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ADVENTURERS DELIGHT!

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FOR ONE OR TWO SIMULTANEOUS PLAYERS

General Alexander Bonn, C.I.F. US Forces in Central America - has been seized by a band of revolutionaries and held captive in his own headquarters. Before his final capture he relayed a mayday which you and your buddy picked up.
Your plane crashlands in the dense jungle some distance from the headquarters. After deciding whether to go it alone or attempt the rescue together you set off. You are deep in guerilla territory. On all sides gather trained marksmen and combateers, determined to stop you. It soon becomes apparent that you lack the supplies to win, but win through you must.
Ambush enemy tanks and use them yourself. Collect fuel and grenades left by the enemy as they retract. Show no mercy, for you are the Ikari Warrior.

RELEASE DATE: 28 March 1988

SCREENSHOTS TAKEN FROM VARIOUS COMPUTER FORMATS

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<tr>
<td>SPECTRUM</td>
<td>Cassette</td>
<td>£8.99</td>
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They packed the streets, they waited in anticipation for it was coming soon. They didn't know when it was coming or what it would be like — only that it would arrive. . . Some camped in the fields other just lay in the road, they weren't going to miss it — no way! Some knew all about it. They knew nearly all about it. When it was coming, how much it would be — they even knew that it wouldn't come out of the drains, as first expected. They knew the next CRASH would be on sale April 28.
BEAT THE SYSTEM... Now for the crew of FIREFLY there is no home — just a desperate mission to eliminate the mechanoid army which has colonised the solar system.
Last issue I exclusively revealed the stunning truth behind CRASH editorial: they're written at the last minute and flow from desperation. Well, this is no exception: it's written in my last minutes at CRASH, which makes the last days of the Roman Empire seem like a Microcalc, and I'm sure everyone's desperate to see me flow away.

There's no room to wax nostalgic – and Philippe living with me will explain this. But (in the tedious tradition of Oscar-winners) I'd like to combat boots anyway. But (in the last days of the Roman Empire) I'm sure everyone's desperate to see me flow away.

I'm off to join the unassuming heroes – it's coming on already. I have this overwhelming impression of being a South Pacific doctor and slave over a hot-throw screen at Computer News magazine.

Bill Stowe has just done a last look at little Ludlow, its thousand minarets glimmering in the twilight... give my regards to Broad Street.

I know you will all be pleased to hear that CRASH is once again the biggest-selling computer magazine in Britain, just pipping ZX81 to this coveted title. Our circulation is currently hovering below the 91,000 figure, which goes to show the Spectrum market is certainly NOT in a decline. Good news indeed!

More good news is to be had for all those of you who spend hours and hours sweating over computer and arcade games to get that legendary highscore. Newfield, in conjunction with US Gold, the National Association of Boys Clubs and Montbuild, have instigated the first National Computer Games Championships. Interested? For the lowdown on the highscores, stroll on over to page 92.

'Till next month.

April's auspicious

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IN THE NEXT CRASH

ATEI SHOW REPORT - apologies are due for the omission of the report on the 44th ATEI show from this month's contents. Next month, the report will be here in all its glory - honest!

TIPS SECTION SPECIAL - Nick Roberts has had his cut out, and when CRASH features a 16-page tips supplement, bulging with hints, tips, POKES and maps.

CRASH CHALLENGE - the challenge returns on more

COMPILATIONS - a round-up of games anthologies

ON THE SCREEN - more pixelated pictures

AND PAGES AND PAGES OF TIPS AND REVIEWS
It's all in CRASH Issue 52, on sale Thursday April 28
THE MAGNIFICENT 5 + 2?
Citroen and Olive Sinclair are likely to join forces in a deal set to take the motor industry by storm. The innovative designs of the battery powered 5C and internal combustion of the 2CV are to be combined in a unique attempt to create a motor car for the ecologically-minded consumer. The last-old style 2CV rolled off the production line late last month; all along its slow speeds and homely looks had appealed to the more environmentally concerned motorists (2CVs and Greenpeace stickers often go together). Following extensive market research, the manufacturers have expressed an interest in creating an even more ozone-friendly vehicle, and the 5C with a small unleaded petrol engine - a compromise to give the car more power - seemed an ideal candidate. The first 2CV5s (only a provisional name as yet) are likely to go into production late next year. The alternative car will be significantly cheaper to produce and run; the Department of the Environment has even suggested the possibility of a reduction in road tax.

THREE DISKS
THE BUDGET label Alternative is making several of their games available on disk. Each will have three popular titles and retail at £6.99. The first, Spectacular, is released on 23 February and features Soccer Boss, Olympic Spectacular and Indoor Soccer.

EASTER COMPILATIONS
OCEAN is releasing a compilation game pack in time for the Easter holiday. We are the Champions, available from 17 March, comes in a twin cassette gift box for £9.95. The games included will be System 3's IK - (91% Issue 49), Activision's Rampage (69% Issue 49), Imagine's Renegade (83% Issue 44), Palace Software's Barbarian (65% Issue 41) and Electric Dreams' Supersprint (58% Issue 46).

DESTINY OF THE YETI
DESTINY SOFTWARE are running a competition in connection with their first release Yeti (61%, page 17), and the winner could receive up to £30,000. In the wake of a recent Russian expedition which came within 30 yards of the legendary creature, Chris Bonington is organising a search which is probably the most comprehensive yet. The bookmakers William Hill are giving odds of 150-1 against discovering the fabled beast and making several of their games available on disk. Each will have three popular titles and retail at £6.99. The first, Spectacular, is released on 23 February and features Soccer Boss, Olympic Spectacular and Indoor Soccer.

THE GREAT EVENING STAR RACE
IN CONJUNCTION with Railway World Magazine and The Great Central Railway, Hewson are launching a competition centred on the steam simulation Evening Star (53% CRASH Issue 45). By racing the clock, keeping a log of the full record run attempt from Bath to Bournemouth and taking a photograph of the screen on completion, you could become one of the finalists to compete in the Grand

CRASH READERS' AWARDS 1987
JERSEY, March 12. The Hotel de France, site of the Newsfield organised Computer Arena 88 - a software industry conference, the first of its kind ever to be held in Britain - was also the moment when the CRASH and ZZAP! Readers' Awards were presented.

Details of the awards can be seen on page 57, but here are a few pictures from the presentation. 25 awards were handed over by Newsfield's Managing Director, art supremo Oliver Frey.

Driller swept the board, and kept on track Andrew on his feet all night

Gary Bracey receives the CRASH Award for Best Arcade Adventure (Head Over Heels)

THE GREAT EVENING STAR RACE

Play-Off at Loughborough Great Central Railway on 25 June 1988. Prizes include dinner for two on the Charnwood Forest evening wine and dine train and passes to the Great Central Enthusiasts Day in July. Entries should be sent to Ian Allen, Coombelands House, Weybridge, KT15 1HY by 30 April 1988 (first post).

THE GREAT EVENING STAR RACE

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+3 MASTER DISCS

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This is a 100% GUARANTEED (Sept 08) 29 Eddleston Drive, Inceworth, Bury, Lancashire Tel: 061 768-5712
Cybernoid - The Fighting Machine - will excite your senses more than any other game. It's action-packed excitement right from the start. Incrédible music, stunning graphics, sprites, crashing explosions and bomb blasts that are out of this world. Hold on to your seat, keep your finger on the trigger - this is another major hit from Raffaele Cecco who gave you Exolon. Stay with the hit games from Hewson!

**SPECTRUM**
Cassette £ 7.99
+3 Disc £14.99

**COMMODORE**
Cassette £ 9.99
Disc £14.99

**AMSTRAD**
Cassette £ 9.99
Disc £14.99
The Tasty Space Griffin has been acclaimed as a galactic delicacy for many years. After being hunted to the edge of extinction, it has subsequently become very rare, and thus very valuable – to the point of forming a highly prized unit of intergalactic currency.

Now, on a distant planet, a band of unscrupulous crooks are planning to flood the market, destabilise the monetary system of the whole universe and allow them to seize power in the ensuing chaos.

No problem: send for Captain Neil Armstrong. He'll soon sort them out. Well, he would have done, but for an error in the astro telex. Instead of sending for the clean-cut hero, the garbled message asked for the Inspector Clouseau of the Starfleet Taskforce – the bungling Rover Pawstrong.

Transported to the crooks' hideout, Pawstrong has to kill or capture all the Griffins there to complete his task. To aid him, a Starfleet ship occasionally drops supplies, consisting of explosives, transporters, rockets, and missile launchers, all of which help him to apprehend the runaway birds. A bonus slide puzzle is also available, completion of which is rewarded by extra points.

Energy is one of Rover's biggest problems, represented by the Tasty Space Griffin in the bottom left-hand corner of the display. As Rover's lifeforce ebbs away, bits of flesh disappear to leave the bony carcass beneath. Failure to find food to quieten his rumbling tum results in a pile of bones, and one very dead Rover.

Once he has either captured or zapped a Griffin, a Starfleet scoutship lands and takes it off of the ebb and flow of dextral skill – there's no appropriate position to appropriate weapons and contraptions to outwit the speedy Space Griffins. I must admit that they do look very much like the Coyote in that famous cartoon, Rover (aka the player) has a very hard time trying to catch the Griffins. The bonus puzzle is a nice idea, but with the pressure of the time limit and difficulty of co-ordination, it's quite an elusive prize! This amusing and fun collect-em-up is certainly worth the small asking price.

 STAR PAWS

Producer: Software Projects
Retail price: £2.99
Authors: Software Creations

It's a dog's life for poor old Rover Pawstrong. Sent to a desolate planet to capture those priceless birds, is he dog enough to manage it? Star Paws is quite fun to play, using all of the varied weapons and contraptions to outwit the speedy Space Griffins. I must admit that they do look very much like the Coyote in that famous cartoon, Rover (aka the player) has a very hard time trying to catch the Griffins. The bonus puzzle is a nice idea, but with the pressure of the time limit and difficulty of co-ordination, it's quite an elusive prize! This amusing and fun collect-em-up is certainly worth the small asking price.

I really enjoyed Star Paws when it came out on the C64 and it hasn't lost any of its addictive nature in conversion to the Spectrum. The graphics are still well drawn with cartoon-style characters and detailed backdrops. There's a decent soundtrack that plays constantly in the background and some sound FX, but with both going at the same time it can get very irritating. Star Paws really has plenty of variety: if you go down one of the many holes with a mining lamp on, you enter into a completely different sub-game with a maze of possibilities and special objects to collect; if you pick up the bonus puzzle, you get a sliding picture game to complete for a bonus. The gameplay is made tough at first because you have to let go of the direction keys to jump. This is soon mastered, though, and merely adds to the game's challenge. Star Paws is a very enjoyable arcade game that has survived the conversion from the Commodore very well.

MARK

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JOYSTICKS: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair

COMMENTS

General rating: a delightfully cute and humorous game to play. With such addictive qualities, at only £2.99 it shouldn't be missed!

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair

Graphics: Captain Pawstrong is a superbly drawn and animated cartoon character – combined with the many varied and ornate backgrounds Star Paws is a delight to watch.

Sound: a irritating title tune with functional spot effects

Presentation: 75%
Graphics: 68%
Playability: 74%
Addictive qualities: 75%
OVERALL: 77%
BLACK LAMP

Producer: Firebird
Retail price: £7.95
Authors: designed by Graham Everett and Steve Cain, programmed by Software Creations

Jack the jester's lot is not a happy one, he observes as he trudges out on an impossible mission to find nine enchanted lamps. The problem is he's in love.

Well, it's not actually being in love that's the problem, it's that his loved one is the king's daughter, Princess Grizelda. And the king is more than slightly peeved at Jack's interest in his daughter; after all, who wants someone who wears silly hats and hits everyone with a pig's bladder for a son-in-law?

So King Maxim has decided to get rid of Jack by sending him on a crusade to retrieve these nine lamps, including the revered Black Lamp of Allegoria. Once safely housed in the castle treasury, the lamps were stolen, and ever since the Kingdom of Allegoria has been plagued by strange and unearthly creatures. Jack sets out after consulting his friend Pratweezle the sorcerer, who endows him with two magical powers: recuperation (allowing him to cheat death a few times), and energy bolts which Jack can fire from his belt buckle.

And the buckle-dusters come in handy on Jack's travels as he encounters witches, crows, goblins, werewolves and - the archnastries of all - dragons. Energy lost in being beaten up can be replenished with food and drink, and other collectible objects include shields and weapons.

Once each lantern is found, it must be taken to a chest (there are 20, all around the land of Allegoria). Each chest has nine compartments, each one a different colour. Jack has to place each coloured lantern into its correct compartment - and defeat a fierce dragon to get at the eponymous black lantern.

Once the lanterns have been returned to their rightful places, peace and tranquillity will return to Allegoria. And, as in all good stories, Jack will get to marry the beautiful princess.

MARK

"At first glance Black Lamp looks interesting. The high-score table picture is impressive - especially the two flickering lamps flanking the day's high scores - and the graphics are OK, with a porky little sprite wobbling around nicely-drawn backgrounds.

His movements are very sluggish, though, and after a few games Black Lamp becomes boring. There's too much wandering around to find the action, and when you do it's usually just shooting creatures. Black Lamp is a barely average collect-'em-up - it looks bright, but the lantern of interest soon goes out."

KATI

"Jester Jack is an attractive little fellow, jiggling through the countryside with his pig's bladder, and the monochrome magic kingdom is well-drawn, with enough detail to get you interested and plenty of scope for exploration.

Zapping wicked witches and wailing werewolves with one hand while grabbing the odd chicken leg to fill your ever-rumbling belly is quite fun in its way, and Black Lamp is very playable at first - but there's no challenge to keep you going back for more.

However cute the jolly jester and however attractive the feuding grumpy goblins, the gameplay just isn't difficult enough. Even the dragon which jealously guards the black lamp on each level doesn't match opposition; it takes only a few shots to make the dastardly demon disappear in a disappointing flash."

PAUL

"Black Lamp is most unplayable. Jolly Jack takes ages to respond to frantic movements of the joystick or keyboard, which is infuriating in such a fast action game. And because of poor game design most of your precious time is spent retracing the jester's footsteps back past the same old enemies over and over again.

But the simple game would be very addictive if it weren't for that. And the graphics are competently animated and well-drawn (though not very original), ranging from simply-drawn houses to magnificent mansions. Despite the slow-moving sprite, Black Lamp is mildly effective."

/comments

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: slow animation against a wide range of detailed backgrounds
Sound: superb 128K title tune
General rating: Black Lamp looks great, but there's not much game to play

Presentation 75%
Graphics 66%
Playability 48%
Addictive qualities 54%
OVERALL 57%
Producer: Hewson
Retail price: £7.99 cassette, £14.99 disk
Authors: Raffaele Cecco and Nick Jones
Evil pirates have ransacked the Federation's storage depots, stealing valuable minerals, jewels, ammunition, and the latest in battle weaponry. The player takes the part of the brave Cybernoid, picked to retrieve the valuable cargo and destroy the pirate hoard.

Apart from human adversaries, the Cybernoid also has to battle the dastardly defence system that the Cybernoid also has to battle. Pirates have activated in order to complete his mission. Add to that the time limit imposed on returning all the cargo for each level, and it can be seen why only the brave - or the foolhardy - volunteer for these tasks.

The Cybernoid isn't entirely defenceless, though; apart from the standard lasers, his arsenal also consists of bombs, mines, shields used to provide limited invincibility, bouncing bombs, and heat-seeking missiles. Needless to say that stocks of these items are limited, although collection of the yellow canisters occasionally dropped by pirate ships increases the currently selected weapon's stock by one.

Other items that may be collected include the Federation's stolen booty, objects that alter the appearance of the player's craft and extra external weaponry that can be used on the more difficult sections. As the Cybernoid travels through the pirate's flick-screen territory, he is hampered by their atmospheric music, growswriggly caterpillar that car-

tons that make a game enjoyable to play, and the Cybernoid has plenty of these: animated cannons, scrolling borders all make the game pleasing to eye. Well done Hewson: the ultimate Spectrum arcade game!"

"Cybernoid: the sensational mean fighting machine, collecting cargo and firing bombs - the idea isn't exactly unusual but the slickness of its presentation certainly is. The graphics, reminiscent of Exolon and Starquake, are extremely colourful; the destruction of each Cybernoid ship is accompanied by an explosion so spectacular it's almost worth losing a life to watch the effect. The nasties are numerous and have some engaging characteristics: I particularly liked the wriggly caterpillar that car-

tons that make a game enjoyable to play, and the Cybernoid has plenty of these: animated cannons, scrolling borders all make the game pleasing to eye. Well done Hewson: the ultimate Spectrum arcade game!"

"An arcade game in your own home - you'd better believe it. Cybernoid is one of the most addictive, play-

able, attractive and down-right unbelievable games you're ever likely to meet on the Spectrum. All the points that people used to criticize on the Spectrum could never be levied at Raffaele Cocco's latest masterpiece. The graphics are astounding - fantastic use of colour and amazing detail. The (optionally) constant sound on the 128K complements the game superbly. Cybernoid has been one helluva fighting machine - the weapons available are mean and monstrous, making the action really compulsive. Cybernoid defies all adjectives; it just has to be played to be believed - and once you do play it, you'll never leave it. If only all Spectrum games were like this!"

Paul

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair

Graphics: Cybernoid is so colourful and detailed you'd be forgiven for thinking it was an arcade version

Sound: an amazing 128K in-game tune, as well as some impressive spot effects

Options: sound on/off

General rating: the formula may be old, but everything else is new or improved. Raffaele Cocco's best game to date - if only it were bigger!

Presentation 93%

Graphics 96%

Playability 95%

Addictive qualities 96%

OVERALL 96%

COMMENTS

CRASH April 1988 13
Unchain your

Your friends are prisoners within the mysterious castle. Release the fetters that bind them and chain them to yourself; only then can you make your escape. Release as many as you can for their predicament is dire, though the more you have on your chain the slower your progress will be! Defend yourself with a choice of 8 different weapons! Battle your way through 112 stages of gripping continuous action! Defeat your foes, rescue your friends, escape from every stage; only then is freedom yours!
Shackled is available for:
Amstrad CPC-Atari ST
CBM 64/128
Spectrum 48K/128K+2
Spectrum+3-MSX
AT LAST
A WORTHY SUCCESSOR TO THE EVER POPULAR MATCH DAY FOOTBALL SIMULATION - A GAME WHICH HAS REMAINED IN THE READERS CHARTS FOR 3 YEARS

Written once again by Jon Ritman and Bernie Drummond this NEW Match Day is the result of all the customer feedback and advice on how to create the pinnacle in computer soccer. Pit yourself against the CPU or with 2 players - full league or cup competition with unique code - save facility. Jump, head, volley and kick (using the kick meter) to move the ball from player to player with automatic deadball set ups and goalkeeper control.
DIAMOND DEFLECTION SYSTEM™ ensures realistic ball ricochet and the action comes with full music and sound FX.
If you want the very best in football for your micro then there's only one choice... MATCH DAY II with multi-menu system makes the home computer come alive.

MATCH DAY II

P.O. Box 1, Ocean Software, Northwood, Middlesex TW8 2LF. Telephone 01-932 6558. Telex 16937 OCEAN G.
The Abominable Snowman, mysterious subject of Tibetan legend and myth, has been granted the ultimate accolade of a computer game of his own. In this case there is no speculation as to whether the notorious Yeti exists or not; he tramps across the title screen to assure the player of his existence. The object of this game is to catch him.

The Yeti is extremely shy, and the largest part of the quest involves travelling through uncharted territory to find the beast. Beginning in the midst of hostile oriental caverns the search moves on to counter the perils of the snowy landscape. Buddhas, invincible mini-monks, rivers of fire and mystical flying monsters impede your progress: contact with any of these means instant death.

To counter these dangers, the player is armed with the famous Lee Enfield rifle and a limited supply of grenades; extra ammunition and shields are also available. For sale: one ski-bike, going to the highest buddah.

NICK

"Yeti is just an Exolon rip off! What Christian Urquhart has done is to copy the idea and layout of Hewson's fantastic game completely. The only real differences are the jerky animation and pathetic sound. The graphics look great but they move around the screen so poorly that they soon become annoying. Colour is used well on the fire and some of the nasties, but other objects in the game are all the same colour and become boring after a while. The way the score and amount of ammunition is displayed on screen is also terrible: if you want to quickly check on how many bullets you've got left it's impossible to work out which figure refers to what! If you've already bought Exolon then you've done the right thing because although they look alike, Exolon is ten times better."

MARK

"I must admit that the idea of a Yeti hunt in a game is quite novel - well I for one haven't heard of it before. Chasing the Yeti across the frozen wastes of Tibet is fun, especially as the route is filled with many dangers. These include large spikes, gun turrets and a multitude of aliens that whizz around the screen causing a great nuisance. Graphically the game is good, with some very drawn and animated obstacles - especially the large Buddha statues that spit lightning bolts at you. My only gripe is that the game is hard to play, and many of my early attempts hardly took me further than the first couple of screens; I feel that this may put some people off very quickly. Okay, the game isn't anything special - basically a shoot and collect 'em up - but it is fun to play."

KATI

"Yeti is very reminiscent of Exolon, even down to the effect of some of the explosions. What saves this clone from obscurity is the unusual scenario, cleverly portrayed in some very colourful graphics. The pagodas and pillars of the Tibetan environment are atmospheric, and a lot of the game's appeal stems from the elusive figure of the shambling Yelli, rewarding you with the odd fleeting glimpse before he mysteriously disappears. The gameplay is more difficult than is really necessary at first: nasties come thick and fast and don't ease up when you reach the edge of the screen. If a fireball appears at this point you have no chance of avoiding it; traversing from one screen to another becomes as much a matter of luck as skill. Collision detection is tight, and often clearly ducking a fireball is not enough to save your life (annoying when you only have three). These elements reduce Yeti's initial payability but with such high quality graphics and some compelling gameplay a little persistence should go a long way."

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: the snowy background is a great effect, adding atmosphere and realism to the game
Sound: pathetically feeble
General rating: Destiny have played very safe with their first game - nothing new, but nothing too bad either

Presentation: 57%
Graphics: 66%
Payability: 61%
Addictive qualities: 56%
OVERALL: 61%
**SIDE ARMS**

Producer: GO!
Retail price: £8.99 cassette, £12.99 disk
Authors: From a Capcom arcade machine

B ozon, the tyrannical megalomaniac, is threatening to exterminate the Earth, except for his race of revolutionaries. The action is necessary and so Lieutenant Henry and Sergeant Sanders are assigned to the mission. Their aim: to infiltrate Bozon’s underground empire, locate the enemy’s ultimate weapon and destroy it.

Converted from the arcade game, Side Arms allows one or two players to participate in combat across a variety of horizontally scrolling monochrome backgrounds.

Infiltrating Bozon’s underground empire, the player unleashes its defence: all available manpower is alerted and combatants appear in a variety of forms to do battle.

As the intrepid astronauts advance, they have the chance to improve their weapon’s arsenal and create a series of additional battle improvements. A specific number of shots transforms the pod into another weapon; one shot for increased speed, four for a mega bazooka launcher, and so on. The weapons in a player’s arsenal can then be selected individually from the keyboard.

Play is divided into a series of stages. At the end of each, enemy fire culminates in a laser-belching monster, who must be defeated to allow entry to the next underground level.

The game comes complete with its own soundtrack intended, presumably, to inspire you as you approach Bozon’s ultimate weapon, the Mobile Armour Sentipet.

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**CRITICISM**

• “Another shoot ‘em up conversion fails to hit the mark. Strip away all the hype (this is definitely not a ‘classic shoot ‘em up’), take away the gimmicky soundtrack, and you’re left with a rather average game. The action, far from being as breathtaking as the promotion claims, is slow. Even with maximum speed bonuses the astronauts don’t seem to get very far and spend a lot of time travelling through empty screens. Scrolling is uneven and collision detection annoyingly inaccurate. The graphics are no more outstanding than the gameplay. The atmosphere they create can be quite eerie, especially against the black background but this element isn’t really exploited to its full potential. Side Arms isn’t a complete disaster - after a few turns it even becomes addictive, but at the inflated price it’s probably best to give it a miss.”

KATI

• “On first investigation, Side Arms seems just like just another ordinary shoot ‘em up game with appalling colour. On second investigation it’s still just an ordinary shoot ‘em up!

The graphics are confusing, the colour is monochromatic and the sound is terrible. Some of the aliens are so small that you hardly notice them creeping up on you and others are just so big that you hardly stand the once. The sloppy presentation makes the game look unappealing and side arms doesn’t even have any.

There are some places in the game that are quite pleasing to play - but not many. This game lets down GO!’s usually high standard.”

NICK

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**BLOOD VALLEY**

Producer: Gremlin Graphics
Retail price: £9.99

The hunter and the hunted represent opposite sides of the same coin; Blood Valley gives the player the chance to savour the experience of both.

Before the hunt itself begins, a map is displayed and Archveult stations his henchmen in positions that correspond strategically with his quarry’s quest.

The movements of Archveult and his quarry against the various landscapes of the Valley of Gad are shown simultaneously on a split screen display. Unfriendly valley inhabitants, robbers, vampires, trolls and demons must be defeated by hand to hand combat. Food, gold and other collectable bonus objects boost stamina rating and increase bargaining power. When invoked, an options screen allows each character to use different potions and items.

Ordinarily Archveult pursues the quarry in his own person, but when the slave approaches any of his allies, Archveult takes control and fights on their behalf.

A scroll to the right of the screen displays the stamina level of both characters, distance travelled and amount of gold collected. The Hunt lasts five days and a clock displays the countdown.

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**CRITICISM**

• “Blood Valley is intended to combine fantasy adventure with elements of role play and strategy. Unfortunately, once you’ve waded through all the explanations, you’re confronted by nothing more than a sub-standard arcade adventure. Gremlin have tried to include so many elements that only the most basic ones - of killing and collecting objects - stand out. The objects, once you have them, seem to bring little benefit other than the dubious one of a prolonged life. The graphics are remarkable only for their inconsistency: objects and enemies appear and disappear at random. The scrolling, combined with the strange flick-screen procedure, is uneven and the weird, ghostly music can do nothing to resurrect the spirit of this barren and bitty game.”

KATI

• “After sitting through almost half an hour of loading you eventually find that the game wasn’t worth the effort! The idea of playing everything in sight is fun for a while and extra things like bribing trolls add a little spice, but the lack of a tense atmosphere and real variety soon kills any compulsion to continue. There’s the choice of playing three different characters but if you load in one and don’t like it you have to reload the entire game. If you want a good two player game then look elsewhere.”

NICK
is pretty bland visually, with some large, but rather unimpressive monochromatic sprites battling across a very similar monochromatic backdrop. Control of the main character is frustrating, as he often takes a fraction of a second too long to react to a situation, which is more often than not fatal. Another thing that annoyed me greatly was the way that the aliens occasionally killed my man without even touching him. All of these factors added to my initial feelings about the game, and in the end I was left with a vague, 'why bother?' sort of feeling.
Coin-op hero Rastan, king of Maranna, is the only man tough enough to liberate his kingdom from the evil influence of the wizard Karg. In an attempt to gain control of the barbarian race the nefarious necromancer has released a host of beasts and demons upon the land. Protected only by leather and bearing his trusty sword, Rastan hacks his way across a horizontally scrolling landscape of underground passages, grim citadels and rocky cliffs. Unexplored parts of this hostile terrain are connected by flights of steep steps and ropes swinging perilously over lakes of fire. Remote areas boast deadly streams and lava flows; contact with either of these results in instant death.

