They're not just here to take the money and, like some Japanese companies do, when the market declines, pull out and go back home. This is a real commitment.

As you might have guessed, Scriven comes to the PC market after having worked in the world of Japanese consoles. What are the main differences between the two? 'For me it's incredibly refreshing to come from the Nintendo market into the world of the PC because consoles are all about marketing and not about quality of product. It's a cliché but Cyberdreams is all about quality and not quantity.' Indeed, for a company that spent over two years developing its first title *(Darkseed)* and a further two years working on the second *(Cyberace)*, you could hardly accuse it of rushing to meet consumer trends. 'That's why we delayed the launch of *Cyberace* until September. We thought it was worth waiting another three months to make sure we brought out a piece that was as good as it could be. This meant taking on extra artists – which we did – and spending extra money.' Z

Mark Scriven outside Cyberdreams' UK office. It's not the Trump Tower, but it's a start

SYD MEAD – A VISUAL FUTURIST

Do you know what 'story bifurcation' means? Syd Mead does. He's also the man behind the *Cyberace* designs, so that makes him clever on two counts.



I wonder if this is Syd Mead's studio?

What is a 'futurist'?

The term futurist is applicable to those who use economic, demographic or other data to postulate a possibility of some sort of future scenario. It's a legitimate description of this kind of activity and is no more 'quasi' than that of philosopher, psychiatrist or any other profession which arranges discovery to ascertain a range of possibility.

Is there an area that you specialise in?

My usage of the term should be linked to 'visual' as this aspect is what I am usually hired to do. That is, producing elaborate visual prognostications about the future, as highly specific solutions to client demands. I coined the term 'Visual Futurist' for the single screen credit I received on the movie *Blade Runner.*

Is *Cyberace* the first time you've been involved with computer game design?

No. The first was a game that wandered off into writer's limbo through a rather circuitous route and I honestly don't know what happened to it. However, this first exposure made me aware of the severe restrictions that limit computer games in terms of the installed computer base, the memory of that average base and the limitations of the programming process itself.

Did this put you off designing more?

No. I got involved with a Japanese company called RightStuff, designing an ambitious project based, roughly, on the Gaia principle (last seen in *Sim Earth),* called Terraforming. Unfortunately the finished game encountered difficulty in market introduction since it coincided with the sudden downturn in the Japanese economy two years ago.

What has been your role in *Cyberace?*

My specific involvement was the creation of characters, hardware, set views, packaging design, the logo and the graphic design of the release poster. The creative staff at Cyberdreams wrote the code, created the actual electronic artwork, linked the visuals to the interface and prepared the finished game for the market.

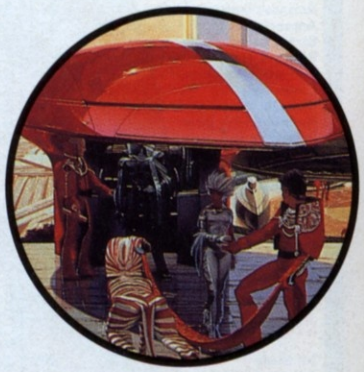
What do you feel the game offers that others don't?

Well I would never claim to be a games expert, but most of the games on the market are responses to various market niches, whether that means age groups, interest groups or program to hardware match-ups. Most of the games on the market struggle, stylistically, to be visually elaborate in the 'cinematic' sense. Others are cleverly designed to avoid this problem (within the reality of electronic limitations) and present simplistic, iconic graphic arrangements. *Cyberace* is a combination of the various types of game theory and involves combining the attributes of interaction, perusal, story bifurcation and role playing. It's different because it is more elaborate, and uses new pixel management theory to produce rather startling scenic screen effects within the limitations of the constraints with which this classification of game must exist.

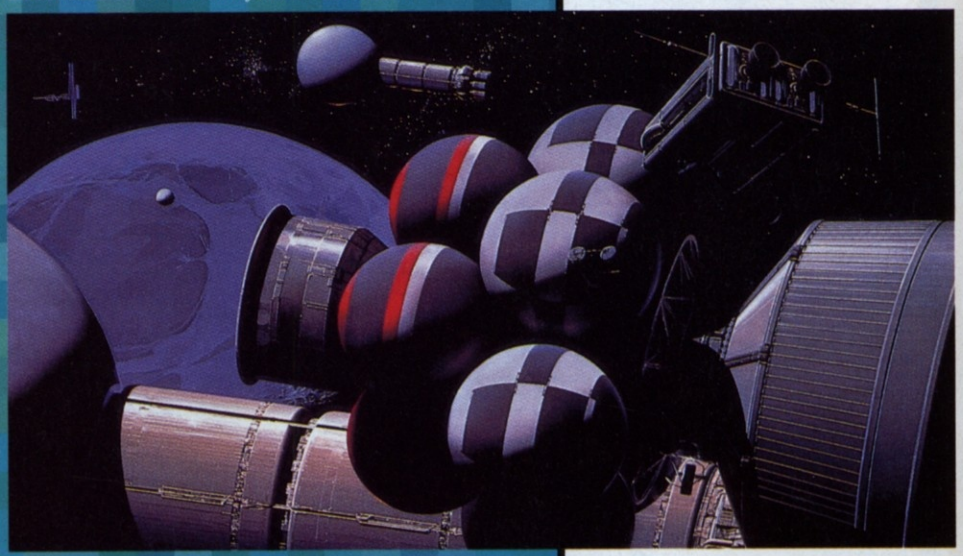
How do you create your designs?

Historically I have used manual techniques to accomplish my visionary production. Co-operating with technicians in large staff groups has been the 'modus operandi' for my entire professional career. This most recent example of learning, creating and solving specific stylistic and technical problems is another example of matching imagination to technique. The tools may be different but the methodology is the same.

One of Syd Mead's areas of interest was the packaging. He has stepped away from the familiar six-faced box and designed a model Cyberace vehicle to grace the top.



Some pretty stunning examples of visual futurism (or whatever you want to call it). The first two are from the fairly fab 2010 and the bottom one from the utterly smart Blade Runner.



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CD ROM GUIDE

As the CD market finally starts to take off, Branko Djakovic and Drago Indjic takes a look at some of the CD drives currently available while the rest of the *PC Zone* team attempt to blag the hardware.

FINALLY, AFTER ALL the years of promise, this really does look like being the year in which CD ROM drives make it into the mainstream of the computer games industry. How do we know? Well there's the small matter of *The 7th Guest*, which has not only picked up loads of attention but sales to match. More companies seem to be simultaneously releasing CD and floppy titles, and more games is always a fair indication of a technology coming into bloom, though it can often be a chicken and egg dilemma.

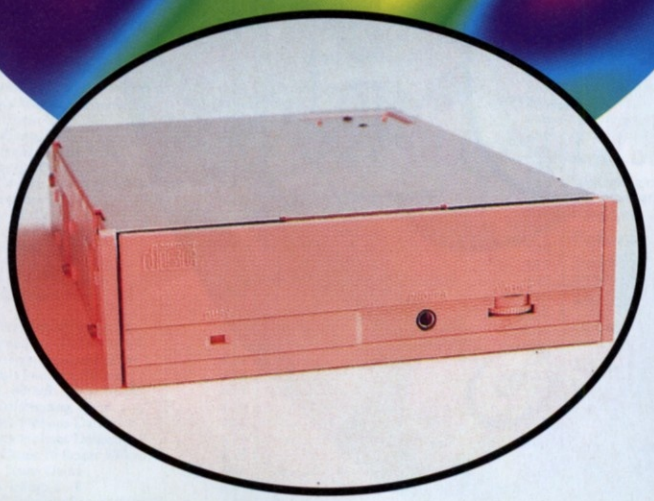
So the stuff's there, more every day, now the only problem is which CD ROM drive should you buy? For the games player the answer might originally have been: 'The cheapest, I only want to play games off it', but that's no longer the case. The latest batch of games for CD ROM are demanding higher specs than before. You don't get these sort of problems on an abacus.

The drives are generally becoming cheaper with more and more improvements being bundled into them. New standards are emerging: the multispin drives allow the CD to be rotated at twice the speed allowing faster access to the data and in the end bigger transfer rates. Multi-session drives can read the Kodak standard photo CDs which were recorded in a number of different sessions instead of a single recording session like traditional CDs. There also exists a division between the types of controller cards that drives use. Some use proprietary (AT) controller cards which are easier to install (and cheaper), while others use SCSI controllers which are faster but more expensive and distinctly harder to install. So, in effect, there is more to choose from and at the same time it is harder to choose. We took a swipe at the drives present on the market and the most intriguing selection is in front of you.

We tested the speed by running *Loom* off the drive and by timing the installation of *Space Quest IV*. The installation ease was tested by installing them and the overall functionality by putting together reactions concerning the performance of drives, control options, documentation, technical support and so on. ☞

The Mitsumi LU005 (internal)

Supplier: UK Flex (021 624 7777) **Price:** £169.00
Transfer rate: 150Kb/s **Access time:** 375ms
Speed: 4 **Installation:** 6 **Functionality:** 5
Obvious advantages: The cheapest drive on the market. Fairly simple to install and does not need a SCSI controller.
Obvious disadvantages: Fairly slow and unimpressively underspeced. Does not offer multispin/multi-session capabilities. The open clamshell tray offers little protection against dust.
Rather less obvious details: The installation is straightforward enough but do not expect the best drive in the world. The drive is not multi-session compatible and is definitely not multispin. It is on the verge of being slow but still plays all the animations with maybe just a bit of shudder. Instead of just the tray coming out of the drive, the entire drive comes out of the machine. Watch out if you do not have too much desk space. All in all a dependable but not too exquisite drive.
Intended for: Mr Game himself – cheap and cheerful; well, very cheap and quite cheerful. Perfect for playing lots of games. Mind you, if there are many animations in those games and you intend to play them off the drive, forget it.



The SyDOS Personal CD (external)

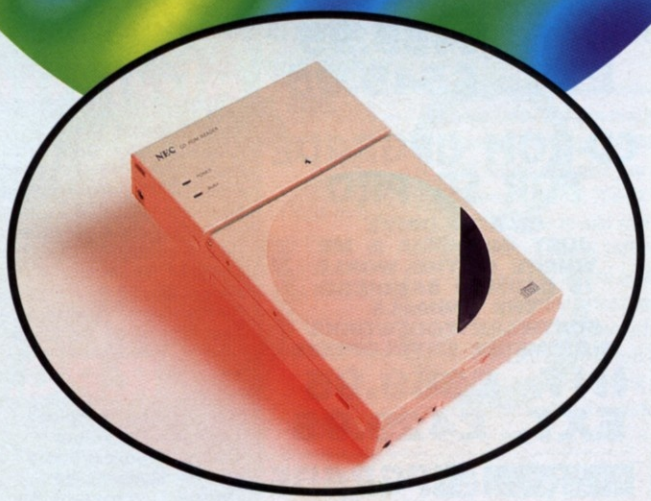
Supplier: SyDOS (031 339 2022) **Price:** £269.00 with CorelDraw
Transfer rate: 150Kb/s / 70Kb/s **Access time:** 545ms
Speed: 3 **Installation:** 8 **Functionality:** 6
Obvious advantages : The object of one of the best bundling deals on the market – together with CorelDraw on CD ROM it sells for just £256.00. Easy to install since it plugs into the serial or parallel port.
Obvious disadvantages: Very slow. So slow that you can read the entire game instruction book while it loads the game, although that is the fault of the slow connection rather than the drive itself.
Rather less obvious details: Based on a now defunct Philips model. Too chunky to be really portable which it was obviously intended to be. Open tray. Has got awkward positioning of the audio control, on the back of the case. Of course, it is much better for installing games than having them played off the drive. Actually, it is almost impossible to play a game off the drive because they are painfully slow. Installation, on the other hand, is quite fast and smooth. This drive is perfect for sharing between a couple of un-ambitious users since it is so easy to move and install.
Intended for: Someone looking for CorelDraw who'd be happy to get a drive free with it, or someone looking for a drive who'd be happy to get CorelDraw free with it. Also for a user who needs easy installation without opening the machine, or those users that have no free slots left in the machine.

The Panasonic CR 562 B (internal)

Supplier: Optech (0252 714340) **Price:** £285.00
Transfer rate: 300Kb/s **Access time:** 340ms
Speed: 7 **Installation:** 7 **Functionality:** 7
Obvious advantages: An extremely fast and powerful drive for an extremely popular price. Need we say more. The perfect compromise.
Obvious disadvantages: Fast but still a generation behind the Toshiba.
Rather less obvious details: This drive is a brand new design from Panasonic. The previous range – CR 521 – has been completely redesigned to produce this double-spin multi session compatible drive. It is also fairly easy to install since it has a proprietary controller card instead of the SCSI controller. The drive was so fast in both installing games and running them off the drive itself that you need not look for anything faster if it is just games and an occasional 'serious' pack you have in mind. Could serve you well into the next generation of CD ROM drives.
Intended for: The buyer who likes high specs and wants speed and functionality but just doesn't have enough money for a Toshiba. Excellent for ambitious game players.

The NEC CDR 38 (external)

Supplier: NEC (081 993 8111) **Price:** £285.00
Transfer rate: 300Kb/s **Access time:** 400ms
Speed: 7 **Installation:** 7 **Functionality:** 8
Obvious advantages: An excellent portable drive, in fact the only portable drive on the market with multi-session and multispin capabilities.
Obvious disadvantages: Well, it could always be a bit cheaper.
Rather less obvious details: Installs easily and works without a hitch. In our tests the animations and the sound quality were both impressive. Installation of the drive was extremely easy and so was the usage. Who said installing CD ROM drives was complicated? Although it looks very slim and elegant – in design it is very similar to the portable audio CD players – this is a high power CD ROM drive with all the frills you can get on this market. The full installation kit is also handy.
Intended for: Someone who wants an excellent drive which can easily be moved. Mind you, it is better than most non-portable drives on the market. Price is also very accessible.



The Hitachi CDR 3750 Y (internal)

Supplier: Optech (0252 714340) **Price:** £536.00
Transfer rate: 150Kb/s **Access time:** 300ms
Speed: 7 **Installation:** 6 **Functionality:** 7
Obvious advantages: Very fast and extremely well engineered. Perfect dust exclusion mechanism allows for fast reading of CDs.
Obvious disadvantages: Not as fast as the Toshiba and not as cheap as the rest of the low level ones. Actually, quite pricey now that the Toshiba prices have been reduced. Occupies a perfect mid-market spot.
Rather less obvious details: Uses an SCSI controller card which improves the speed of data transfer but cuts down on the ease of installation. Installing this SCSI controller and connecting the drive to it wasn't exactly easy, but once it was over the drive functioned without problems. Comes with the full install kit which makes life easier where installation is concerned. Functioned well through all the tests with excellent results in animation playing and in audio quality.
Intended for: Serious users who do not mind frolicking with games once in a while. It is almost affordable and excellent in design. All in all, a serious drive.

TheToshiba XM 3401 SA (external)

Supplier: Optech (0252 714340) **Price:** £595.00
Transfer rate: 330Kb/s **Access time:** 200ms
Speed: 9 **Installation:** 7 **Functionality:** 8
Obvious advantages: The fastest drive on the market. Also: the best drive on the market.
Obvious disadvantages: The price, although lower than it used to be for the previous generation, is still far from low. It needs an SCSI controller. Installing a SCSI controller can take anything between 30 minutes and a decade.
Rather less obvious details: Improved mechanism allows it to perform under any angle, on the move and even upside down. The software side of the installation is easy and straightforward. The interior of the chassis is extremely dust-proof due to a sophisticated door mechanism which reduces the amount of dust in the case and increases the speed of the drive. The performance of this drive with any piece of software was a delight. No glitches and mistakes.
Intended for: The user who wants the best drive on the market. Not really suitable for someone who just wants to play but extremely good for someone who wants to play once in a while, between heavy duty applications. May be a bit pricey for a games drive but if you are playing a game on it you'll know what it was meant to be like.

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Street fighting man

I GOT *Lemmings 2* a few weeks back and I had to use a boot disk to lower the edition of DOS as my computer did not have enough memory at first to play the game. I was wondering if I would have the same sort of problem if I bought *Streetfighter 2*. Could you also tell me how much memory it is likely to need.

Leo Earle, London

A boot disk doesn't 'lower' the version of DOS – the 'SETVER' command is used for that. A boot disk is a way of starting up your computer 'clean' of all memory resident programs, such as TSRs and unnecessary drivers. TSR is short for Terminate and Stay Resident – meaning that the program is hovering in your memory whether it is being used or not.

Streetfighter 2 isn't out yet, so I'm not sure what the specs will be. I would guess it will need 286 minimum processor and the usual 640K base RAM. No one knows yet how much extended memory it will need.

If you are having to do a cold boot for a lot of games, I would suggest that you could do with some more memory. **MB.**

Another Amiga owner sees the light

I CURRENTLY OWN an Amiga but hope to buy a PC soon. Please could you answer a couple of questions for me.

I have seen the Amstrad PC7386 GP80 with 25MHZ processor, 80Mb Hard Disk, 2Mb RAM and with a soundcard, games and joystick.

Will this be able to run such games as *X-Wing*, *Stunt Island* and all other IBM games?

Is this a good machine or crap (for a beginner)?

Will it be as fast as an Amiga which runs at 8.5MHZ (I think)?

Is only 256K of Video RAM a problem?

Should I buy it for a first machine or, if not, can you recommend a good machine.

Mick, Blackburn, Lancs

The specs for the Amstrad look fine. But the games you mention will be slow on it. The 386SX is yesterday's chip and not upgradable. If you are interested in top rank PC games you will find 80Mb too little; X-Wing and Stunt Island will take up about 26Mb on their own. The 386 is now the minimum processor for many games so all of them available now should run on it although, as I say, not very fast.

The machine will certainly be faster than your Amiga. I think that you would be better off getting a 486SX machine with 4Mb memory minimum (and space to fit more) and a Hard Disk of at least 110Mb. That should take care of your requirements. Such a machine will cost more than the Amstrad and will probably not come with a soundcard. But you will be able to add a 'clock doubler' chip – an OverDrive in your case as DX2s are only available to manufacturers – and upgrade it so that flight sims become a joy.

256K isn't a lot of video RAM these days – the norm is about 1Mb. But you really only need 1Mb of video if you're running 256 colours at high resolution. A compromise is 512K which will give you a resolution of 800 X 600 at 256 colours or 1,024 X 768 at 16 colours. Make sure that the card has slots to add more memory so that you can upgrade to the full 1Mb in future.

If you can't afford a 486 just yet, then wait until you can – either the price comes down or your bank balance goes up. A recent court challenge to Intel's monopoly of the 486 chip could mean that 486 machines will probably get cheaper soon. I think you would be making an expensive mistake in lumbering yourself with the machine you've described. **MB.**

So you want to be a Jedi?

I HAVE RECENTLY purchased the much sought after *X-Wing* game from my local games store. The gameplay is fine, but my problem arises from its Sound Blaster sound card support. The game does not produce any digital music, voices or effects with my Sound Blaster 2.0 card selected from the installation, although the Ad-Lib music and effects work fine.

Please note that my soundcard is configured correctly and has an IRQ interrupt which was previously free, and base address of 240 Hex. My other games such as *Underworld* and *Links 386 Pro* produce perfect digital speech. Is there any simple solution to this problem without having to send the game back to US Gold for a new version?

I hope you can shed some light on the matter, as I am sure many other readers have encountered the same problem.

Martin J Pickup, Scarsborough, North Yorkshire

There is, in fact, a problem with X-Wing and Sound Blaster. If you write to US Gold, Units 2 & 3 Holford Way, Holford, Birmingham, B6 7AX, they'll send you a disk that fixes things. **MB.**

Stepping on the gas

I bought my current PC a little over a year ago and now I find that my 386SX, which runs at 16MHz, is too slow to run some of the bigger games such as *X-Wing*. Therefore I would like to know if it's possible to update my processing speed to say 33MHz? If so, how much will it cost and how would I go about it? Also, if I manage to update my PC to 33MHz, would I be able to substitute the 386 chip for a 486 or 586 at some point in the future?

D Kewley, Sheffield

The clock is an oscillating crystal and it's usually soldered to the motherboard, so there is not much you can do about that. In some modern 486SX machines the clock is in a socket and you can replace it as you upgrade to a ninja 486DX2 66MHz system. Watford Electronics (0923 237 774) and Viglen (081 758 7000) do chip-based upgrades. I don't know what brand of motherboard you have; on some it's not possible to change the chips because they're glued in. **MB.**

CD or not CD

I HAVE CURRENTLY run out of hard disk space on my PC and, due to the fact that I'm not flushed with money, have a query.

Should I go for a second hard drive or a CD ROM which in effect reduces the need for a hard disk. I'm sure the way forward is with CDs and I'm interested in them.

Also if I was to go for a CD ROM is there anything I should be wary of? Will some ROMs not work with my system or are they all standard. As you can guess I'm quite a novice on this subject.

My system is:
486DX2 50MHZ
8Mb RAM (8 X 1Mb Simms 90 ns)
256 Cache
SVGA 1Mb
Sound Blaster 2.0

David Byrne, Cannock, Staffs

A second hard drive and a CD drive will solve two different problems. Both will give you more storage space (640 Mb on each CD) but while every game can be installed to hard disk you cannot write to a normal CD. Only a few games are available on CD now, but the proportion is bound to increase. Some games, like the recent The 7th Guest, are only available on CD. Take a look at CD software and see if the sort of games you fill your hard drive up with are out on CD. Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe, Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego? and tons of shareware means my tastes are catered for, but I'm a bit weird.

All CD drives will work with your PC. The differences between them amount to how fast they read data and whether they play audio CDs – a fairly meaningless occupation in my opinion.

How fast they read data depends to a large extent on how they connect to your computer. The slowest are those that attach to the parallel port. Next are those that come with their own interface card and the fastest are those which have a SCUSI interface card. All CD ROMs will have a slower rate of transfer than a hard drive.

Access time is how quickly the laser gets to the part of the disk it has to read. It ranges from about 700ms (slow) to about 300ms (fast). Frankly, anything under a second is okay. CD drives read data a lot slower than hard drives. ☞

☞ *You need a sustained transfer rate of around 150K/s. One drive, from NEC, has a transfer rate double this. That is because the NEC CDR-74 L599 model spins at either 300 or 600rpm so data can be read off that much faster. Normal drives spin at 200rpm. The NEC would be my personal choice, but look around. CD drives are reviewed in this issue (page 83), Last October's Computer Shopper and Computer Buyer is doing a test as I write.* **MB.**

Sound Blaster again

1. I HAVE A Sound Blaster card and a game card – is it possible to use both ports at the same time with two joysticks?

2. Why doesn't my Sound Blaster work with *PGA Tour Golf*?

3. If I buy an extra hard disk do I have to plug it in, or do you have to set it up and buy a completely new controller?

Chris Williams, Manchester

No, they will clash. I suspect this is the reason why you can't get the soundcard to work with PGA Tour Golf. I would remove or disable the game card and use the joystick port on the Sound Blaster.

Bus driver

I have just got a Dan 486SX 25MHz PC but because I am new to the world of PCs I have some questions about them which may be simple to answer to you but to which I would really like the answers. Please could you answer them clearly because, remember, I'm a bit of a Mr Cursor at the moment.

1. The Dan I have only has 16-bit expansion slots, will an 8-bit Sound Blaster 2.0 card work in one? Someone told me it would.

2. Apparently my magazine has a VESA local bus which I have seen mentioned in magazine articles – what is it?

3. Are then any 9 or 24 pin colour dot matrix printers you can recommend? It would be used for letters occasionally, the odd picture/drawing and some of my schoolwork.

James R Smith, Cookridge, Leeds

1. Yes, it will work fine.

2. The standard PC architecture transfers data to peripherals in 16 bit chunks at 8MHz. A local bus should transfer data in full 32 bits at 33MHz. VESA (Video Electronics Suppliers Association) is just one of the standards for local buses. They're sometimes called a VL-bus and are quite common. There is a VESA 64 bit bus in the pipeline.

3. The Panasonic KX-P2124 is a fast 24 pin colour printer that offers front loading. The Seikosha SL-95 has better colour but is slower – an hour for a full colour page. Frankly, the output of dot matrix colour printers is pretty dire and if you are going to do a lot of colour printing, or need good results, you will be better off with an inkjet printer. The Seikosha should cost around £170 and the Panasonic about £220 – these are 'usual' prices rather than the recommended retail prices which are £249 and £395 respectively. Inkjets will cost about double – the H P DeskJet 550C sells for approximately £410 (RRP £729) and is a nice little printer. **MB**

Hard drives can be external or internal. There are two different sorts of external drive; those that plug into the parallel port and those that plus into an interface – either their own (usually SCUSI) or your existing hard drive controller. The ones that work through the parallel port are slow and relatively expensive whereas the ones that use their own interface are usually portable and are fast and expensive.

Internal drives are cheaper and easy to install. Your present controller should support a second drive – check the manual and if your controller is the IDE or SCUSI standard then you're away. The manual will tell you how to configure the card for the second drive (called a 'slave drive') by moving the jumpers. Make sure that the second drive has a 14 pin resistor pack near the cable connector. If it doesn't then your dealer will supply one – you need 230 and 330 ohm pull-up and pull-down pairs.

If the existing controller doesn't have facilities for a second drive (i.e., the near obsolete ST405/506 standard), then you will have to get a new hard drive controller – but they don't cost that much and are easy to fit. If you install one, you will have to disable the existing controller – this is done from SETUP. **MB.**

Cache in hand

1. I'VE JUST STARTED buying *PC Zone* because, like most people I know, I'm upgrading to a PC from my humble Amiga A500. Firstly I would like to say what a well written, honest and informative magazine *PC Zone* is. (I always did wonder where half the staff of *Zero* magazine went.)

Anyway, as I am new to the PC scene and currently wading through a sea of jargon and technology, I wonder if you would mind answering a couple of questions;

What is a cache? It is usually written on PC adverts. For example – 486SX – 25MHz 64K Cache. Is it important? I assume it has something to do with memory.

2. What are the major differences between a 386 and a 486 machine other than speed? I'm hoping to buy a 386SX 33MHz computer, however I'm worried about its future potential when compared with the 486 machines. Is a 486 really worth the extra?

I suppose to PC veterans it seem stupid and somewhat obvious, but please take sympathy on an unfortunate Amiga owner!

Mike Word, Copt Heath, Solihull

1. A cache is a small section of fast memory chips which supplies the CPU with data and instructions faster than the main memory can. The main use is for data that the program uses frequently. How useful it is depends on the machine and the application. 486DX chips have their own, internal, 8K cache and over 90% of the processor's instructions are provided from this section of fast memory. 386 machines need a motherboard cache – usually 32K.

There is a trend for disk controllers to have a cache memory. The principal is the same – frequently requested data is held in memory from where it can be retrieved faster than from the disk. You can configure part of your normal RAM as a disk cache with a program such as SMARTDRIVE.

2. The 386 and 486 are both 32 bit chips. The 386 was the first chip to be capable of multitasking – running more than one program at the same time. The 486DX has a built in maths co-processor (useful for programs that do a lot of calculating) and a built in cache (see above). The 486SX is the same chip with the cache and co-processor 'knocked out'.

What is exciting about the 486 is that is upgradable by plugging in companion chips that increase speed and performance. 386 machines do not have this option. I must say that you should go for a 486. Strange to say, the 386 is on its last legs now. **MB.**

New readers start here

Being completely new to the baffling world of PCs, I am thinking of running games on my Hewlett Packard Vectra 486. Can you recommend a sound board, and will I need a VGA card? Do these cards allow for better graphics or speed up the machine? Also, will my SVGA monitor have any bearing on graphics capabilities?

John Shell, South Shields, Tyne and Wear

Any standard soundcard should fit in your computer. You should aim for a card which is 16-bit and compatible with Sound Blaster and Ad-Lib. We did a soundcard survey for the first issue and Sound Blaster and Gravis Ultrasound came out well.

All HP Vectra 486 machines come with their own 'Ultra' VGA card and the ST and U series come with a local bus – this gives them an impressive video performance – you shouldn't need to add anything at all, unless you need extra video memory (VRAM). The monitor that came with your computer copes with VGA and SVGA which are just different resolutions. VGA is typically 640 x 480 pixels and SVGA is, again, typically 800 x 600. Your card will support up to 1024 x 768. **MB**

Disk tower

ALTHOUGH I AM new to the PC I have owned an Amiga for several years and have grown accustomed to paying around £4.00 for a magazine with two cover disks. With the Amiga this wasn't so bad as any useful files on the disks were easily transferred thus allowing the disks to be reformatted and re-used. £4.00 for a good magazine, some programs and two blank disks is better value. Unfortunately my PC (a Del 486/25P) refuses to reformat any unwanted cover disks. So I am left with a dilemma. As I have not seen your mag on sale without cover disks, do I buy your magazine which I enjoy very much and add to the pile of unwanted cover disks or do I miss out on all the useful information contained within your pages because I begrudge paying £4.00 for a magazine with cover disks I don't really want. Perhaps you know of some minor miracle which will allow me to reformat my ever growing tower of unwanted cover disks.

Geoff Marshall, Sydenham, London SE26

Miracles are the stock in trade of PC Zone. Type 'CD DOS' at the c:\> prompt. Put the cover disk in the floppy drive. If it's a DD disk (that is, it doesn't have 'HD' on it somewhere and it doesn't have a hole in the bottom left corner) type 'FORMAT A: /F:720'. If it's a HD disk then just type 'FORMAT A:'. If the computer says 'WRITE PROTECT ERROR FORMAT TERMINATED' then take the disk out and move the tab to close off the hole on the bottom right. If the disk does not have such a tab, then close off the hole with some tape.

Put the line 'PATH C:\DOS' in your AUTOEXEC.BAT file and you can format from any directory. You can also format disks under Windows by using the disk option in File Manager. But it's not nearly so much fun. **MB.**

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386SX 16MHz	386SX 20MHz	386SX 25MHz	386SX 33MHz	386DX 33MHz	386DX 40MHz	486SX 16MHz	486SX 20MHz	486SX 25MHz	486SLC 33MHz
20 MHz	25 MHz	31 MHz	47 MHz	51 MHz	66 MHz	54 MHz	67 MHz	84 MHz	92 MHz

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TROUBLESHOOTER

FEATURING THE HACKMASTERS™ AND THE TRUEPLAYERS™

Hey, anti-establishment, anti-system, anti-TruePlayerism is in! Believe us. Out are the moth-eaten, yellow fingernailed, budgie-owning, carrot cake-eating, Jilly Cooper screen adaptation-watching, *Morse*-loving TruePlayers™ and their oh-so-holy 'complete solutions'. In for '93; the rap-music-loving, guitar-playing, catchphrase-making, flightsim-hating HackMasters™ and their ever-so-magic hacks and cracks. These are the two sides of the games-playing world. Troubleshooter is the mediator in this conflict.

HackMasters™ and *PC Zone* take no responsibility for direct or indirect damage caused to software and hardware by the use of the HackMaster™ hacks. It's nigh on impossible to damage anything with these hacks, but, you'll understand, we have to cover our yellow chicken behinds.

The Bottom Line

The bottom line is that you'll have to have a specky chromosome in your genes (or else borrow one) to achieve maximum satisfaction from the HackMaster's™ experience. If you are not very brave or you are having teething troubles then the bottom line is 'do not ring us' unless it is an emergency.

The HackMasters™

All these hacks, like the rest of the magazine, are copyright ©Felden Publications 1993. If you try and pass them off as your own to another magazine, we'll get you both.

ENTER INTO THE REAL world, where it is cleverer to not succumb to the morally demoralising world of computer gamesplaying. Don't suspend your disbelief and sit there, hours on end, playing a flight-sim and believing you're really flying. Don't play an adventure game. Or an RPG. Or an arcade adventure. 'What did you spend your time doing between the ages of 20 and 45 grandad,' says your granddaughter. 'Oh,' you reply. 'I played *Space Hulk* mainly.' Get a life. Hack the games and then throw them in the bin where they belong.

Backup

Most, if not all, of the hacks on this page will require changing actual game files. It is then sensible, if not prudent, to back up the file specified in the hack. To do this, simply enter the directory containing the file, say for example `SAVEGAME.SAV`, and back it up thus:

```
COPY SAVEGAME.SAV SAVEGAME.BAK
```

If you make an bad mistake and/or *Eldorado* is recommissioned, then restore the files thus:

```
COPY SAVEGAME.BAK SAVEGAME.SAV
```

Simple as pimples. But remember the bottom line – don't ring us, unless it's an emergency or you're really stuck. Then still don't ring us.

Hexadecimal

Let me tell you about the PC. It doesn't count like you and I. We count up in base 10. The PC's count up in base 16. Like this: `01, 02, 03,` all the way up to `09` and then `0A` (for 10), `0B` (for 11), up to `0E` (14) and `0F` (15) and then `10,` which, in decimal, is the number 16. If this sounds complicated then it's because it is. But for the HackMaster's™ experience you only really need to learn a few choice hex numbers (and remember all hex numbers on this page will be suffixed with an 'H' e.g. `FFFFH`).

HEX	DECIMAL	HEX	DECIMAL
0AH	10	40H	64
0FH	15	63H	99
10H	16	64H	100
20H	32	C8H	200
28H	40	FAH	250
32H	50	FFH	255

Debug

Somewhere in the depths of uncharted territory (i.e. your DOS folder) is a very useful program called *debug*. It allows you to edit files of all descriptions and subtly change the data. It is the program we will use most in the HackMaster™ zone, and since it is the most user-unfriendly program *on this planet*, a brief introduction /explanation may be in order. Here's a step by step guide to a *debug* hack:

To run it just type `DEBUG` in the appropriate directory (i.e. the one mentioned in the hack blurb). It should run automatically and produce a little '>' prompt. If you get a 'file not found' style error then your DOS path hasn't been set properly. Refer to the MS-DOS manual and remember the bottom line – don't ring us.