The wizard has enlisted a grisly crowd of allies, ranging from docile looking lions to ghoul ishly aggressive demons. Their instincts are to attack on sight, and the more humanoid beings have seemingly unlimited shot power. Rastan can find and collect a number of helpful items including more powerful weapons, bonus shields, mantles and also medicines which reduce vulnerability. Some enemies carry jewellery which bear a variety of mysterious powers, and more devious opponents attempt to fool the warrior king by carrying poison in the form of a magic potion. Adversaries are also well animated, and include skeletons, lions, bats, and snakes — all as mean as hell and eager to contribute to the barbarian's demise. One small thing that did annoy me was the intrusive and time-consuming multiload. In the end I found this most tiresome, but it fortunately didn't spoil my enjoyment of the game. Rastan is a great game for all you closet mad axe-wielders out there."

"I'm all for hack 'n' slay type games, and Rastan is just the ticket. Graphically good, a macho Conan style main character cleaves his way across a variety of solid, smooth scrolling backdrops. Adversaries are also well animated, and include skeletons, lions, bats, and snakes — all as mean as hell and eager to contribute to the barbarian's demise. One small thing that did annoy me was the intrusive and time-consuming multiload. In the end I found this most tiresome, but it fortunately didn't spoil my enjoyment of the game. Rastan is a great game for all you closet mad axe-wielders out there."

MARK

"Rastan: The wizard has enlisted a grisly crowd of allies, ranging from docile looking lions to ghoul ishly aggressive demons. Their instincts are to attack on sight, and the more humanoid beings have seemingly unlimited shot power. Rastan can find and collect a number of helpful items including more powerful weapons, bonus shields, mantles and also medicines which reduce vulnerability. Some enemies carry jewellery which bear a variety of mysterious powers, and more devious opponents attempt to fool the warrior king by carrying poison in the form of a magic potion. Adversaries are also well animated, and include skeletons, lions, bats, and snakes — all as mean as hell and eager to contribute to the barbarian's demise. One small thing that did annoy me was the intrusive and time-consuming multiload. In the end I found this most tiresome, but it fortunately didn't spoil my enjoyment of the game. Rastan is a great game for all you closet mad axe-wielders out there."

KATI

"Hacking and hewing through hellfire demons, Rastan the dragon-slayer, barbarian warrior supreme, slashes his way through some surprisingly subtle designer graphics. Pastel shades and different gradations of grey, pierced by sudden splurges of red, turn Maranna into a bleak and hostile world. Rastan himself is smoothly animated and all the different ducking, fighting and jumping actions are clearly defined. A game which concentrates on killing marauding fiends is obviously limited in terms of depth but the swinging ropes and the bonus collection system ensure ample variety. Difficulty is well graded (the first level even has a practice rope) and your first go takes you just far enough to keep you hooked. As you're given the chance to start again where the last game ended there's no laborious repetition of levels you already know off by heart. Rastan is slick and compelling — anyone remotely interested in the barbarian cause and those new to the sport have nothing at all to lose."

NICK

"Rastan is another coin-op that doesn't seem to have the same addictiveness on the Spectrum than it does on the original machine. The graphics are detailed enough and look good on the screen, but the unrealistic way Rastan moves around the world of Maranna and the lack of colour is very offputting. There's a feeble tune at the beginning and weak spot effects throughout the game. Rastan contains some of the best enemy sprites I've seen for ages, but although they look really vicious, when you run into them you just go straight through as if nothing had happened! In some places you could mistake it for a targe version of one of Software Projects' classic Jet Set Willy games because there are swinging ropes that are almost impossible to hold on to. Another drawback is the terrible multiload that destroys any excitement that the game may have had. Rastan is disappointing."

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair

Graphics: superb use of BRIGHTs with detailed drawings of all the large characters

Sound: feeble title tune with bash and crunch effects

General rating: a playable arcade tie-in, although lacking in variation and content — the multi-load is also annoying

Payability 83%

Addictive qualities 79%

OVERALL 85%

Presentation 80%

Graphics 85%

Playability 83%

Addictive qualities 79%

OVERALL 85%
TAKE 'EM ALL ON...
IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO LIVE!

TARGET: RENEGADE

Every move you make, every step you take, they're watching you. Fight your way through the precinct - the back alleys, the car parks, fight your way through the villainous community, the skinheads, the Beastie Boys, the bouncers. On a hot, steamy night in New York this is just the tip of the iceberg on your chilling quest to confront "MR. BIG". A spectacular arcade style brawl with many hoodlums and hellhounds to encounter - this is target Renegade - if it moves, it hurts!
The first casualty of war is innocence.
ZOLYX
Producer: Firebird
Retail price: £1.99
Author: Peter Cooke

The objective of Zolyx is to fill in an empty screen by enclosing areas with straight lines which then automatically fill with colour. Lines are drawn by a cursor which is directed around the screen, and constantly moving balls are avoided since contact with the cursor, or any part of an incomplete line, signals the loss of a life. Continuous line length is limited by a glowing bail which chases the cursor after a set time. Again, a life is lost should the ball and cursor touch.

At least 75% of the area must be filled in within the time limit to allow progress to the next level. For every percentage above 75 bonus points are awarded. Each level successfully completed sees an extra ball added to the screen.

CRITICISM

- "When Zolyx was first released on the Commodore it was met with almost universal acclaim. Surprisingly, this conversion is an unmitigated disaster. No satisfaction is to be gained from transforming the screen; the blocks have different textures, are divided by thick black lines and combine to form an ugly patchwork of motley patterns and hues. The killer ball, introduced specifically for the Spectrum, makes long sweeping strokes across the screen impossible, and effectively cripples play. Definitely not recommended."

KATI

- "This game is just so unattractive and unaddictive that is isn't even worth £1.99! The graphics... well, are a couple of blobs and dots worth mentioning? Colour is restricted to just one per screen, occasionally being garish and limited to unsatisfactory dot shading. The idea is too simple; attempting to fill in 75% of a screen with shading isn't my idea of fun. Perhaps if there were a few more enemies it might have perks up a bit, but otherwise it just looks like a failed first attempt at programming on a ZX81!"

MICK

- "Zolyx is very similar to an Atari game I owned about five years ago called Qix. The idea is simple enough, so what do Firebird think they are doing? They have, seen a simple, but pleasantly frustrating game idea, and turned it into this totally unplayable pile of you know what. Graphically Zolyx, is totally dire, although gameplay - if possible - is even worse. Firebird have missed the game up something rotten. Whatever you do, DON'T buy this."

MARK

- "Although arcade adventures are common on the Spectrum, Thing's tidy presentation and humorous graphics help it stand out from the crowd. Gameplay is moderately slow, sometimes with periods during which there is nothing to do but plod forwards. The shooting action is also a nuisance, in that Thing frequently runs into the hostile Dingalingers, resulting in some short-lived games! The strong brain-teasing element was enough to keep me playing, though, and if puzzles are your poison, I would suggest you exchange a couple of coins for Thing!"

PAUL

- "Thing! is quite nice, graphically, with a couple of rather cute-looking characters fighting off the treacherous Dingalingers, and attempting to complete the tasks set by the Dingalinger Overlord. These puzzles are quite simple, but are challenging all the same, and will probably take several games to solve. Once completed however I feel the game will lose its appeal, but until then, just keep going!"

KATI

- "The ridiculous storyline of Thing! warns you not to take the game too seriously, and the cartoon style graphics create an atmosphere of absurdity. Most of the problems are just an excuse to make some very silly jokes (it's easy to work out what to do with an American Express card, but what do you do with a CRASH reviewer...?). Whether you like this sort of thing depends entirely on the depths to which your sense of humour is prepared to sink. £1.99 doesn't seem such a bad deal to me."
**Reviews**

## MAGNETRON

**Producer:** Firebird  
**Retail price:** £7.95  
**Author:** Steve Turner

**LP-2** is the little droid who made his first appearance in the citadel of Quazatron.  

### MARK

"Long ago, there was a Commodore game called Paradroid. This game was so successful that it was followed by Quazatron on the Spectrum, and its hero, KLP-2, now returns to star in Magnetron. I know what you’re probably saying, ‘Surely by now this game should be dead and buried?’ But no; the same formula has been used to produce yet another episode in this Paradroidesque saga. However, I must say that I actually like the game: I found disabling the enemy droids and tracking down and destroying the power plants quite enjoyable. Admittedly anyone totally bored with this type of game won’t find anything new in this latest offering, but if you have been off-planet, or stuck down a dark hole for the last few years, take a look."

### NICK

"Magnetron has the same old graphics, the same old ideas and the same old gameplay as that other Gaelforce game, Quazatron. You can get a bit of fun out of it to begin with by zooming up and down the ramps and doing death leaps from the top of high ridges, but once this novelty has worn off you are left with a rather flat D game. There are some reasonable effects in the game, like the pattern of Magnetron sprites making an oval shape in a starry sky at the start, but not much else. Grappling with robots is extremely confusing at first, and only having a few seconds to complete it makes the matter worse. Magnetron has little new on offer and doesn’t really deserve closer examination."

### KATI

"Magnetron should have been called Quazatron II since it’s merely an updated version of the prototype rather than an original game in its own right. The few elements which are significantly different actually spoil the playability of the game. Admittedly the monochrome Quazatron landscape has been given an injection of much-needed colour, but impressive graphics can’t salvage insipid gameplay. In Quazatron the grappling sequence was exciting and unpredictable; Magnetron’s icon puzzle lacks a competitive edge and becomes increasingly repetitive. Neither the reactor problem nor the grappling sequence are complex enough to sustain anyone’s interest for very long. Trudging monotonously from one to the other is a process which is best avoided."

## SHACKLED

**Producer:** US Gold  
**Retail price:** £8.99 cassette, £12.99 disk  
**Authors:** Choice from a Data East coin-op

### NICK

On discovering one of his friends, Kein takes charge of the weapon they are carrying. These include grenades, shuriken stars, disks, shock waves, boomerangs, cushion balls, and fire balls. Each character holds a different weapon, and once gained are displayed as icons which can be scrolled through and used as desired. Sword, axe, and spear-wielding guards make their presence felt, and Kein loses energy points whenever they attack him. Bonus

### KATI

"Gauntlet has spawned so many clones it’s hard to muster any enthusiasm at the prospect of another one, but at least Shackled has added the comparative sophistication of 3-D. Dashing around the mazes in a desperate attempt to find your friends and keep them safe (disorientated prisoners have a tendency to wander off) has a realistically frantic touch. The battles sequences themselves are reminiscent of a comic strip as weapons and bodies disappear in a cloud of dust. The scrolling is slightly jerky, and you don’t get more sound for your money than one or two (admittedly atmospheric) spot effects. With a little more attention to detail this merely good game could have become an excellent one."

### MARK

"There have been plenty of Gauntlet variants over the last few years, but unfortunately most of them have been pretty poor affairs. Shackled on the other hand, although not graphically brilliant, is at least playable. The dungeons are nicely drawn and although the scrolling is jerky and character movement slightly wooden, this didn’t spoil my enjoyment too much. In fact, I found the game quite entertaining. It’s not exactly the new Gauntlet – but it’s better than most of the other imitators."

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"Disappointing Quazatron follow-up."

armed satellites under their control. KLP-2 is immediately beamed aboard the first satellite, where his task is to negotiate the multicoloured 3-D landscape of ramps and walkways which comprise each station, locate its four reactors and deactivate them. The safety of a reactor is entirely dependent on the combined charge of its positive fuel rods and..."
its negative inhibitors. By swapping fuel rods KLP-2 can manipulate the charges sufficiently to cause the reactors to shut down or overload.

The droid inhabitants of the stations are completely unsympathetic to his mission and although KLP-2 doesn't have enough firepower to counter them directly, he can 'grapple' with other droids in an attempt to take control of their attributes. Three other droids in an attempt to take control of their attributes.

A successful grapple discards the one grid within a given time limit.

Three diamonds that kill all adversaries dungeons including coins to boost items are available throughout the stations are completely deactivated, the station shuts back-up life.

The next level is then entered and he can 'grapple' with his freed companions to the exit. Collect the correct key and lead the player's movements, and crowns, which bestow a hefty points bonus.

Kein's energy level, keys to open filtered ghosties flicker all the time and none of them look remotely scary. Many of the screens are similar and range from bare to bland. The best graphics in the game are on the title screen, I soon discovered that it was little more than a run of the mill story controls mean that it doesn't even rank as one of the best of its type. Frightmare can get very addictive, but £9.95 is a high price to pay for some fairly standard fare."

"Thank goodness my worst nightmares aren't as creepy as the guys in this game! Graphically, Frightmare is pretty good. Of particular note is the loading screen picture, based on the subtle ambience. The real nightmare, however, is the standard fare. "Like a recurring dream, the promotion of Frightmare has been frequently appearing in the magazines with monotonous regularity for months. Unfortunately, the realisation is never as good as the dream. Nevertheless, Frightmare is entertaining enough. The graphics create a fittingly ghoulish atmosphere and even the control method - somewhere between jumping and floating - is expressive of the surreal ambience. The real nightmare, however, is the price. As a platform adventure it's hardly a pioneering breed. Unremarkable spot effects, messy collision detection and slightly clumsy controls mean that it doesn't even rank as one of the best of its type. Frightmare can get very addictive, but £9.95 is a high price to pay for some fairly standard fare."

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: miniscule characters on a plain and simple background
Sound: very few atmospheric spot effects
Options: one or two players
General rating: a convincing arcade licence, but lacking originality and content

Presentation
Graphics
Playability
Addictive qualities
OVERALL
% 72

COMMENTS

John: Ron Ashley
Producer: Cascade Games
Retail price: £9.95
Author: Ron Ashley

Frightmare

Each person's subconscious stores primordial memories which seep into our dreams. Frightmare dares the player to step into this psychic abyss and surrender to fears in the landscape of their darkest imaginings.

The nightmare takes place over a period of eight and a half hours in the supernatural environment of four ancestral tales. You are to journey through a surreal world of ruined, crumbling statues, networks of skeleton trees and rooms of disembodied hands, these can be countered by a series of collectable weapons. Holy Water kills all monsters instantly, revolts (for which you also need to collect bullets), crucifixes and random potions have a more selective effect. Other icons increase your ability to jump, represent extra lives and allow you to warp to different rooms.

As the inner self is penetrated, the dream state, recorded in the top of the screen, alters accordingly. Beginning with a 'bad dream' the state slowly advances to finally become a 'nefarious frightmare'. After that all you have to do is wake up.

Each new room visited moves the clock by six minutes; at 8.12 am the frightmare is over and the harrowed dreamer awakes.

"I didn't know that my darkest dreams were full of badly drawn characters, colour clash and irritating gameplay, but that's what the Frightmare advert says, so it must be true! The best thing about Frightmare is the inlay, full of ghastly descriptions of the inhabitants of the frightmare itself. The game itself is the pits. Theanimated ghosties flicker all the time and none of them look remotely scary. Many of the screens are similar and range from bare to bland. The best graphics in the game are on the title screen with the word 'Frightmare' scrawled across the top. If you are looking for a ghostly game then this isn't the one for you. The now aging Ghosts 'n' Goblins is far ahead of this."

This dreamscape is haunted by the victims of five ancestral tales and legends. Contact with any one of them means the loss of one of the dreamer's five lives. Ranging from zombies to scarlet disembodied hands, these can be countered by a series of collectable weapons. Holy Water kills all monsters instantly, revolts (for which you also need to collect bullets), crucifixes and random potions have a more selective effect. Other icons increase your ability to jump, represent extra lives and allow you to warp to different rooms.

As the inner self is penetrated, the dream state, recorded in letters at the top of the screen, alters accordingly. Beginning with a 'bad dream' the state slowly advances to finally become a
UNLEASH THE POWER OF YOUR
It's 7.00 in the evening. You've just finished another meal. You should do your homework but something is calling you from the garage. Something that would terrify the neighbours. Something agile, fast and deadly. Pegasus - the Patrol Hydrofoil Missilecraft. The temptation is just too much.
GeeBee Air Rally - joystick gripping, pylon-shaving racing action. Speed in spades. Trick turns. A swarm of other planes to outfly and outmanoeuver - or collide with.

All in three dimensions. Because in GeeBee Air Rally, you race not just next to or around the competition, but over and under them as well.

With 16 great race courses, each with vivid fast scrolling graphics and 256 levels of difficulty, the challenge never ends. Plus authentic sights, sounds and music that recall the days when speed kings were the heroes of the skies.

GeeBee Air Rally. Strap yourself in, grab your joystick and open the throttle. You're in for a whole of a ride.

Created by Steve Cartwright, Gene Smith, Mike Nowak and Russell Lieblich.

Amiga (£19.99), Commodore 64/128 Disk (£14.99), ZX Spectrum 48K/128K/+ (£7.99) and Amstrad CPC Cassette (£9.99) and Disk (£14.99), Commodore 64/128 Cassette (£9.99) coming soon!

Mail Order: Activision (UK) Ltd, Units 3 & 4, Lloyds Close, Finedon Road Industrial Estate, Northampton NN8 4FR. Tel: 0933 76768.

TM & © 1987 Activision Inc. All rights reserved. Amiga screens shown. Screens may vary depending on computer system.
Trying to please all of the people all of the time is the main theme of CRASH like any other publication is a collection of individuals right we would be the very best magazine ever printed. As it is, most of this month's letters; quite honestly, if we could get that trick admitting despite being an avid Spectrum owners whose idea of intellectual reading is "The Sun", have a fraction of the price for new software. Such sentimentality, however, cannot halt the flood of upgrades Spectrum users enticed by superb graphics and attractive sound (or should it be the other way round? Never mind, all I would like to see anyone thinking of making the giant leap to keep their Speccy: they wouldn't get much further and at least it means you'll still be able to play Match Day 4 if Ocean don't do a 16-bit conversion). I suppose Silica thought that it is still new enough, with in-depth reviews and criticism cannot be levelled, but if they won't get much for it after all, and positively terpsichorean to listen to – but they play like a brick. There are the odd one or two at which this criticism cannot be levelled, but if you rate playability higher than the merely aesthetic, then the overall Spectrum still has plenty to offer in the games department.

Nigel Palmer, Norwich

As a rubber-keyed Spectrum owner, hasn't once looked at an Atari ST/Amiga screen shot and said, "Damn those attribute problems!" or something similar. But sometimes you're up against unarguable financial facts, and the men with the books at our Gravel Hill office say that compared to two years ago CRASH is not quite as profitable as it was – probably because there's more colour in it now. Some issues are thicker than others – it depends a bit on the time of year, and after Christmas each year there have been thinner issues. Prior to Christmas there were several fatter CRASHes too you know.

PLAY IT AGAIN, LOKI?

Dear Lloyd

As regards upgrading to a 16-bit machine, (bearing in mind that the Amiga costs £450, the ST is due for a £100 price increase, and the software currently hovers around the £250 mark), selling your Spectrum and software collection would appear to be a false economy.

CRASH a bit thinner? Well, yes and no (how's that for an equivocal answer?). But sometimes you're up against unarguable financial facts, and the men with the books at our Gravel Hill office say that compared to two years ago CRASH is not quite as profitable as it was – probably because there's more colour in it now. Some issues are thicker than others – it depends a bit on the

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Dear Lloyd,

I am writing to complain about the accuracy or rather the lack of it in many of the reviews in issue 49. Firstly, the review of Out Run.

The resounding opinion amongst my friends is that this has been vastly underrated. I agree that the multiload 48k, to say the least, a pain in the backside. The graphics are extremely well detailed, and the animation is great, especially the movement of the car as it negotiates hills and turns. I have to point out that only Nick was accurate in his review. Mike has a tendency to either overrate or underrate games (the latter with more) and Oli Frey's artwork is excellent. Forum is good for letting off steam, and special indexes and features like Run It Again are very interesting. Keep up the quality reviews. Thank you for the final compliments Chris, but I feel (as an old hand so to speaking) I must defend Nick and say he does a fine job of the Playing Tips section. I feel most people would agree that maps are an important facet of the tips section, giving aid in playing while not "cheating" as with POKEs or hints. However, it's also true that all maps and no words make for a dull section, and some months may be guilty of spaceman with maps that are printed bigger than they need be. But a deficit of POKEs and tips can hardly be Nick's fault, for he merely checks and collates the information sent in; he can't print POKEs he hasn't got! The tip section is only as good as the stuff sent in, so get working!

Out Run. Out Run should have been given more than 27% in a year? I doubt it very much. The resounding opinion amongst friends, the game is great. It merits approximately 80%.

Well, that is my final complaint; the animation is great, especially the going offshore, and special indexes and features like Run It Again are very interesting. Keep up the quality reviews. Thank you for the final compliments Chris, but I feel (as an old hand so to speaking) I must defend Nick and say he does a fine job of the Playing Tips section. I feel most people would agree that maps are an important facet of the tips section, giving aid in playing while not "cheating" as with POKEs or hints. However, it's also true that all maps and no words make for a dull section, and some months may be guilty of space maps with maps that are printed bigger than they need be. But a deficit of POKEs and tips can hardly be Nick's fault, for he merely checks and collates the information sent in; he can't print POKEs he hasn't got! The tip section is only as good as the stuff sent in, so get working!

Out Run. Out Run should have been given more than 27% in a year? I doubt it very much. The resounding opinion amongst friends, the game is great. It merits approximately 80%.

The perennial argument! And, as ever, the answer to your disagreement of reviewers' ratings is down to personal taste: the ratings and comments given to each game are based solely upon the feelings of the reviewer in question. You can't expect to agree with all of the ratings all of the time – we only try to give as comprehensive and unbiased review as possible to help guide your decision to purchase the game. For instance, I did not think very highly of Out Run, although it wasn't exactly bad, it also wasn't as well implemented as it should have been; still, it can be very playable. As for Rampage, I thought it was tedious and a waste of time – and I don't even get to write reviews any more! Since the reviews mentioned, Mike Dunn has left and nothing is heard of. Rampage is another game which the locals think has been underrated. When played amongst friends, the game is great. It merits approximately 80%.

Not having K+, I perhaps should comment on that, but do the graphics really merit 90%? Having Gauntlet I and Gauntlet II, I agree that they are very similar. Mike's overall appraisal dropped 27% in a year? I doubt it very much.

Usually, the reviews are accurate, but I feel I had to comment on the aforementioned games. Incidentally, what happened to World Class Leaderboard and The Double?

Why were they not reviewed?

Here are a couple of general comments about the mag:

When reading the Scores page, I experienced deja vu. Was it an error or was it deliberate?

When printing competition winners, how about printing the answers?

Subscription – why do present subscribers have to pay more if they want to renew their subscription and get Paltee or GFL?

Finally, congratulations. Newsfield, for the excellent GAMES MACHINE. Issue 3 was my first purchase of TGM, and it won't be the last. Congratulations, again!

Scott McGlashan, Glasgow
Dear Lloyd

Although I agree with you that Peter Hoar's letter (Issue 50) did appear more cynical than strictly necessary, I feel that several of his points are ones I (sadly) have to concur with. Although I have been a faithful CRASH reader since points are ones I (sadly) have to necessary. I feel that several of his Peter Hoar's letter (Issue 50) did

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gradually phasing out the adventure game world. It may be, and it will sadden me if this is so, that CRASH is merely reflecting general interest in these games - or a tendency to cater less and less for minorities such as adventurers or strategy gamers (I do not play many myself, but I have noticed that the strategy section of the magazine is also dwindling and in issue 50 is pushed up against the adventure section - are they to be eventually rounded up into just an 'adventure and strategy' section?)

Perhaps these developments are only a temporary disturbance. My subscription is still good for a couple more issues - maybe CRASH can persuade me to change my mind and renew it. I certainly hope so.

Simon McGregor, London NW3

I certainly shan’t apologise for my reply to Peter Hoar’s letter, because if people can be stupid and calculatedly offensive letters full of deliberate misinformation and cheap innuendo, then they can hardly expect a sympathetic reply - even though his did earn him the

bumper software bundle; the first time I ever recall awarding it in a fit of pique!

Everyone will have to accept (and may well expect) that when a talented specialist writer like Derek Brewster stops working for a magazine after four years, there is bound to be a great change; and to be a touch cynical about it, no-one really likes changes, which can often explain the more savage criticism in these cases.

It isn’t really a case of not catering to what you refer to as ‘minority’ interests - adventures have always been important to CRASH - but they have become decidedly less important to software producers in general, simply because hardly anyone buys enough to warrant the cost of producing them.

The result has been, as we have all seen, that almost all Spectrum adventures available now come from independent individuals at budget prices on mail order. No, there’s nothing wrong with that itself (why take arcade experts and strategy and adventures are not intended to merge in the near future. The results of our next CRASH-thon will be interesting - tell us how you feel about adventures that way - as you told us that Ocean was the best software house last year in the Readers’ Awards… did Ocean bribe all of you to vote for them?

Among the new reviewers working on CRASH, and generally at Newsfield, are several who not only enjoy playing adventure games and do so regularly, but are also quite expert on the subject itself (why take arcade experts if you enjoy the occasional adventure off their job for one that always takes so much more time to assess? - the reason for the wording in the ad you refer to). Their impact has hardly been felt.

I hope you feel, Simon - since your letter was constructive and polite - that I have answered it more logically and completely than you think I did Mr Hoar’s.

What an exhausting set of answers that proved to be! Sorry if it sounded long-winded, but sometimes you can’t do a reply in two lines. How about a few more constructively jolly letters next month?!
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MAGIC BYTES
Between 1984 and 1986, when games were getting big and the software world became an industry, the most famous, most praised and most successful software house was Ultimate Play The Game — but the programming stars of Atic Atac and Knight Lore were secretive and gave no interviews.

In 1986 Ultimate began to fade, and by 1987 it had virtually disappeared.

But under a different name Ultimate was working on a new project — and could soon be back at the front of the next revolution.

A few months ago, former CRASH Editor ROGER KEAN was asked by Ultimate to hear the inside story on its history and future . . .

Ultimate Play The Game became a household name in software households just weeks after Jetpac and Pass were released in 1983, getting the company's Spectrum career off to a scorching start. The packaging boast of 'arcade quality graphics' was more justified than for any other game of the time, and the gameplay and sheer fun to be had from Ultimate's first releases was astonishing — they were packed into only 16K of memory.

Two more 16K releases followed — Cookie and Tranz-Am — and when CRASH was launched in 1984 we were treated to the even more complex 48K games, Lunar Jetman and Atic Atac. Between 1983 and 1986 Ultimate had an unbroken chain of 14 Spectrum hits; most were reviewed in CRASH, and their Overall ratings averaged at 93%, making Ultimate the magazine's most highly-praised software house of all time.