1 `›NCHEAT.DAT ‹return›`

Now, once you have a little '>' prompt you should type in the commands listed in the program, starting with the line above, the 'N' command. This tells *debug* which program is to be hacked. There should be no space between the 'N' and the full filename.

2 `›L ‹return›`

This command actually loads the file you've just specified into memory and into the hands of the hacker.

3 `›E 026F v ‹return›`

This is the Edit function. Type it as it appears above, i.e. with a space between the E and the address (`035b`) and the 'v'. The 'v' stands for a value you will enter yourself, ranging between `00H` and `FFH` (0 to 255 decimal).

4 `›E 0289 92 22`

If the edit command looks something like this (i.e. a long list of numbers), then press RETURN after the address and *debug* will repeat your command. Then type in the values which follow (92, 22 etc.) pressing SPACE between each one, except the last when you press RETURN. So the command should be enacted thus (with what you must type in red):

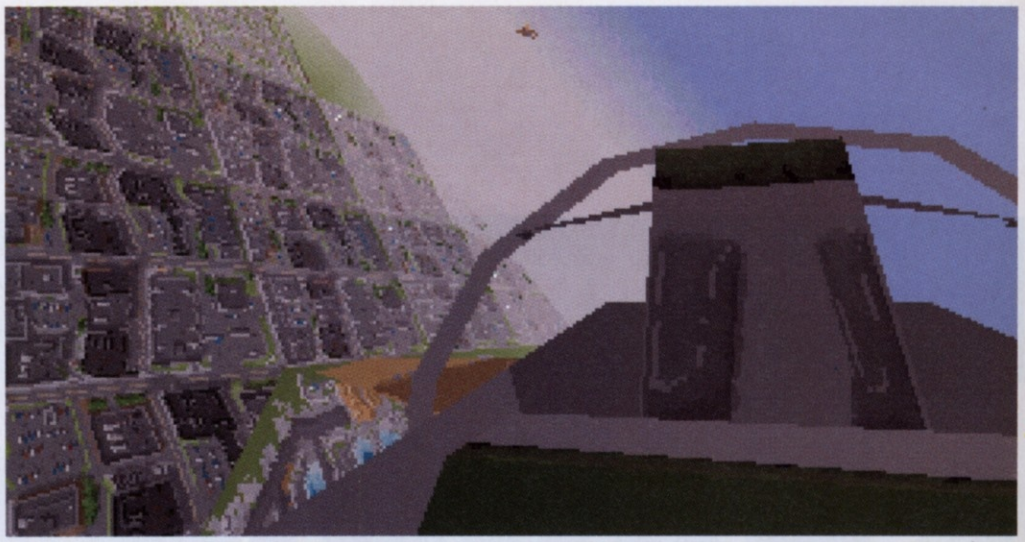
```
›E 0289 ‹RETURN›
21FB:0289 00.92 ‹space› 11.22
‹return›
›
```

5 `›W ‹return›`

This command writes the hacked file back onto the disk. A message saying 'writing xxxxx bytes' will appear, where xxxxx is the size of the file (it varies). Nothing has been changed on your hard disk until you type this command. So if you've made a mistake earlier just quit *debug* and start the process again.

6 `›Q ‹return›`

This quits you back to DOS. ☞



Strike Commander; Revolutionary flight sim technology or just a 'pile of old jobs'? Well, if in doubt, hack it.

Spelljammer
(US Gold)

This extremely esoteric game will now receive a fairly down-to-earth savegame hack, courtesy of neophyte hacker, Brian Beast Oxley – who wins a couple of items of software from the *PC Zone* cupboard. It's an RPG so we're glad. It's also a *debug* hack, so we're doubly glad. Here's how to do it. Play the game as per norm but save your game as 'CHEAT'. Quit out and backup the file CHEAT.PTY. For massive hit points (circa 1000) enter the following bytes:

```
FF FF FF 00 FF 00 FF FF FF
```

into the following addresses:

Character	Address
1	0124
2	0330
3	053C
4	0748
5	0954
6	0B60
7	0D6C
8	0F78
9	1184
10	1390

For a succulent amount of money enter:

```
FF FF FF FF
```

into:

Character	Address
1	0173
2	037F
3	058B
4	0797
5	09A3
6	0BAF
7	0DBB
8	0FC7
9	11D3
10	13DF

So, for example, to plump up the hit points and money of character 5, for instance, do the following in *debug*:

```
>NCHEAT.PTY
>L
>E 0954 FF FF FF 00 FF 00 FF FF FF
(for HPs)
>E 09A3 FF FF FF FF (for dosh)
>W
>Q
```

Silly Silly II

Hot on the very silly heels of our issue 2 *AV8B* 'novelty hack', comes Richard Sokl's nearly-as-amusing hack for *Comanche*. The graphics files for helicopters and tanks are stored in the main *Comanche* directory, with a .RLE extension. If for some reason you want to change the choppers into flying tanks then do the following:

```
COPY HOKE.RLE HOKE.BAK
```

That backs up the original 'copter file. Now:

```
COPY TANK.RLE HOKE.RLE
```

and then ready your aching sides (and your AMRAAMS) for flying tanks. Ho! Oh, and if you get bored of this effect (and let's face it this gag has a very short 'shelf-life') then do this:

```
COPY HOKE.BAK HOKE.RLE
```

Strike Commander
(Electronic Arts)

This wonder-sim's gameplay may be debatable, but it sure has a full quota of 'hackplay' for the HackMasters™ and their latest recruit, Nicolas Owen, to muck about with. If you're feeling a little low on missiles, cash, or enemy files try this little *debug* experience.

Play the game and save your progress as 'CHEAT'. Quit out and back up the file CHEAT. Enter *debug* and enter the following at your leisure (the 'v' value can be anything from 00H to FFH).

```
>NCHEAT
>L
>E 026F v          v=no of AIM-9J missiles
>E 0272 v          v=no of AIM9M missiles
>E 0273 v          v=no of Mavericks
>E 0275 v          v=no of Anti-
                   runway bombs
>E 0277 v          v=no of MK20
                   cluster bombs
>E 0279 v          v=no of 500lb bombs
>E 027B v          v=no of Paveways
>E 027D v          v=no of Rocket Pods
>E 027F v          v=no of Amraams
>E 0289 92 22      Lots of money
>E 0299 v          v=no of Planes hit
>E 029B v          v=no of Tanks hit
>E 0305 v          v=no of Planes lost
>W
>Q
```

The Summoning
(US Gold)

Finish *The Summoning* in ten minutes! Do away with all that multi-levelled 100 hours of gameplay preamble with the HackMaster's™ 'Three Boiled Eggs' solution. Load the game as usual, and start from scratch, choosing a character etc. Straightaway, talk to Malachi. Don't ask him for coins, just say 'ZEBU'. Go north-west until you see a strange teleporter (near a skull). Enter it and appear in a small room. Pick up the Warmonger, Top of Staff, Chessantra's Skull and read all the other scrolls. Exit via the portal to the north-east. Go to the door with a hole in front and place the staff top in the hole. Enter, pick up the top of staff, and then go and talk to Shadow Weaver. Get the bottom of staff and the necklace of Runes from inside the chest. Hold both parts of the staff in your hands and then cast the spell of Mending (FHGACABF). Now use the fixed staff to summon Borel, Chessantra or the God Of Magic. Summon Borel (make sure you're wearing all Shadow Weaver's kit) and then the end is nigh.

X-WING BIN

A few late contributions from P. Hilling and Ben Thomas go straight (we're afraid) into the *X-Wing* Bin. Alas, poor HackMasters™. Better luck next time.

The TruePlayers™

SHADOW OF THE COMET

SPOILED!

The gypsies are useful allies, so don't upset them.

Sargeant Baggs is a nasty piece of work.

Donahue is harmless enough, but no help at all.

The fortune teller is in a mind-expanding business.

In the H.R. Geiger Warped Childhood Chart, H.P. Lovecraft's adolescence weighs in at a respectable 8 - psychological scars a mile wide produced all this Call Of Cthulu big octopus stuff, and some very dodgy ideas on white supremacy. Similarily, too many cardigans, rich tea biscuits, and small glasses of sherry in Laurence Scotford's teen years brought about a thick streak of TruePlayerism in the man. Witness: his nitty-picky *Shadow Of The Comet* Spoiled solution, part one...

DAY ONE

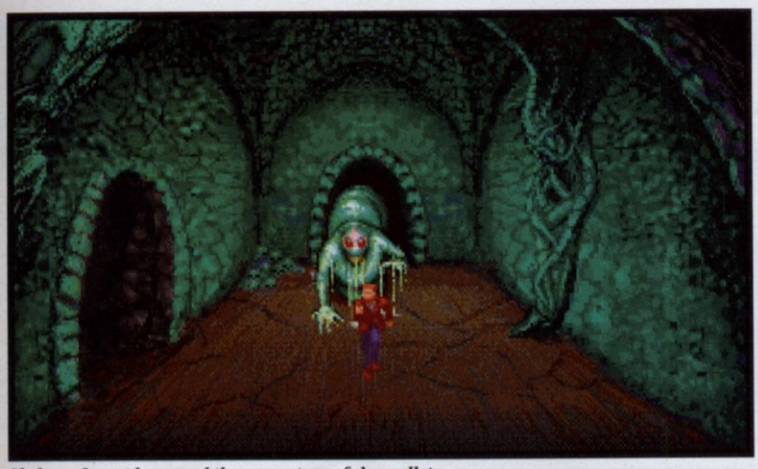
AFTER THE introductory sequence, the game begins in the Illsmouth harbour, just after you have come ashore. Your host, Dr Cobble, and the Mayor, Andrew Arlington, are waiting for you with a horse and carriage. Walk down and talk to them. Pleasantries will be exchanged and you will then be driven to Dr Cobble's house which is situated in the north-east corner of the town.

Outside the house, Mayor Arlington will ask if it is true that you are interested in the stars. It is important that you do not make him suspicious at this stage in the game, so answer: 'Amongst other things...' and then, in response to the Mayor's comment that it must be fascinating, say: 'That might be putting it a little too strongly'. He finally asks what the purpose of your visit is, but your answer is non-committal. The Mayor will take his leave and Dr Cobble will show you to your room and leave you there.

For the moment, ignore your luggage and take Boleskine's diary which is lying on the chest of drawers. Read this to obtain your first clue. Now take and read the telegram on the small table to discover that you will need to obtain some photographic plates. Go to the general store just south of the town square. The shopkeeper, Will Myers, will be serving the robed figure of Wilbur Hambleton. Wait till Myers has finished and then talk to him. You will buy one of his two remaining boxes of photographic plates. Hambleton will hang around and try to hear what you are saying, so when Myers asks you what you plan to photograph, tell him that you are going to take some views of the area. Leave the shop by the north exit and you will see Miss Picott and her niece sitting on a bench. Talk to them twice and on the second occasion say: 'I would be so immensely grateful if you were to tell me where I might find the town records.' Miss Picott will tell you that the town records are kept in the town hall.

Juggs

Go to the town hall and, as you approach it, the Mayor will pass you. Follow him to Coldstone's house. This is another clue. Go back to the town hall and enter it by the door on the south side. Go right through the first room into the inner office. Talk to Jugg, the records keeper, twice to tell him you'd like to consult the register of births. He will test you with a quote. The correct answer is: 'Shakespeare'. When he asks you if you're a reading man, say 'I like nothing better than a good read.' Go to the register of births (the open book on the long desk to the right) and consult it. It will ☞



Oh dear... I must have used the wrong type of slug pellets.

Waldo's jelly mould trick was always a winner at parties.

Love and marriage, Love and marriage... Have nothing to do with it.

Roughly translated: 'I've got a lovely bunch of runic stones'.

☞ identify the three individuals that could possibly have been Boleskine's guide as; Curtis Hambleton, Coldstone and Greenwood. Talk to Jugg again and, when he begins talking about local legends, say: 'How fascinating! That's a subject I'm very keen on.' He will tell you about his library. Continue the conversation along the subject of secrets by saying: 'Well they do say there's no such thing as a perfectly guarded secret, Mister Jugg... '. This will get Jugg on your side and he'll invite you to visit him. He'll also tell you the location of the three houses you need to visit and invite you to examine the other room.

Go into the other room and Jugg will follow you, telling you that he will be at home. Follow him to learn the location of his house and then go back to the second room in the records office. Look at the strange statue in the corner and you will find another clue in the form of a page of Boleskine's writings that have been corrected. Go back to the inner room and search the four cabinets on the far wall. There you will discover a clue about the names of citizens of Illsmouth, evidence that Jugg has been involved in spying, some useless papers and a magnifying glass. Take the magnifying glass with you.

Ethnic cleansing

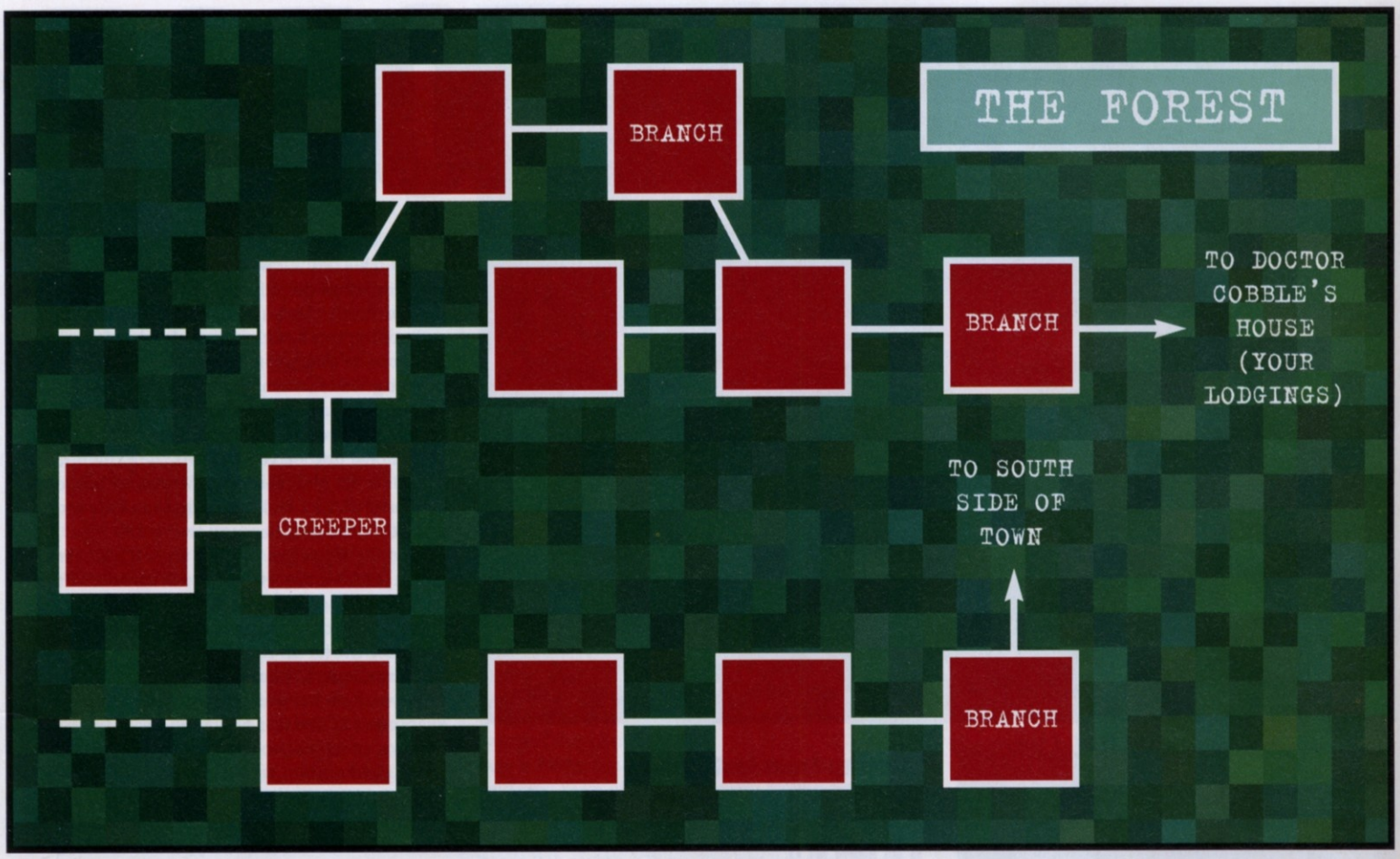
Now you can begin your search for the guide. Go first to Greenwood's house, just to the right of your lodgings. He will be sitting outside on a bench with Miss Picott. Talk to the couple and you will discover that Greenwood has been blind, deaf and dumb since birth, putting him out of the picture. Next try Coldstone's house in the far south-west corner of the town. This is the house that Arlington visited earlier. When you knock there will be no answer. Finally go to Curtis Hambleton's dwelling, which is the boat-house next to the dock. Curtis will be curled up asleep in one corner. Talk to him and he will start to discuss his role as guide and tell you that he took Boleskine to a cross in the forest. Ask: 'Where did you take Boleskine?', but he will not tell you. He will give you a clue about the events that are about to occur, and implicate his brother, Wilbur. Head back to the town square, taking the rope ladder next to the boat yard on the way.

In the town square you will find Sergeant Baggs trying to clear some gypsies out of town. Talk to him to tell him what you are looking for. He will warn you away from the forest. Talk to him again to argue with him about the innocence of the gypsies. He will get mad but the fortune teller will thank you. Now go to see Jugg in his house. Talk to him. He has something on his mind. Say: 'Have you found something?' He will tell you that he will discuss something with you later on. On your way out, examine the rifle hanging on the wall. It is Boleskine's. Use the magnifying glass to read the clue on its side.

Fascist

Now go back to your lodgings. Open your chest and take the drawing and map. Now look in the set of drawers and you will find some absorbent cotton and surgical spirit. Use the surgical spirit to dampen the cotton. Now go to the table and use the drawing. Then use the damp cotton on the drawing to gain another clue. Take the rubbed drawing. Using the map at the table, pinpoint the location of the cross by marking the Searcher constellation with an X. Leave the house and go left into the forest. Explore the forest using the forest diagram until you have found three branches and a creeper, then return to the town.

Now go to the drugstore, where you'll see Myer. Talk to him. He will warn you about Wilbur Hambleton and his sons, and tell you to find Tyler in the tavern. Go to the tavern and talk to Dr Cobble, who is standing outside. He will give you a clue about Mrs Picott's religious persuasion and remind you to speak to Tyler. Inside there is a man at the bar. Talk to the barman until you ask the barman if the man is Tyler. He will tell you that the man is Thomas Bishop. You will both talk about Tyler and then the man himself will arrive. Tyler will be introduced to you, and you'll both sit down. Talk to him. He will ask for $20.00 to guide you. Say '$20.00! I'm talking about the forest... '. You will negotiate, but when your name is mentioned he will offer to take you for just $5.00. Tell him you'll



think about it. At that point a window will be broken and everyone will rush outside to discover the two Hambleton boys laying into Walter Webster. After failing to stop them, pick up the bat lying on the ground and threaten them with it. They will move off. You take Webster to the drugstore to get fixed up. The assistant will call her father in to help. He will take Webster into another room, while you talk to Mary Matthews about photography. When the chemist appears again, he will introduce himself as Matthews and offer you the use of his darkroom.

Racist

You go outside with Webster and talk to him; he offers to guide you to the cross and arranges to meet you in an hour outside the town hall. Return to your lodgings and retrieve your camera, tripod, lantern and lens from the trunk. Then rendezvous with Webster outside the town hall and talk to him. It is now night. Once he is satisfied that you have the necessary equipment, he will carry your tripod and lead you into the forest and through an overgrown path to a bridge. Something will move in the undergrowth and he will become frightened. He points you in the direction of the cross, but will not go on. Try to bribe him, but he will run away taking your tripod with him. Go across the bridge and you'll find the cross. Use the three branches and creeper to make a makeshift tripod. Put the camera and lens on the tripod. Unwrap the photographic plates and take a picture on each of them, then recover your camera and lens.

Bigoted

Walk to the right and you'll come into another clearing with a black cat. It will dash away into the undergrowth. Look at the spot where the cat disappeared and you'll discover a path. Walk along it and you'll emerge above a clearing with a stone circle. An Indian will be conducting a strange ceremony with a group of robed figures. Quickly shuffle to the right, behind a tree where you can watch without being seen. The Indian will utter strange words and fire will appear from his hands. A bird will then swoop down and take a parchment from him, but it will be dropped at your feet. At this point, the Indian will notice you. You grab the parchment and run back along the path. In the clearing, the Indian will appear in front of you. He will tell you that you are to die and that Cthulu will reign again in two nights. He will also reveal himself as Nerackamous. You will quickly run back to the cross. He will chase you, so escape by running back over the bridge.

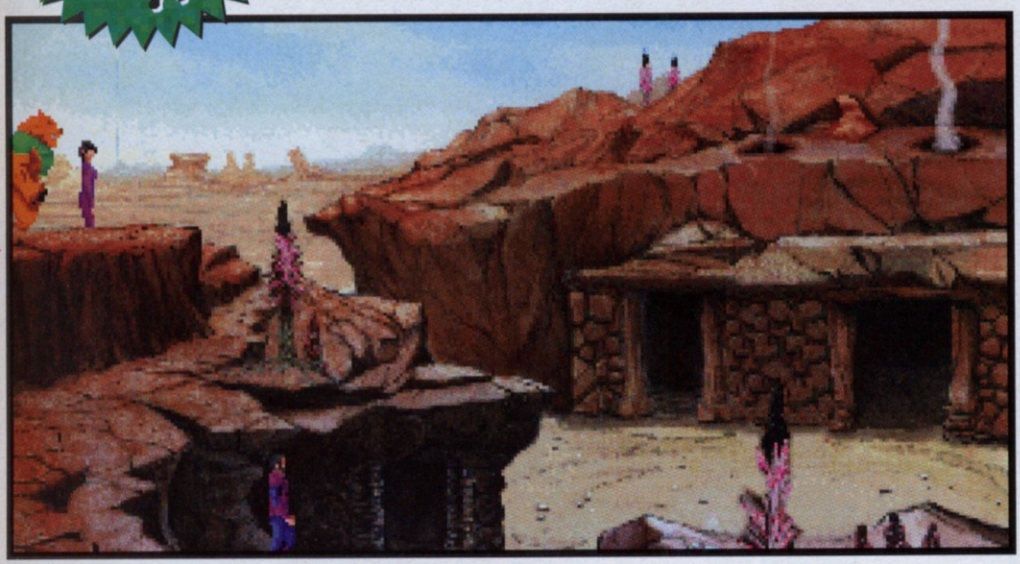
Nerackamous will not follow you over the bridge, but stops to perform an incantation. The bridge breaks and a tentacled creature begins to appear. You will dash from the forest back to Dr Cobble's house, to collapse from fright and exhaustion.

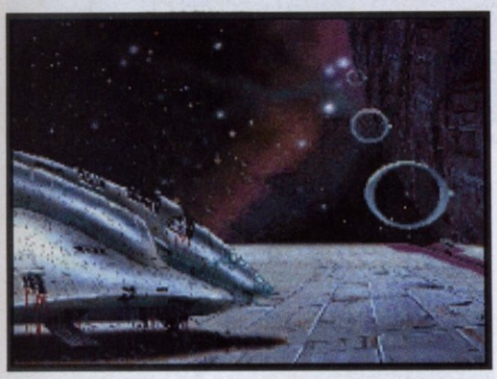
SO ENDETH THE FIRST LESSON

This is the end of the first day. Look out for the next thrilling instalment in enthralling TruePlayer detail next month.

SPOILED!

RINGWORLD





Part Two

As promised a couple of issues ago, a bit late admittedly, but pretty comprehensive you have to admit. The full blown finish to *RingWorld: Revenge Of The Crap Pretentious Story Line* By Larry Niven. Have joy.

Starting from last time...

ONCE YOU'VE RESCUED Seeker, the ship chugs towards the next deep radar contact. The whole team has a chin-wag about what to do next. Say you'll 'check the computer'. Touch the flashing console on the left wall of the bridge. Flick through the computer pages and then click on 'Stasis field' to receive some interesting info. Press EXIT twice to return to the bridge. Go to level 1 and walk to the west of the landing bay to find Miranda and Quinn. With the info you've gleaned Miranda will extract a gadget from the field.

Slaver sunflowers

The second box is to be found in the rather large Slaver Sunflower field. The consensus is that you should wait until nightfall and then use the probe. Save the game here and play the arcade sequences, skimming over the field. If you take too many hits the probe will be damaged and have to be returned for repair. Eventually you'll manage to reach the box. Meanwhile, Miranda will have discovered a use for the 'gadget' – it jams neural patterns. Hmm, very interesting.

The great ocean

The third box is deep under the ocean surface. On the beach is Skeenar, a friend of Louis Wu's, who will take you to the leader underwater. Go back to the lander, and go up to level 2. Enter the airlock chamber and nab the red suit in the middle of the racks. Exit the lander, talk to Skeenar and walk into the water. The cut scene will show you in conference with Lord Poria. A translator box has been taken by the Explorer who lived in a 'sky house'. This box allows communication between sea people and dolphins who, in turn, can rescue the box (this is such a load of codswallop).

Store the suit and then go to level 3. Talk to Seeker to be directed to the nearest floating building. Go to level 1 and touch the buttons behind the bulkhead to the left. A fly-cycle will appear to fly you to the 'sky house'. The man sitting on the bench when you arrive is the Explorer, a crotchety old git if there ever was one. Chat to him, get bored of him, and then stun him. This should give you a free-reign around the room.

Find the key in the tube on the left wall, then grab a jar from the left of the workbench. At the back of the room is a barrel stopped with a cork. Pull the cork out and drain the liquid out onto the floor. Use the jar on the puddle to collect the lubricant. Search around the books on the shelf until you find one which resembles a novel. Examine it to find it is hollow and contains a note with 2,4 and 3 inscribed on it. Look at the seat to gain a close-up. You will find a mark on the floor and a mark on the chair. Click the hand icon on the right hand close-up twice. Click on the left four times to turn it the other way. Click on the right three more times and the tile will flip open to reveal a floor safe. Use the key on the lock to open to the safe and find the translator.

Dolphins ahoy!

Fly back to the ship and go back to the beach. Give the translator box to Skeenar. She will send the dolphins to grab the box but they can't. The stinging anemones of death are stopping the poor dolphins. So give the jar full of lubricant to the Skeenar to allow them to penetrate the deadly aquatic fauna. But – oh no – the dolphins have no hands so cannot pick up the box. Go back to the lander, tap into the computer, and access the info on dolphins. Basically the snub-nosed mammals need mechanical hands. Touch the damaged probe to extricate its hands. Grab them and return to the beach. Give the handy tarsals to Skeenar who will pass them onto the dolphins who in turn will grab the box.

The map of earth

The next location is the above place – an alterior Earth reality. Before you zip down there with Seeker, Miranda reveals that the sunflower box contained a stasis field control unit. Wow. Your first encounter on 'Earth' is a non-human slave, washing clothes. He won't talk to you (because he's scared of Seeker). Heading towards the city you discover a Kzinti nobleman and his human slave. The Kzniti have invaded Earth and now the map is ruled by a telepathic Patriarch, donated power by

his 'silver crown'. Talk to the slave to find out that the 'silver crown' is hidden in the Patriarch's chambers. Wear the washed clothes and then go left, and keep going left until you reach the castle gates. Slipping in by virtue of your disguise, you will be presented to the slave overseer. You will be assigned to the dining hall. Grab some straw before you depart.

More, more, more

Leave via the door, walk right and then down into the dining room. Watch as the rather deadly Patriarch kills a clumsy slave and gets blood on his tunic. Talk to the ruler and volunteer to get him a new tunic. Leave via the door and go right into the entry hall of the Patriarch's chambers. Show the tunic to the guard and enter the chambers.

Walk into the closet, but ignore the tunics. Touch the cabinets without handles and you'll find that the centre one is hollow. Examine the statue on the column between the tunics and, more importantly, the arrows in the quiver. Touch the arrow which sticks up at a 'strange angle' to open the cabinet. Inside there are two swords – a scimitar and a short sword. Take them both and then exit the cabinet.

Notice the similarity between the short sword and the swords carved into the columns against the walls. Similar or what? Use the sword on the column next to the door of the closet. The sword will fit like a glove and a panel will open to reveal a psychic amplifier (or something) enclosed in a stasis field. Take the helmet (obviously). Put the straw on the bed and use one of the candles to light it. The bed will flare up allowing you to exit safely without the guard getting in the way. Quinn will automatically exit outside. Walk to the balcony at the back of the screen, select your scanner and make your escape.

The end (ish)

Once back at the lander, a conversation will ensue and you'll end up back at the canyon. The priest will allow you to examine the 'sky silver'. The stasis field negator will lower the shield and you will have access to the ships' sealed hatch. Touch the access panel to reveal a keyboard. Press this sequence: 3-4-1-1-5-2-6. The hatch will open. Inside is a badly injured alien and a dangerous anti-matter situation. There are also two modules in storage slots and a maintenance panel, but you can't reach either yet. Pull the alien out of the ship and report back to Miranda. The key to solving the danger seems to be in communicating with the alien. Put the telepathic helmet on the alien. He'll give you the key to the magnetic panel. Go back into the ship and use the key to reveal a glowing globule of anti-matter. Use the empty stasis box on the sphere to contain it. Grab the modules and exit.

The end proper

Oh no, the alien has used the telepathic helmet to control Seeker and Miranda. Quick, use the sunflower neural control doobrie to zap the alien. Hooray – he'll be nicely sealed up back in his ship before long. Now let the lengthy end game sequence play itself to death...

The Peace Table

Serpent Isle: Complete solution coming soon.

More pleading requests from those poor people who are too old (i.e. six) to write into to *GamesMaster.*

The Last Crusade (US Gold/Kixx)

Andrew Craig, Edinburgh: Er, yeah, I've just bought *Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade* on the Kixx label .
Peace Table: Good choice.
Andrew: – and I'm stuck. I want to know how to rescue Henry Jones from the German Castle. I've pushed the Mona Lisa painting to find the safe but I don't have the combination. I cannot take the grey uniform because of a large lock. I also cannot get past Biff the guard.
Peace Table: Have you heard of Robert The Bruce?
Andrew: Yeah, of course. Are you having a dig at my heritage?
Peace Table: No. It's just... well you wouldn't have heard Rob saying: 'Oh no, I've just been defeated by the English – best I write into Peace Table to find out what to do' – would you?
Andrew: No. But could you please shut up and tell me what to do?
Peace Table: Alright... well, we don't actually know here. So we've put this in as a kind of 'challenge'. The first person to send in the answer will receive a game from the *PC Zone* games cupboard. Hey, and Andrew – you want to make more friends in the spider world. They might inspire you.
Andrew: Yeah, bye.

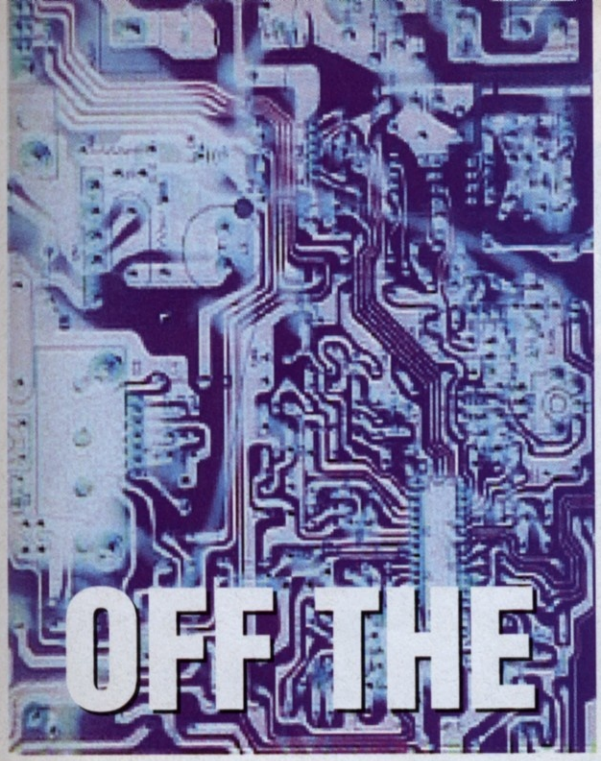
Underworld (Electronic Arts)

Sean Kennedy, Co.Down: Hi Peace Table.
Peace Table: Hello.
Sean Kennedy: *Underworld I* is bugging the hell out of me. I originally started the game in June '92, collected seven talismans and ran around the Abyss like a headless chicken looking for the Cup.
Peace Table: I hate to be pedantic but you're mixing your metaphors Sean. You can't be 'a headless chicken' and be 'looking' at the same time. You have no head and hence no eyes.
Sean: Yes, anyway, can you a) tell me where the cup is; b) do all the caved-in passage ways become open eventually; and c) where's this 'green path with the void on either side' mentioned by the orb on level 1?
Peace Table: Well, here are your answers: a) the Cup is on level 3 in a room parallel with the north(ish) shrine in the rough centre of the level. Say 'insahn' to that shrine and it will tell you the cup is 'due west'. Go north to the marshy water and follow the wall round until you find an upstream passage way leading east (you'll need to cast Water Walk to get past the current). Inside the room is a Gazer and nothing else apparently. Ah-ha, using a mandolin or a flute, play the tune the ghoul on level 5 taught you in exchange for ten fish. Viola – the cup of wonder; b) no; and c) very near to the end of the game you are sucked into the void where you will find the green path (and lots of large red demons).
Sean: Cheers Peace. Wow. Thanks. Oh God this is great. Wow. Thanks.
Peace. Yes, okay Sean.