Ultimate became about its press silence — and indeed very little was known about the software house, which never even showed its wares at exhibitions after one early experiment. The nearest anyone got to a foot in the door was when CRASH found some favour with Ultimate's nearly-invisible owners. They ran several competitions and even promised an interview — but always only after the next game was completed, and that tomorrow never came.

FAMILY BUSINESS

Based in the Leicestershire town of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Ultimate was wholly owned by one family: two brothers, Chris and Tim Stamper, and Tim's wife Carol. With one or two other programmers — or 'software engineers', as they prefer to style them — the Stampers were Ultimate. The two brothers had started as designers of real-life arcade-machine programs — but they made no marketing mileage out of this coin-op background, exotic enough in those heady early days (and still rare in Britain), preferring to stay in Ashby-de-la-Zouch and produce games.

And it was as though the games really did speak for themselves: magically. Ultimate avoided the criticisms usually attracted by standoffish organisations in the professionally friendly entertainment trade. Each Ultimate release was eagerly awaited, and whenever a game was delayed magazines were flooded with complaints, as though the editors could do something about it. And when rumours circulated, originating from an all-too-unusual (and all too-sparse) press release, that Knight Lore was to feature an entirely new three-dimensional concept with superb animation called Filmation, anxious readers ran riot with their letters.

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REVOLUTION AND DEFEAT

Knight Lore was revolutionary. It brought about a new genre, the pseudo-3D arcade adventure; one CRASH reader has claimed it became the second most-clone piece of software after the word processor WordStar.

But by the end of 1985 it seemed Ultimate’s magic might be waning, though veritable hero-worship kept the company’s profile high till well into 1988. Something had gone; the flair seeming missing, we wondered if the originality had ossified, letters kept sadly referring to the ‘once-great software house’. Inevitably, when someone has been on top so long detractors start sowing seeds of gloom, and as Ultimate slid CRASH readers’ letters were harping on the similarity of so many later Ultimate games.

Looking back, but it seems incredible that Ultimate kept its supreme position for so long, always producing original games that went straight to the top of the sales charts. Despite its fall from fame, it remained a major label, and after a rumour that Ocean had bought the company it was announced that in fact US Gold had won out and taken over Ultimate.

The terms of the sale were obscure; the Stampers retained a majority shareholding, and Ultimate games continued to appear, though to less and less acclaim. But a glint, shrouded in the mists of corporate obscuration, lay before all: the small, typically mysterious, ‘concept and coding’ credit for some of the later Ultimate games – Rare Ltd.

RARE

The Ultimate software label has been largely dormant since mid-1987, and though the Stampers still have an interest in it, 2 years ago they formed a new company, Rare Ltd., and moved from Ashby-de-la-Zouch to the nearby village of Twycross. It’s there that the Stampers are working on a new generation of games and it was there that they gave CRASH the Ultimate story.

This is the home of Rare, protected on the borders of Leicestershire and Warwickshire, known only for its zoo. Sitting on the western edge of the village is a very large 18th-century mansion, part of Manor Farm.

This is the home of Rare, protected by rambling outbuildings, barns and a crowd of noisy cockerels and chickens. It’s a quaint though rather dilapidated building, gradually being repaired by the Stampers, and its calm, very country-English exterior belies the power of the technology within.

The inside is half-finished, but in the board room a row of clocks on the wall shows the times in Japan and America – all part of Rare’s international market.

And what illuminates Rare’s otherwise unlit headquarters is the Stampers’ intimate working knowledge of their hardware. Very little equipment in the mansion is as it came from the manufacturer, even the modest Amstrad PCs have been given vitamins. That’s the style of the two former coin-op designers, of course, and it was their technical knowledge of the Spectrum as much as their imagination that kept Ultimate playing the game so long.

WHY ULTIMATE FADED

I started with the most obvious burning question: why did Ultimate disappear about 1½ years ago? Perched on the edge of a massive desk, 32-year-old Tim Stamper, who acts as the company’s business spokesman, thought for a moment and then corrected me slightly.

‘I think for us, as the main development team, possibly 2 years ago was the time. It wasn’t really conducive to company expansion to carry on producing on the Spectrum – unless we went along the budget route…

That’s what people said at the time; that Ultimate had gone as far as it could with the Spectrum. But what about the 1987 games like Bubblener and Cybern? Tim insisted that was the post-Stamper Ultimate’s work.

They were not really our involvement. We said, ‘Ultimate, if you’re developing on Spectrum, carry on doing that’ – we’re still the majority shareholders in Ultimate, so we still take an active interest in the company.’

Chris – at 29 the younger, quieter brother, who concentrates on coding – broke in: ‘What was the last one we developed as a team? It was Gunfight. I think, everyone was copying our Knight Lore concept, so we thought we’d do one as well! Get a little bit of extra cash.

But even before Gunfight Ultimate had come in for magazine criticism – Sabre Wulf a copy of Atic Atac, Alien 8 is a copy of Knight Lore, and so on.

It was funny to read the reviews,’ recalled Chris. ‘A lot of the earlier reviews were actually incorrect. It never really affects you. You know whether the product’s good or bad. I think the only criticism we would be aware of was the sales, and the sales were very good.’

Tim observed: CRASH always gave us fair reviews, but with some of the other magazines, if we’ve got a test and the product got a bad review – and I was actually told by a few of the other companies that they thought the problem existed as well – and I’m sure it’s still there now.

So we steered clear of speaking to anyone, and if they liked the product great, and if they didn’t I wasn’t bothered, because if the sales were there people were buying it.

FANS

Most software houses get as much criticism from letter-writing players as they do from reviews. But Chris said ‘we

More cloned than World Star, Knight Lore set a new standard

had hardly any letters written to Ultimate which actually complained. We had tremendous fan mail, though, 50 to 60 letters a day, and had to have someone fully employed just to deal with them.

Talk of fan mail prompted Tim to make a point. ‘I think we had an opportunity to capitalise on the sort of fan club Ultimate created. So many people wanted more information on Ultimate, and sweatshirts and caps and that.

‘We could have expanded, like some companies did, with a large fan club and giveaways and posters to buy, and we could have said “If you like Ultimate, buy the games, buy sweatshirts’, but in fact we gave them all away.

‘If anyone asked us for a sweatshirt or a cap we said “Well, you can have it or posters”. We were just interested in seeing the software out there and getting fair reviews.’

QUALITY CONTROL

Today’s software houses, anxious to keep buyers happy with bugless games, regard playtesting as essential. But despite Ultimate’s string of hits, the Stampers never employed hordes of young playtesters as the old Imagine used to.

‘We rely on friends and friends of the family,’ said Chris, ‘usually people a lot younger than ourselves, to play the game. We like to see their reaction to the game from fresh. It’s very easy for us to see what the problems are when they start to play the game. Basically we’re all arcade players and we’re all arcade addicts.

No game is perfect, and with hindsight the Stampers can often see something they should have done better.

‘But when we’ve finished a game, all we can see is all the hard work that went into it. It takes a long time before you can look at it with a different eye: you always remember all the problems and all the concepts that were thrown out, all the stages of development. It’s easier to look at a product you haven’t worked on, because you can look at it with an open mind. It’s so difficult for us to criticise or comment on our own games.

MYSTERY

A mystery in one Ultimate game always annoyed even the label’s staunchest fans.

Pentagram – with everyone else copying their style, the Stampers didn’t see why they shouldn’t
HARDWARE HARDSHIPS

Everyone at Rare contributes to game concepts. ‘We have so many ideas filed that game ideas are just never a problem,’ explained Chris. ‘It takes 6 months to develop a good game and by that time you’ve probably had three or four other ideas.’

‘We scribble them down and file them away,’ Tim went on, ‘and then when we’re ready to start a new team off, we just go through the files and decide which one to produce, which is best for the time of year and the current trends.’

‘But obviously it was a hoax – or was it? I added that the graphics looked very authentic. Tim merely laughed. ‘I wish they had contacted us!’

And so the mystery persists. But mystery was Ultimate’s fifth name. Was it a conscious policy to be mysterious? Was it seen as good PR? No it wasn’t,’ said Tim, ‘that’s the way it turned out. We were so busy producing a few products a year and making sure they were right. I think while we were full-time Ultimate, we only had two Christmas mornings off, and that’s how hard it was.

‘We worked seven days a week, 9am till 1 or 2 in the morning. I don’t feel it’s any good having engineers who only work 9 to 5 because you get a 9-to-5 way it turned out. We were so busy working farm, explained Tim. Still, the 6-acre Manor Farm isn’t a good development place, the atmosphere for development we have in this place is excellent. It’s a nice rural setting with Chris added, ‘It’s just a bad...’ His voice trailed off.

Continuing Sabreman’s adventures, Underwurlda was eclipsed by the sophistication of Knight Lore

‘But obviously a lot of the hardware can’t handle it!’ One for the future!’ we say, I’m sure everyone’s got game ideas that could be produced on a Cray supercomputer, but it’s getting them on a home machine...’

It must have seemed a step down for Tim and Chris Stamper, used to designing coin-op games and licensing them to America and Japan, to give up all that dedicated hardware and memory and work with the 16K Spectrum?

‘The arcades armed us really well for the UK market,’ said Tim, ‘and when the Spectrum came out we thought ‘what a piece of garbage!’ But there’s something about it, to have lasted this long is amazing.’

16-BIT DOUBTS

The Spectrum’s extremely limited sound could have posed a problem for Ultimate’s programmers – one common criticism in the old days was that Ultimate games needed better music and sound effects.

‘Well, yes,’ admitted Chris, ‘but I think you had to decide whether you wanted to spend the processing power on the game or on the audio – you couldn’t have it both ways.’

Today a Spectrum-owner will be stunned by the quality of rich sound on his first confrontation with a 16-bit machine – an Amiga, say. But neither of the Stamper brothers is particularly impressed by the much-hailed 16-bit revolution.

Tim Stamper: ‘I haven’t seen
We were having a serious problem with the number of (illegal) copies. And I think going from E5.50 to £9.95 was a bold step we took. The price was gradually creeping up, and I thought we decided the market wasn't ready for it. The price was was ahead of its time, and in looking back at the market now, there doesn't seem to have been any vast improvement in the 2 years since we left it. I don't know whether we could have made any more of an improvement.

**AHEAD OF THEIR TIME**

"Knight Lore was finished before Sabre Wulf," Tim suddenly said. "But we decided to go the whole way and put it out there. Because if we released Knight Lore and Allen 8 — which was already half-finished — we wouldn't have sold Sabre Wulf."

"So we sold Sabre Wulf, which was a colossal success, and then released the other two. There was a little bit of careful planning in there. But they could have had Knight Lore possibly by the year earlier — we just had to sit on it because everyone else was so far behind."

Careful planning is the hallmark of the Stampers. They recognised long before anyone else that they had done everything they could with Spectrum games, and thus phased Ultimate out. But that was only one reason for the Stampers’ move: and having dropped the Knight Lore bombshell, Tim dropped another.

When Ultimate bowed out, most people in Britain had heard only the faintest murmurings about the Japan. But Chris and Tim had discovered the dedicated console through their contacts in the Japanese coin-op industry, and started planning Nintendo games about the time they were coding Lunar Jetman — 1983. We managed to get just about all the software available for the Nintendo then," said Tim. "For the price it was available for in Japan then, it had colossal potential — we looked at this and we looked at the Spectrum — and then the Spectrum was hot stuff, but this was incredible. So we spent 8 months finding everything out about this system, and then started to write on the machine."

"It was a sort of introduction process," Chris said. "We had to show Nintendo that we had the capability before they could give us the rights to go ahead and produce for their system."

And as a result of their foresight, Rare is already competing with the big names in Japan: Konami, Nintendo, Sega and Taizo. The Ultimate people could do for the Nintendo now what they did for the Spectrum 4 years ago.

**BOOMING MARKET**

"We knew a market was going to boom in Japan and America, said Tim, and we decided to go into that. Obviously, we didn't want to give too much away because we needed to develop our associations before everyone really became aware of it."

"A lot of UK companies are beginning to look overseas," Chris added, "and so we are talking to people here and there."

When asked why Rare had put so much effort into their Nintendo games, Chris explained, "We managed to get about all the best talent, without a doubt."

**POTENTIAL**

Rare has seven Nintendo products either finished (one was done 2 years ago) or nearly completed, and another four in development. They've all had to be designed with the tastes of the Japanese market firmly in mind. "There is a difference in style and there is a difference in what makes a good game for the US and Japan," muses Tim. "I think we understand now what that difference is. And our success rate proves that.

"Japanese games sell very well in America and American games sell well in Japan — and in England — but English games don't do well in America and they don't do well in Japan."

Rare hopes to be able to help programmers understand the essential differences. In fact, one reason for giving this interview was to appeal for freelance programmers and development teams to contact Rare — the Stampers’ team needs backup in producing both Nintendo games and original coin-ops. On the coin-op front, Rare has developed an extremely fast and powerful 64-colour arcade board. Called the Razz Board, it's based on the Z80 processor with a lot of hardware extras and a Yamaha synthesizer for the sound.

Another Rare idea is growing in the large mansion, where Tim hopes to construct studio lighting and paint his graphics into animated movies for viewing on computers. The price of memory is dropping, so that future could soon come.

But very few people know we're here," said Tim, "very few people know what we're doing, and I'd just like to appeal to all the people in the very large market out there and that they can take advantage of it through us."

And Chris finds it surprising that so few British programmers and software houses have seen the huge potential of the Japanese market.

"With all the talent in the UK and with all those thousands of people writing games, I think it should be UK companies producing the Number One arcade games and then everyone in the world following that — because Britain's got the best talent, without a doubt."

"I think this country's very conducive to that — it's cold, it's damp and people's sitting indoors."

There's more on Ultimate and Rare in Issue Four of CRASH's multimedia sister THE GAMES MACHINE.

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At times strongly reminiscent of Underwurlde, this is Wizards And Warriors, an original Nintendo game.
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OH! WHAT A LOVELY CONVENTION

BRENDA KAVANAGH reports on the pomp and razzamatazz of the third British PBM convention, and reviews some exciting new PBM games . . .

What a sellout! Held at the Porchester Hall, London, on the 20th February, an estimated 1200 PBMers invaded the third British PBM convention — it was busy to say the least! Many companies had stands, and there was plenty on display.

OTHER NEWS

HISTORICAL ENGINEERING are launching a new game from The Stable, the Temple, Great Western St. 4PUL on May 1st. A game is entitled WORLD WAR II where the player takes the role of a powerful wartime personality. It certainly sounds fascinating.

WAVENY GAMES (28 Diprose Road, Corte Mullen, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 3QY) have launched a simple simulation of the Stock Market entitled SPECULATE!, which should appeal to the economically minded.

MIRET GAMES (Unit 6, 9 Bredon Terrace, London, NW1 7DU) report that they've bought the role to TRIBES OF CRANE, while DIGGER GAMES have just released an impressive STREETWISE — I’ll let you know more when I can find their address!

LABORATORY have introduced MAGELORDS OF DORM (for info write to The Laboratory, 18 Ridge Nether Moor, Liden, Swindon, Wilts SN3 6NB which is a development from their previous game FURTHER INTO FANTASY. Start up is £2 and turn costs £1.50 thereafter. Worth trying.

PROJECT BASILISK (PO Box 24, Sheerness, Isle Of Sheppey, Kent) has launched a new game entitled the very simple CREEPHOUSE, and costs £4.50 for five turns.

Possibly the most interesting new game at the convention was VORCON GAMES’ (59 Juniper Birch Hill, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 4ZG) THE TIME SENTINEL. It costs £5 to start (including a few free turns) followed by a charge of £1.50 per turn. I can wholeheartedly recommend you to spend an SSAE for an information sheet if you’re interested.

HARRAW POSTAL GAMES (14 Butler Road, Stoneleigh, Middlesex HA1 4DX) used the convention to promote their excellent licensed game, THE WEAPON, their quiet but interesting game OMEGA VICTOR and to launch their new game entitled ALBION, a computer mastered fantasy game which uses human moderation for new does reactions. From reading the rulebook it seems that the players of each race must work as a team to succeed, and thus it is fairly safe to assume that this is an important part of the game. This game would suit the strategist who enjoys convincing people to play his way. It costs £5 to start up, and turn costs £2 each thereafter. Meanwhile HPG have two more games under development: VALE- IMPERATOR about German barbarians struggling against Non Player Character (NPC) Romans, and MOVING FINGER, a time warp game due for launch later this year. I look forward to it.

We’ve all heard and wonderful games before, but the brainchild of two young ladies: Amanda Kerr and Newsfield’s very own Philippa Irving. Turns cost either £1.75 (standard turn) or £2.50 (as before but with a bit more detail) so this fortnightly deadline game may be out of reach for some of you, but those interested should certainly try to find out more.

THE ALCHEMISTS GUILD also has MACEDON, a twelve-player wargame. Send an SSAE to Spellbinder for further details.

RAIDERS!

A new company on the scene was MJR GAMES (4 Higher Lidden Road, Penzance TR18 4N2), who were displaying their new game RAIDERS OF GWARAS. This is a Fantasy RPG set upon the world of Gwaras, which is divided into fifteen completely different countries — one of which you come from. There are 37 types of race (of which are humanoid), and you must also decide your character’s occupation. Character progression is achieved by developing a variety of attributes—character’s occupation. Character development seems to be a quality offering, and at £1 per turn you certainly can’t grumble. It looks like a good game (but a complex one; Spellbinder don’t recommend it for beginners) and is played on a convincing map of the world as we know it. The game has the usual features of attributes, technology levels etc and the combat and economics look fun. Send an SSAE to Spellbinder for further details.

AN AUSSIE OFFERING

SPELLBINDER GAMES are now old hands at the PBM hobby (36 Butler Road, Barking, Essex IG11 9UA) and as such have successfully negotiated with the AUSTRALIAN WIZARD to run their game WORLDS IN CONFLICT in the UK. The game is very similar in style to the TV epic V, with alien invaders and freedom fighting humans (the player can be either).

I feel that this sums up WORLDS IN CONFLICT very well indeed. It looks like a good game (but a pleasant surprise for me was to bump into Jon Woodall and Andrew Dodd of FELLOWS & CO (designers and moderators of MEGALOMANIA and ORDERS OF CHAOS). Andrew Dodd was proud to inform me that he finally had understandable info sheets for these two games — write to “Stoneleigh”, Holly Lane, Upper Ellwood, Glos GL16 7LZ. By the way, did you know that standard publication. One of the current aims of KIRKWOOD is to introduce RPG players to the world of PBM, although the content will be by no means be limited to topics encouraging this. The first issue will cost £1 and includes PBM based articles. All the same, this is a fanzine worth watching.

FANZINES

KIRKWOOD is a fanzine currently being prepared for launch from “Legend House”, 40 Green Ridges, Headington, Oxford OX3 9PL. Produced on an Apple Macintosh SE linked to a laser printer, the editor of Kirkwood hopes to use a combination of quality writing and high resolution computer graphic illustrations to create a high standard publication. One of the aims of KIRKWOOD is to introduce RPG players to the world of PBM, although the content will be by no means be limited to topics encouraging this. The first issue will cost £1 and includes PBM based articles. All the same, this is a fanzine worth watching.

DARK BLADES

As far as the companies present were concerned, the most aesthetically pleasing game on display had to be DARK BLADE by Standard Games & Publications (Arlon House, Station Road, Kings Langley, Herts WD4 8LP). What a gem — this Nagus is a twelve-player wargame. Send an SSAE to the Alchemist’s Guild for more info.
ADVENTURE TRAIL

In the wake of Derek Brewster's more down to Earth reviewing methods, CRASH has been fortunate enough to engage the talents of one Samara, a shapely being of charm, wit and intellect who, from now on, will be guiding you on your travels through the twilight world of the imagination. Take it away Sam...

GUILD OF THIEVES
Rainbird/Magnetic Scrolls, £15.95 disk only

When The Guild of Thieves was voted Game of the Year, Spectrum owners went quietly green with envy. Now at last the game has been released for the +3 and all over the country adventurers are opening their shiny blue boxes with bated breath.

Inside is a game more than likely to live up to everyone's expectations. As a burglar, complete with stripy sweat shirt and swag bag, you have applied for membership of the Kerovnian Guild of Thieves. To prove your criminal eligibility to join, the Master Thief has devised a test: explore an island and thoroughly sack it of all available treasure before returning.

The adventure begins in the Master Thief's boat. You jump confidently to the jetty and begin a survey of the expansive countryside. The numerous locations range from castle to cave and from scrub to snow-capped peak. The descriptions, even without the graphics much-praised on other formats, are extremely atmospheric; even the most commonplace objects have their own characteristics.

Exploration has some very realistic qualities: as you wander through the castle you can run your fingers casually along the piano keys or try your skill at potting the billiard balls.

The treasures are often quite easy to locate but difficult to collect. A jewel hanging from the ceiling of a cave is about to drop into a bubbling pool of quicksand; a silver chalice is inconveniently placed in the cage of a savage bear. Reckless burglars quickly come to grief!

The puzzles are often tough but at least have the virtue of being logical. The adventure is certainly more accessible than The Pawn which was occasionally open to charges of excessive obscurity. In The Guild it's sometimes the very obviousness of the solution which makes a problem difficult.

The parser is up to Magnetic Scrolls' usually high standards; as well as complex sentences it accepts FIND and SEARCH FOR commands to locate objects you may have forgotten or misplaced. The GO TO command lets you move from one location to another without typing in all the directions in between. In practice this can be quite dangerous as you can't stop the command once entered and...
the program marches you straight into whatever obstacles (for example a closed drawbridge) there may be in the way. A small quibble is the absence of a RAMSAVE command. Constantly having to disc gets a little tedious, especially in an adventure in which sudden death in the most innocent of locations is a constant possibility.

The Rainbird packaging comes with, among other goodies, a Contract of Service with the Guild of Thieves and a playing guide cleverly disguised as 'What Burglar' magazine.

This last item also acts as a combined hint sheet and program protection: several problems are listed and a series of codes printed underneath. Enter these codes and a cryptic hint (but not one that gives the whole game away) is displayed.

The Guild of Thieves easily lives up to its reputation: a well-crafted scenario, immediately accessible puzzles, and a flexible parser make this a most for the compulsive adventurer. Even at the comparatively high price, it's a steal.

OVERALL  90%
FEDERATION
CRL, £9.95

It's a good job you have a strong sense of responsibility because once again the fate of the Universe lies in your hands. As a member of the Federation's secret service you have been assigned to the case of Erra Quann, the alien scientist who hijacked the Flagship Quann Tulla in order to sell the secrets of its engine plans to the evil Tulla in order to sell the secrets to the Federation. As a member of the Federation's secret service you must find your way through the shattered hull of the flagship and solve the mystery of the Universe.

The game begins in a leaking air bubble on board your ship. Sparks are flying from the instruments and black smoke obscures everything. You can't breathe, so your first objective is to find air. Once this initial urgent task is completed you must find your way through the shattered hull of the flagship and survive long enough to continue the investigation on a distant alien planet. The adventure winds through a series of cargo bays, control domes and futuristic corridors, and the suitably atmospheric descriptions are complemented by a small selection of graphics and a visible sci-fi score display.

At first, apart from a few surly droids (which must be treated tactfully) you are alone. Objects are scattered around to help you and range in complexity from a neon weapon to a humble tube of glue. The puzzles, mostly involving the use of these objects, are challenging but not infuriatingly difficult. Sudden death is an ever-present danger but special commands include a RAMSAVE option.

The game has quite a large vocabulary and although it won't accept complex commands it does have one labour-saving feature (interestingly, one that is missing from the two highly sophisticated Magnetic Scrolls adventures reviewed this month). If, for example, you have the key to a box there's no need to go through all the rigmarole of saving UNLOCK BOX WITH RED KEY, you simply type UNLOCK BOX and the computer knows which key to use. This is particularly useful when you have to perform more involved actions with other objects (play the game to see which ones). In effect it compensates for the parser's lack of complexity and eradicates the infuriating problem of knowing what to do with an object but not knowing how to say so.

CRL's version of the sci-fi adventure doesn't break any especially original ground but within the limits it sets itself it is a compelling and highly polished game.

OVERALL 78%

LORD OF THE RINGS
IAN FLYNN can't get into Bree or cross the bridge at the end of Part one. How is it done? Well...

Knock on the hatch, give your name and wait. To cross the bridge after you have killed the riders, become Frodo.

CUSTERD'S QUEST

STUMPS

EUREKA
TONY GRIST wants to know where to find the cars.

In the same place as the boat. Search the vegetation twice.

THE BIG SLEAZE
PAOLO SILVA from Portugal wants to know how to get the aeroplane in Central Manhattan. What to ask the librarian and how to get through Central Park.

Buy the aeroplane with the word of German notes. Whisper Maltese Bullfitch to the librarian. Negotiate Central Park between 6 am and 6 pm.

KENTILLA
B MONKMAN from Hornsea asks:
1. 'In part three how do I frighten away the robbers?'
2. 'How do I make a German uniform in part four?'
HOW QUICK CAN YOU GET AT YOUR SAVINGS WITH A BARCLAYPLUS CARD?
CLANDESTINE COMMUNICATIONS

Plied by free drink, PAUL EVANS gets sociable on Micronet's new exclusive chatline

HI THERE! I'm back online with a now modem for my ST and I think it's the VTX has risen again from the dead. So It's back to normal and the long process of the (Micronet's) latest brainchild. Before I knew it I've got an operational manual, access to the system and a bottle of wine! Why wine? Well, it's common practice to have a press briefing over these matters.

Well, it's common practice to have a press briefing over these matters, and one of the 30 rooms available. If you want a general chat with anyone, you can hold private discussions in any of the 30 rooms however, are for more private chats you can hold club meetings in them, or discussions on certain topics. One definite use would be meeting of Starfall or PBM 'alliances' to plan their next move without the opposition finding out.

To use a room for, say, a conversation with a group of Spectrum enthusiasts planning to destroy some Commodore owners on Shadex, you can either hire a room for a conversation, or hire a room for a meeting. Easy! However, there is only one thing that really gets to me about it and that is the personal modem, which can be used by anyone in the room until he leaves. It someone starts causing trouble by typing MUTE (name). This person's comments will now be unheard by anyone in the room. However, if someone starts causing trouble the leader can throw them out of the room with no resistance; the leader does not have complete control over the conversation and room. So the leader can formulate a plan, go onto Shadex, and kill everyone. You should be careful.

What I have just outlined is just one of the many commands available to the TeleTalk user. You can leave messages to each other by writing MEMO's. These are stored in your 'Memobox' and can only be accessed by you.

Many adventure-style commands are available, such as INVENTORY and READ, objects. You can even type KISS (name) with success. I suspect that many commands are undocumented and are left up to the user to discover.

Other aspects of the system include the information centre. This area contains a self-teach system for first-time users, a news section and a file centre where archives are kept. I suppose there will be a large amount of gossip and amazing happenings flying about that will add to the atmosphere. We will have to wait and see.

So that's the theory, what about in practice? My first experience of TeleTalk in action was at the aforementioned press on-line briefing. Initial reactions were 'slow and confusing'; the normal scrolling service now available to Shadex users has not yet been implemented on TeleTalk, although it's promised soon, so you have to make do with Viewdata scrolling. While this is a very good piece of software, it's still a bit confusing. Sometimes things are meant to be seen by everyone, but then you type something that is only to be seen by you. This is a bit baffling.