Serpent Isle (Electronic Arts)

Ian M. Armstrong, Taunton: I'm stuck in *Serpent Isle* and Electronic Arts don't want to help me.
Peace Table: Doesn't surprise us. Your best bet – as always – is Peace Table.
Ian: That's exactly what I thought, so here's the problem: I've reached the last rooms of the Mountains of Freedom and can get no further. I've killed all the baddies in the final room and found a transporter which teleports me outside where I am instantly teleported back inside. From a scroll inside the final room I have ascertained that I have to go back and talk to the madman in the previous room. Sadly the connecting door is shut fast.
Peace Table: Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear. Well, basically you've missed something. After resurrecting the woman who was killed by a horse, and the ranger has mended the jammed lever, and you've entered the fire pit room, you'll end up in what seems to be an endless tunnel. Not so. Go south and feel your way along the right tunnel wall to find a secret exit. That should set you back on the right track. Chiao!
Ian: Er, chiao!

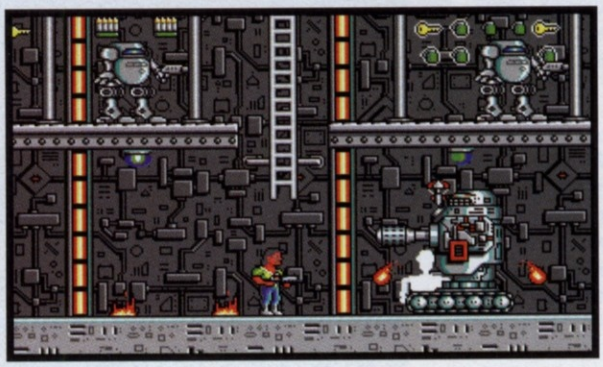
If you want to send your hacks, cracks, solutions and requests then please do. The address is: **Troubleshooter, *PC Zone*, 19 Bolsover Street, London, W1P 7HJ.** If you're sending hacks, then please make them *debug* format if possible. If not state the package used (XTG, PC Tools, Norton etc.) and give the offsets rather than huge chunks of hex. Cheers. Next month the HackMasters™ tackle *Eye Of The Beholder III, Space Hulk, Prince Of Persia 2* and lots of others (maybe).



OFF THE BOARDS

Mark Burgess sings the body electric and searches for the weird and wonderful.

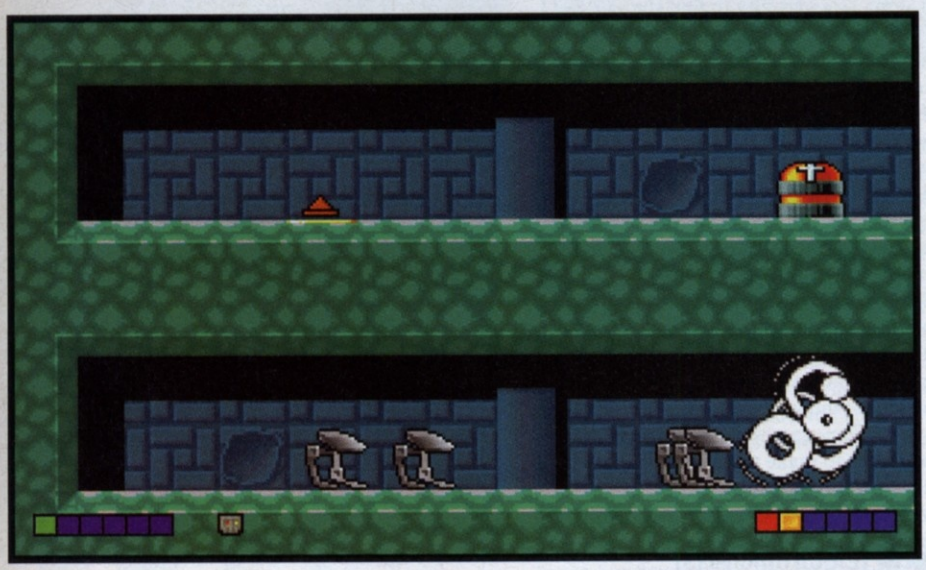
BIO MENACE



BIO MENACE is a new game from Apogee. It's been two years in the making from Jim Norwood and his team. The hero is Snake Logan of the CIA. He is on a suicide mission to Metro City, which has been taken over by monsters. The sinister Dr Mangle has mutated insects into highly intelligent and rather large killing machines! Can you thwart his plans?

The gameplay is similar to *Duke Nukem* and the screen scrolling is the same as in *Monster Bash* and *Commander Keen*. The program needs a 286 or faster and supports Ad-Lib and Sound Blaster. *Bio Menace* is slated for June, so should be ready by the time you read this. On the other hand, you know Apogee.

ELECTRO BODY

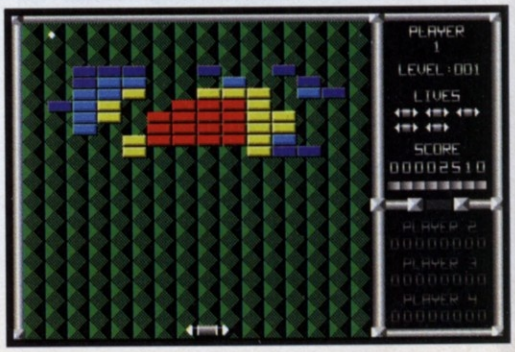


THIS PROGRAM HAILS from Germany and is by the team at X Land. Jack is one of two survivors from a robot attack on his spaceship and is out for revenge. Landing on the planet Xepton he becomes a Cyborg with Robocop helmet and leather trousers like our own, glamorous, Kirsty Fortune. You guide him through a massive complex, shooting robots and pretty much anything else you want. Ammunition is in little cans dotted around the place and so are circuit boards, which power up your gun. There are restart points which shout out 'Jesus is here!' when you hit them and rob you of your ammo. Perhaps there is a message here.

Hazards include lasers, killer pipes and various robots. The shareware version is one massive level out of eight. The digitised speech is excellent and in English. Sound effects include the sound of Jack's trousers. Smart. Registration (49DM or US$29) brings a faster, fuller version of the game, a cassette of the soundtrack and a manual in German. The file is EBODE!.ZIP (336,243 bytes) and the program should run on any computer faster than 12MHZ, all graphic adapters and most soundcards (Ad-Lib, Sound Blaster, Convox etc.). The memory requirements are: 580K free with speech and 480K without.

AQUANOIDS

TO THE MAKING of *Breakout* clones there is no end. Here is another program from Germany, written by Stefan Heineke and Karsten Finger. It is a good version of the old original with some interesting features. For instance, you can alter the direction of the ball, tilt the flipper and various falling thingies give you bigger flippers, extra points or warp you to the next level. Registration (20DM or US$20) brings 150 levels, four player mode and an extra game. The file AQUANO.ZIP is 149,204 bytes.



Aquanoid and Electro Body were downloaded from Compuserve using WigWam for CIS. CDV Software (0049 721 972 240) provided the full version of Electro Body.

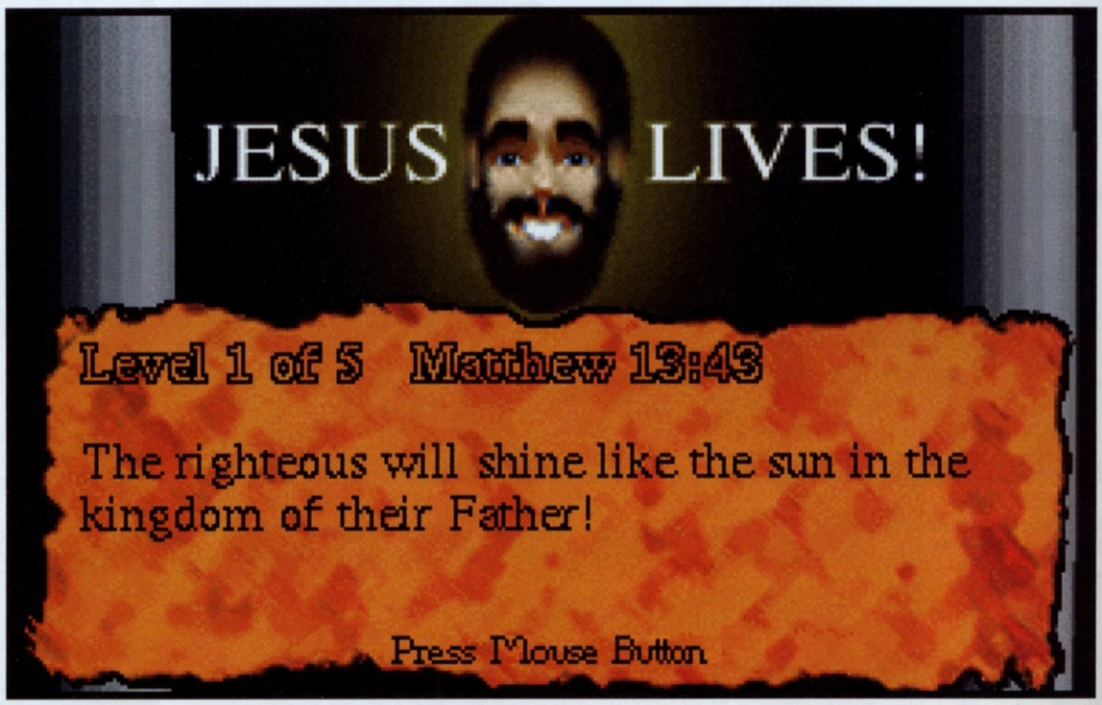
THE TWILIGHT ZONE

Off the Boards goes off the wall in search of strange shareware.

I've got a program called JESUS.EXE

FINDING WEIRD RELIGIOUS programs is like shooting fish in a barrel. The King James' version of the bible has been available in ASCII text for many years and recent versions have a sophisticated text search system. But that isn't weird. KJQ.EXE (160,553) is. It's a graphics adventure based on the bible. So is JESUS.EXE (1,123,309) a fun arcade game based on the words of Jesus. BVD404.EXE (142682) displays a biblical text on boot up. GW4W11.ARJ (588,085) is the Gospels for Windows, easily out-classed by Greek New Testament for Windows (NTGRKW 622,320) which has the entire *textus receptus* as published by Stephanus in 1550. (Oh, that one!) Displays the text in Greek or in English transliteration.

For the more ecumenically minded, VODUN.EXE (23425) is all about Vodun 'popularly known as Voodoo'.



He walks on water and jumps – move over Mario.

Programs you can't refuse

FOR ALL CRAZIES out there, Ross Perot's book, 'United We Stand', is available free as a text file (PEROTBK.EXE: 79,542). On to mainstream US politics, FAMILIES.EXE (16,457) gives details on the top Mafia families and GODFTHER.EXE (17,851) of the bosses.

Speaking of the Mafia, check out KENBOOK1.EXE – KENBOOK6.EXE (various lengths) for an amazing run down of various JFK conspiracy theories. And there is JFK123.ARJ (196,873) a hefty text file on how the CIA offed the President.

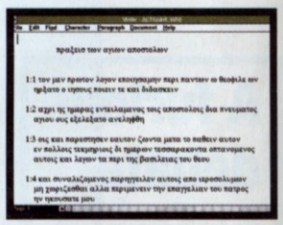
Conspiracy theories about AIDS include AIDS-US.ARJ (24172) which reckons the US developed it to depopulate the world and AIDS.ARJ (7199) which maintains that it is the result of a biological warfare experiment gone wrong.

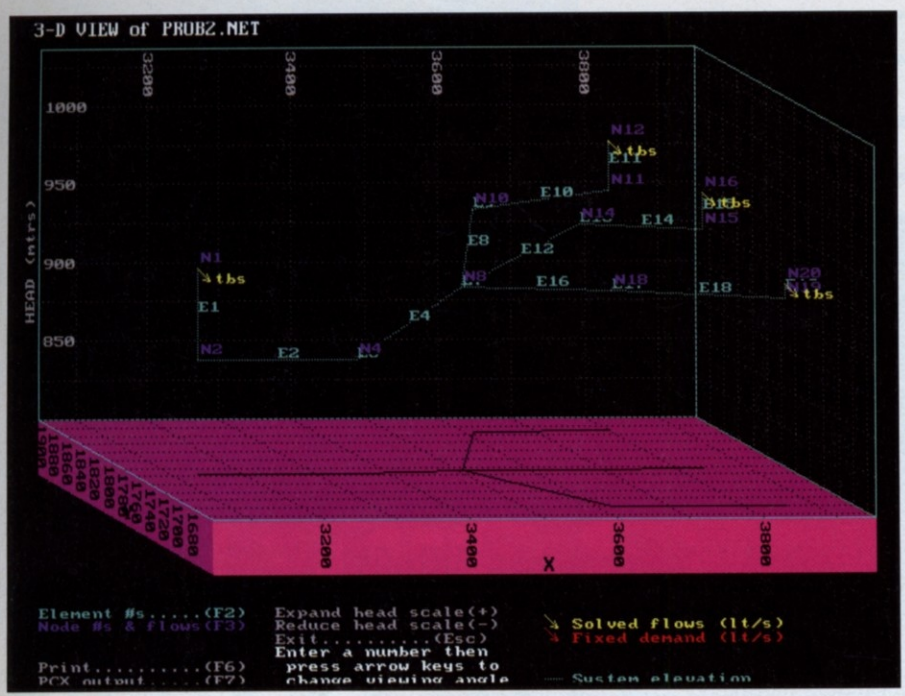
Speaking of conspiracies...

The aliens are amongst us

YOU CAN IMAGINE the sort of stuff that comes under this head. 10BEST.ARJ (3,574) gives the ten best UFO cases in history, 890402TX.ARJ (1376) is a Mufon sighting report from San Anronio, Texas and AFRICA.ARJ (4845) gives details of the retrieval of a UFO crash in South Africa. AFOSI.ARJ (2798) gives USAF reports on UFOs obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, BODIES.ARJ (2,357) is a report of alien body count year by year and CHAMBERS.ARJ (2598) concerns an ancient chamber under Arizona.

(Top) JESUS.EXE; how nice to see someone looking cheerful.
(Below) The Acts of the Apostles – read the original and sneer at St Luke's Greek.
(Bottom) King James' Quest – you're welcome to it mate.



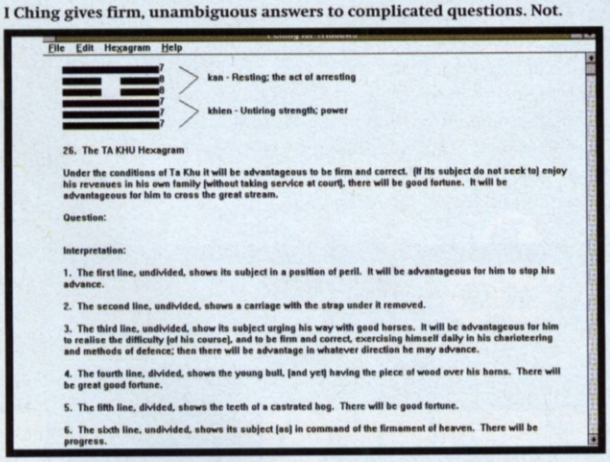


Want to plumb a small city? You want Hydronet you do.

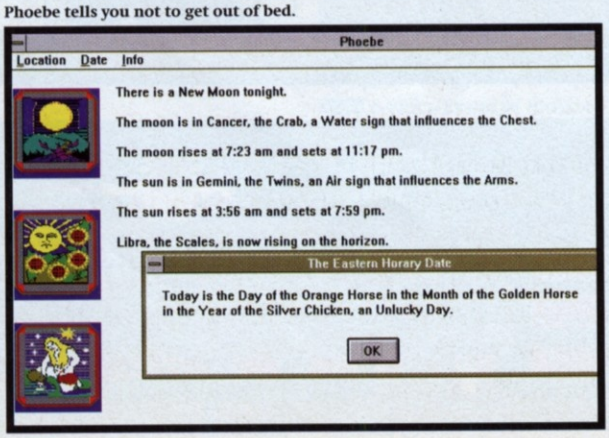
Zen and the art of file management

A RICH CROP HERE – much of it for Windows, if that proves anything. There is an Ouija board (OUIJEWIN.ARJ: 238,939) and Tarot packs aplenty. *Phoebe* by Anthony Nguyen (PHOEBE.ZIP 129,059) is an astrological calculator with the registration fee going to Vietnamese orphans. *I Ching* for Windows is by Eric Bergman-Terrell (ICHING.ZIP 58,699) and generates the hexagrams randomly – or you can choose your own.

I Ching gives firm, unambiguous answers to complicated questions. Not.



Phoebe tells you not to get out of bed.



A furious debate

ED: For God's sake Burgess have you been drinking? This is supposed to be a games magazine.
MB: To me, word processing in Chinese is a game. If I want serious software I'll play *Rescue Rover.*
ED: Sigh.

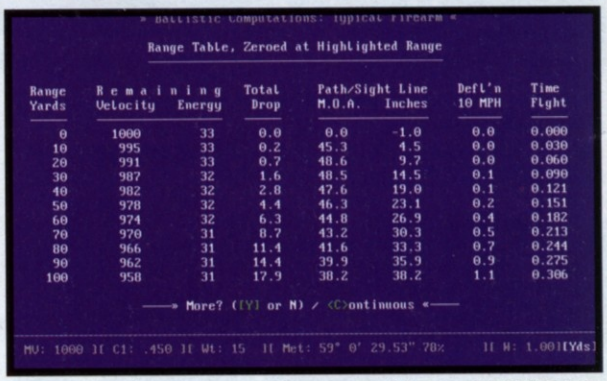
Most of these programs were downloaded from the Farm BBS (0839 99 33 99 [36p a minute cheap rate 48p per min all other times]) using the shareware package MicroLink. Other programs were supplied by Omicron Systems (0702 710 391) and PCIUG (0732 771512).

Cook with Coke

AS THIS IS A GAMES MAG we don't normally, etc., etc. But how can you do without QBALL209.EXE (159,941) which is a small arms ballistics program. Find out if your gear really would stop a charging rhino. What about BRAKTHRU.EXE (42,628) a self-extracting text file that details a non-medical breakthrough that allows adults to alter their personalities permanently. Spooky! Still not what you're after? Try BAKEBRED.EXE (18,887) which has various recipes for bread. No? BURGER1.EXE (92,828) has burger recipes and C_COLA.EXE (57,363) has 12 recipes using Coca Cola. Still slaving over a hot stove, MM215RE.ZIP (682,645) has a different recipe for every day for the next six years. Pretty scary, I'd say.

Spline PC (327 072) calculates spline under tension, as you'd expect. (A spline is 'any one of a series of narrow keys formed longitudinally around the circumference of a shaft that fit into corresponding grooves in a mating part: used to prevent movement between two parts, esp. in transmitting torque' – *Collins Dictionary.)* If you don't know what it is, you don't need this program. *Hydroflow* (290,819) and *Hydronet* (SMHN.ZIP 267,448) are essential for water engineers.

Graph your blood pressure with the Windows program BPWIN10W.EXE. Add the shout of Encore! or the sound of the Orient Express (ENCORSND.EXE 300,285 & HAIL_SUD.EXE 450,704) both for Windows. SOAP.EXE (18049) is a text file on the making of soap. NERVES.EXE (292832) is a nervous system construction kit. BABYCALC.ARJ (86527) calculates birth date and weight whereas DEATH.ZIP (11696) predicts the date of your death. WELDER.EXE (120470) is an oxy-acetylene welding tutor for all those Jennifer Beals out there.



Ever wanted to shoot someone and been unsure of the range? This is for you.

Storming Babel

THERE ARE WORD PROCESSORS for virtually any language. Hebrew Edit is the classic one for Hebrew (HEDED10.ARJ 131735). Supports nikud (breath marks), registration $19.00, to you $18.50.

MARTINA.EXE (9181683) is a Russian-English word processor and translation aid, a Russian dictionary of 100,00 words and a Russian-English dictionary of 50,000.

Heading East, *Adami* has all you need in a Tamil word processor and if you're into Vietnamese, there is one for you called *Viet.*

A good Chinese word processor is DNGDGN12.ARJ (294834) with five scaleable fonts and an easy window input. It also supports Pinyin – the system of romanised spelling developed in 1958. Another, much larger word processor is NJS210 (-1 to -3.EXE: 344546, 334033, 331011).

To the land of the rising sun: NJJ210-1.EXE (304755) and NJJ210-2.EXE (296333) is a Japanese word processor that will take text in Romaji form and allow Hiragana, Katakana, Kanji or Katakana transliterations. Another word processor is KDP32-1.EXE (406230) and KDP32-2.EXE (453431) a fully featured word processor.

INTEXT is a remarkable program that supports Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Gaelic, Greek, Hebrew, Polish, Russian, Serbo-Croat, Turkish, Urdu, and more. One for Kate Addie's laptop.

Back by popular demand!

What is Public Domain and Shareware?

PUBLIC DOMAIN: This is software that's free. You can copy and distribute it as you like. The only conditions are that you do not pass the work off as your own, do not incorporate it in another program without due credit and, of course, that you do not charge money for something you have got for nothing.

SHAREWARE: This is software that asks for a registration fee, either after a specific time or 'if found useful'. The fee varies enormously and you are morally obliged to pay it or stop using the program although it is true that many programs ask you to send $5.00 to an address in Wichita. Registration brings the latest version of the program, a place on the mailing list for updates and often a properly printed manual. Not to mention that lovely warm glow of moral satisfaction.

OTHERS: Bannerware/Adware – this is a program where the author does not ask for any payment but reserves copyright. This means that you have a free license to use and copy the game.

Demonstrations – many commercial software houses will release a playable demo of their latest games so that you have some idea of what you're expected to pay £50.00 for. Not often found in libraries, they tend to live predominantly on the covers of magazines or on bulletin boards.

What do you get?

The disk should contain a file called READ.ME or README.1ST. Read it by typing TYPE README.1ST | MORE. There will also be some sort of batch (.BAT) file. Typing in the name of this .BAT file should load the program.

Most programs will come in archived form. This is because the library is trying to fit as much information as possible on a 760K disk. The files will have extensions like .ARC, .ARJ, .LHA, .PAK, .ZIP or (very rare) .ZOO but don't worry because the disk will come with a program that will decompress the files, together with instructions on how to use it.

LIBRARIES

Argent Shareware (Freepost)
26 West Croft
Hethersett
Norwich
NR9 3BR
0603 812 888 ['phone or fax]

Benetech Systems
17-21 Loughborough Rd.
Leicester
LE4 5LJ
0533 611 231

Classic Software
71 Park St.
Cleethorpes
S Humberside
DN35 7NB
0472 359 957

CmB Shareware
7 Rookhope Grove
Bishopa Auckland
Co Durham
DL14 0SW
0388 662 875

D & E Software Services
Unit 3a, Community Workshops
Cable Street
Nartham
Southampton
SO1 1RJ
0703 634 120

Diamond International Shareware
PO Box 2640
Smethwick
Warley
W Mids
B67 7NQ
021 558 8958
021 555 6886

E C Software
13 Shannon St.
Huddersfield
HD3 3UL
0484 460 070

Ensign Systems
Freepost
London
SE26 5BR
081 778 2871
081 776 8477

Joint Venture
57 Hart Rd
Thundersley
Essex
SS7 PB3
0268 754 522
0268 757 919

Kingsway Computer Services
72 Glencoe Rd
Sheffield
S2 2SR
0742 750 623

Links PD & Shareware
7 Mercers Rd
Heywood
Lancs.
OL10 2NP
0706 360 676

Magnetic Fields 0772 881 190
P O Box 118
Preston
Lancs
PR2 2AW
0706 360 676

Nildram Software
82 Akeman St.
Tring
Herts
HP23 6AF
0442 890 303

Omicron Systems Limited
Leigh-on-Sea
Essex
SS9 3DT
0702 710 391

PC Independent User Group
87 High St
Tonbridge
Kent
TN9 1RX
0732 771 512
0732 771 513 [fax]

P.C.L. Software Ltd
1 Silvey Grove
Spondon
Derby
DE21 7GH
0332 678 713

PSP
3 Valley Court Offices
Lower Road
Croydon
Nr Royston
Herts
SG8 0HF
0223 208 288
0223 208 089 [fax]

Red Dragon
3 Oaklea Ct
Rhyl
Clwyd
LL18 4NP
0745 338 094

Shareware – Elite
25 Cades Parc
Helston
Cornwall
TR13 8QS
0326 564 164 ['phone & fax]

Shareware Marketing
3a Queen St
Seaton
Devon
EX12 2NY
0297 24088
0297 24091 [fax]

Sheffield Shareware & PD Library
52 Livingstone Rd
Chapeltown
Sheffield
S30 4UG
0742 464 561

Springsoft
Springfield House
Llanfynydd
Wrexham
Clwyd
LL11 5HW
0352 770049

The Disk Park
67 Ashburnham Rd
Ampthill
Beds
MK45 2RH
0525 841 731

The Public Domain and Shareware Library
Winscombe House
Beacon Rd
Crowborough
East Sussex
TN6 1UL
0892 663 298
0892 667 473 [fax]

Testware (UK) Ltd
46 The Avenue
Harrogate
N Yorks
HG1 4QD
0423 886415
0423 880471
0423 889728 [fax]

Transend Services Ltd
Keighly Business Centre
Knowle Mills
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Keighly
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This is not an exhaustive list, just a selection. Inclusion does not mean recommendation and, no, none of them have paid to be here. Most libraries will have access to over 20,000 titles with a catalogue containing a rolling selection of about 1,500. Some charge for each program, the majority for each disk.

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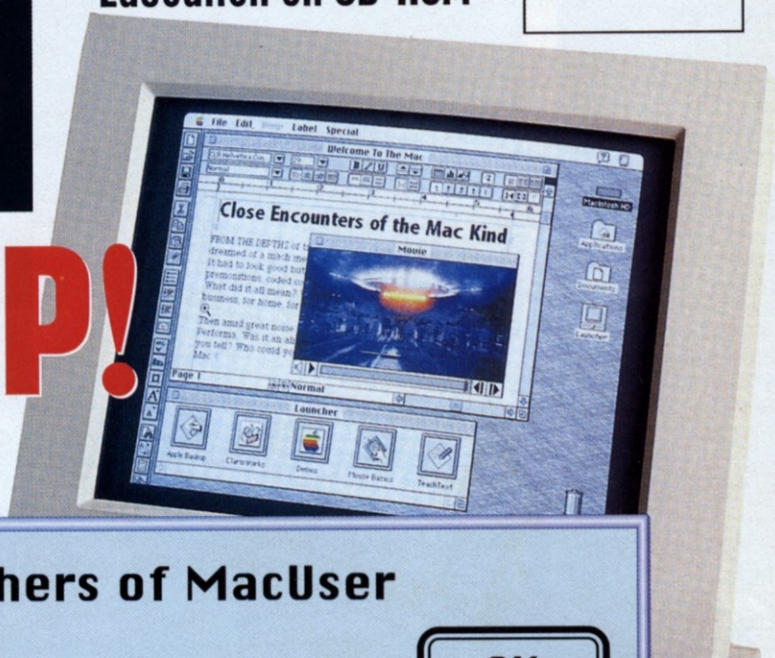

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You've seen those cheap black and white adverts in the newspapers: 'Earn money by writing', well now *PC Zone* offers you the chance to earn software (and the small matter of eternal fame) by writing. Sound off on anything and everything and, if you're letter is the star letter, a piece of smart software will soon be winging its way towards you.

Mr Cursor STRIKES again

WHERE WAS THE 'jerkovision'? Where was the 8-bit sega graphics? Where was the k-k-k-k-k-k-k hard disk access? Duncan 'Mr Cursor' MacDonald's review of *Strike Commander* left me in shock, I could not believe this was the same game I was playing on my 486DX 33MHZ machine.

'Smoothvision' is how I would describe 90% of the 'pilot parts' of *SC*, the remaining 10% of 'jerkovision' only occurred when there were a lot of objects around and yet it was still nowhere near as bad as Duncan described.

As recommended in the *SC* Install Guide, I am using SMARTDRV to create a 2048K disk cache. Like many other packages, *SC* runs much better with a disk cache, try using MS Windows without SMARTDRV to see what I mean.

I have to add that Duncan's review of *SC* would have been quite enjoyable if it was true, however I can only assume that Duncan has not been playing *SC* with the correct configuration and so the score of 65 was totally inaccurate.

PC Zone is an excellent games magazine and I look forward to future issues. However I feel that *SC* deserves another chance.

My experience with *SC* has left me with the impression that it is the best and most enjoyable flight game available for any computer, even better than *Falcon 3.0.* and I hope you would agree with me that it should be a *PC Zone* Classic.

The last possibility is that your 486 was not performing at its correct speed, which meant that Duncan missed out on a great gaming experience.

Michael Massay, London.

None of our reviews has caused more of a stir than Strike Commander, with strongly worded letters both for and against. Obviously all reviews are, to an extent, subjective. Duncan's views (shared by others on the PC Zone team) were those of a huge flight sim enthusiast who regularly takes Falcon 3.0 out to dinner. After reading all the letters and re-reading his review he stands by his verdict. In terms of correct PC configuration and performance we played the game on three different PCs including a DX2-66MHZ ninja computer. What makes you think Duncan is Mr Cursor? **Ed.**

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Bugs and PCs

I would like to suggest that you consider maintaining a listing in *PC Zone* of known bugs in games, and what workarounds and patch or upgrade disks are available to fix or avoid bugs or provide additional features. Some American magazines do print such information and I don't see why the British consumer should be getting the shitty end of the stick *(Charming imagery! Ed)* as usual, especially considering that they're paying generally twice as much for the same products as their American counterparts. Of course the distributors wouldn't be very happy about it as they would see it (perhaps rightly) as both having an adverse affect on sales and opening them up to the obligation of supplying fixes to a large number of customers who would probably otherwise never have known anything about them.

For whatever reason magazine reviews are often over generous in their praise, not too conscientious in pointing out the failings in games and inaccurate or even misleading in their descriptions. (I'm not particularly condemning *PC Zone* here, who seem to be generally better, or at least a hell of a lot funnier, than most: this is just a general comment based upon years of reading computer magazines.)

In America this situation isn't tolerated by consumers; all the major suppliers accept returns on faulty games and some even take back games on the sole grounds that the purchaser didn't like it (!) or it wasn't what they expected (which I find rather startling, but it does happen). Although I wouldn't suggest taking things as far as that, it would be helpful to at least attempt to provide people with information. They can then solve any problems they may be having with a game for which they might have forked out an extortionate amount of money.

Such a directory should also provide information on game patch and expansion release which provide extra features. These are often not made available on a commercial basis so, again, the UK customer gets left in ignorance. You might say that if people send their registration cards they'll be kept informed of things like this. Well, I've registered over 40 PC games and do you know how many of these companies have written back to me with information on upgrades or new releases? One. Again this is probably because most of the games originate in the US and they really can't be bothered with the expense of overseas mailings.

So what are you going to do about it?

-Come back here and say that!

Jim Grimwood, Hatfield, Herts.

Yikes! Such a carefully reasoned letter (which I had to cut by 50% to fit on the page) leaves me no chance to be facetious or snide. You also seem to have answered most of your own questions. We have been considering a column much like the one you mention. In fact we would have on now if I hadn't mislaid a crucial 'phone number. **Ed.**

Mega Zone

YOUR MAGAZINE IS superb, and really takes the concept of a games only PC magazine to the limits. There was just one problem with issue 3 – Alex Fitch asked in your letters page if there would be a 486 version of the Mega PC and you said no. Well there is and it's called the Amstrad Mega Plus PC – which brings me to my question, what do you think of it? I'm thinking of buying one and from the blurb in the Silica Systems advertisement it sounds excellent.

Johann Hari, Edgware, Middx.

The Mega PC and the Mega Plus PC are in fact different machines. The Mega PC is a 286 or 386 PC with a Mega Drive built in. The Mega Plus PC is a more conventional 486 PC. As to whether you should buy one or not, it depends on your price range and needs. It would not be my first choice for playing games on. **Ed.**

South Sea Bubble

I AM TRYING TO get hold of an old (mid to late '80s) PC5 game but am finding it difficult to obtain. So I thought to myself that you and your fantastic, great, brill (Creep, creep!) magazine might come up with some great ideas of how to get hold of it.

The game in question is called *Bubble Bobble.* Please, please come up with some good ideas on either disk size.

S.M. Harrison, New Malden, Surrey.

Bubble Bobble was originally produced by Activision but, as far as I'm aware, it's no longer available on PC. Your best bet is to check out various Mail Order companies who might have old copies knocking about. Alternatively any reader who no longer wants their Bubble Bobble (so to speak) can contact you through us. **Ed.**

Lack Of Management

I'VE BEEN BUYING computer magazines for the past year or so since I bought my PC. Now I know that the people that write them think that football management games are boring, but in all that time I've only seen one review of this type of game. As *Football Manager* was one of the most popular games on the C64 and the Sinclair Spectrum there must be a lot of people, like me, who like them. I'm considering buying *Premier Manager* and would like to know if this is the best of the bunch of current football management games, could you please help?

Phil Clark, Bow, London.

What a happy coincidence. Such a coincidence indeed that if I didn't know myself better I'd say I made this letter up. (I didn't honest!) There are two management games reviewed this issue and if you think reviewers don't like Football Management games you should have seen the crowd of us round both Premier and Championship Manager when they came in. **Ed.**

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Gone are the long and only vaguely interesting lists of games and prices. Gone are the personal 'phone numbers, office memos and coffee stains that would inevitably slip into the copy unnoticed. Gone are the forests and the little furry animals that lived in them. Gone are those lovely, trusting times of yesteryear when everybody knew everybody else in the world and you could leave ten million pounds in cash lying in the middle of the road and it would still be there when you game back a day later. Gone are the... sorry, it's such an emotional moment.