Such a system has many uses: club meetings can carry on privately behind closed doors. It's an easy way to arrange a meeting. This can be done in a few different ways: you can leave a message on each user's mailbox to give a general message to everyone in the same room as you, or TELL (user) (message) to give someone a message that no one else can listen to. The leader can formulate a plan, go onto Shadex, and kill everyone. You should be careful.

However, what's to stop the enemy entering and starting the meeting? Easy! However, What a pity! I suppose there will be a large amount of gossip and amazing happenings flying about that will add to the atmosphere. We will have to wait and see.

That's all for this month. See you next time for the long-awaited Shades feature. Bye!
OK, so maybe using a cash dispenser machine takes marginally longer than turning the page. But not much.

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+++ YOU'RE BETTER OFF TALKING TO BARCLAYS

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SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE

The coin-op smash hit from Konami now for your home-micro. This fantastic conversion with all the original play features takes you into a thrilling alien world... negotiate force fields and take on fanatical guerillas as you infiltrate their headquarters. Split second timing and nerves of steel are a must for this fun packed program where addiction will always bring you back for more!

WORLDS APART,

Survive to become a captain through the toughest training academy. Konami's arcade blockbuster has already reached No 1 in the Gallup charts with this superb conversion for your home-micro.

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ME, MYSELF, I

REVIEWS in FRONTLINE are printed for two purposes: one, so that you the reader can enjoy a fairly full description of games that you have no intention of buying. Two, so that, having enjoyed the description, you might decide that you do want to buy the game after all. The primary function of a review magazine like CRASH is to help you get to know a game better, to make sense of all the bright little boxes on the dealer's shelf, and to choose which ones you actually want to part with money for. I also think that it helps to circulate knowledge and general awareness of the computer gaming scene to add to your enjoyment of the hobby; I always prefer reading bad reviews, but for utilitarian purposes – that is, deciding which is more useful. And it has occasionally been the case that I've bought a game on the basis of a review to be disappointed in it; it helps to know the reviewer's methods and criteria. And so, for your own information, I shall always write about what I buy.

Games are sent to me through the CRASH offices in Ludlow to my home in Oxford, sometimes weeks before I have to write the review, and sometimes days. No matter when they arrive, I try to have at least two sessions on a game. Often, if I like it, and I have a lot of spare time, I play it more extensively for the sheer enjoyment of it. If a game has extremely complex rules and lots of reading material with it I try not to be put off by the extra time that entails, and remember what a delight it would be if I'd actually paid for the game. Software which arrives with the CRASH offices in Ludlow to my home in Oxford, sometimes weeks before I have to write the review, and sometimes days. No matter when they arrive, I try to have at least two sessions on a game. Often, if I like it, and I have a lot of spare time, I play it more extensively for the sheer enjoyment of it. If a game has extremely complex rules and lots of reading material with it I try not to be put off by the extra time that entails, and remember what a delight it would be if I'd actually paid for the game. Software which arrives with instructions covering the back of an inlay has my sympathy, although I try to suppress it.

However, I do want to be forced to waste my time with a game, even if I don't enjoy having to plough through lots of salutory background material. A game which forces me to play it for only a few hours when I really only have two to spare certainly got something going for it. Some games are impossible to play for more than an hour, either because I finish them on my first attempt (that always has me pulling out the plug) or because they're desperately boring. I usually go back to the deeply boring games a day later, to see if they improve upon acquaintance (several have, quite significantly); some get played for another hour. It's much easier to write a review of a game I've played extensively and enjoyed. The most difficult reviews to write are those of games which I can see are good but which I don't like or enjoy myself. I don't entirely subscribe to the view that reviewers are necessarily a reviewer's personal opinion. I hope I can see that some games which do not appeal to me, and which I would never voluntarily play, have lots of strong and interesting qualities which readers who like that sort of thing will enjoy.

That's why my reviews are predominantly descriptive. I give my opinion very much for what it's worth, and try on the whole to let you the reader understand what sort of a game is on offer. But that doesn't mean that I don't occasionally enjoy doing a really bad review of a game that I can't stand... and I hope you enjoy reading them.

THE MORAL DILEMMA

Last year the question was raised in FRONTLINE FORUM about whether a game is of necessity a trivial thing, because games always met – though never fully obeyed – in every society, condemn murder. But it also commends bravery, when it takes the form of defending one's immediate circle from danger; and it has to be true that this overrides the killing of another person, and does not categorise it as the murder which the same code forbids. Whether individuals choose to rise above this distinction and categorise all killing as murder doesn't alter the fact that the 'loophole' in human conscience is there, and that's why it's so interesting. When people have got comfortable with the concept and indeed the idea of going to war so much for the irresolvable; the issue we're interested in is whether buying old playing wargames implies moral: the battle is in general is intrinsically wrong, or has nothing to do with the matter. Can you be an ardent pacifist and yet enjoy a game which simulates closely the experience of the battle of Waterloo under duress, it is because you are doing it as part of a school exam. If you read about it for any other reason, it is because you are interested: you mean – if you're honest – that thinking about and even imagining the battle of Waterloo is for your own enjoyment, the research historians who wrote the book presumably gained pleasure from it, too, but nobody would reasonably suggest that because people enjoy learning about, thinking about and even imagining the battle of Waterloo – a matter concerning the deaths of many men – it was because they thought playing a game was an unemotional and dull dry and factual. They reduced the experience to numbers, to a greater or lesser extent. If a particular game does not have a two-player option it is more often because of memory restrictions than any bias to one side. Even the potentially unsettling Falklands '82 was an unemotional and dull game as could be imagined.

The fact that we have a game based on the battle is merely an extension of the principle. Those who play miniature wargames often have a genuine and elaborate historical interest in the subject, and so sometimes – do those who play computer wargames. But it would surely be wrong to think that a serious, grown-up 'historical interest' would sanction something intrinsically wrong, if it were intrinsically wrong.

This holds true so long as the battle or war is a fact, which cannot be altered; and most wargames based on past wars are extremely dry and factual. They reduced the experience to numbers, to a greater or lesser extent. If a particular game does not have a two-player option it is more often because of memory restrictions than any bias to one side. Even the potentially unsettling Falklands '82 was an unemotional and dull game as could be imagined.

It seems to me that wargames start to wander into dangerous territory when they approach the idea of game, when they assume an inclination towards one side. Fantasy games irritate me in this respect, although of course they bear no relation to the real world; it is always the straight-line of mean-living humans and twisted evil ghouls from the north. On the other hand, people have as much right to write a game about a political opinion they may have as to write a book or an article about it. It is a game to simulate the act of playing a game when the game will imply acquiescence with the view, any more than reading the book or article does.

I come to the unequally concluding that playing wargames has nothing to do with agreeing or disagreeing with wars. That remains as much a separate issue from wargames as it does from books describing wars. It is merely a different way of exploring the same material.
The company which produces this game, Specsim, describes itself as 'authors of small operation' with one previous game - Carriers at Midway - to its credit. I haven't seen this game but although it only sold to a few hundred copies and enthusiasm spurred on the author to attempt a more ambitious project; one previous game - as 'an extremely small operation' - is reproduced in an inevitably shallow, or overly technical and dry manner. The mechanics of the game and technical details about the ships and their capabilities contains no summary of the battle itself. Although one can glean a fair amount of information from it, from the rest of the material in the book, this is a serious omission. The author is clearly knowledgeable on the subject; he ought to have indulged his knowledge in condensed form for the benefit of ignorant players like myself.

As far as I can gather, the battle of Jutland took place on May 31st and June 1st, 1916. The First World War that machine simulation orientated; the only game that I can think of which is a balance between the strategy of Silent Service. Dreadnoughts at Jutland is not a simulation - there are no buttons to be pressed, no controls to be set - but it certainly relies on factual accuracy, and focuses attention on the ships rather than the battle.

The player is given a choice between controlling either the British or German forces, or a two-player game. The British forces are divided into three groups - under the command of Admiral Jellicoe and Vice-Admiral Beatty - and subdivided into squadrons. The basic units of play consist of a large number of squadrons on the British side, made up of battleships, which are dealt with individually and do not have names and sets of statistics. Squadrons contain only one class of ship, for the sake of simplicity. The light cruisers and destroyers are anonymous, but the battle cruisers have names and sets of statistics. The layout on the screen shows a visual representation of the information illustrated on the on-screen diagram. There are five scenarios to choose from, even though the battle lasted for no more than a day. Three recreate particular incidents in that period, one allows you to play through something that might have happened, and one, naturally, allows you to attempt the entire confrontation. Solenm realism reaches its height in the scenario 'Night Action' which sounds almost unbearably exciting because of the very poor visibility. It might well be that there will be little or no contact or action during this scenario.

Combat takes place automatically when enemy ships are within range of each other, and it is displayed visually after the player has entered movement orders. The chances of hitting the enemy are influenced by various factors, including the visibility (which can be affected by the smoke having to fire into the setting or rising sun) and the running ability of the particular ship. Contingently, if there are no ships shown from the scene, the player is given the chance to stop the attack. Lessor ships - the light cruisers and destroyers - are either sunk or afloat. The battle cruisers, on the other hand, go through a complex damage sequence before finally sinking. Their gun turrets can be knocked out, reducing their efficiency in combat, their maximum capabilities of certain ships in the scenario. The turn sequence starts with each squadron rather than to each ship. The squadron can be ordered to move in a clockwise direction, by means of a direct bearing around the flag- ship. The maximum speed of each ship in the squadron can be decreased to the speed that can be carried up at any time, and a squadron cannot be ordered to travel faster than the flagship's maximum speed. The speed can be beyond the capabilities of certain ships in the scenario. Maximum speed is only achievable if the ship loses speed rapidly when they are damaged, and it is easy for ships to lose sight of their flagship and fall behind. Keeping a squadron together, particularly in low visibility conditions, is the most important task in the game.

The main screen is a stylised version of the ruleset which describes the 'exhaustively analysed' battle. A preliminary look at the rulebook is enough to make one realise that a full of grim technical detail, aiming at accuracy rather than playability. Games about naval battles seem to me to be either fatuous and shallow, or overly technical and machine simulation orientated; the only game that I can think of which is a balance between the strategy of Silent Service. Dreadnoughts at Jutland is not a simulation - there are no buttons to be pressed, no controls to be set - but it certainly relies on factual accuracy, and focuses attention on the ships rather than the battle.

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OVERLORD

Producer: CCS
Author: Ken Wright
Price: £9.95

This is the second game that I've reviewed in FRONTLINE which deals with the famous Normandy landings, and last year I dealt with a Commodore game in ZZAP! on exactly the same subject. It seems that the Overlord campaign, when the Allied forces swept across the north coast of France in a well planned but not often well co-ordinated effort to liberate Europe, captivated the imagination of many game designers. It was the largest amphibious assault in history, it was a turning-point of the war and means most to us today, and the dramatic nature of events means it is a perfect template for any wargame. The campaign had been in planning for over a year, and was launched with live amphibious forces - assigned to their own landing beaches - backed up by three airborne divisions. It was two members of that airborne division who first touched occupied soil, at sixteen minutes past midnight on 6th June 1944. Their plane landed so abruptly that they were both catapulted forward out of the cockpit. This first contact was rapidly followed by waves of troops flooding onto the beaches. The American divisions found themselves scattered and uncoordinated; unable to concentrate their attack force at any one point, they ended up fighting haphazardly wherever they met resistance. Ironically this disorganisation probably contributed to the success of the assault. The enemy was unprepared and confused, and was unable to discern any pattern in the landings simply because there wasn't one!

By contrast, the landing of the British 6th Airborne Division between the Orne and Dives rivers...
came off perfectly, and they achieved their preplanned objectives within minutes. This, of course, was the scenario concentrated upon in *Pegasus Bridge*. Many attempts to recreate the entire sweep of the campaign.

*Overlord* comes from Ken Wright, who now has *Waterloo*, *Yankeer and Blitzkrieg* to his credit. Whereas the first of these two games is basically a simulation of both *Blitzkrieg* and *Overlord* take a long-range overview of a whole campaign, complementing each other thematically. *Blitzkrieg* was based on the first sweep of the Axis armies into Europe, and *Overlord* on the counter-attack.

The most fundamental question about *Overlord* is whether the scale chosen is correct for this kind of campaign. The Normandy landings were tightly-packed, individualistic events, and recreating them really requires attention to detail and a degree of precision. In *Overlord*, we have divisions represented by the usual square counters bearing slightly dubious symbols to identify them. In the context of these battles, they seem large and clumsy and are, by design, almost impossible to manipulate.

The non-screen appearance of the game is identical to that of *Blitzkrieg* and indeed the author's earlier games, though there is a rather sparse map fills the screen without extraneous clutter, and all communication takes place in the small message strip at the bottom. One innovation is the reinforcement box: a panel which floats in the English Channel and allows the player easy access to the units of each of the seven armies which have not yet entered the game. The area represented is the northern coast of France, not unnaturally, but the map goes southwards for quite a bit further than *Blitzkrieg* is generally possible to move your units. The whole map is seven times larger than the one in *Blitzkrieg* (referring to the rulebook), and scrolls smoothly by means of the cursor keys.

The player has command of seven armies: five American corps, plus British and Canadian forces. The divisions are divided into infantry, mechanised and armoured units, and each corps has seven units. There are also airborne units, which are few in number and function as normal infantry when they've made their landing.

These units are defined only by a morale rating and a percentage strength. They do not even have individual designations, though which tends to make them seem bland and somewhat anonymous.

The way the movement system works makes it impossible to place them precisely, however, so a certain interchangeability is useful.

After selecting a difficulty level from one to three (the morale of your units is affected by the choice) the game begins without further preamble. Due to memory restrictions, and the large amount of the program dedicated to driving the enemy's artificial intelligence routine, there is no choice of sides or option for a two-player game.

The turn structure, as in *Blitzkrieg* is divided into a single orders phase and a watch execution phase. At the start of the game, however, all the player's units are floating in some nebulous region to the north of the map. The continent is occupied only by enemy units which, although they disappear into a fog of limited intelligence after the first turn, are clustered in full and frighteningly prolific view. The invasion must in instructed to the first turn, and to this end the first thing the player does is to 'activate' five beaches to land on from a choice of twelve. The beaches are effectively points on the northern coastline where units can be brought onto the map, and are lettered A to L. Further beaches can be activated by moving units close to them.

On the first turn only infantry units can be mobilised, and only one can land on each beach. This means that the strategic decisions possible on the first turn are limited to the choice of landing areas — not unimportant — and of the corps to be used in the first assault. On the action phase of the first turn, the chosen units are moved onto the beaches. The thing to do in the next turn is to get them off as soon as possible, so that others can be moved in. On the first turn there is also an airborne units option, if a corps with such units has been chosen for the initial assault. The airborne units form a spearhead by landing up to three squares away from one of the active beaches.

The movement orders are entered much the same way as in *Blitzkrieg*: the general line of advance of the corps is set by a central, right and left flank position; it is not possible to give orders to individual units. Combat orders are limited to a choice of three approaches: whether to advance, to delay or to attack.

Once these orders are entered, the execution phase moves the chosen units to the same advantage as one could in the author's smaller-scale games. In fact, the impossibility of positioning units precisely makes it difficult to care much about this aspect. The results of combat, instantaneously displayed, are somewhat monotonous: strength or effectiveness, is chipped off in 5% blocks. I have never seen damage greater than 20% in one combat round, although in a single combat phase a unit might suffer considerable damage from repeated attack by enemy units surrounding it.

The author lays great emphasis on the artificial intelligence driving the enemy, but the first thing this routine is called upon to simulate is confusion as the enemy dots about haphazardly in response to the unexpected invasion. But they soon rally and come streaming up to the beaches in alarmingly large and solid numbers.

Despite these negative aspects, the potential for varied development of strategy is very great and this is certainly an extremely well designed and well presented wargame. I must admit, I'm looking forward to the next offering from the same keyboard.
MATTHEW STIBBE outlines a few simple guidelines to the design of a wargame from initial scenario through to the finished article.

THE ADVENT of computers has meant that wargames can now be enjoyed without recourse to rule books or dice. Games like Desert Rats and Annals of Rome have sold as well as arcade games, indicating a real interest in wargames. The spirit of the dedicated wargamer still lurks inside those games, however; as easy as they are to play, somewhere inside the computer there are as many sets of rules as any table top game. As a result, designing a computer wargame is not as straightforward as it seems, but with an eye for accuracy and an idea of what makes a game entertaining, almost anyone can design a reasonable strategy game. In this article I hope to show how a such a game emerges from a basic idea, to become a fully-fledged computer wargame.

The first stage is to decide which historical period is to be simulated. This does not mean that wargames must be set in some school-book past, though; they can just as easily be set in some imaginary future, such as the games that simulate a hypothetical war in Europe; although a wargame is still the player against a simulated real life situation, that doesn't necessarily mean it must have a definite anchor point in reality; however, as 'What would have happened if Hitler had invaded England?' is a good starting point, 'What if Hitler had had 30,000,000 tanks?' is not, mainly because the game would be unbalanced, and partly because it would not be a good test of the player's abilities, since it has departed from an accepted reality level.

Among my favourite wargames are Eastern Front and Desert Rats, and although these are quite old now, they both provide a chance to replay history with the player in command. Perhaps the acid test of a wargame is whether the game unfolds exactly like the real historical situation if the player issues the same commands that were made at the time. There are several ways of implementing a wargame, and the next task is to decide what scale to use. In my first game – based on the Vietnam war – the smallest units that are available to the player are battalions. These small units of about 800 men were the best compromise between reality and the limits of computer power, to work out their moves, and human memory, to remember where they all are! The war itself was a series of small scale actions, and to use larger units would have completely taken away any tactical control of the war, leaving only a strategic simulator. Even so, using battalions means that there will be about 200 units in play at any one time, and to get round the problems of human memory they can be given several orders at once to be executed sequentially.

In my latest game design of a tactical level set in modern Europe, I have opted for battalion-sized units (about 30 men, or 3 vehicles) as the smallest unit to which an order can be given. Eastern Front works at a divisional level, and Desert Rats at a more detailed brigade level.

A wargame is usually displayed on a scrolling map, which shows the terrain over which a battle is being fought. Raimb's innovative UMS (Universal Military Simulator) uses a perspective map to display hills and terrain. This is excellent for small battles, but is a little limiting when trying to fit a continent on the screen; nevertheless I think it shows the way that wargames are going. I look forward to a sort of battle simulator in which the player will get a general's eye view, instead of, or as well as a map display. I always begin with a proposal, which is usually only a few sides. This has two purposes: firstly it helps me to think through what I would like to do with the game, and secondly it helps me sell the game by giving other people an idea of what the game is about. I then expand on the ideas that I have covered in the proposal in my design, which actually says how the things that I outlined in the game proposal work.

Along the way some things change, get added or dropped. For instance, my most recent game proposal for tactical combat suggested the use of tactical airpower. It was only when I had worked out that a turn should last only 15 minutes and therefore, a whole game no more than 3 hours (in game time), that I realised that it would take the length of an average game for the aeroplanes to arrive. This was the use of tactical airpower. I had three histories of the Vietnam war, from which I chose a scenario that I thought would make a good game, and I had read a lot of books about Vietnam. General military reading is also useful reading, for instance Von Clauswitz's On War is a fascinating study of military strategy. General books and magazines about military affairs are also useful reading, for instance Jane's Defence Weekly. In addition, playing board and computer wargames gives a good idea of what can be done, and what can be improved upon.

Once I had an idea of how my Vietnam game should work, I began my research properly. I had three histories of the Vietnam war, from which I derived the strategic and political elements of the game, and a huge book called The Vietnam Order of Battle which cost a small fortune but which...
lists all the units that were present in the Vietnam war. Although this information is available in other sources, it was invaluable to have all the information collated in one book. It is this sort of detailed information that is necessary when putting together a game.

Turning the available information into a working wargame requires the use of rules. These tell the computer what should happen in certain circumstances. For instance, in my game, when the US raises its commitment to the war, the government's popularity falls. The difficult thing is to work out by how much. I found that the best way of doing this is to make a mini simulation. In the case of the political elements of Vietnam, I used a spreadsheet, with columns for each year of the war, and rows for each of the variables. When I had entered the figures, I could test out various strategies and see if they were realistic. From this testing I modified the rules until I felt that I had a realistic working model.

For the resolution of combat I wrote a simple 'C' program to test the effect of various units' strengths in combat against each other. Another way is to make a mini simulation. In the case of the political elements of Vietnam, I used a spreadsheet, with columns for each year of the war, and rows for each of the variables. When I had entered the figures, I could test out various strategies and see if they were realistic. From this testing I modified the rules until I felt that I had a realistic working model.

I modified the rules until I felt that I had a realistic working model. To persuade a computer to think in terms of flanking and encirclement, it is necessary when putting together a game.

The most difficult area is that of artificial intelligence: it is very difficult to persuade a computer to think in terms of flanking and encirclement. Instead you need to give the computer a set of rules for moving that produce the same net effect. There are usually two levels in a computer's play, the first being strategic, the second tactical. Crudely speaking, in the strategic phase the computer decides which units are going where, and in the tactical, how they are going to get there. This is done looking several turns in advance. With many units in play it is hard to consider each possible move in the light of possible countermoves, as is done with chess, so a mechanism needs to be built in to consider when to advance and when to cut losses by withdrawing. These decisions also affect the decisions the computer makes at a lower level: for instance, when the assault a computer might attack enemy units, and move directly toward them. But when on the defensive, units will move away from and around enemy units wherever possible.

Another possibility is to pick a scenario where the player will always behave in certain ways and so preprogram a number of counter strategies into the computer. In Desert Rats the computer always plays very defensively with each unit moving in support of its neighbours. This successfully represents the British manoeuvres, but under computer control the Germans lack the vigour that nearly won them the Desert War. Yet another way is to respond to the player's moves as they are made during a movement phase. This is a form of cheating, and allows the player to test out various strategies and see if they were realistic. From this testing I modified the rules until I felt that I had a realistic working model.

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A simulation is, of necessity, a scaled-down version of reality. A simulation deals with general trends, not specific events; in my Vietnam game I have included a variable called 'outrages' to simulate all the different things that applied in the war, such as the atrocities and the mining of Haiphong harbour. I would have liked to include a model of North Vietnamese diplomacy and a model of the computer to respond to the player's strategy rather than predict it. In a way, a human player is handicapped because the computer can always examine the exact state of his or her forces, but the player cannot
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Armed to the teeth, the might of the meddling overlord, to return to a happy, lucky life as a B... B... Bounder.

Screen shots from various formats.
THE 1987 CRASH READERS' AWARDS

After spending many an hour sorting and compiling an absolute mountain of voting forms, CRASH proudly presents the definitive Spectrum software awards for 1987... come a very close and respectable second with 14% of the vote—sadly Melbourne House seem to have forgotten about adventure games now. US Gold popped its head in with the detective/mystery game Killed Until Dead in third place (7%).

BEST GAME

DRILLER

Incentive

M.A.D.

GAUNTLET

US Gold

No surprises here! Not only is it a favourite in the CRASH offices, but Head Over Heels also gained a 26% winning vote in this category, proving its popularity throughout the land. No one else came even close: second place went to Stormbringer with 7% and the arcade licence, Gauntlet, came third.

BEST PLATFORM GAME

AUF WIEDERSEHEN

Hewson

Exolon

Monty

Gremlin Graphics

BBBLE BOBBLE

Firebird

EXOLON

Hewson

The platform game seems to be a dying breed in 1988, but that isn’t to say we didn’t get some great ones during 1987. With a tremendous 15% Gremlin’s Auf Wiedersehen Monty just came top. Following only 2% behind was the very colourful Bubble Bobble and again coming third was, Exolon. The same 8%, no doubt.

BEST SHOOT ‘EM UP

ZYNAPS

Hewson

EXOLON

Hewson

WIZBALL

Ocean

With a combined vote of 57%, Hewson games dominated the shoot ‘em up award. When it came down to pure mindless violence Zynaps just had to come top, with 34%. Exolon—always the bridesmaid never the bride—came a notable second with 23%. While Ocean’s Wizball received 6% and third place.

BEST ARCADE

ADVENTURE

HEAD OVER HEELS

Hewson

STORMBRINGER

The adventure market was very quiet in 1987 but Rainbird still had lots to shout about when they released the highly complex and intelligent game The Pawn—so did 15% of you (don’t think they were ALL Rainbird employees). Melbourne House’s Shadows Of Mordor came a very close second with 14% of the vote. With one in five of you voting for Incentive’s Hewson masterpiece, the tremendous, attractive and playable Driller swept the board with 16% of the vote. Raffaele Cecco’s first innovative eye opener, Drillers, came top. Following only 2% behind was the Hewson game Auf Wiedersehen Monty just had to come top, with 34%. Interestingly, Top Gun received 6% and third place.

BEST SIMULATION

GUNSHIP

Microprose

COMBAT SCHOOL

Ocean

TOP GUN

Ocean

You all had your minds made up on what was going to win the Best Simulation award when you filled in the forms way back in the Christmas issue. Even though they’ve only produced two products on the Spectrum the American giants, Microprose, needed only Gunship to get almost half of the readership (43%) voting for them. Trailling way behind, but still interesting to note, came Combat School (8%) and Top Gun (5%), both from Ocean.

BEST SPORTS GAME

MATCH DAY II

Ocean

WORLD CLASS LEADERBOARD

US Gold

BOBSELEIGH

Digital Integration

Match Day II gained an amazing 62% of the vote in this little contest—thus giving no-one else a hope of winning. However, the golfing classic, World Class Leaderboard, must have appealed to all you Arnold Palmers out there, gaining 15%. After Calgary ‘88, Bobsleigh was obviously in the minds of the 5% that voted for the Digital Integration simulation.

BEST ADVENTURE

THE PAWN

Rainbird

SHADOWS OF MORDOR

Melbourne House

KILLED UNTIL DEAD

US Gold

The adventure market was very quiet in 1987 but Rainbird still had lots to shout about when they released the highly complex and intelligent game The Pawn—and so did 15% of you (don’t think they were ALL Rainbird employees). Melbourne House’s Shadows Of Mordor in third place (7%).

BEST STRATEGY GAME

VULCAN

CCS

TAI-PAN

Ocean

THE SENTINEL

Firebird Gold

I can’t say that this was much of a surprise. Vulcan has been at Number One in the Strategy Chart almost since it was first started. And with PSS now pulling out of the market (see Frontline) CCS seems to have it sewn up. Vulcan got 34% of you voting for it. Interestingly, Tair-Pan and The Sentinel came second and third, with 5% and 4% respectively—even though they weren’t reviewed in Frontline.

MOST IMAGINATIVE

GAME

DRILLER

Incentive

The adventure market was very quiet in 1987 but Rainbird still had lots to shout about when they released the highly complex and intelligent game The Pawn—and so did 15% of you (don’t think they were ALL Rainbird employees). Melbourne House’s Shadows Of Mordor in third place (7%).

BEST GRAPHICS

DRILLER

Incentive

HEAD OVER HEELS

Ocean

EXOLON

Hewson

Gaining more than twice the number of votes as Head Over Heels that unforgettable game, Driller (30%) again zoomed to the top. But as far as REAL artists go (Freescape is a graphics generation program) Bernie Drummond, who drew all the cute characters in Ocean’s extra-vaganza, must still be regarded as the Number One Spectrum artist. Exolon—The Runner-Up of 1987—gained a respectable 12% in third place.
The synthesised four-channel sounds of GOl's 58 CRASH April 1988

**Lightforce**
**Agent X II**
**Mastertronic**

The synthesised four-channel sounds of GOl's 58 CRASH April 1988

**Best Software**
**Ocean**
**Hewson**
**US Gold**

If ever there was a two horse race then this was it. Ocean and Hewson were streets ahead in 1987, with CRASH readers giving them 39% and 32% respectively. Ocean can be remembered for such hits as Top Gun, Wizball, Match Day II, Combat School and Renegade. From Hewson we had Exolon, Zynaps, Nebulus and Ranarama. The producers of many a licensed game, US Gold gained 5% in third place.

**Best Utility**
**Gilsoft**

Gilsoft's popular adventure creator got 21% of you voting for it. Two art programs, The Artist II and The Advanced Art Studio came 11% and 10% behind the winner. (Work that out if you will!!)

**Best Peripheral**
**Romantic Robot**
**Multiface**

Many a +3 tape loading problem were solved with the Multiface 3. 26% voted for the series of 3 products. The Swift Disk interface got 7% of you interested with a musically-minded 6% of you voting for RAM's Music Machine.

**Best PBM Game**
**KJC Games**

Much has been said about the moral aspects of KJC's It's A Crime but it certainly created much interest amongst the PBM fraternity with 27% of the vote. The immensely popular Shattered World was just squeezed into second place with 19% and Brendon's favourite, Megalomania from Phoenix Games, in third place with 10%.

**Most Effective Game**
**Imagine**
**Barbarian**
**Lightforce**

So the scantily clad young lady from Imagine and Maria Whittaker got you running to the shops to relieve your pockets of money! Game Over and Barbarian gained 12% and 10% of the vote. Lightforce again popped its head up with 7% in third.

**Best Game Packaging**
**Incentive**

Gunship
**Microprose**

Big boxes were certainly the order of the day for 1987. Driller, which got 21% of the vote, came complete with a novella and map model. Gunship (13%), in true American style, came with a great big mission manual and keyboard overlay. And 10% of you didn't mind lashing out 15 pounds for the lavishly packaged Starglider from Rainbird.

**Best Game Inlay**
**Imagine**

Gunship
**FTL**

My goodness that Imagine girl doesn't half get around a bit. As well as gaining an award for affecting most of you with an advert Game Over also had the Best Game Inlay. The now defunct, software company Faster Than Light featured highly with Lightforce, as did Imagine's Renegade - both with 6% apiece.

**Worst Game**
**Eastenders**
**Gilsoft**

Many a +3 tape loading problem were solved with the Multiface 3. 26% voted for the series of 3 products. The Swift Disk interface got 7% of you interested with a musically-minded 6% of you voting for RAM's Music Machine.

**Most Overhyped Game**
**Domark**
**Imagine**

It seems ironic that one of the few games that the CRASH team could not get their sweaty palms on should come top in this hated category - sorry we couldn't warn you. There were many bad games about, though - rather attracted, 6%. The hardly Super Soccer got a measly 2%.

**DRILLER**
**Incentive**

Obviously, Game Over was an amazing disappointment to you all - but Imagine did a great job in promoting it. As did Domark with The Living Daylights - they both gained 10% of the vote. Was Driller not the amazing "new dimension" it was cracked up to be? It seems not. 9% of you felt that you can go so far with promoting a new idea.

**Easiest Game**
**Bulldog**
**Ocean**

Ocean and Hewson were streets ahead in 1987, with CRASH readers giving them 39% and 32% respectively. Ocean can be remembered for such hits as Top Gun, Wizball, Match Day II, Combat School and Renegade. From Hewson we had Exolon, Zynaps, Nebulus and Ranarama. The producers of many a licensed game, US Gold gained 5% in third place.

**Most Challenging Game**
**Ocean**
**Rainbird**
**FTL**

This is the programmers' favourite category, for it is only now that they know for sure whether they got a game's playability just right. Head Over Heels gets a second award with 16%. The Sentinel follows on its heels with 17%, and then all with 8% come Renegade, Lightforce and Wizball.

**Most Accurate Crash Review**
**Incentive**
**Gilsoft**

Head Over Heels
**Ocean**

Yes, we thought so too!

**Least Accurate Crash Review**
**Imagine**
**CRL**
**Renegade**

Umm... sorry about that.
MAY THE FORCE GO WITH YOU!

You'll need it!! The reflexes and powers of a mere mortal will not be enough if you accept the challenge of these four chart topping arcade conversions, together for the first time in one package.

GAUNLET™ & THE DEEP DUNGEONS MAPS
Enter a world of monsters and mazes, follow the paths of mystery and combat, searching for food to increase your health. Monsters and legions of enemies will bar your way. However, they're not your only opponents in this quest for food, treasure and magic potions – the other players are also on the trail of the same good bounty.

ROAD RUNNER™
Cartoon's most elusive character has finally been trapped in this comic all-action extravaganza that recreates those nailbiting chases and the fast moving excitement. Overcome all the dirty tricks Wile E Coyote can throw at you with ease, agility and grace and a haughty 'Beep Beep', otherwise it's sorry, goodnight and 'Burp Burp'!

METROCROSS™
Are you the one in a million who can think in microseconds not minutes? If so Metrocross is for you. A chequered floor riddled with potholes, a barrage of obstacles that hinder your progress and no go areas that bring you to a standstill make this race against time increasingly impossible.


U.S. Gold Ltd., Units 2/3 Hollord Way, Holllord, Birmingham B6 7AX. Tel: 021 356 3388.
FAR AWAY IN A LAND WHERE TIME STOOD STILL...

...A SUDDEN ROCK-FALL THREATENS TO KILL OUR HERO

ARGHN!!

WHERE TIME STOOD STILL

GOOD LORD!

OH NO!! CANNIBALS

DANGER LOOMS EVERYWHERE!!
We can't have American words in this column! But it's too late to change the name of Infogrames's excellently-drawn Sidewalk now, because Stephen Pettitt of Maidstone has already sent these tips.

1. Find the hippie, ask where to get tickets.
2. Go to the record shop (with two arches) and ask for three tickets.
3. Find Whacka, ask about the fiver.
4. Find Snake, say 'The man with the flail sent me'.
5. Go to the record shop, say 'You ran away! any more tickets?'
6. Find the hippie, say 'What do you know about a stolen bike?'
7. Go to Germaine's house, ask the same question.
8. Go to the dead-end street, get the engine.
9. Beat up all the gang members to collect pieces of the bike.
10. Find the punk girl and ask 'What do you have for sale?'
11. As you walk past the alleys, collect more pieces.
12. When you've beaten up a gang member, always go to the bar and have a drink.
13. Once you have every piece of the bike and two Band Aid tickets, go to the phone box and tell your girlfriend that you will be with her as soon as possible.

**ATF TACTICS**

Digital Integration's ATF, reviewed last issue, was liked all round even though it missed getting a Smash. And now you can fly further with your Advanced Tactical Fighter, using these tips from Luther Arkwright of North Kelsey.

The map will always show all friendly and enemy forces, even though only one or two units are spotted by intelligence so they can be attacked. Only sea forces of either side are at sea, so a cluster of enemy ships can be easily distinguished.

Since any enemy unit within 50cm of the ATF will be spotted, a tight cluster of enemy units is a good target.

**Weaponry:** 5 units of gun ammunition is enough for almost any mission. It is possible to carry an extra Maverick instead, but it isn't worth the points lost for killing an enemy ship. The ASRAAM is of little use, and steering it also turns the ATF.

It's usually better to carry a full fuel load than to carry a full load of Maverick missiles. If a couple of enemy bases are near your starting point, the trade-off is worth it. Usually range is an advantage.

**Speed:** It's very rare for an ATF at full speed to hit the ground in Terrain Following mode. And at that speed most interceptions are from the front. It's worth slowing down for the actual attack on the target - it takes a lot of hits to destroy some targets, such as bases.

The Maverick has a range of slightly over 100km. The target has to be in front of the ATF, and the closer the target bearing is to the ATF's heading the better.

Land and sea forces are usually destroyed by one good shot; but it usually takes two or three hits to destroy tanks and communication bases. Bases are very tough targets.

Turning back to continue an attack is a slow job, so it's worth taking a slow approach to allow as many shots as possible.

**Interceptors** are a nuisance. If the terrain grid is switched off a head-on attack is a little easier to spot, but a brief burst of cannon fire and a slight turn to the left or right will usually drive off the interceptor and avoid any shots it's fired.

There are two ways of surviving an attack from the rear. The simplest is to turn away from the interceptor. If it appears on the left turn to the right. The pattern of shots will then just keep missing.

There is a distinctive pattern just before the interceptor breaks off, and you turn back toward your original course you should get a good shot at it.

A head-on unit tactic is to break across the interceptor's line of fire and then keep turning left and right till it breaks off, giving you a very close shot. This method keeps you closer to your original course but can get you shot down.

The automatic landing system has a range of about 70km. If you are not actually being attacked by interceptors or SAMs you can stop worrying about flying.

There is one hazard: badly damaged aircraft maintain height and speed when the undercarriage is lowered, so don't do it till the last moment.

The end: ATF ends when one side or another runs out of land and sea forces, or when you've lost three ATFs.

Two easy mistakes to make are not lowering the undercarriage on landing, and not noticing that there is a SAM warning.

For maximum points, save the last military unit till you've hit everything else, though be careful not to lose all your own units. Enemy interceptors do not appear to need a base to fly from, but there will be not many flying.

**GARY LINEKER'S SUPER STAR SOCCER**

Dribble, dribble, pass, GOAL, last one back over the halfway line, ten press-ups (well, that's what my games teacher says). Matthew Hickling of Bradford has some tips on Gary Lineker's Footy Game.

First select your options:
- Speed = 10 x normal
- Centre = joystick
- Coach = computer

When you start playing keep right pressed on the joystick; when you've taken the centre, dodge the opposition's players, and when you're near the goal make as if you're going down.

The goalie will dive that way and then walk into the goal with the football.

Before the opposition takes the centre, keep right pressed, and you'll take the ball off the centre forward.

Do the same as before, tackle the opposition and make the goalie dive the other way. Continue this throughout the match, but remember to go the other way after half-time.

**SHORT INVADERS**

Remember how John Morris found a hidden Fruit machine game in Ocean's Short Circuit (revealed in Issue 49)?

Well, now Stephen Pettitt of Maidstone has discovered more secret software. Follow these directions to get a Space Invaders game in Short Circuit.

From the fruit machine: r, link, load 'DROP', drop blue passcard, I, play the fruit machine till you've collected two 10 piece pieces, d, I, l, u, u, search desk, get red passcard, d, d, r, u, u, I, I, use red passcard on locked door, r, d, r, u, use 10k on desk.
It's nice to see cartographers taking notice of the art department's pleas - all the maps this issue were sent in drawn in black and white, just right. This one, for Firebird's Dark Sceptre, comes from S.Walls of Aberystwyth (Mark Caswell's home town) and wins him £30 worth of software.

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### Key: Starting Points

<table>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Assassins</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Fools</td>
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<td>R</td>
<td>Reapers</td>
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<td>UR</td>
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### Objects

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**Embellished by Marg. Helpful Hints by Good Old Ian (Smitten) Cruise! (Eggless 'Um')**
ONE NEBULUS AND YOU'RE NOBBLED!

Following on from issue 49's tips for Hewson's Nebulus, here are levels 3 to 5 from Simon and Gregory Brock of Mitcham in Surrey.

Next month: levels 6 to 8.

LEVEL 3

THE TRAP OF TRICKS

Walk left around the tower and shoot the bouncing ball. Go in the door and get onto the lift. Go up and walk right. Wait for the spinning nasty and let it knock you onto the level below. Shoot the bouncing ball and keep walking right till the end platform disappears. Go on the lift and go up.

Walk left and wait at the door. When the spinning nasty comes near you, go through the door; you should fall down on the other side. Go up on the lift, then walk left under the aliens and go up on the lift, if nothing is coming. Fall left and wait for the alien to move right and pass above you. Now walk left.

Shoot the blocks, then walk left and fall down onto the lift. Go up and through the tunnel, then immediately walk left and go through the door. Walk left and get on the lift. Go up and through the door to finish the level.

LEVEL 4

THE SLIPPERY SLIDE

Walk right, up the steps, and jump the aliens when they are down. Go on the lift and wait for the spinning alien to appear. When he does, go up and shoot the block on the right. Walk left and shoot one of the blocks; then allow yourself to be pushed back by the slippery platform and shoot the other block. (Don't press FIRE while you're walking — it makes you jump.)

Walk left and quickly climb onto the lift. Go up and through the tunnel when the spinning alien gets close. Walk left, and jump the middle platform or it will disappear. Shoot the flashing blocks on the right and fall down onto the lift. Go up, go up the steps and go into the tunnel. Wait till the eye is above you, then climb the steps and go up on the lift.

Jump left and wait for the eye to go over your head. Jump again and fall down the next gap. You should be knocked down by a platform. Try getting back to the point when you jumped the block. This time you have to fall onto the left-hand platform, and it should disappear. Go up on the lift. Walk left and jump the gaps. Jump the first eye as it moves down, then shoot the left. Jump right, back over the eye, then fall right onto the lift. Go up, jump left when the lift stops and walk under the eye. Fall onto the lift and go up.

Walk left and wait for the spinning alien to knock you onto the platform below. Climb the blocks and shoot the blocks. This time you have to fall onto the right-hand platform, and it should disappear. Go up on the lift. Walk left and jump the gaps. Jump the first eye as it moves down, then shoot the left. Jump right, back over the eye, then fall right onto the lift. Go up, jump left when the lift stops and walk under the eye. Fall onto the lift and go up. Walk left and wait for the spinning alien to knock you onto the platform below. Climb the blocks and shoot the blocks. This time you have to fall onto the right-hand platform, and it should disappear. Go up on the lift. Walk left and jump the gaps. Jump the first eye as it moves down, then shoot the left. Jump right, back over the eye, then fall right onto the lift. Go up, jump left when the lift stops and walk under the eye. Fall onto the lift and go up.

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LEVEL 5

THE BROKEN PATH

Go onto the lift to the right and go up. Walk right and stop just before the alien. When it goes up you must go left and jump over the nearest alien, then jump over the next gap; it must be pushed over by the platform. Go up, and go up the steps. The platform should disappear. Shoot the flashing blocks on your left and go up on the lift. You should be knocked down by a platform.

Try getting back to the point when you jumped the block. This time you have to fall onto the left-hand platform, and it should disappear. Go up on the lift. Walk left and jump the gaps. Jump the first eye as it moves down, then shoot the left. Jump right, back over the eye, then fall right onto the lift. Go up, jump left when the lift stops and walk under the eye. Fall onto the lift and go up. Walk left and wait for the spinning alien to knock you onto the platform below. Climb the blocks and shoot the block. This time you have to fall onto the right-hand platform, and it should disappear. Go up on the lift. Walk left and jump the gaps. Jump the first eye as it moves down, then shoot the left. Jump right, back over the eye, then fall right onto the lift. Go up, jump left when the lift stops and walk under the eye. Fall onto the lift and go up. Walk left and wait for the spinning alien to knock you onto the platform below. Climb the blocks and shoot the block. 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Last month there was a level 1 map for Ocean's Platoon, and now Stav from Sunderland has sent in these excellently-drawn maps for levels 2 and 3. Well done, Stav, these are just what the art department wants maps to look like!
When you're approaching the two of the screen, walk forwards till you're level with the other two and then stand off by killing the soldier on the far right-hand side. Come to the side of the screen, walk forwards till you're level with the other two, and then turn sideways and blast them to pieces.

The first problem which you may encounter is the three-man attack. Start off by killing the soldier on the far right-hand side, come to the side of the screen, walk forwards till you're level with the other two, and then turn sideways and blast them to pieces.

When you're approaching the two snipers perched on the end of the platform, make sure you're at the right-hand side of the screen. If a bazooka man appears when there's no chance of getting to him, you can kill him but they'll miss you. One major tip: walk up to the snipers and let them have it.

To go along with Dave's tips there's a genuine Bravestarr Hack - I don't know where it came from, but I'm sure the sender will know.

The POKE is from The Tefal Men; the tips are from Andrew Read of Ipswich and Mike 'Skippy' Dunn of Ludlow!

First move left till you see the sword, but don't collect it. Remount the saddle and fly to the new town which has now appeared. Keep walking right and you will, at the end, be attacked by a different-looking man. This is Tex Hex (boo, oh!).

Kneel down and continually fire until he disappears - I find this the best method. Fly back to the original town and enter the jail; examine and release Tex Hex. Now fly to the Hexagon, the final place on the map, and walk right till you find the flying head. Kneel down and fire, dodging and occasionally jumping, till the head is destroyed. Then you've completed the game.

There hasn't been much response to last months competition to produce a map of all the levels of Gremlin's Northstar - so instead, just try to do as many levels as you can.

This month I want you to map as many levels of Cybernoid as possible. The closing date is May 3rd and the best one will receive £30 worth of software and a Hewson sweatshirt. Four runners-up will also receive a sweatshirt. Send in your entries, along with any other POKEs, tips and maps to the usual address...
Lost and forgotten. A civilization beyond our understanding and machines beyond belief.

Ring Worlds – their purpose was simple. To locate uninhabited worlds and bleed them dry. But then something went wrong. A programming fault? Possible … but irrelevant because hundreds of Ring Worlds are converging on our Solar system devouring everything in their path.

With an entire solar-system to explore, RING WARS features superb 3D action depicted in the most detailed vectors you’ve seen.

Your squadron is scrambled and you call up NavCom to plot your attack. Your system planet chart is directed to your main display while the outside view is windowed simultaneously on-screen. Multiple targets demand cool calculation as you decide which presents the greatest threat.

Armed with an array of sophisticated intelligence gathering devices you can probe your enemy and engage. Your ultimate aim – to penetrate the RING WORLD diving deeper and deeper into its heart to deliver the killing blow. Can you escape before it kills you.

AND YOU’VE GOT TO FIGHT THEM

Ring Wars – A computer game for the Commodore 64, Spectrum, Schneider/Amstrad, IBM PC and Compatibles and soon on Amiga, Cassettes £3.95 Disk £4.95 (ST, Amiga and IBM £3.95).

All prices include P&P.
WIN A DAY OUT
AT THE
LANDROVER JUNGLE TRACK

COURTESY OF ELITE
To celebrate the release of their latest arcade conversion, Ikari Warriors, Elite have decided to offer a trio of fabulous first prizes in this great competition. Offered to three fortunate readers is a superb day out at Land Rover for some pulse-pounding driving action across their hazardous ‘jungle track’ terrain, plus a copy of the arcade conversion and a T-shirt! Thirty runners-up will each receive a copy of the game and a special T-shirt.

Are you sitting comfortably? Then all you have to do is this: we want you to design a multi-terrain vehicle. It can be something inspired by contemporary machines or some fantastic creation embellished with a wealth of customisations suitable for alien landscapes. Whichever you choose, it’ll need to be practical enough to tackle the wide scope of earthly and otherworldly terrains it might encounter. There’s only one condition of entry; you must be at least 14 years of age by the time the great day out arrives (for insurance purposes!).

Designs must be sent to us at:

CUSTOM ROVER COMPETITION,
CRASH TOWERS, PO BOX 10,
LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB.

to arrive no later than May 9th, 1988.

As ever, our expert panel of judges will decide the winners on merit of design rather than simply on artistic talent – remember, it’s the thought that counts!
INTER GALACTIC HAVOC! A METEORIC MAD HOUSE! IT'S SPACE AGE....

BEDLAM

INTER

A METEORIC MAD HOUSE! IT'S SPACE AGE....

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SPECTRUM 128
£8.99 Not 48K Compatible
AMSTRAD
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£14.99 Disk
PC £19.99

Will you endure the X12 Fighter Simulator and emerge an ice cool space fighter at the pinnacle of his powers or like many more will you be reduced to a nervous, gibbering wreck fit for no more than intergalactic tinpot trading ships. Only the premier cadets of the Stellar Imperium's pilot academy will ever find out and its upto merciless instructors to ensure that only the elite survive.

It's space age frenzy... It's interstellar turmoil... It's Bedlam!
JON BATES expounds on the MIDI implementation charts, the maternal side of the family, and recommends a little bedtime reading.

The owner's manual of the synth is a key to your choice for guidance about the MIDI codes. Ho, Ho, Ho. I expect Sinclair had a few more good jokes up their sleeves, since to most people these codes are about as clear as swampwater. Well never mind. I'll try to be as accurate and useful as possible.

Gather round all synth and interface owners and see what these charts mean. Fortunately, all MIDI implementation charts follow the same format and should be a familiar sight to many people. By flipping through the chart you should have a fairly good idea of what your synth module or drum machine can send and receive. Having got this far there may well be other charts in the manual or obtainable from the makers which will enlighten the darker corners of the protocol, but more of that later. Let's look at a basic chart and see what it all means.

The following is a chart from my multi-keyboard called an HS6 which I have found to be a wonderful mother to me - another keyboard that is.

Taking it from the top, there are four vertical columns: function, transmitted, received, recognized, and remarks. All pretty self-explanatory, so on with the first note-value section.

**BASIC CHANNEL:**

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<td>System Common</td>
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<tr>
<td>System Real Time</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Aux Messages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
- The 0-127 range of note numbers are the numbers that change the pitch of the instrument.
- *Message* is the true range of pitch bend.
- The 12 semi-tones or 7-bit resolution means that it requires 7 bits of information for each of its 16,383 miniscule graduations. The HS will effectively bend up or down to an interval of 12 semi-tones or half an octave. This may be a trifle confusing but any alteration to pitch bend range is done by the setting for that voice; to get two synthesizers to bend in unison requires that both pitch bend parameters are set the same.

**PROGRAM CHANGE:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Change</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>System Exclusive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System Common</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>System Real Time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aux Messages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTICE:**

These numbers change the voices on one synth in parallel to another. They must be recognized by the receiving synth in order to be heard.

**VELOCITY:**

Shows the note value that can be transmitted and received on each MIDI channel. 1 to 127 is the full MIDI value range of 1 to 127. 0 is in effect a note-off command. A note can be transmitted and received on any number of MIDI channels, meaning that it can receive and transmit on any channel from 1 to 16 and that it memorises the last channels it has been on.

**CHANNEL 16:**

This is the control channel. It's function is to send and receive control messages. The HS6 is only capable of receiving and transmitting on channels 1 to 16 for both transmitted and received with the remarks 'memorized'. This means that it can receive and transmit on any channel from 1 to 16 and that it memorises the last channels it was set to. Continuing, the HS will receive channel 15 but only play its percussion on it. By way of explanation here, the instrument has a set of sampled, velocity-sensing drums but it will only recognise input patterns: it will not recognize input patterns regarding the percussion out to another drum machine.

**MODE:**

The HS is only capable of setting one mode at a time, the most usual of modes. A quick glance at the chart shows us that this mode is polyphonic. As this is the only mode the HS6 will respond to, 'Messages' are defined to mean that when it receives a request for an unavailable mode it will not respond.

**NOTE NUMBER:**

This lists the transmitted and received pitch range of the instrument. In this case for each keyboard area. As is often the case it will transmit less notes than it is capable of receiving. When given a note number outside of their range, many synthesizers will transpose it to a number inside the range producing a new transposition effect; this is often referred to in the remarks.

**FOOT PEDAL AND BREATH CONTROLS:**

Volume has only recently been used as a control change whereas expression pedal in this case.

**CTRL CHANGE:**

A list of the peripherals that can receive and transmit control information, like modulation or volume (expression pedal in this case.) Volume has only recently been used as a control change whereas sustain is quite common.
The PRS is spread between user and factory presets. Most synths now have an addition to user and factory presets. Most numbers can be renumbered internally. To blend the voices of numbers to ones that will suit.

**SYSTEM EXCLUSIVE**: The interesting part. This is the section of MIDI code that allows manufacturers to set up their own code; it is not enough to enter the system's exclusive code on its own. Most manufacturers require not only their own ID but usually at least one or two sub-status numbers. It is here that voice dumps take place, drum patterns are dumped, etc. All aspects that are particular to that device and that manufacturer are loaded into the exclusive code.

At this point you would need to refer to an exclusive message code list to access different areas and it often requires several commands to alter specific peripherals.

**SYSTEM COMMON**: Information common throughout all MIDI systems and not exclusive to one manufacturer: 'Song Pos' and 'Song Set' are usually found on sequencers or drum machines. It means that if you were to start recording half way through a complex piece the drum machine will pick up its chain of patterns at the correct point and you don't have to start from the beginning every time to get the sequence of events correct. 'Song' will ask a drum machine or sequencer to load a specific song pattern from its memory, responding to a number from 1 to 128. 'Tune' is often used but it tells every instrument in the chain to make sure it is in tune.

**SYSTEMS REAL TIME**: These are all short and simple. The clock is a regular pulse that is inserted in every quarter note. It tells every instrument in the chain how to respond to a number from 1 to 128. A clock pulse is sent to a number that is particular to that device and that manufacturer are loaded into the exclusive code. At this point you would need to refer to an exclusive message code list to access different areas and it often requires several commands to alter specific peripherals.

**AUX MESSAGES**: 'Local on/off' tunes the keyboard for a synth off or on, derived from the idea that the keyboard is the local controller as opposed to a remote one.

'All notes off' is usually sent at appropriate points in transmission by sequencers to ensure that there are no notes left hanging.

'Able Sense' is a fail safe against instruments becoming unplugged accidentally. If an instrument does not receive any message within 300 milliseconds it stops playing. This will avoid transmission of noises in large set-ups and provides a neat way of circuit testing in any set-up.

'Reset' does just what it says: it returns an instrument to a born-again state complete with the factory set voices.

So there we are: chaps, instant erudition. If you wish to follow the subject up there are quite a few books out now on the subject varying in price and complexity, but you might like to try.

**MIDI for Musicians**: (£9.95) by Craig Anderton. Published by Music Sales. Understanding MIDI: (£6.95) Published by Music Sales. Music Through MIDI: (£17.95) by Craig Anderton. Published by Music Sales. The MIDI Resource Book: (£3.95) by Steve de Furia. Published by IMP.

Full reviews of these publications will pop up in later issues. In the meantime I have a stack of letters and queries to get through and the next issue will see the results of a little midnight oil-burning on these. All welcome, as per usual, and subject to the usual conditions.

---

**LOADED QUESTIONS**

**SIMON N GOODWIN**

**gives the definitive run-down on Spectrum storage techniques:**

**cassettes, cartridges, wafers and disks**

The Spectrum has a cassette storage system that is remarkably reliable by micro standards, but still slow and inconvenient compared with more expensive systems. This article considers the pros and cons of cassette filing, and compares the alternatives.