Anyway, each month we'll be bringing you an up to date and thoroughly informative look at one or more category of game. Each game will be listed with its current price, publisher, and a rating. If it's a game that we have reviewed recently the rating will be the same as the score we gave the game when we reviewed it, otherwise the score will be based on our opinion of the game today. Following this information is a brief description of each game.

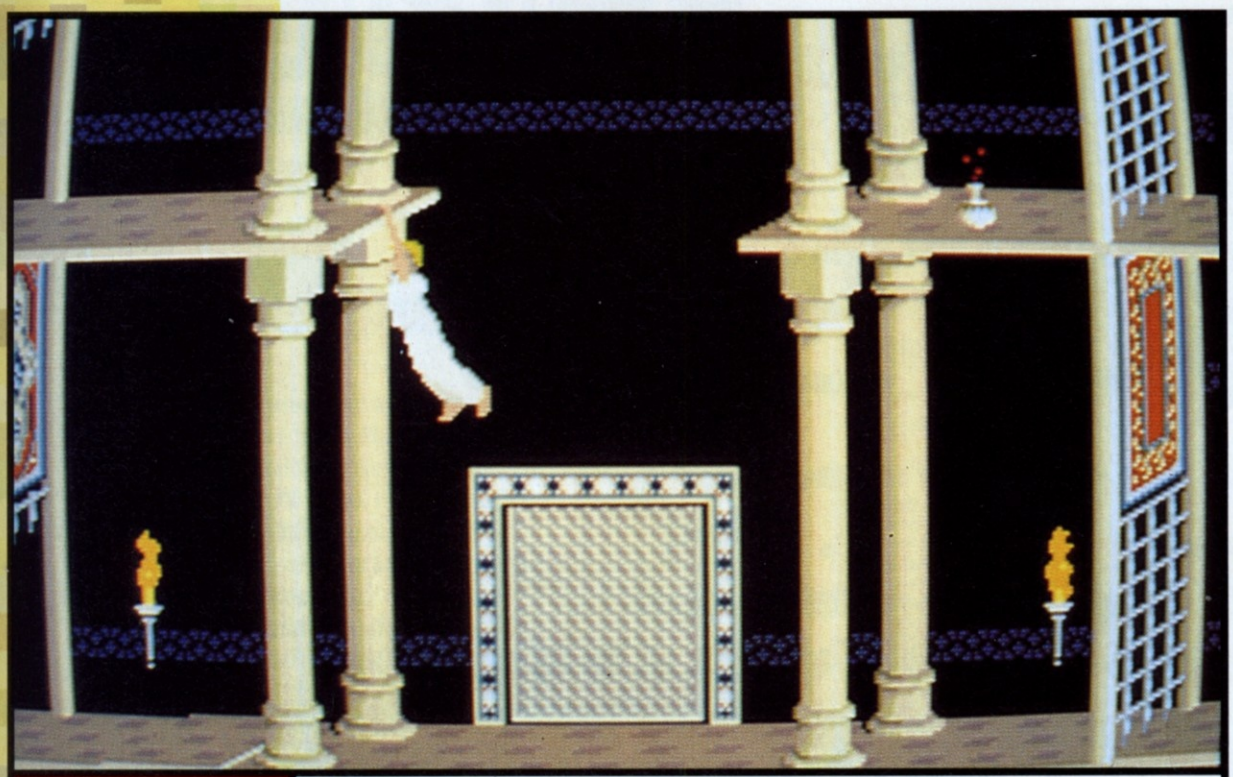
If you see something you fancy, stop being so lecherous and get on with what you were supposed to be doing. If, on the other hand, you spot a game you'd quite like to have and own for eternity – or until you get bored sick of it, whichever is the shorter – simply look up the publisher's number in the 'phone list on this page. Most publishers have a mail order department, although many of the games we look at will be available from reputable high street dealers in games software for use with suitably equipped high-fidelity computing devices.

So, without further ado, come with me on a magical journey into the wonderland of floppy disks, bits, bytes, pink bunny rabbits and crazed gun-toting maniacs (amongst other things).

PHONE LIST

Here we have possibly the most scintillating bit of the Buyers Guide, the 'phone list. You'll notice that many of the numbers are the same, but don't worry, it's not a misprint, many of these companies are distributed through another company in the UK, and where this is the case we've printed the number of the distributor, and the name of the distributor in brackets. Happy 'phoning.

360 (Electronic Arts) 0753 549442
Access (US Gold) 021 6253388
Accolade 081 8770880
Addictive 081 8048100
Alternative 0977 797777
Beau Jolly 0737 222003
Blue Byte (Kompart UK Ltd) 0727 868005
Broderbund (Electronic Arts) 0753 549442
Coktel Vision (Digital Integration) 0276 684959
Codemasters 0926 814132
Colorado Technologies (Kompart UK Ltd) 0727 868005
Core Design 0332 297797
CP Software 0993 823463
Cyberdreams (Mirage) 0260 299909
D&H Games 0462 816103
Daze Marketing 071 3282762
Delphine (US Gold) 021 6253388
Digital Integration 0276 684959
Disney Software (Infogrames) 071 7388199
DMI 0753 686000
Domark 081 7802222
Dynamix (Sierra On-Line) 0734 303322
Electronic Arts 0753 549442
Empire (Entertainment International) 0268 541126
Flair Software (Microvalue) 0661 860260
Impressions 071 3512133
Interplay (Electronic Arts) 0753 549442
Internecine (Kompart UK Ltd) 0727 868005
Infogrames 071 7388199
Konami 081 4292446
Loriciels (Digital Integration) 0276 684959
LucasFilms (US Gold) 021 6253388
MicroProse 0666 504326
Microvalue 0661 860260
Millennium (Electronic Arts) 0753 549442
Mindcraft (Electronic Arts) 0753 549442
Mindscape 0444 246333
Mirage 0260 299909
New World Computing (US Gold) 021-6253388
Novalogic (US Gold) 02 -6253388
Ocean 061 8326633
Origin (Electronic Arts) 0753 549442
Oxford Softworks (Kompart UK Ltd) 0727 868005
Psygnosis 051 7095755
Readysoft (Entertainment International) 0268 541126
Renegade 071 7023643
Sierra On-Line 0734 303322
Simarils (Daze Marketing) 071 3282762
The Software Business 0480 496497
SSG (Electronic Arts) 0753 549442
SSI (US Gold) 021 6253388
Storm (Sales Curve) 071 5853308
Storm Computers Ltd (Kompart UK Ltd) 0727 868005
Titus 071 7002119
Ubi Soft 081 3439055
US Gold 021 6253388
Virgin Games 081 9602255
Zeppelin 091 3857755



PLATFORM

GAME OF THE MONTH

PRINCE OF PERSIA
(Domark, £24.99, 89%)

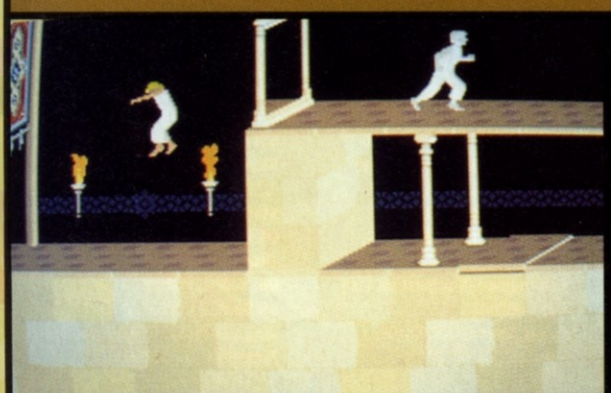
PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

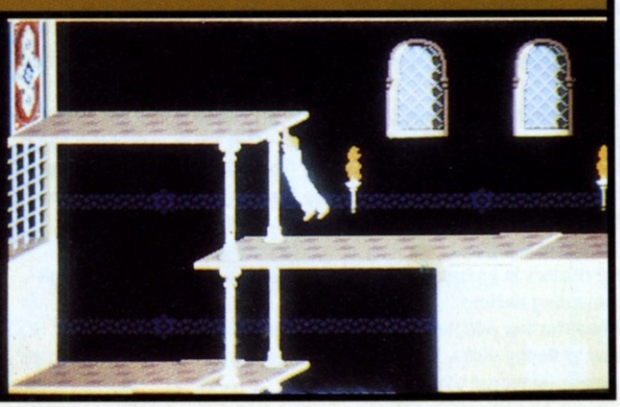
We thought we'd focus on this classic game because it ties in nicely with the release of *Prince of Persia 2* (see the review in this issue). At first sight, *Prince of Persia* doesn't seem to offer anything over and above traditional platform fare. It has a disgustingly yucky storyline: young princess and handsome mysterious traveller fall in love and put the wind up the evil Jaffar who, in the absence of the girl's father, wants to have his own wicked way with the princess, so he locks them both up and the hero has to fight his way through several levels of dungeon and palace to rescue his beloved. I know, it makes you want to puke doesn't it? Look beyond the sickly sweet plot however, and you have a game that excels in several different ways. The most fundamental and refreshing new feature in *Prince of Persia* is the superb quality of the animation. Author Jordan Mechner made videos of his brother performing all the actions that the main character would be likely to undertake, like running, climbing and so on, and used the film as a basis for his animations. The result is the smoothest, most fluid, and most realistic animation ever seen in a game of this type. You can edge up to the tops of chasms, where the prince will topple slightly before stepping back. Run fast and then change directions rapidly and he will slide realistically.

But beyond that, *Prince of Persia* is a cracking good game. Not only does it present a well-progressed challenge that guides the player smoothly from a learning level through to some torturously difficult areas, but the entire design has been well thought out from beginning to end, with some of the most inventive puzzles ever created for a platform game.

At one point you rescue a trapped mouse and release it. That's that, you think, but the mouse helps you out later in the game. The puzzle that most *POP* players rave about however, is the mirror half way through the game. When you jump through this, a doppelgänger appears as a mirror image of you. Discovering how to deal with him in the later stages of the game is one of *Prince of Persia*'s most appealing tests.

If you haven't yet experienced *Prince of Persia* you won't regret doing so, even though it has now been superseded by a sequel. Very highly recommended.





DRIVING/ MOTOR RACING

I have a secret theory that all Formula One drivers are closet banger racing fanatics. I mean, look at the evidence: the way that Mansell likes to slam into brick walls at a hundred miles per hour, or the way that some silly arse likes to tail spin his car on the grid as soon as the lights go green. I'm sure they all privately dream of waiting for that dreaded red flag so they can scream round the circuit as fast as possible and then all pile into the... er... huge pile-up. Then again, perhaps not!

CAR AND DRIVER
(Electronic Arts, £39.99, 75%)

If you're the sort of person who keeps stacks of dog-eared performance car magazines under your bed, and gets them out to drool over late at night when you think everybody else is asleep, then you are going to love this. Not only does it have a full electronic magazine section with articles on half a dozen of the world's top luxury cars, it gives you the opportunity to test drive any of them in conditions ranging from an interstate highway to a race track or even a parking lot!

CHICAGO '90
(Addictive, £2.99, 37%)

In the days when Infogrames was churning out a fair amount of rubbish, rather than the gems it has produced of late, this was its failed attempt at an action driving game set in the city of the title and based upon police chases. Really not worth bothering with.

CRAZY CARS 2
(Titus, £9.99, 42%)

Another police car chase game. It's sort of a cross between *Outrun* and *Chase HQ*, but with the appeal of neither. It's certainly better than the delisted *Crazy Cars*, but not by much. At about £3.00 it would have been worth a second look, but it's just not worth a tenner by any stretch of the imagination.

CRAZY CARS 3
(Titus, £29.99, 45%)

Having a bloody nice night out, buying your better half a thoughtful present, going to see

three movies in good seats at the Empire, Leicester Square, renting 12 films from your local video store and going on a day-trip to Margate are some of the things you could do with the 30 quid you'd otherwise spend on this game: every one of them, yes, even the day-trip to Margate, is infinitely preferable.

GRAND PRIX
(MicroProse, £44.99, 88%)
Geoff Crammond has the knack of creating definitive driving games. He was the man responsible for *Stunt Car Racer,* which for years was the benchmark for driving games. More recently, he has produced the only motor racing game worth getting out of bed for. Forget everything else, this is as realistic as they come.

GRAND PRIX 500
(Addictive, £2.99, 25%)
Roll up, roll up. Come and see bright purple motorbikes screaming round a CGA track. Feel the unresponsive controls. Wonder at the complete lack of gameplay. Thrill at the idea that anyone would want to buy this crap, even for three quid.

GRAND PRIX UNLIMITED
(Accolade, £34.99, 83%)
It's a shame that Accolade's slightly tarnished reputation in the simulations field will put a lot of people off buying this driving game. It's actually pretty damn good. It doesn't quite capture the trackside realism of Geoff Crammond's opus, but it does have more features, including an excellent circuit design utility.

HIGHWAY PATROL II
(Addictive, £2.99, 20%)
Yet another police car chase game from the Microids/ Infogrames stable and even more crap than *Chicago '90.* Set in the desert, this 'simulation' has the action viewed from a 'through the windscreen', first-person perspective. It wouldn't be bad, if it wasn't for the fact that it is totally uncontrollable. Don't waste your time – life is too short.

HOT RUBBER
(Titus, £9.99, 34%)
A thrilling exposé into the world of S&M. Control leather-clad Linda as she whips and shackles her way through dozens of men dressed in nappies or school uniforms. I especially love the power up sections where you get to swap your leathers for a suit of velvet or even rubber, and the bonus spanking game is the best we've seen. Actually this is another ageing and playably challenged motorbike game. Soz.

INDY 500
(Electronic Arts, £29.99, 75%)
Before Geoff Crammond ruined things for them, EA had pole position for a good few years with this excellent racing sim. It was the first to really offer the sort of features commonly found in flight sims at the time. So, for the first time, players were able to watch replays of action sequences, and select from a variety of 'camera points'. Still good.

IVAN 'IRON MAN' STEWART'S SUPER OFF-ROAD RACER
(Virgin, £9.99, 87%)
The best of the available full-screen games in which the whole circuit is seen on screen and the cars controlled are tiny little sprites. There was a rash of these a few years ago: *Supercars, Badlands* and so on. This one has superbly animated vehicles and is great fun, although its long term appeal is limited.

KARTING GRAND PRIX
(Addictive, £2.99, 20%)
A laughable game in CGA only which supposedly simulates the excitement of motorised karting. Here's how to get max enjoyment out of the game: go to your local software vendor. Walk past it to the nearest decorating store. Buy a £3 tin of paint. Go home. Find a spare wall. Paint it. Watch it dry.

MARIO ANDRETTI'S RACING CHALLENGE
(Electronic Arts, £29.99, 76%)
This has a very similar look to *Indy 500,* but whereas the latter exclusively covers Formula One racing, *Mario Andretti* is more of a mixed bag, covering a range of racing styles from stock cars upwards. The variety adds interest, but this is quite a tough game to play so it should be avoided by players who are quite easily discouraged.

STUNT DRIVER
(Digital Integration, £14.99, 50%)
A pretty good attempt by Spectrum Holobyte to capitalise on the success of the Hard Drivin' arcade machine. It has some very good design features, like opponents with different personalities and a track construction kit, but at the end of the day it is let down severely by its truly awful control interface. A shame – this could have been a real winner.

TURBO OUTRUN
(US Gold, £30.64, 30%)
Even as a coin-op, *Turbo Outrun* wasn't a patch on the original. This poor excuse for a conversion, however, really does show how not to produce a driving game. The control isn't at all adequate, but you'd expect that when a joystick is substituted for a wheel. But why the collision detection and graphics had to be so pathetically awful is beyond me.

MINI COMPO

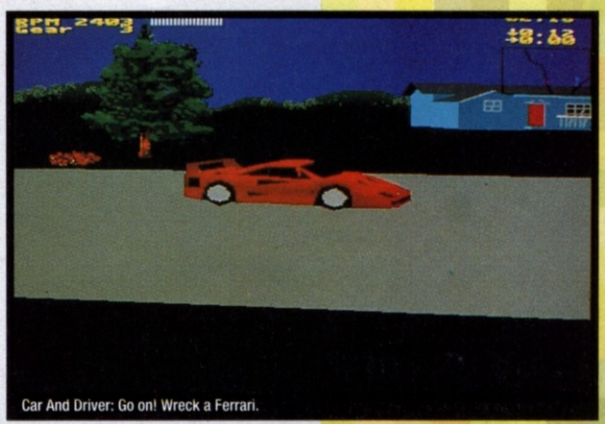
WIN!

PRINCE OF PERSIA 2!