Audio cassettes were not designed to store data, so the computer has to turn numbers in memory into sequences of tones, so that they can be recorded on tape. Each character starts with a long, continuous tone. A tape recording circuitry written on but any data is recorded. Normally it doesn't matter if you start recording in the middle of this tone, but you mustn't miss it completely.

After the long tone comes 17 bytes of header data, holding the file name, type, length and other information needed to make sure that the body of the file ends up in the right place. Then comes a shorter tone, a pulse to distinguish the next block from a header, and as many data bytes as the header indicated.

The Spectrum writes files of three different types: PROGRAMS, CODE and DATA. Programmers can invent other file types, but most use schemes similar to the standard ones.

A PROGRAM file contains program lines and variable values, in the internal 'tokenised' form in which the computer stores them. You can specify a line number for loads prior to the headerless file in order to find the exact machine code instructions that load it, so you can tell how long it is or where it should go.

The principle of storing data as tones is very flexible: the higher the pitch of the tone the more data you can store on tape, since higher pitches means faster pulses, normal recordings contains around 200 bytes a second.

So called 'hyperload' or 'turbo' cassette routines use non-
standard tones to save and load 50% faster than normal, or even faster. This means they load more quickly and are harder to copy, both for the manufacturers as well as would-be pirates! There's a program to compare checksums called TURBO tape routines on the Crash Tech Tape.

The TURBO tape routines on the Crash Tech Tape can adjust in the hope of solving the problem. This makes it possible to save vital files twice, on different tapes, and use the VERIFY command to test that they can be read after you've saved them.

If the original recording was usable there's no way you can tweak a computer to reload correctly. It's therefore a good idea to save vital files twice, on different tapes, and use the VERIFY command to test that they can be read after you've saved them.

Verify works like LOAD but it just compares the numbers read from tape with the values in memory. The message 'verify fail' indicates a mismatch. You should VERIFY immediately after saving important files but don't change the disk unless you value the program between the SAVE and the VERIFY, or you're sure to cause a mismatch.

One of the problems with saving and reloading screens is that the name of the file is normally displayed at the start of a VERIFY action, and that changes the display so that the check is sure to fail.

If you're using a standard Spectrum without add-ons, you can disable the message in 48K environments by leaving POKE 39694,191 before you VERIFY. This POKE doesn't work if you're using programs that load in microdrive map area (like HiSoft BASIC) or if you've got a disk on screen connected; the correct address to POKE is two bytes into BASIC's CHANS area, and some utilities may use that area.

GET SET

Normally the Spectrum is very tolerant of fluctuations in level. The best bet is to set your tape recorder to a point where replay is loud, but not distorted. If the output from a speaker or earphone socket is very loud, the angle of the tape head to the tape can sometimes reduce back-ground interference in the TV sound by putting a switch in the red wire, turn the switch off (unless you're using the internal drive) and you may find that the sound is clearer.

The blue wire carries the EAR signal, and should go to the tip of a plug connected to the EAR socket on an external tape recorder.

BAD LOADS

If you have trouble loading a cassette there are three things you can check to see if the original recording is faulty. Check the recording by playing it on a machine at the start of a VERIFY action, and that changes the display so that the check is sure to fail.

If you find that your own tapes load fine, but you often have trouble with commercial tapes, the azimuth setting of your machine may be wrong. Beware: any correction may stop the tapes from playing at all, so it may not load worthly.

+2 TAPE

The Spectrum +2 is often supplied with the tape head incorrectly set up. You can adjust the alignment by pressing PLAY and turning the screw that can be seen through a little hole between the tape controls and the cassette door. If the machine is new, don't fiddle with the screw yourself - get it adjusted under guarantee.

If you can connect an external tape recorder to the +2, even though it has no appropriate sockets, you can copy files from the machine to add the extra wire, so again you should leave it alone unless you don't care about the guarantee. Disconnect everything, then undo the screws in the base of the computer. Five wires connect the cassette drive to the circuit board; the red and black ones convey power to the drive, and you can sometimes reduce back-ground interference in the TV sound by putting a switch in the red wire, turn the switch off (unless you're using the internal drive) and you may find that the sound is clearer.

The blue wire carries the EAR signal, and should go to the tip of a plug connected to the EAR socket on an external tape recorder.

Yes TUB will back up most of your TAPE based software, including most of the recent prony loaders and those programs with a counter – converts for reliable loading. Can measure speed of faster loaders, manages 100% accurately many blocks over 5K, etc. Unrivalled. On tape at £7.50.

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A complete software package (includes TUB) to transfer hundreds of programs to your drive – manages same that hardware devices can not reach. Jerky and counter loaders disabled, easy to use, drives, drive to tape, it has to many features and is unique. YOU MUST HAVE THIS PROGRAM IF YOU HAVE A M/DRIVE! £13.99 on m/drive cartridge.

M/DRIVE OWNERS – MICROMATE

The only complete package for minor events, and complete for itself! These are just some features: Format (up to approx 104k), Clone, sector editor, recordings cartridges, repairs and gives condition of files, boot program, multiple ERASE, rename, CAR Copies tape to the unsecured. Drives, drive to drive, it has to many features and is unique. YOU MUST HAVE THIS PROGRAM IF YOU HAVE A M/DRIVE! £13.99 on m/drive cartridge.

CODE COMPRESSOR, Z80 TOOLKIT

Code compressor – compresses machine code – many uses, but ideal with hardware devices that don't compress code. Only £4.50, Z80 Toolkit – An superb assembler (full screen editor), fast class assembler, single step to see how mic works, loader, hardware toggles, tutorial – ideal for ALL particularly beginners. Only £2.50, STATE TYPE OF SPECTRUM + drive system when ordering. E.g PLUS 3 or 128K with Opus. M/drive cartridges £1.75 each (min 4).

ALL PROGRAMS CARRY OUR MONEY BACK GUARANTEE (not updates – phone for prices of these). All prices inclusive except add £1 Europe, £2 others. EAE for full details.

LERN DEPT CR 11 BEANGIELD CLOSE, WHITELY BAY, NE32 3UK (Tel. 081-2533625)
Be sure to unplug this when trying to use the built-in drive. The white wire goes to the tip of the external MIC plug. The brown wire is the signal earth, which should be connected to the shaft of both jack plugs.

**+3 TAPE**

The +3 breaks with convention by using a stereo connector for both loading and saving, rather than two separate sockets. A stereo plug — such as a mini headphone plug — has an extra ring of metal, insulated from the tip and the shaft; the shaft is the earth, as usual. The ring carries signals into the computer (from EAR) and the tip carries them out (to MIC).

**ALTERNATIVES**

There are two main alternatives to cassette recordings of data. Either you can opt for a continuous loop of tape, or a disk of magnetic material.

The tape loop approach is cheap but now unpopular — the drive is simple, as it only needs to move the tape at a steady speed in one direction, but access to data is slow because the entire loop must pass the head before you can be sure of loading any particular part. Tape loops tend to be expensive, and the larger their capacity the slower they work.

Two types of tape loop drive have been popular on the Spectrum: Sinclair’s own microdrives, which can store 65K of data on a thin copper spring at the front, and Rotronics Wafadrives, which record more slowly on larger tape cartridges, available in 16K, 32K and 64K lengths. Both are out of production, but still available.

Microdrives are a better bet when they work; they give a theoretical maximum access time of seven seconds, and can load 48K in four or five seconds on a good day. There are quite a few utility programs around that let you use microdrive files, but the drives are often extremely unreliable. Microdrive tapes sell for between £1.50 and £2.00. There’s no shortage of them, as ICL and British Telecom use them as well as Spectrum and QL owners.

Microdrive royalties are one of the main sources of revenue for what’s left of Sinclair Research — the firm that was left with little more than debts when Sir Clive sold his computer designs to Amstrad.

When buying tapes check that they have the words ‘Regd Design App’ printed on the part that plugs into the drive. Some tapes produced in the early days did not have this message, and tended to have loose plastic floating around inside the cartridge, which led to reliability problems.

Middle period tapes had a very thin copper spring at the front, pressing the tape against the head. These could work loose and cause more trouble. Modern production has a much fatter and more sturdy spring. Shop carefully, as all three sorts are still available.

Microdrives need an interface called Interface 1, which can cope with up to eight drives but only runs one at a time. Interface 1 also provides a simple network link, allowing several computers to share information, and includes a rather peculiar serial printer port.

The Rotronics Wafadrive is an all-in-one unit, containing two tape drives, plus serial and parallel printer ports. Wafadrive mechanisms are well engineered and have been dirt cheap since the manufacturers went bust, but the tapes, or ‘wafas’, are slow, hard to obtain and costly. The sole blank wafa manufacturer, based in the USA, has announced that prices will double this year — and 64K wafas already cost an extortionate £4 a throw.

A few good programs have been converted to work with the Wafadrive, but in general it is incompatible with most software: the drive grabs certain areas of memory and won’t let programs use them. I wrote a full discussion of the quirks of the Wafadrive in the Christmas Special. In brief, avoid it if you want to use a wide range of commercial software.

**DISKS**

Disks work much like tapes, but record information in a series of
This requires marking up into sec-
centric rings. The disk turns at
about 300 RPM and a magnetic
head can B ASIC and out to read or
write data in any ring, or "track", so
you can find any part within a sec-
oncassette files you can use. Most
disks must be "formatted". This
requires marking up into sections
so that files can be kept sepa-
rate.

Amstrad's +3 uses cheap
Hitachi drives that can only read
and write 40 tracks on one side of
the disk; you can take the disk out
and turn it over to use the other
side. The drives use unfashionable
3-track technology, but it is
cheaper.

The +3 disk system is slow
compared with other disk drives,
but it is not as clever or flex-
able as the ones in the Plus D or the
Swiftdisc. However, charge £12 extra for a
"microdrive emulator" that pro-
vides this perfect compatibility. The Swift Disk is also the only add-on
disk system that works with microdrives plugged in at the
same time.

The Discipile was designed by Miles Gordon but sold by Rockport Products. It is the Plus D's big
brother and the interface alone sells for around £90. Besides most of the Plus D features it has, through port, two joystick ports and connections for a network that allows several computers to share disks and printers. There have been a number of problems with the build-in software in the Discipile. so you should get the latest
version you can: versions 3B or 3C have been recommended to me. The Discipile was reviewed by

**THE CRASH TECH TAPE**

Don't forget that the Crash Tech
Tape is still available, and includes
loads of helpful and useful routines
aimed at anyone interested in the Spectrum's technicalities.

Side one of the tape contains
ZIP2, a BASiC compiler and a
BASIC game to show off its
capabilities. There's a turbo tape
loader, and a BASIC program pro-
tection analysis routine. A sample
multi-tasking program allows
three 16K programs to run simul-
taneously in 48K, and a new
character set (as seen on TV). For
users of the Serial 8056 printer,
there's also a machine code COPY
command.

For the musically-minded, side
two features a real-time sound
effects editor, a sample converter
to exchange samples between
Chestan's SpecDrum and the
RAM Music Machine, a SpecDrum
sound editor and four new Spec-
drum sounds including a new
snare drum and an 'orchestral
thump'.

Franco Frey in Crash issue 38.
"Serious" users often buy disk
systems, so it's important that file-
handling utility programs are com-
patible, as well as games that just
load and ignore the disk thereafter.
Some good utilities are specially
produced or adapted for the Discipile
and Plus D, and many but not all
microdrive programs will work with
the MGT interfaces.

Next month Simon N Goodwin
examines the pros and cons of the
forthcoming CPI/M and BASIC lan-
guages for the +3.

Disk system contact addresses:
Miles Gordon Technology: Unit
4, Chesterton Mills, French's
Road, Cambridge CB4 3NP. Tel
0223 311665.
Sixword Ltd: 26 Church Road,
Warsash, Southampton, Hants
SO3 6DN. New Tel 0243 771689
Rockport Products: 81 Church
Road, London NW4 4DP. Tel 01
203 6143

Please send me a CRASH Tech Tape.
I enclose a cheque or postal order for £5.95 (£7.95 if my address
is outside the mainland UK) made payable to NEWSFIELD LTD, or
I am paying by VISA or Access with the special form below.

NAME

ADDRESS

POSTCODE

DEBIT MY VISA/ACCESS ACCOUNT £

EXPIRY DATE

(Can be used as applicable)

CARDHOLDER'S ADDRESS (if different from above)

ADDRESS

POSTCODE

SEND THIS FORM AND YOUR PAYMENT TO: TECH
TAPE, CRASH, PO BOX 20, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB

Tel 01 203 6143
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Only one can find out, only one has the necessary powers. That one is you... a unique being on a mission to rescue a unique project.

Spectrum 48K £7.99 Cassette
Amstrad £9.99 Cassette £14.99 Disk
Atari ST £19.99 Disk
CBM 64/128 £9.99 Cassette £14.99 Disk

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“FROM OUT OF THIS WORLD...”

TO THE FIGHT FOR THIS WORLD!”

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Amstrad £9.99 Cassette £14.99 Disk
MSX £7.99 Cassette

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**CRASHTIONNAIRE**

**WE HAVE WAYS OF MAKING YOU TALK!**

It's that time of year again when we ask loads of questions and find out what you like and don't like. Some questions may seem quite nosy, but they all go to help us shape the magazine the way YOU want.

So, please fill out this form to the best of your ability, and send it (or a photocopy if you don't want to cut up your CRASH) to CRASHTIONNAIRE, CRASH Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1AQ to arrive here before May 9th 1988.

The first form drawn out of Mailbag after this date earns the sender £50 worth of software of his or her choice, plus a CRASH cap and T-Shirt. The next four forms drawn earn their senders £20 worth of software, plus a cap and T-Shirt.

---

### THE BASIC STUFF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>ARE YOU</strong></th>
<th><strong>MALE</strong></th>
<th><strong>FEMALE</strong></th>
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<tr>
<th><strong>HOW OLD ARE YOU?</strong></th>
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<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>ARE YOU...</strong></th>
<th><strong>At school</strong></th>
<th><strong>At College/University</strong></th>
<th><strong>Working Full Time</strong></th>
<th><strong>Working Part Time</strong></th>
<th><strong>Unemployed</strong></th>
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<tr>
<th><strong>MONEY MATTERS</strong></th>
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<tr>
<th><strong>ON AVERAGE, HOW MUCH DO YOU SPEND ON COMPUTER GAMES EVERY WEEK?</strong></th>
<th>£2-£5</th>
<th>£6-£10</th>
<th>£11-£20</th>
<th>More Than £20</th>
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<tr>
<th><strong>HAVE YOU PURCHASED A UTILITY IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS?</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>YES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>DO YOU INTEND TO PURCHASE A PERIPHERAL IN THE NEXT SIX MONTHS?</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>YES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>DO YOU INTEND TO PURCHASE A PERIPHERAL OR GAMES CONSOLE IN THE NEXT SIX MONTHS?</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>YES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>WHAT IS THE MAJOR INFLUENCE ON YOUR DECISION TO BUY A COMPUTER GAME (PLEASE INDICATE IN ORDER OF PRIORITY 1-6)?</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friend's Recommendation</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>ARE YOU WELL READ?</strong></th>
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<tr>
<th><strong>WHEN DID YOU FIRST BUY CRASH?</strong></th>
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<tr>
<th><strong>HOW MANY ISSUES HAVE YOU BOUGHT SINCE THEN?</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ALL</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>ON AVERAGE, HOW MANY OTHER PEOPLE READ YOUR COPY OF CRASH?</strong></th>
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<tr>
<th><strong>HOW DO YOU GET CRASH?</strong></th>
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### THE BASIC STUFF

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<tr>
<th><strong>WHICH OTHER MAGAZINES DO YOU BUY/READ?</strong></th>
<th><strong>IN THE CORRESPONDING COLUMN, IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE (1, 2, ETC), PLEASE MARK THE MAGAZINES YOU BUY REGULARLY PLUS THOSE YOU READ BUT DO NOT PURCHASE YOURSELF.</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BUY READ</strong></td>
<td><strong>AGE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>WHAT TYPE OF GAME DO YOU ENJOY PLAYING (IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE 1-6)?</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Adventures</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>IN GENERAL...</strong></th>
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<tr>
<th><strong>PLEASE AWARD MARKS OUT OF TEN FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING FEATURES IN CRASH.</strong></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adventure Trail</td>
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CRASH April 1988 77
SOFTWARE COVERAGE

PLEASE RATE CRASH'S COVERAGE OF SOFTWARE OUT OF TEN

News

Previews

Reviews

REVIEWS

ARE THE REVIEWS DETAILED ENOUGH?
YES
NO

ARE THE REVIEWS LONG ENOUGH?
YES
NO

ARE THERE ENOUGH SCREEN SHOTS?
YES
NO

ARE THE COMMENTS DETAILED ENOUGH?
YES
NO

HOW OFTEN DO YOU AGREE WITH RATINGS?
Always
More Often Than Not
Occasionally
Rarely
Never

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THE RATINGS SYSTEM CHANGED OR IMPROVED?
YES
NO

DO YOU USE CRASH AS A SOURCE OF REFERENCE WHEN BUYING SOFTWARE?
Always
Sometimes
Never

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE STANDARD OF CRASH'S COVERS?
Great
OK
Rubbish

IS THERE ANYTHING YOU'D LIKE TO SEE IN CRASH, OR IS THERE SOMETHING WHICH YOU FIND PARTICULARLY AGRRESSIVELY CONSTRUCTIVE COMMENTS PLEASE...

WHICH PRODUCTS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE INCLUDED IN THE CRASH HYPERMARKET? (THESE NEED NOT BE COMPUTER RELATED)

OTHER STUFF

WHAT IS YOUR WEEKLY INCOME?
Up to £5
£5 to £10
£10 to £30

£30 to £100
£100 to £200
£200 plus

WHERE DO YOU BUY MOST OF YOUR CLOTHES?
Large Retail Chains (Woolworth etc)
High Street Fashion Shops (Next, Top Man etc)
Specialist Fashion Shops
Other (Please specify)

DO YOU HAVE ACCESS TO A RECORD, CASSETTE OR CD PLAYER?
YES
NO

ON AVERAGE, HOW MANY SINGLES DO YOU BUY A MONTH

ON AVERAGE, HOW MANY LP RECORDS DO YOU BUY A MONTH

ON AVERAGE, HOW MANY CASSETTES DO YOU BUY A MONTH

ON AVERAGE, HOW MANY CDS DO YOU BUY A MONTH

HOW OFTEN DO YOU BUY CANNED DRINKS?
More than once a day
Once a day
Every other day
More than once a week
Once a week
Less than once a fortnight
Never

HOW OFTEN DO YOU BUY CRISPS, SWEETS AND PEANUTS?
More than once a day
Once a day
Every other day
More than once a week
Once a week
Less than once a fortnight
Never

HOW OFTEN DO YOU GO TO THE CINEMA?
Once a week
Every other week
Once a month
Every other month
Less than twice a year
Never

WHAT WERE THE LAST TWO FILMS YOU SAW?

WHAT TYPES OF BOOKS DO YOU BUY?
Horror/Fantasy
General Fiction
Film and TV tie-ins
Computer
Thrillers/detective
Historical
War
Romantic
Sci-fi
Humorous
Non-fiction

HAVE YOU ANY OTHER HOBBIES APART FROM PLAYING COMPUTER GAMES?
YES
NO

IF YES, explain further

DO YOU PARTICIPATE IN SPORT?
YES
NO

If YES, list your three favourite sports

DO YOU HAVE ACCESS TO A VIDEO RECORDER?
YES
NO

IF YES, HOW OFTEN DO YOU HIRE PRE-RECORDED TAPES?
Once a week or more
Once a week
Once a fortnight
Once a month
Less than once a month

HOW OFTEN DO YOU BUY PRE-RECORDED TAPES?
Once a week or more
Once a week
Once a fortnight
Once a month
Less than once a month

DO YOU HAVE A BANK ACCOUNT?
YES
NO

IF YES, PLEASE STATE BANK AND TYPE OF ACCOUNT (DEPOSIT, CURRENT ETC)

DO YOU HAVE A BUILDING SOCIETY ACCOUNT?
YES
NO

IF YES, PLEASE STATE BUILDING SOCIETY AND TYPE OF ACCOUNT (DEPOSIT, CURRENT ETC)

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING TAKEAWAY FAST-FOOD CHAINS DO YOU PREFER (MARK 1-6)?
Macdonalds
Wimpy
Kentucky Fried Chicken
Pizzaland
Pizza Hut
Local Fish and Chip Shop
Other (please specify)

WHICH TV STATION DO YOU WATCH THE MOST?
BBC 1
BBC 2
ITV
Channel 4
Satellite

HOW MANY HOURS DO YOU SPEND WATCHING TV PER DAY?
Up to one
One to three
Three to five
Five or more

WHICH RADIO STATION DO YOU LISTEN TO?
Radio 1
Independent commercial
Local BBC
Radio Luxembourg
Pirate

NAME
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POSTCODE

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YES
NO
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MORE ACTION AND EXCITEMENT THAN HUMANLY POSSIBLE!
MIKE DUNN has decided to hang up his beret and brush for a mortar board and calculator, and is busy studying to be a nuclear brain geologist or something. From now on, MARK CASWELL will be introducing your Spectrum SCREENS, and so, without further ado . . .

8 STOP statement, 30:1

As this is the Chinese year of the Dragon, I thought it would be nice to add this colourful screen piccy, courtesy of Jason Scott from Lancaster.

Bridge of Spies

A musical interlude now from the maestro of the computer screen, Matthew Arnold from Newport Pagnell in Bucks. After impressing everyone with his excellent Communards picture a couple of issues back, he doth return with another album cover piccy, this time from Bridge of Spies by T’pau.

Well, that just about wraps it up for this month. Don’t forget to include with your tape/disk a list of software that you’d like if your screen gets printed. Remember the new software prize? It’s £40 worth of software for the best entry, and £10 worth for everyone else featured. And if you don’t want me to keep your entries, you must send an SAE!

Keep your ego happy and your software collection bulging: send your screen dumps to MARK CASWELL, ON THE SCREEN, CRASH, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.

Meat is Murder says Gary Levitt from Walthamstow in London, echoing the thoughts of Morrissey and the gang.

Here’s one dude I wouldn’t like to meet on a dark night: Night Wolf, by Simon George of Oxford.

Kevin Willcocks, from my old stamping ground of Sunbury on Thames, freely admits that his picture entitled Freddy, was inspired by the Freddy’s Revenge picture in issue 48. By the way, the short passage in the top right corner of the screen is shown at the beginning of the film, so there.
Looking for an Old Angle

From Ultimate's classics to the cute and quirky Head Over Heels, we've had our arcade adventures in the strange 3-D of isometric perspective.

But, says WILL BROOKER, some of those first tentative steps in the new dimension work better than today's glossy games.

WAY, way back when Hungry Horace was still a national hero, 3D Ant Attack sneaked out under the Quicksilva label. Its Softsolid graphics of the walled desert city Antescher were hailed as astounding, and 3D Ant Attack wedged itself firmly into Spectrum history as the first game with truly three-dimensional views.

The next isometric blockbuster was Vortex's Android 2, released in the spring of 1984. In gameplay it's just a 3-D version of the old arcade game Berserk, but the graphics (which CRASH gave 96%) brought it up to this magazine's Game Of The Month standard.

Programmer Costa Panayi followed this up with the impressive TLL – a fighter-plane simulation with a carefully worked-out dynamic playing area. There's not a lot of game behind it, but the flying is enough.

The Softsolid technique was soon followed by the first 3-D "adventure movie" – Hewson Consultants' The Legend Of Avalon. Its adventure element is a bit dubious, and the term 'arcade adventure' would be disputed for years after its release, but the game was a great success with its colourful, pseudoisometric graphics.

In 1985 the spate of high-quality isometric games continued: Ultimate's classic Knight Lore was followed by another Vortex game, Highway Encounter, and the next technical advance was Filmation 2. An Ultimate invention, this allows graphics of Knight Lore's quality to be scrolled smoothly over a large playing area. Filmation 2 was used for Ultimate's Nightshade, but was soon knocked into a cocked hat by The Edge's Fairlight.

Even back in the golden year of 1986 there were unimaginative clones which sometimes threatened to swamp all the review pages with their identical, and by then extremely boring, isometric screens. But some games brought a breath of fresh air to the already tired genre: the humorous Sweevo's World from Gargoyle Games, Ocean's surprise hit M.O.V.I.E., and Hewson's Quazatron. A Spectrum version of the Commodore 64 hit Paradroid, Quazatron amazed everyone by being superior to the original.

Not so original but also well-implemented was Ocean's Batman, and Quicksilva's Glider Rider deserves a mention along with Design Design's Rogue Trooper for taking a gamble and nearly succeeding.

Last year Ocean had a megahit with Head Over Heels, M.A.D. had a budget Smash with Amaurof, and Gargoyle brought out the first (and probably last) Hydromation game, Hydrocollo – the sequel to Sweevo's World. CRL's 3-D GameMaker utility now enables everyone to rewrite Knight Lore, and last November saw the first real isometric adventure, Incentive's Karyssia.

Of course, whether isometric perspective presents a 'true' 3-D view is arguable – the player in these games is 'positioned' somewhere up in the air, outside the playing area, so any game using the technique looks forced, like a technical drawing. Though its representation of object and

3D Ant Attack
Nightshade
Batman
Quazatron
Head Over Heels
Rogue Trooper
Highway Encounter
TLL
Knigh Lore

rooms may be highly effective, if we're going to nit-pick we can't say isometric perspective gives a realistic view.

But the technique has proved perfectly satisfactory for countless games, and it's pointless to damn them all for lack of realism.

More significantly, it will be interesting to see if the market for isometric graphics ever dries up, and if the public will one day reject the genre as outdated and overused, just as it once refused to accept any more Pacman clones.

Complete one level and the foolish girl (or boy) goes and gets herself (or himself) captured again, but this time further away from the starting position. Well, that's life...

Back in late 1983 when nobody worried about glaring white backgrounds, UDG-sized graphics and poor sound, 3D Ant Attack was a wonder to behold. But even if you overlook these faults the fact remains that there isn't much gameplay, and what there is soon grows repetitive. Next to modern software, 3D Ant Attack looks rather dismal.
Run It Again!

TLL

Vortex

81% Issue 7

TLL involves navigating a landscape sprinkled with houses, pylons, cliffs and bridges in order to eliminate 'enemy dots'. This top-priority procedure (you don't know how dangerous enemy dots can be if you let them get out of hand) is carried out by swooping low over the ground (hence the title - Tornado Low Level).

You always run the risk of crumpling your fighter against an obstacle, and once five of the nastily-dots have been wiped out a new mission begins - it's on the same landscape, but this time those devils are hiding below bridges and in the water and all sorts of underhand places.

Pay off old dots: despite an unlikely lot-destroying scenario, TLL flew well along the border of arcade and simulation

TLL was seen as a masterpiece when it first appeared, and its appeal has hardly diminished since. The landscape is described in effective, clean washes of colour and the fighter is well-drawn, rotating smoothly. The whole thing handles really well and though destroying evil dots is a bit of an artificial exercise the dynamics of the game come together perfectly.

Perhaps more a simulation than an arcade game, TLL would, I'm sure, still do well at a budget price.

HEAD OVER HEELS

Ocean

97% Issue 39

The best Fitman/Drummond game yet - it's even better than Batman!' said CRASH. We read on: 'cuddly', 'cute'.

I agree, and that's probably what puts me off Head Over Heels.

Pay off old dots: despite an unlikely dot-destroying scenario, TLL flew well along the border of arcade and simulation

As isometric arcade adventures were becoming increasingly common, Head Over Heels was seen as a masterpiece that didn't quite reach the same heights. The game bears no relation to their appearance (why should stuffed rabbits give you extra abilities?), the spires from the planet Freedom are out to destroy the Evil Empire, and the graphics look like something you see on early-teatime children's TV (not that I watch it). Yes, they're detailed and well-animated; yes, they're cute if you like that sort of thing; but there's nothing to link them all together.

For example). The avalanche of isometric games in this style has lessened the impact of Knight Lore's graphics, but the avalanche of isometric games in this style has lessened the impact of Knight Lore's graphics.

More a simulation than an arcade game, TLL would, I'm sure, still do well at a budget price.

Pay off old dots: despite an unlikely dot-destroying scenario, TLL flew well along the border of arcade and simulation

S

94% Issue 12

Skeer perfection,' enthused an anonymous CRASH reviewer of way back at the sight of Knight Lore's Filmation graphics.

The Filmation technique allows your sprite to physically interact with on-screen objects in almost any way, and with Knight Lore, the tenuously-related sequel to Underwuride and Sabre Wulf, Ultimate's programmers surpassed themselves.

In this thrilling instalment of Sabreman (the player) must brave the castle of the wizard Melkhior to find the ingredients of the potion that will cure his sudden lycanthropy (Ultimate's instructions take the form of an epic poem, but manage to say nearly the same thing). Fail, and you must remain the werewolf forever - but so what? He's a damn sight cooler than Batman. Melkhior's castle is divided into rooms full of traps, structures and useful objects, all of which can be maneuvered using Filmation.

The game itself is a little unpolished in some ways, but it's essentially it's just a set of Manic Miner-type problems of timing, jumping and avoiding, and Filmation only comes in useful for making higher leaps.

Still, Knight Lore deserves some recognition for having started off the isometric-arcade-adventure genre proper - it's just a pity the subsequent deluge was so heavy.

Pay off old dots: despite an unlikely dot-destroying scenario, TLL flew well along the border of arcade and simulation

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Pay off old dots: despite an unlikely dot-destroying scenario, TLL flew well along the border of arcade and simulation

I can do without poisonous Marmite jars, stuffed rabbits, reincarnation fish and doughnuts, especially when their purpose in the game bears no relation to their appearance (why should stuffed rabbits give you extra abilities?). The scenario is unoriginal (two

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NIGHTSHADE
Ultimate
91% Issue 21
Nightshade just scraped into the Smash bracket, and the autumn 1985 release is now generally considered to have marked the beginning of the end for the former masters of Spectrum software at Ultimate. The gameplay is similar to Atic Atac's: wandering around the playing area (in this case a medieval town) destroying materialising nasties and collecting 'super antibodies' to kill off the four major villains. But the real star of Nightshade is the Filmatron 2 technique, which scrolls the highly-detailed buildings about and lets you effectively see through the walls in a cut-away view whenever you pass behind them.

It's become a cliché that 'the trouble with Ultimate's games is that they have great graphics but no game bolted on', but in this case it's undeniably true. Though the pseudomedieval atmosphere is strong and the characters are well-animated, Nightshade is extremely boring. It eventually boils down to searching in vain for the major villains, just for the dubious thrill of getting killed by them instead of by lesser monsters for a change.

HIGHWAY ENCOUNTER
Vortex
95% Issue 20
You're a lone Vorton droid, pushing a highly brainfrying explosive device to the far end of an alien highway to blow up an enemy base.

The road is populated by various aliens resembling anglepoise lamps and other dangerous household items (I gave them all names once but that was ages ago), and floating mines weave across the tarmac in dances of death. Your only strategy is to block up or kill off the nasties on your first run, and then go back to get your slave droids and the bomb.

Highway Encounter's graphics are still impressive today; as in T.L.L., the combination of flat background colour and detailed monochrome overlays works very effectively. All the roadside scenery is beautifully drawn, from the crops in the fields to the golden sands of the beach. The only trouble with the game is its difficulty.

I still wonder at CRASH'S comment of the time: 'It will be easy to complete—and I will probably get bored with it'—after 2½ years I still can't clear the 30 zones and get the bomb to its destination within the time limit.

Beautifully difficult: Highway Encounter

QUAZATRON
Hewson
94% Issue 29
As Klepto, a psychotic young droid with a penchant for breaking things apart, you have been volunteered to get the mutant droids out of Quazatron, a multi-levelled underground citadel of ramps and lifts.

Klepto starts with a measly pulse laser but can collect extra weaponry by ramming other droids and entering a grappling sequence—really a subgame. A test of strategy and reflexes decides who wins the grappling duel. If you successfully grapple another droid you can take any available weapons; if you lose, the consequences are usually fatal. As you upgrade your weapons you can take on ever more powerful opponents, till you become the top dog—and then it's time to move on to the next citadel.

Quazatron is a true masterpiece,' said CRASH at the time, and the comment is still valid. Apart from the rather jerky scrolling everything is fabulous: the graphics, the music, the FX and the gameplay. Quazatron is a successful fusion of strategy and arcade and deserves all the recognition it's had.

ROGUE TROOPER
Pirhana
79% Issue 36
This licence is based on the early Rogue Trooper stories from the comic 2000AD. Rogue is, as usual, trudging around Nu Earth, this time looking for the eight vid-tapes which show how the Traitor organised the destruction of the rest of the Gal (you have to know the strip to follow the scenario, really).

Nu Earth, which seems to have shrunk a little in conversion from comic to computer, is patrolled by Norts and littered with ammo, med-packs—and, of course, the tapes. And Rogue's biochipped buddies Gunnar, Heim and Bagman give onscreen advice which isn't always particularly useful (Gunnar rarely says anything more inspiring than 'Let's grease some more Nort scum').

When all the evidence has been collected Rogue can return to the shuttle and wait for Cym Kennedy to draw him some more identical stories (oops! that just slipped out).

Despite the extremely tacky presentation, this is an enjoyable game. It's not hard to win, which may put some off, but it provides relaxing therapy when you need your confidence boosted a little. The graphics are detailed, varied and recognisable, and though the colour washes are used simply they add interest. Perhaps Rogue Trooper's strongest point is the atmosphere generated by the graphics and the comments; It is, surprisingly, the most faithful 2000AD conversion yet.
A coin op conversion

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Screen shot from Amstrad
Screen shot from CBM 64/128

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To celebrate the 51st edition of Britain's biggest-selling Spectrum magazine, we've organised an astoundingly easy-peasy competition with rewards beyond the wildest dreams of even the wildest dreamers. CRASH's generous streak means that we're throwing away 1001 weird, wonderful and whacky freebies to all you lucky readers. The first 1001 names to be drawn from a bulging sack with the correct answer to the unbelievably simple question below will receive any one of a magnificent multiload of pristine prizes.

Scintillating isn't the word for this breathtakingly unique selection of spoils: most people will receive a software gift, but there are also many surprises awaiting future recipients ...

Anyway - on with the task. Question: This is CRASH Issue 51. What number will appear on the cover of the January issue, 2001?

Got it? Put your answer on the back of a post card or sealed envelope, send it to the following address, and you could be the fortuitous winner of, well .. . something!

As if you didn't know by now, our address is: CRUMBLY CRASH COMPETITION, CRASH TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB.

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“Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my Soul to keep.
If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my Soul to take ...”
OUR HERO SETS COURSE FOR PLANET ZARKS TO HELP FLASH GEORDY FIND HER TREASURE, LITTLE EMMY. THAT THE FABULOUS EYE OF ORTHUE (THAT CAN SEE THE FUTURE) WAS, IN CHAMBER, HANDS, OR THAT THE ASSASSIN THAT THE PLAYERS WERE MEETING IS STILL ALIVE WITH A HEADACHE, OR THAT THE PROTES ARE NOT ON THE HALL PLAYING CARDS WITH SOME OTHER ALIEN GUYS AND HAVE JUST LOST THE SHIP TO THEM, OR THAT HIS BREATH SMELLS....

THANKS FOR THE GAME, YOU GUYS. NOW IF YOU DON'T MIND STEPPING OFF MY SHOW ME, AN MY WINNINGS WILL BE GONING ON OUR WAY!

WHAT'S UP, WHAT'S GOIN' ON? GON'T TELL ME THAT YOU WERE GOING TO LET THAT ALIEN STRANGER, RUN AT CHARGEN... HOW COME IT'S NOT UP TO ANOTHER THAT ALIEN STRANGER LIKE GOOD PIROTS? HOW... EH... HOW? I'M SURE ABOUT GOIN' TO UPSET HIM BY WINNING AT CHARGEN!

AND INSIDE THE SHIP, OUR HERO'S DRIVING CUTS SOME STICK... FROM THE GUARD ASSASSIN...

IT IS GENERALLY THOUGHT THAT AT A MEETING OF ALIEN LIFEFORMS THE COMMUNICATIONS WOULD COMMENCE WITH DELIBERATE AND CAREFULLY THOUGHT OUT SIGNALS BASED ON SIMPLE HEATS AND UNIVERSALLY KNOWN SYMBOLS, SUCH AS A CIRCULAR SUN WITH CHRISTMAS PLANETS, OR THAT EACH ALIEN FRONT POOR TO ITSELF AND LITTER IT'S NAME AND AFTER READERS AT THE OTHER. WHY POOR IT TO MATCH IT'S CHRISTMAS... THIS BRUTALLY WORKED VERY WELL...

WHERE OUR HERO LOOSES FLUSHED NO WUNDER. LEEKIT WHAT THE EYE SEES FOR HIS FUTURE... BUGGED OUT, MAN!
It’s here - The return of Elvin Atombender!

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...But where to next?...

...Who or what is lurking behind these cars?...

...Can you access the next tower?...

...Could the final P.I.N. number be here?...

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EPYX
NATIONAL COMPUTER GAMES CHAMPIONSHIP

Organised by Newsfield Publications Limited on behalf of US Gold, thNa

BIG PRIZES AND THE CHANCE TO COMPETE IN THE FINALS AT THE PERSONAL COMPUTER SHOW

NEWSFIELD PUBLICATIONS is proud to announce the first ever British National Computer Games Championships open to all-comers. Six regional heats with contestants competing in two categories – Spectrum and Commodore 64/128 – will be followed by two semi-finals with the qualifying contestants going forward to compete against each other on a stand built specially for the finals at the new PERSONAL COMPUTER SHOW (formerly The Personal Computer World Show) at London's Earls Court. By filling out the entry form on these pages you could be among the 324 first-round contestants selected to play arcade games provided by competition sponsors US GOLD and put yourself on the road to fame and a big prize worth £1,000.

From May 14, a custom-designed travelling roadshow will take banks of Spectrum and Commodore computers to selected boys' clubs in six locations around Great Britain for the regional heats. The qualifying competitors will aim to raise the highest scores playing games specially selected from among the latest US Gold releases.

The event – the first of its kind – is being organised by Newsfield's magazines CRASH, ZZAP! 64 and THE GAMES MACHINE. US Gold, market leaders in computer software, are sponsoring the whole competition and providing all the prizes. The National Association of Boys' Clubs, with over 2,000 affiliated clubs 200,000 members throughout the UK, is helping to promote this exciting championship as well as providing venues for the regional heats and the semi-finals.

So what do you need to do to get yourself selected for the competition that could prove you to be Britain's best arcade game high-score? For a start off you don't have to be a Spectrum owner, but to have a chance of qualifying you will need to be able to achieve the best possible scores on the listed games in the coupon – and remember, if you do qualify, not only will you be playing in public but also in front of the British press, so cheating now on the entry form will not stand you in good stead later!

HOW THE CHAMPIONSHIP WILL RUN

Six towns throughout the UK have been chosen for the regional heats, so there should be a venue not too far from you (see the separate list). The National Association of Boys' Clubs is already running a qualifying competition among its own membership, and they will be supplying three Spectrum and three Commodore entrants to each of the regional heats. We will be selecting a further 27 Spectrum and 27 Commodore entrants, from the forms you send in, to attend each of the regional heats. This means that in the first round a total of 360 contestants will fight to go through to the semi-finals. The five best high scorers in each format per regional heat will qualify for the semi-finals, making a total of 60 contestants. And from there, the three top scorers in each format will go through to the prestigious finals to be held at the Earls Court Personal Computer Show.

THE PRIZES

Apart from the thrill of displaying your joystick prowess to the world at large, there are some exciting prizes and mementoes to be won. Every qualified entrant will receive a specially designed certificate scroll to prove that they are at least considered among the 360 best arcade games players in the country. Special medals have been struck bearing the National Computer Games Championships logo on one side and the Boys' Club logo and year on the reverse; the 60 semi-finalists will each receive a bronze version of the medallion, while those who qualify for the finals will receive a silver medal. For the two outright winners, one on the Spectrum and one on the Commodore, there will be gold medals mounted in wooden display plaques.

US Gold are providing a mixture of hardware and software prizes for both winners to the value of £1,000, with valuable runner-up prizes for other finalists. On top of that, there will be free software and other gifts for finalists and semi-finalists and the chance to meet several famous personalities who will be attending the events. But perhaps the most thrilling aspect will be the chance to prove yourself the very best British computer games player in front of the vast audience attending the Personal Computer Show. And of course you will be featured in Newsfield's magazines as such.

COMPETITION RULES, ENTRY DETAILS AND VENUE DATES

The six regional heats, each comprising 30 Spectrum and 30 Commodore contestants drawn from the National Association of Boys' Clubs (three per machine) and from Newsfield magazines' entry forms will take place in the following towns:

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>May 14</td>
<td>Birmingham</td>
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<td>May 21</td>
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<td>May 28</td>
<td>Belfast</td>
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<td>London</td>
</tr>
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</table>

All days are Saturdays. Heats will be held in the mornings. The towns listed are correct at time of going to press, but the organisers reserve the right to make last-minute alterations. Qualifying entrants will be informed of necessary attendance details in good time.
The semi-finals will be held in Leeds on August 16, and in London on August 18; finals at the Personal Computer Show over the three public days, September 16-18.

Friends and relatives wishing to attend the first round and semi-finals will be welcome, but the NABC will be making a very modest entry charge to non-contestants. Readers wishing to attend will also be welcome – details will be published in future issues, or you can ring the organisers’ office for details no sooner than one week before these dates.

If you wish to put your name forward to qualify for Britain’s first National Computer Games Championship, fill out the form as soon as possible and send it to the listed address. The high scores you give will be checked by experts both at Newsfield and at US Gold. Entrants under 18 must ensure their form is countersigned by a parent or legal guardian. All qualifying entrants must be prepared to attend the venues they select on the due dates. You may select to enter at any one of the above listed venues. The organisers will accept no claims for travel or subsistence expenses for contestants in the regional heats. All contestants qualifying for the semi-finals can claim up to a maximum of £10 for travelling expenses and will receive free software from US Gold. Finalists will be given a free weekend at the Personal Computer Show in London. During contests, the decision of the appointed judges and stewards will be final and no correspondence concerning administration can be entered into.

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NATIONAL COMPUTER GAMES CHAMPIONSHIP ENTRY FORM

Please write clearly, using block capitals.

I wish to put my name forward to qualify as a competitor. If selected to compete, I agree to abide by the championship regulations.

Name ____________________________________________________________
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Postcode ____________________________________________________________

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Please tick the appropriate box:
I wish to compete on the Spectrum: □
I wish to compete on the Commodore: □
I am aged 18 or over: □
I am aged under 18: □ If you are under 18, your parent or legal guardian must sign here and print their name below:
Parent’s Signature ______________________________________________________

Parent’s Name ______________________________________________________

Please tick the regional heat venue you would like to attend
□ Birmingham
□ Gloucester
□ Belfast
□ Edinburgh
□ Leeds
□ London

In order to help us determine whether you should qualify to enter, please give your high scores on two of the following five US Gold Games:
OUTRUN high score is: ___________________________________________
INDIANA JONES high score is: _________________________________
720° high score is: ___________________________________________
GAUNTLET II high score is: _________________________________
RYGAR high score is: ___________________________________________

And your best score on two of your favourite arcade coin-op machines:
1 Coin-op name is: ___________________________________________
high score is _________________________________

2 Coin-op name is: ___________________________________________
high score is _________________________________

Complete the form and send it to THE ORGANISER, NATIONAL COMPUTER GAMES CHAMPIONSHIP, NEWSFIELD LIMITED, PO BOX 20, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB. Successful applicants will be contacted in plenty of time. Please do not ring or write to ask, it only blocks up the phone lines! And good luck!
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Issues 1, 2 and 5-16 now out of stock. SORRY!
The three charts compiled from the votes of CRASH readers is the most realistic chart for gauging the popularity of Spectrum games - it is the games that are being played that get the votes, not the games that are in the shops this week or month.

And the votes are important. It's up to you to let us know what you feel, so fill in the voting forms which live on the results pages and in FRONTLINE to make your voice heard.

If you don't want to carve up your issue of CRASH, we understand. Use a photocopy if you like, or copy the details from the voting forms onto a postcard, or the back of a sealed envelope, and send that to us instead.

Apart from the satisfaction of registering your vote, there's always the chance of winning a prize. Each month we draw 15 winners from all the voting forms received - five for the HOTLINE, five for the ADVENTURE and five for the STRATEGY chart.

A top prize of £40 worth of software (your choice, not ours) and a CRASH T-shirt is awarded to the first slip drawn from the HOTLINE votes, and another £40 of goodies and a shirt goes to the ADVENTURE and £20 of goodies and a shirt goes to the STRATEGY.

Four runners up from each ballot box collect a CRASH T-shirt and a CRASH Hat. So get those votes in to the CRASH HOTLINE, CRASH ADVENTURE and CRASH STRATEGY CHART.

CRASH HOTLINE CHART, CRASH ADVENTURE CHART and CRASH STRATEGY CHART:
PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB

Well surprise, surprise! Yet again The Static (sorry) Strategy Chart holds no shocks. The top four stay where they are with the rest of the chart only moving one position. What more can you say? The CRASH Readers' Best Strategy Game of 1987, Vulcan, still holds the Number One spot for the umteenth month.

Vulcan lover, Andrew Franks of Snaith Nr Goole in Humberside, scoops up the £50 worth of software available to the winners this month - listing Desert Rats, Arnhem and Battle Of Britain amongst his requested games. He also gets a T-shirt along with the following four runners-up. Malcolm Young from the seaside resort of Seaford in East Sussex; Lifton Edwards of Llangefni (easier to write than pronounce) in Gwynedd; Mark Thompson from Southport and Alan Diss who lives in Rubery, Birmingham.

Strategy Top 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Game</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>VULCAN</td>
<td>CCS</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>LORDS OF MIDNIGHT</td>
<td>BEYOND</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>ARNHEM</td>
<td>CCS</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>DOOMDARK'S REVENGE</td>
<td>BEYOND</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>REBELSTAR RAIDERS</td>
<td>FIREBIRD</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>DESERT RATS</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>THEATRE EUROPE</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>BATTLE OF BRITAIN</td>
<td>PSS</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>THEIR FINEST HOUR</td>
<td>CENTURY HUTCHINSON</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Let's hope that this month's Adventure Smashes, Jinxter and Guild Of Thieves - both from Rainbird - have a devastating effect on the Adventure Top 20, as not much has happened in the last few months. Their CRASH Smash, Knight Orc, enters the chart for the first time at Number 15, with The Pawn at Number 11.

The winner of fifty golden pounds worth of software this month comes from Bracknell in Berkshire (as they say on the Premium Bonds). Lucky old Graham Codd will be receiving a small CRASH T-shirt and games such as Match Day II and Combat School for his 128K Spectrum. The fortunate four who'll each be getting a T-shirt this month are Anthony Goddard living in Oxford; Paul Gifford of Brinkley in Suffolk; an XXL Sophie Sharp of Preston and Oliver Bayliss (he of the flamingo postcard fame) in Leatherhead.
ROBIN CANDY'S SCORES

DEAD again? Lost that last life on the first level? Do YOU have trouble saving Earth from aliens? Well, don't despair - even losers can be winners with SCORES, because you don't have to be a high-score hero to get in (though it helps). SCORES is a monthly game-by-game list showing the whole range of scores on the very LATEST games (Jet Set Willy record-breakers are out from the word go!).

Each month there'll be the top score so far received for each game - the first listed under the game heading - and then a couple of others, so you can measure yourself against not only interface-burners but ordinary mortals too.

And each month there'll be five winners picked at random from all the entries received, regardless of whether they're printed or not. The first entry form drawn from the SCORES postbag each month will win £40 of software of the winner's choice plus a CRASH cap and T-shirt, and four runners-up will receive CRASH caps and T-shirts too. So don't forget to tell us on the form what software and T-shirt you'd like if you're a lucky one - because every loser can win with SCORES.

BUBBLE BOBBLE
Sutinder Benipal, London N21 4207960
Nicholas Tellis, Harrow 2610000
Mark Thompson, Bristol 320000
COBRA
E Williams, Llandudno 15006
Mark Cox, Darlington 105000
Fred Willis, Fort William 9500
COMBAT SCHOOL
Kristian Gibson, Derby 166540
Lee Thomas, Burntwood, Staffordshire 162490
Tom Barnes, Bognor Regis 51056
DRILLER
Mark Thompson, Southport 1632490
Sean Roberts, Bloxwich 123800
Matthew Payne, Churchdown 379890
ENDURO RACER
Iain James Wiseman, Wooton Wansen, West Midlands 343561
Steven Hulse, Crewe 2368190
Nathan Purst, Tamworth 1885206

WINNERS
Mark Chappell of Northope in Lincolnshire wins £50 worth of software (he sent his scores in on the special Golden Issue form) including Firefly, Platoon, Scummbl and Northstar - and, of course, a CRASH cap and T-shirt. Runners-up, each getting a CRASH cap and T-shirt, are Simon Brown of Bexley, Southsea in Hampshire, Matthew Wright of Wanham in Essex, Stefan Ratcliffe of Battersea (where even the dogs read CRASH), also in Essex, and Brendan Fanning of Oldham in Lancashire. Remember - any score sent in to SCORES can win you a prize.

SEND ME YOUR SCORES
Send this form (or a copy) with your scores for up to three games to ROBIN CANDY'S SCORES, CRASH, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB. Only genuine scores will be accepted; any improbably huge scores will be immediately binned and the sender will be forced to listen to Lloyd Mangram - a fate worse than sharing a desk with The Art Of Noise.

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GAME SCORE DATE ACHIEVED
1
2
3

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AND IF I WIN ANY PRIZE I WOULD LIKE THIS CRASH T-SHIRT, CHOSEN FROM THOSE ADVERTISED IN THE CRASH HYPERMARKET:

The decision of CRASH's appointed judges is absolutely final in all respects - however high your Jet Set Willy score.
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Lands that produce men of legend, dragon slayers, lie in his shadow. He guarded evil fears his fierce weapon sword, the axe he wields as swift as lightning. State of the art programming makes a true simulation of the arcade game. In your home micro, enjoy super graphics and realistic action as RASTAN takes on a world of dangers - magical wizards, fire breathing lions, bats, spakes, skeletons and finally the living dead. Is it more than you can handle?

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Imagine Software Limited, 4 Gaskell Street, Manchester M25 NS. Tel: 061 834 3929, Telex: 669977.
**CHAMPIONSHIP SPRINT**

**Producer:** Electric Dreams  
**Retail price:** £9.99  
**Authors:** Catalyst Coders

Ever fancied racing around a racetrack at high speed? Standing on the winner's podium with a bottle of champagne in one hand, and a blonde in the other? Well in this game, the player at least gets to have both. Converted from the Atari 8-bit game, Championship Sprint gives one or two people the chance to test their driving skills on a Grand Prix racetrack.

Initially, participants are given the choice of either racing on a standard track or on their own design, created using the track editor which is included on the flip side of the tape. The program then prompts for the number of players and their initials, and it's off!

Human drivers compete against computer controlled opponents and attempt to finish first over the finish line. Along the way, having to contend with digital hazards, they also have to try to avoid the digital hazards on the track: oil, water, gravel, and a baby whirlwind do their best to send the player spinning off the road. However, they are not alone in their challenge, as the track is also filled with useful bonus extras for the next race, such as turbo boost and higher top speed. At the end of the current race the cars are shown in the pits, along with their placings, scores, and best lap times.

In a particularly creative mood, the player can use the construction set to design devious tracks to delight or annoy friends. Selections are made by clicking on a series of icons placed along the right-hand side of the screen. These allow the user to view the segments of track that are used to create the course, select obstacles to place in the driver's way and check for afinished track for faults. Once completed, tracks can be saved to tape for posterity.

**CRITICISM**

- "And they said Super Sprint was bad! Additions there may be, but improvements they aren't. My main gripe with both the Sprint games is the appalling collision detection. The track may be drawn to look smooth and circular, but if you actually examine the limits by banging into the sides of the track you'll find it blocky - in other words somebody couldn't be bothered to use pixel collision detection and settled for the easier, and less accurate, character detection. If this aspect of the game wasn't so infuriating then it could be mildly addictive. One of the plus points is the track designer: it should lengthen the lastability by a few weeks - if you can be bothered to load the editor, design your track, save your track, load in the main game and then load in your saved track (phew)!"

PAUL

- "It was enough to have to put up with the tiny graphics and irritating gameplay of the original Super Sprint but an increase in the dose of the same, well it could be fatal. (To the enthusiasm, at least) The only aspects that cheer up the game are the vaguely decent pictures racing cars in between courses. Championship Sprint suffers terribly from colour clash which makes the potentially rubbery graphics even worse (if that's possible), and gives the game a generally untidy feeling.

There are no sound effects or tunes, which all detract from a generally uninteresting, unimaginative game. If I didn't know any better, I would think it was budget game; it's definitely not worth the £9.99 asking price!"

NICK

- "I've never been a great fan of racing games, and often find that I spend more time off the track than on it. This was the case with Championship Sprint: control of the car seemed very loose and 'soggy'. Agrieved by the faultless performances of

PAUL

- "The movie is atmospheric and frightening, but the only part of the Predator game with any suspense is the inlay - well-written, but not very helpful. The loading technique is a farce. First you have to load an unimpressive demo, then you have to load the actual game area (and none seems very different from the others), and finally you have to rewind the cassette back to the first level (situated somewhere in the middle of the tape - the game is to find it)."

When everything's finally loaded you're subjected to a 10-second opening sequence (every time you play) and then hidden behind it all is ... the game. Predator has few addictive elements - the basic 'get the guy' before they get you instinct is the obvious one - and though the graphics hold it together for a few games, when their appeal has worn off you're left with a very boring, repetitive and infuriating piece of software."