Seeing as how we're going such a bundle on *Prince of Persia* this month, what better way to round off our coverage than by offering three of our readers the chance to win a brand spanking new copy of *Prince of Persia 2.* Just answer the questions below (all of which have been set by our local DENSA panel) and send your answers on the back of a postcard or sealed envelope to: **Ponce is Back, *PC Zone,* 19 Bolsover Street, London, W1P 7HJ.** We must receive your entries by 5 August 1993. It really helps if you include your name and address, seeing as how our telepathic skills are a bit rusty these days.

The oh so difficult questions

1. *Prince of Persia 2* is set in: (a) An exotic carpet showroom on the Old Kent Road (b) Persia (c) A Hollywood Film Lot?
2. The main character in *Prince of Persia 2* is: (a) A Persian prince (b) Saddam Hussein (c) A mouse?
3. Which of these is not a feature of *Prince of Persia 2?* (a) Superb, fluid animation (b) Stunning gameplay and cunning puzzles (c) Free membership of OPEC?



Car And Driver: Go on! Wreck a Ferrari.

Crazy Cars 3: You'd have to be crazy to buy it!

Grand Prix (Microprose): It's not the pits!

Indy 500: Classic driving action in the game that put the sim in driving games.

Ivan 'Iron Man' Stewart's Off-Road Racer: Rough racing for real riders.

Mario Andretti's Racing Challenge: Tour Monaco in one and a half minutes.

First Samurai: Not the last ninja, just the best one.

Gods: The platform game for leather and whip lovers.

PLATFORM

Platform games have come a long way since the days of *Donkey Kong*, when that little so-and-so Mario was first brought into the world. Even now, when there have been too many platform games to number, just when you think that there can't possibly be any original features left to add to the age old genre, somebody goes and proves you wrong. Warms the cockles of yer 'art, don't it?

BAAL
(Psygnosis, £9.99, 50%)
A pretty uninspired platform based adventure set in catacombs unconvered during an archaeological dig in which an ancient evil has risen again to menace humanity. Sounds a lot more impressive than it actually is since the game basically involves finding, via trial and error, how to avoid dying in each of the sections.

THE BLUES BROTHERS
(Titus, £25.99, 73%)
Titus had produced some really rank software before they released this redeeming game. It's not the most innovative platform game you'll come across, but it does boast some good graphics, a huge playing area, and some quirky, comic action. It's nice that Titus pulled its socks up especially since, given such a strong licence, they put a lot of work into it rather than simply revamp something from their back catalogue, hang the licence on it, then sit back and wait for the profits.

COOL CROC TWINS
(Empire, £25.99, 70%)
Another platform game with a simultaneous two-player game option. This is unusual in that each of the platforms has a sort of local gravity so you're never quite certain whether up is up or down when you're not facing up, or whether if you are facing up, down is up, or down or sideways even, or... oh you know what I mean. Otherwise it's pretty much a standard hit the blocks, avoid the monster type of affair.

COOL WORLD
(Ocean, £29.99, 25%)
I've always had this theory that Ocean have a unique machine which, when it is fed the plot of a blockbusting movie, or any movie for that matter, automatically churns out a platform game. Naturally that isn't how it actually works, but it may as well be considering the originality, or lack of it, evident in the likes of *Cool World*. It's somewhat comforting to think that the licence factory can only go on churning them out while people are still buying them, but very disturbing to dwell on the fact that it's lasted for nigh on 11 or 12 years with absolutely no sign of stopping.

ELF
(Ocean, £29.99, 63%)
Having said all that I've said above, you might be expecting me to lay into this game too. Well I'm not because, although this is not the best platform game in the world, it's pretty playable and it looks very nice too. What is significant is that it isn't a film licence so it stands or falls on the quality of the gameplay. The only conclusion you can draw is that someone, somewhere is thinking: 'Why bother to spend time and money developing a good game, when the strength of the licence will sell it for me?'

FANTASY WORLD DIZZY
(Codemasters, £9.99, 63%)
The first of the *Dizzy* games to make it to the PC, and a reasonable conversion. The egg must be guided around a series of platform based screens collecting objects and avoiding hazards. Fairly simple puzzles have to be solved to progress to other areas. It will probably appeal more to real kids than grown-up ones.

FIRST SAMURAI
(Ubi Soft, £34.99, 80%)
Martial arts platform games are nothing new, but this one took the art to new heights. There are no significantly new features but for good looks and a first class soundtrack, nothing else comes close. The central figure is well animated with a nicely-executed sword blur and the background animations really add atmosphere. Gameplay is so-so, but has enough to it to keep your interest up.

GODS
(Renegade, £34.99, 89%)
Deservedly described as 'The thinking man's platform game', *Gods* has nevertheless been much maligned by critics who never bothered taking time to properly appreciate its features. The many clever aspects of this game, like the way the gameplay modifies itself depending on your performance, and the addition of intelligent enemies, cunning puzzles and bonus triggers, are not just there for the sake of being clever, they do actually elevate this game well beyond the usual standard for this genre.

THE GOLD OF THE AZTECS
(US Gold, £30.99, 62%)
A very pretty puzzle game set in the South American jungle. It requires more agility than brain power, so you'll get through it at a fair pace, but then, there's plenty of it so that shouldn't necessarily put you off.

HELTER SKELTER
(Audiogenic, £19.99, 77%)
This is one of those games that is extremely simple and yet dangerously addictive. You control a bouncing ball in a colourful platform environment populated by various monsters. Your aim is to crush all the monsters, but in a specific order or else they multiply. It can get frustrating, but you'll come back to it time and time again.

MAGIC POCKETS
(Renegade, £30.99, 80%)
Unlike *Gods*, this game is aimed fairly and squarely at the 'cute' market. The central character is the Bitmap Kid, a streetwise youngster with a problem: his toys have been stolen by strange creatures and hidden away inside the magical worlds in his pockets. So the Kid enters his own pockets to retrieve them. Wow, it's amazing what you can dream up when you consume this Columbian stuff (coffee that is). Seriously good fun!

PREHISTORIK
(Titus, £9.99, 45%)
This is one of those games that looks very attractive (it's set in a Prehistoric land in which your little caveman battles dinosaurs, which, of course, they only did with Ray Harryhausen's models). But it's actually all pretty dull and uninspired, although just about acceptable at this price.

RISKY WOODS
(Electronic Arts, £29.99, 50%)
The team responsible for some of the popular Dynamic platform games, like *Game Over* and *Army Moves*, are also responsible for this one. Fans of the genre will be disappointed that, other than a

noticeable improvement in graphics and sound, it doesn't seem to have moved on much in terms of features. It's competent enough though, and will provide some short term amusement.

STRYX
(Psygnosis, £9.99, 70%)
An unusual blend of platform game, puzzle game and shoot 'em-up. This has you trying to fight your way to a rogue computer in order to shut it down. You will fight your way through four domed cities, each divided into two sections. It's fast and colourful, and there is a very nice mix of different types of action depending on which area you're in. I wouldn't have particularly recommended it at full price, but it's well worth looking at for a tenner.

SUPER CAULDRON
(Titus, £29.99, 50%)
A reworking of an old game which obviously has its roots in the likes of *Ghosts 'n' Goblins*. Unfortunately it doesn't have either the charm or the good design of the latter. This isn't a totally bad game and it will provide you with some entertainment, but it just doesn't merit a £30.00 price tag.

TITUS THE FOX
(Titus, £25.99, 60%)
Following its success with *The Blues Brothers*, Titus came up with a second game using a similar engine. It's obviously an attempt to capitalise on the growth in the 'cute' market (charming and rather debonair fox dashes off to rescue his beloved vixen from her prison in foreign climes). It works very well, and there are some nice features, like a magic carpet, but it still doesn't have the depth of many of the games emerging in this genre.

ZOOL
(Gremlin, £34.99, 85%)
Gremlin's answer to Sonic the Hedgehog is, without a shadow of a doubt, one of the most innovative and enjoyable platform games to emerge for the PC in a long time. The 'ninja of the nth dimension' has to fight his way through the six multi-levelled worlds.There are plenty of hidden bonuses, restart points and short cuts to find, and all of the puzzles are extremely clever. If you want a console-style platform game for your PC, you won't go far wrong with this one.

SHAREWARE SPOT

There's so much shareware that selecting the best games can be a painful business, especially since there's so much chaff to be separated from the wheat. Regular shareware users will tell you how frustrating it is to spend time and money downloading the latest game from your local bulletin board, or ordering it from a library, and then have to suffer the excruciating pain of seeing your DX2 SVGA machine being made to look less sophisticated than a ZX Spectrum.

So how exactly do you stop yourself from getting severely stung? With a little help from your friends at *PC Zone* that's how. We've put together a list of our top ten shareware games, in no particular order – some new, some old, but all absolute gems.

1 WOLFENSTEIN 3D
Yes, I know, we're so predictable, but how can you possibly have a list of top shareware games without including this gem. Unless you wanted to object to it on moral grounds of course… naaahhh!

2 CD-MAN
Probably the most original copy (is such a thing possible?) of the classic, *Pacman*. Each screen has a different theme, so while the first one is a fairly standard maze, the second is in the sea with sharks instead of ghosts.

3 DUKE NUKEM
One of the very best platform games in the shareware circuit. *Duke* is a typical broad-chin, low-brow hero fighting against a megalomaniac madman out to dominate the earth. Nothing original in the plot, but there are plenty of neat touches not normally found in shareware games of this type.

4 JOUST VGA
A brilliant conversion of the classic coin-op which featured knights jousting on giant birds. It's just as playable as the original, even if the graphics are a bit basic. Register and you get a two player version as well.

5 JILL OF THE JUNGLE
Not a feminist platform game (yes, it has a heroine for a change, but she's clad in typical Amazon gear). Nevertheless, this is an above average platform game, with the unusual feature of having a polymorphic central character (you change into a frog or bird at different points within the game).

6 TOWN OF ZZT
We just know that there are going to be plenty of people who will disagree with this being ranked as a top shareware game, but we like it so tough! It's an action adventure in which you explore a huge town solving problems and getting through action sequences. The reason it won't appeal to many people is that it has been constructed entirely using coloured ASCII characters!

7 THE CATACOMB ABYSS
Although it is in EGA, this fantasy shoot 'em up from the *Wolfenstein 3D* stable is a little more cerebral than the latter game and certainly a lot more varied and interesting. Definitely worth a look.

8 COMMANDER KEEN 1
The original *Commander Keen* game, and still one of the best shareware platform games to be had. The teenage hero has been marooned on Mars and must find a way to get back home. There are a couple of dozen cities to explore, and a secret one to find.

9 HEXXAGON
An unusual board game like a cross between *Reversi* and a commercial game called *Infection*. You have to capture your opponent's pieces using a combination of jumps and duplication. Very absorbing.

10 KILOBLASTER
Widely acknowledged as the very best shareware shoot 'em-up to be had. For maximum enjoyment you'll need to plug your Sound Blaster card into your hi-fi and pump up the volume.

DON'T JUST TRY IT – BUY IT

Let's admit it, we're all a little lax in this department. Shareware shouldn't be considered as free software. It is distributed at low cost so that you have an opportunity to try it before you buy, but without your registration fees, shareware authors can't afford the resources they need to produce good games. If you don't register, then sooner or later good shareware games are going to disappear. Don't forget that in nine out of ten cases, your registration fee also entitles you to an updated version with extra features.

Magic Pockets: Cute? Yes, but cute with an attitude.

Prehistorik: It is!

Risky Woods: If you go down to the woods today, you're sure of… no surprises.

Zool: I've got a lovely bunch of Coconuts.

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ATAC

RRP £44.99 • A multi-plane flight sim/strategy game that pits a squadron of F-22s and Apache gunships against Columbian drug cartels. Challenging and varied gameplay makes this the game *Strike Commander* should have been.

David Leadbetter's Golf

RRP £44.99 • This is the real heavyweight golf player's simulation. Forget the skin deep appeal of *Links 386 Pro* – this is the one that'll keep you up on Friday night after coming home from the pub with a posse in tow. For the connoisseur of sports simulations.

Railroad Tycoon

RRP £35.75 • This classic strategy game is Sid Meier's prequel to *Civilization*, voted unanimously† by the *PC Zone* editorial team as one of the most addictive build 'em-ups ever written. Construct a railroad empire and smoke large cigars, not necessarily in that order.

B-17 Flying Fortress

RRP £44.99 • The greatest bombing sim of all time! Take your personalised plane and crew on a tour of European landmarks. This stunning game has elements that'll appeal to any player: turret gunner, bombardier, navigator, you control them all.

Special Forces

RRP £44.99 • Sequel to the classic *Airborne Ranger*, *Special Forces* puts you in command of an elite team of crack troops. This difficult and unique squad-level combat game is a combination of action and strategy that requires quick thinking and careful planning.

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Mr Cursor

HE'S AFRAID OF HIS PC

Here's a list of things that have dawned on me this month whilst waiting for my PC to be mended. (Yup, I've been watching loads of telly.)

1 The Lilt advert. It had never occurred to me before that anything like this actually went on anywhere in the world, but having seen it with my own eyes it now makes perfect sense... there *is* a Lilt Man. He paddles around what I assume is the Indian Ocean in his little canoe, and delivers ice cold cans of Lilt to people. And get this... *no money exchanges hands*. That's right, he does it for free. He just paddles to the shore of any island he happens to be passing and hands cans over to whoever happens to be standing there – and then he hangs out with them for a while, drinking Lilt with them, before paddling off to his next port of call (which is probably hundreds of miles away). How the cans stay so cold isn't explained in the advert, but I assume the Lilt Man's canoe is lined with polystyrene or something. It must be.

2 The new *Eastenders* theme tune mix. What a corker, eh? Some young talent from the BBC Radiophonic Workshop has tried to drag it into the '90s. Bet I can guess how the briefing session went...

PRODUCER: We want a '90s feel. Do you think you can do it?

COMPOSER: Yes. Great. I'll do a Hip Hop/New Jack Swing fusion. With a bit of Ragga blended in around the edges. And a guitar solo. And some female rapping. And...

PRODUCER: Whoooah, not so fast. We don't want to alienate our older viewers, do we?

COMPOSER: But I can lose the tune, yes?

PRODUCER: No. Keep the tune, but add a 'trendy' drumbeat... like *Brookside* did.

COMPOSER: Good grief.

PRODUCER: And keep the plinkety plonk piano and the strings of course.

COMPOSER: So you don't really want me to change it whatsoever then?

PRODUCER: Er... no.

3 The new *Neighbours* theme tune mix. Ditto the above, but with a slightly different conversation (and of course it's got nothing to do with the Radiophonic Workshop this time)...

PRODUCER: I want a new version of the theme tune that's even more appalling than the old one.

COMPOSER: Strewth! I don't think I can pull it off, Barry.

PRODUCER: I'll do it myself then.

4 *Beverly Hills 90210*. Now, I'm not saying that I regularly watch this programme – and I'm not suggesting anyone else does either, but I have noticed something. It used to be full of *Baywatch* type 'babe' actresses. Yes? But now that Aaron Spelling has had his daughter (who's no beauty – and I mean that in loving, caring, way) cast in one of the main roles, the 'babes' seem to have dried up somewhat. Almost completely, in fact. Has Mr Spelling had a few words with the casting director? Or am I just overly suspicious and cynical?

5 The Grand Prix season is back with us. Yes, I know it's not exactly an earth shattering piece of news, but I have been thinking about the way the talky bits are done. Instead of just Murray Walker and James Hunt in the commentary box, the BBC really ought to have Murray Walker, James Hunt and a third person... an unknown person... someone who's played Microprose *Grand Prix* a bit. A 'punter', in other words – someone who doesn't necessarily know very much about motor racing, but who thinks he does. Let's call him Barry.

MURRAY: And... they're... off. The German Grand Prix... from the infamous Hockenheim circuit... is finally under way...

BARRY: Er, no Murray, this is the *second* lap.

JAMES: What are you talking about?

BARRY: They've already been round once.

MURRAY: That was the warm-up lap.

BARRY: Aaaah! I wondered why they all stopped when they got back to the grid.

JAMES: *(Tutting noises)*. Oh! Young Damon Hill nearly came unstuck there, his tyres aren't *nearly* warm enough for that kind of behaviour.

MURRAY: Indeed they're not James. Very occasionally his inexperience shows through, and that was a prime example – a ridiculous and, dare I say, extremely *dangerous* attempt to snatch the lead. I'll bet Alain Prost isn't too happy about *that* little incident.

JAMES: Yes Murray. I expect the Williams boys will have a few words to share with him after the race: *both* their drivers nearly out on the first lap.

BARRY: What about Nigel Mansell?

MURRAY: ...What?

BARRY: Nigel Mansell. He's with Williams. He'd have still been in the race.

JAMES: Nigel Mansell quit Formula One last year.

BARRY: Yeah? Bloody hell, I never knew that. I'd better delete him from my PC. So he's, er, been replaced by Graham Hill then has he?

MURRAY: Damon Hill. Graham Hill's dead.

BARRY: Jesus. I'd better delete him as well then.

MURRAY: Look... at... that!!! It's Senna... no, it's Schumacher... no, it's Johnny Herbert... no, hang on, it *is* Senna...

BARRY: Does anyone want a sandwich? Z

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