Schaefer had been briefed to expect guerillas, and they can be disposed of quickly with his scalpel-sharp reflexes and

**PREDATOR**

**Producer:** Activision  
**Retail price:** £9.99  
**Authors:** designed by System 3, programmed by Source

It's a typical Arnold Schwarzenegger role, familiar from Conan The Barbarian, The Terminator and Commando: and it's the same all-action Amie who stars in 20th Century Fox's recent movie Predator, closely followed by System 3 for this licence.

The game starts as Major Alan Schaefer (Schwarzenegger in the film) and his small force of mercenaries rope-slide from a hovering helicopter and begin their hunt for missing VIPs in a dark, uncharted jungle.

Schaefer is the last to make it into the undergrowth. He finds the VIPs' crashed chopper with no survivors - yet no bodies either. Then he realises his team has vanished - but as he moves further into the jungle's depths, he discovers his fellow mercenaries one by one, mutilated and very dead.

Armed with grenades and a powerful machine gun, Schaefer runs through the horizontally-scrolling jungle setting, using all his wits and weapons to survive guerrilla ambushes and the attacks of vultures. He can soon find other weapons, obviously dropped by his murdered colleagues - though they're helpful, an uneasy feeling starts to roll around in the back of Schaefer's mind.
the computer controlled cars as they zoom around the track, I soon found that the game bored me to tears. Graphically, it's okay: the track and backdrops are all quite nicely drawn, but the cars themselves look a little crude and simplistic. The construction set is a nice idea, but even with the facility to design a track, I feel Championship Sprint won't hold your attention for very long."

**MARK**

Long ago, shrouded in the mists of time, there was an arcade game called Breakout. This game was so popular that it became the basis of a long line of imitators, the latest of which is ASL's Impact.

**PAUL**

"The attraction and addiction of simplistic graphics and elementary gameplay has been no more evident on computers than in the implementation of Breakout on the Spectrum. It's very easy to criticize games of this type (especially Impact) for their uninviting use of the display area and oragnes tunes created in what is essentially an easy game to program. You can't deny their addictiveness but, nevertheless, I am appalled to see ASL charging the extortionate (there's no other word for it) price of ten pounds for such a simple game. So you get a designer - but what use is that if you have very few options in the game anyway! Batty and Arkanoid still tussle for the top of the block-bashers purely for their inventiveness and expansion of a very old and lucid concept."

**MARK**

"As with most Breakout-type games, the first thing that goes through your mind is, 'Does this game offer anything new to the old tried and tested formula?'. Well, although Impact is a graphically competent game, with some nicely drawn screens and a zippy ball springing about, there sadly isn't anything new or exciting enough to set it apart from the crowd of other variants. Saying that, I did enjoy playing the game for quite a while, but I feel that as there are so many games of the same type around, you may already have one better than this.

**KATI**

"Impact, the publicity claims, is all set to hit your screens with a bang... a whimper would be more appropriate. The presentation and gameplay are polished but not outstanding; the graphics are colourful and the sound is adequate. Gameplay is addictive (isn't it always?) and if you get bored of trying to master 90 screens there's always the construction set. The idea of catching credits to buy a limited variety of bonus features is new but doesn't really add much interest to the game. There are no unexpected transformations of bat and ball as you fill boldly across the bottom of the screen collecting bonuses. More annoying is the disintegration of the bat before it becomes clear that the ball isn't going to hit it: the computer is always just ahead of the graphics. If you're addicted to this sort of game then the construction set makes it an worthwhile addition to your collection. For dabblers in the genre, though, it doesn't offer anything special enough to rate as an investment."

**COMMENTS**

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair

Graphics: superb character-animation, but a poor 3-D side view of the action

Sound: the mesiage 'Scheater running' sound is out of sync with the sprite's movements - hardly scary

Options: two keyboard layouts

General rating: if only the game lived up to the inlay...

Presentation 72%
Graphics 75%
Playability 60%
Addictive qualities 59%
OVERALL 68%
The salvation of the world is at stake. No time for preliminary explanations; just strap on a helmet, climb into a flying suit and embark on a bombing run over enemy territory.

The display gives an aerial view of the player's spacecraft flying over the vertically scrolling landscape of land and sea. Attacking alien vessels move in from the top of the screen, and ground bases fire from below. The player's ship is equipped with laser fire to combat airborne enemies and bombs to destroy ground bases. A target constantly superimposed on the screen indicates where the bombs fall.

A colourful panel to the left of the action informs the pilot of his score and the number of lives left. Outstanding performance is rewarded by an extra life every 10,000 points.

Shoot 'em ups hit the software shelves with monotonous regularity every month and Xarax doesn't stand out from the crowd: it's just a competent, rather unexceptional game. Bombing and blasting is moderately exciting at first, growing challenging as the gameplay progresses and finally becoming a tedious and repetitive chore. This is aggravated by the fact that enemy fire is difficult to see. If you want to while away an afternoon with some fairly conventional shooting then Xarax should fit the bill.

I remember when it was a pleasure to play a Firebird game because they were all original and fresh; Xarax is merely a mixture of old ideas. The tune doesn't flow properly and the layout and idea have been stolen from Mirrorsoft's Moonstrike. Despite this, the game is neatly set out and the graphics are reasonably clear. Colour is used well on the borders but is a bit lacking in the game itself, which eventually becomes just a matter of remembering the attack waves.

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: as with most games of this genre the monochromatic backgrounds make the bullets hard to distinguish
Sound: repetitive tune
Options: definable keys
General rating: in a market full of monochrome vertically scrolling shoot 'em ups, Xarax is easily forgotten

Presentation 54%
Graphics 54%
Playability 52%
Addictive qualities 49%
OVERALL 52%

Turn your computer into an arcade with...
ROCKFORD

Producer: MAD X
Retail price: £2.99
Author: Fernando Herrera

It's four years since his last adventures but Rockford, hero of Boulderdash and Rockford's Riot, has returned in the conversion of his own arcade machine.

The game consists of five worlds which are accessed individually and carry their own different themes. Each has four levels, and comprises an underground landscape of boulders and strange inhabitants. The object of the game is to tunnel past the precariously balanced boulders in order to collect a specified amount of hidden treasure within a given time limit.

Each location has its own unfriendly natives and while all cause death on contact, some explode when strategically squashed, to create more treasure.

If Rockford's task becomes too exhausting, the player can always try playing Rockman, a platform game featured on the reverse side of the cassette which scored 69% when it was first released in 1986.

KATI

"The new features in Rockford prevent it from being just a simple Boulderdash clone. Such a lot of attention has been put into the presentation, though, that it's a pity the game falls down on technicalities: the scrolling is jerky and the controls are sometimes insensitive. These are problems in the original Boulderdash and instead of improving they seem to have become worse. These niggles don't completely spoil the gameplay but they do contribute towards making Rockford an average budget game instead of quite a good one."

NICK

"The graphics on Rockford might have been passable in the days of the original Boulderdash (Crash issue 12) but now they're only to be laughed at. The animated characters and colour haven't been changed, and the only new game differences are a 128K tune plus new screens. Despite the amateurish graphics the playability and addictive qualities are still there, though, and with the inclusion of Rockman it may be worth a look."

MARK

"I've always been a great fan of the now-aging Boulderdash and while some of the monsters from that famous game rear their ugly heads here, there are many new features and fiendish screen designs. Graphically the game is quite good, being bold and colourful, although Rockford himself does tend to look rather small and splodgy. Not 'The ultimate version of Boulder Dash' as it claims on the inlay but a pretty decent imitation."

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor. Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: colourful but dated, with jerky scrolling
Sound: insignificant title tune and spot effects
Options: definable keys, one or two players
General rating: an old game showing its age. The free game, Rockman, hardly furthers its cause!

Presentation 56%
Graphics 54%
Playability 59%
Addictive qualities 59%
OVERALL 57%

KARNOV, THE 'WELL-KNOWN' FIRE-BREATHING RUSSIAN IS RUNNING, JUMPING, CLIMBING, SWIMMING AND FLYING AFTER THE LOST TREASURE OF BABYLON. COUNTLESS WACKY MONSTERS ARE OUT TO STOP HIM...EVER SNUFFED IT AT THE HANDS OF A SKELETON ON AN OSTRICH? INCORPORATING NINE LEVELS OF GAMEPLAY, KARNOV IS A VAST 4 WAY SCROLLING GAME THAT COMBINES BOTH STRATEGY AND FAST ACTION AND IN WHICH THERE ARE MANY ROUTES TO SUCCESS.
IKARI WARRIORS

Producer: Elite
Retail price: £8.99 cassette, £12.99 disk
Author: David Shea

A band of revolutionaries have stormed the jungle HQ of General Alexander Bonn, and are holding him hostage. Unknown to the guerrillas, however, he managed to send a mayday message before being captured. On hearing of this the Ikari Warriors are rushed to the scene to attempt a daring rescue.

Unfortunately the warriors' plane crashlands some distance from the planned IZ and the two surviving warriors are faced with a trek through dense jungle in order to rescue the General. From here, the mission may be undertaken as a solo venture or with the help of a friend controlling the second mercenary.

As the intrepid soldiers yomp through the vertically scrolling landscape, they are attacked by squads of enemy marksmen and combatants. Equipped with a limited supply of ammunition, grenades and only six lives each, they go about cutting a swathe through the enemy ranks. As the baddies are decimated, the occasional bonus tile appears, bestowing such goodies as additional ammo, extra grenades and fuel for the enemy tanks that are to be found at certain locations.

Boarding these tanks allow the players to provide themselves with some protection and, more importantly, extra firepower. Enemy soldiers who get in the way are squashed and the large gun emplacements - which can also be removed by a well placed grenade - are despatched with relative ease. However, land mines and grenades are more dangerous: contact with these sees the tank bursts into flame along with its passenger.

The Ikari Warriors' mission ends only when their last life has faded away, or when the HQ is breached and the General escorted to safety.

MIKE

"The release of Ikari Warriors has been eagerly awaited by the games playing fraternity for quite a while, and the question is, 'Is it any good'? The answer: Well I like it, at least! There have been a lot of examples of this vertically scrolling 'massacre the enemy' style of game since the release of the classic Commando a couple of years ago but Ikari Warriors carries on the tradition in fine style.

Graphically the game is good, with some veryRamboesque main sprites charging around causing widespread carnage. I particularly liked the tanks which our warmongering friends can use to explosive effect. Overall, a great game in the classic Commando mould."

NICK

"Yes it's Ikari Warriors, the game that seems to have been years in the making. Is it really just a full priced U.C.M.? Well the graphics are close, the layout is similar and the idea is almost identical, so the answer must undoubtedly be 'Yes'. It seems that this game has suffered in the same way as games like Knight Rider and Scooby Doo did. They have just taken so long to write that the initial expectation wears off by the time they appear. Ikari Warriors has a nice tune at the beginning and there are a few nicely detailed screens further up the scrolling landscape but that's about it. There are problems with colour, as per usual, but they can't be helped. It may be worth buying this just in curiosity but I can't really recommend it."

KATI

"The long awaited, much anticipated Ikari Warriors has finally negotiated the conversion from the arcades. Graphically it has survived the inevitable loss of colour content and detail; the landscape is well defined and retains the boldly contrasting features of the original. Crashing fiercely through the undergrowth, dodging bullets, hijacking tanks and hurling grenades are mercenary pleasures which never seem to pall. Failed missions are sufficiently frustrating to keep hardened guerilla fighters charging back for more. A minor drawback is the inadvertent camouflage of some of the enemy fighters; being zapped in the back by what looks like a harmless piece of vegetation can be infuriating at moments of strategic tension. Vigilant warriors are unlikely to be troubled by this and who cares when you've got the crucial elements of an arcade game in the comfort of your own home."

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: the constant scrolling keeps the action coming thick and fast
Sound: rough and tough tune, but feeble effects
Options: Kempston mouse, one or two players
General rating: if Ikari Warriors had come out when it was first advertised it would have been an amazing success - however much more is needed nowadays

Presentation 86%
Graphics 77%
Playability 74%
Addictive qualities 76%
OVERALL 76%
Three of Level 9's most acclaimed adventures – Lords of Time, Red Moon and The Price of Magik – come together in one package. Each has been enhanced and enlarged with more text than ever before – 60,000 mind-expanding words creating magik and mystery round every corner. There's a powerful new parser, and most disc versions include stunning digitised pictures that help to dramatically heighten the atmosphere.

What the press have said:

LORDS OF TIME: "Destined to become a classic" – Computing with the Amstrad.

RED MOON: Best Graphical Adventure or Best Adventure of the Year – Zap 64, Crash, Amtrix, C&VG, CCI, and Amstrad Computer User.

THE PRICE OF MAGIK: "Another superb adventure... their best yet" – Commodore User. Also a Crash Smash.

Available from all good stockists or order direct by sending a cheque or postal order made payable to Mandarin, together with your name and address. Price includes P&P. Access/Visa owners: Phone our hotline or send your card number with your order.
ARKANOID — REVENGE OF DOH

Producer: Imagine
Retail price: £7.95 cassette, £14.95 disk
Author: Mike Lamb

As everyone knows, 40,000 years ago the Arkaid dimension controller DOH. Now, having regained their strength, the universe from the tyrannical Space Wars liberated the Vaus from a very different form and is hiding out in the spaceship Zarg. Taking control of the spacecraft Vaus II — a modified version of the original — the player must penetrate the enemy ship and exterminate the alien invaders.

The Zarg consists of a series of rooms comprising various multicoloured arrangements of bricks. These structures are broken down by an energy bolt deflected off the surface of the Vaus as it manoeuvres deftly from side to side. Different bricks have varying levels of resistance: some are impervious to their touch; others disappear momentarily only to regenerate; only a few are indestructible. Each room contains a generator which bears a warp, allowing the player to progress from one level to another.

The destruction of specific bricks triggers the release of a variety of different energy capsules. Identified by their lettering, these have the power to transform the molecular structure of the Vaus on impact. The dextral skill of the player determines whether the spacecraft spawns a twin, is shadowed by a ghost, doubles in size, assumes extra weapons (laser power, smart bombs, extra energy bolts), flies against a scrolling backdrop or shrinks to a fraction of its size. Special capsules also inject bonuses thrown in. One minor drawback is the colouring of the bricks, which bear a warp, allowing the player instant access to the next round.

A screen display shows score and current level. Generally, to progress from one level to another the screen must be cleared of destructible bricks. Occasionally, capsules are released which bear a warp, allowing the player instant access to the next round.

**COMMENTS**

**Joysticks:** Sinclair
**Graphics:** superbly colourful and very varied
**Sound:** tinny on the 48K, repetitive and monotonous 128K title tune
**General rating:** there's even progress in the Breakout world — Revenge Of Doh proves it!

**Presentation** 78%
**Graphics** 85%
**Playability** 86%
**Addictive qualities** 83%
**OVERALL** 80%

"The Revenge of Doh is just another run of the mill bat 'n' ball game. There are so many similar games on the market that nobody really takes any notice of them any more. The graphics are excellently drawn and would look fantastic on screen if only they were against a black background. But with a highly complex background — which is the same colour as the bat and ball — you soon lose track of what's happening and die. On the first couple of goes the little tunes and jingles are very inviting and add to the atmosphere of the game, but after the tenth go they start to get irritating and you feel like kicking the monitor! I feel sorry for people who own one of the older Spectrums because they can't even pull the sound socket out!Personally I don't think this game will do very well because of all the similar games that are around, but for all fans of the original Arkaid it should be worth a whirl."

"Arkaid is the second of the Breakout-style games featured in this month's magazine, and is in my opinion by far the best of the two. Graphically the game is great, with a very fast and realistic ball being bounced around some very clear and subtly coloured screen designs. Sadly, though, I do have a very minor gripe, in that on some of the paler screens the ball tends to get lost in the background. This is a little disconcerting, and a lot of concentration is needed to keep one eye on the bat, and the other on the ball. As I said though, this is the only slight blemish on an otherwise enormously enjoyable game; definitely one for all Arkaid fans."

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DEMONT'S REVENGE

Producer: Firebird
Retail price: £1.99
Authors: Probe Software

Merlin Jnr has been left to tidy up his master's castle. Renowned for his clumsiness, it's not long before he releases the four talismen of Trodor the Demon. Now the evil one's power is free to roam the castle and the only way to prevent disaster is for Merlin Jnr to restore the talismen to their rightful place.

Each charm is split into four segments, which must be returned whole to one of the castle's four temples.

Numerous demons traverse the chambers, and contact with these causes the player to lose energy. However, finding a pentangle restores Merin Jnr's flagging spirits. Although initially defenceless, Junior is able to hurl bolts of mystic energy at the baddies once he has found the two spells which enable him to do so.

Objects vital to the success of his mission include two keys - one allowing access via the wooden doors of the castle, the other opening the metal doors of the dungeon.

CRITICISM

"...Just because games are released at a budget price, some software houses see it as a good excuse to churn out their worst programs. Okay, Demon's Revenge isn't totally naff, but it's nearing the bottom of the barrel. Graphically the game is okay but the nasty demons are rather simplistically drawn especially the skeletons, which hobble around in an amusing way. This very simple collect 'em up failed to hold my attention for any length of time."

MARK

"...Sorceror's apprentices are traditionally dogged by bad luck. Merlin Jnr also has the misfortune of appearing in a fairly insipid adventure. The graphics are finely detailed and create a grim atmosphere, but they can't compensate for bland and bungled gameplay. The instructions are a feeble attempt to make sense of a completely illogical system. Pressing the keys to select and drop an object variously causes the inventory to swap items around, drop something completely different, or place the desired object in a totally undesired place. Irrational and thoroughly unaddictive."

KAT

"...There is so much wrong with this game: the characters are badly defined, monochrome sprites that move across the screen in jerky diagonals. The spot effects are just basic beeps and there is no tune whatsoever. None of the monsters look menacing and they only kill if you stay in one place for about five minutes! The idea of collecting objects isn't exactly new, and since they don't have any effect on what your character can do, it seems a total waste of time."

NICK

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: the main perspective appears successful, but when the characters begin to move within it the game falls apart
Sound: very basic and lacking a tune
Options: definable keys and three levels of difficulty (Easy, Hmm... and Heavy!)
General rating: poor enough to give budget games a bad name

Presentation 53%
Graphics 50%
Playability 29%
Addictive qualities 30%
OVERALL 32%

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MILES GORDON TECHNOLOGY
BEDLAM

Producer: GO!
Retail price: 128K ONLY £8.99 cassette, £12.99 disk
Authors: Beam Software

It takes many years to train a cadet in the Steller Imperium's pilot academy, and at the end of that time they very often feel that they're ready to face anything. To keep them in their place, the instructors devised one last test: the X12 fighter simulator, aptly nicknamed Bedlam.

From the title screen, Bedlam offers both a one player game, plus a dual player mode in which two pilots are given the chance to kill each other. To aid in the task, there are useful items scattered around the screen: flashing diamonds are useful items scattered around the screen, including extra firepower, additional lives and shields, while collision with enemy fire and objects, including extra firepower, additional lives and shields, while collision with a teleport symbol warps the player to one of the game's four pinball tables. The aim is to gain as many points as possible, and hitting either a X2 or a X10 scoring amplification factor is the ultimate goal since the player's score in the main game is briefly multiplied by the relevant amount.

Here is an impressive game to look at: the graphics, particularly in the pinball bonus game, are colourful and have some interesting features. The gameplay, with unsuspected dangers lurking everywhere, is also unusually varied for a shoot'em-up; by introducing motherships, magnetic force fields and pinball games, the programmers have obviously tried to create something out of the ordinary. Unfortunately the action isn't quite fast enough to make the most of these features. Control of the spacecraft is sluggish (you always seem to be forcing the joystick) and as a result the game lacks a compulsive edge. Hardened blasters probably won't find this a drawback; others should think twice before releasing their cash.

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MARK

"Bedlam is a very apt name for this game, as complete pandemonium breaks loose about the poor old player's ears. Graphically the game is very good, with some nicely drawn alien battle formations zipping around equally well drawn and solid looking backdrops. One feature I particularly like is the bonus pinball tables that crop up every now and then. These not only look nice, but play just like a the real thing, the ball spinning around the screen in a very realistic manner. Playability is high from the start, as huge formations of mean and bloodthirsty aliens charge down the screen after your blood. Add to that the great pinball tables, and you have a very enjoyable game. In my opinion, Bedlam is well worth the asking price."

PAUL

"Now this is more like it. Just lately, products coming out of the GO! offices have been disappointing to say the least, but by all accounts Bedlam could be the game to turn GO! around. Although coming from the same family as Slap Fight, Flying Shark and every other vertically scrolling variant, Bedlam has one great difference - it's NOT monochrome! Gone are the frustrating shouts of, 'What hit me?' and 'I couldn't even see that!'. The technique may not be old, dating all the way back to Lightforce, but I don't think I've seen it implemented in such an impressive way before. Bedlam is the ultimate goal since the player's score in the main game is briefly multiplied by the relevant amount. Also making their presence felt are large alien motherships. These heavily armed and armoured craft can be destroyed for bonus points and a very welcome shot of invincibility, although each time they are destroyed they become more powerful on their next visit.

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: all the colour without the clash, made frantic with some fast animation and scrolling
Sound: average spot effects and poor tune
Options: definable keys and one or two players or two players simultaneously

Presentation 78%
Graphics 77%
Playability 73%
Addictive qualities 75%
OVERALL 75%
BASKET MASTER

Producer: Imagine
Retail price: £7.95
Authors: Dinamic

Cynics may call it just an American version of netball, but basketball is fast, furious and athletic - and Spanish programming house Dinamic will have you jumping through hoops in Basket Master, CRASH's favourite basketball simulation so far.

At each end of a basketball court is a netted hoop, and players attempt to throw the basketball through the other side's hoop (a goal). Two points are awarded for each successful throw or 'basket', and an extra goal, in effect. Two points are through the other side's hoop (a attempt to throw the basketball is a netted hoop, and players try to steal the opposition. Players try to steal the ball by constantly pressuring the ball, but basketball is meant to have no physical contact, but sometimes when the pressure is on things can get out of hand. Barging into an opponent can result in a personal foul; each player is allowed only five fouls, and loses the game if he commits six.

The time remaining in each half is shown beneath the main screen, and when the half ends there's a breakdown of baskets scored, shots taken, free shots made, and fouls committed.

Previous basketball games include Imagine's own World Series Basketball (issue 23/81%), Gamemaster's Championship Basketball (issue 44/87%) and Anolasoft's One On One (issue 21/79%). Incidentally, cynics still reading should note that basketball was invented in 1891 - a year before netball, which was also originally American!

MARK

"Go for the two-player option in Basket Master - the computer opponent is almost impossible to beat. When you have control of the ball he piles in, nicks it, and often scores a basket before you can even move! Basket Master is graphically nice but suffers because it's far too hard to play properly."

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: well-defined cartoon characters and a superb magnification action replay bring the game to life
Sound: simple title tune; few spot effects
Options: definable keys; one or two players
General rating: attractive, enjoyable and action-packed - but the computer opponent is much too hard for beginners

Presentation: 77%
Graphics: 79%
Playability: 72%
Addictive qualities: 69%
OVERALL: 73%

CRASH April 1988 109
**SPORE**

**Author:** M Webb

Deadly spores, so virulent that even TCP can't destroy them, have overrun a laboratory. One hope remains: the strong pesticide held in barrels throughout the building. And the task in Spore is to collect all the barrels on each level. But the spores are continually released from generator blocks, and you must always be ready to destroy them with your blaster.

**MARK**

"Though it's not graphically great, Spore's fast and furious action and tortuous mazes more than compensate for the main character looking like a demented starfish and the 'moving' square-like spores. Spore is a highly playable collect-'em-up."

**D**

**MIKE**

"The challenge of quick blasting and quick thinking makes Spore instantly playable and addictive. The positioning of the mirrors and squares controlling the barriers means you have to pay as much attention to where and how you shoot as to the process of firing itself, and you should plan your progress through each level strategically. And there are enough different elements (the pheromone pill which makes the spores run away, the flasks you have to be careful not to shoot) to sustain interest for several levels. The graphics are colourful and distinctive, too, and there aren't many budget games with so much to offer."

**COMMENTS**

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair (none work, thought)

Graphics: small but well-defined characters

Sound: like dried peas in a tin

Options: definable keys (which, like the joysticks, don't function), maze-construction set

General rating: don't be put off by the simple display and control problems - Spore is very addictive

Presentation 55%

Graphics 46%

Playability 75%

Addictive qualities 78%

OVERALL 67%

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**GRAND PRIX TENNIS**

**Producer:** M.A.D.

**Retail price:** £2.99

Ever dreamed of playing the All Wimbledon final on centre court? Were you Bjorn to be a star? Grand Prix Tennis gives you the chance - grab your gear and get ready to pit your wits against a top professional player (human or computer).

The contest is fought on a yellow monochrome tennis court, complete with umpire and players' chairs. Each match consists of one set by others' mistakes -1 mean, a waste of memories of the good old ZX81 and the 16K Spectrum, with one-character-block graphics running uncontrollably around the screen on a blast. The graphics are colourful and distinctive, too, and there aren't many budget games with so much to offer.

**CRITICISM**

- "The graphics are dismal and the little people are barely recognisable; Grand Prix Tennis just is a mixture of yellow and black with white text; a waste of everything the Spectrum is really capable of. And when you go to hit the ball it doesn't have to touch the racket - a spot 20 pixels away seems quite satisfactory. Grand Prix Tennis is way below average."

**NICK**

- "The inlay calls this a 'fully accurate simulation' - but if Wimbledon were like Grand Prix Tennis no-one would bother to come. There's no atmosphere (no audience or line judges, and you don't even change ends), and as the ball swings in an unrealistic arc across the court it looks and feels like it's attached to the net or your racket by an invisible string. Whether you hit or miss is a question more of luck than of technique.

And the graphics don't give a clear indication of where the ball has landed, budding John McEnroes have some really good excuses to rant and rave. The thoughtless design of the controls makes things worse. The joystick directions are the reverse of the obvious: playing a forehand, naturally to the right of the player, is effected by pulling the joystick to the left. Instinctive reactions lead to confusion."

**PAUL**

- "It's been proved that lawn tennis can work on the Spectrum - Match Point (issue 6/89%) is a fine example - so I have no sympathy with such a substandard version as this. The graphics may look impressive on the glossy inlay (the same could be said of Konami's Tennis), but the programmer apparently didn't know the first thing about accurate collision-detection and smooth animation."

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**COMMENTS**

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair

Graphics: crude animation of stick characters

Sound: simplicity at its limits

Options: definable keys; one or two players

General rating: a poor attempt to simulate a sport which can be simulated well - with an absurd control method

Presentation 26%

Graphics 30%

Playability 20%

Addictive qualities 20%

OVERALL 23%
I anyone has ever doubted your shoot 'em up capabilities, now is the time to give Proof Of Destruction. POD has deliberately avoided any feeble scenario in favour of pure, unadulterated blasting.

In this case, the battleground is an interconnecting grid which spans an optional background of scrolling rainbow colours, and your POD (or PODs, for there is a two player option) can be directed anywhere along this matrix.

Aliens generally approach from the top of the screen and are swiftly despatched by the POD’S blasters. The resultant explosion also destroys a piece of the grid and while the section heals within a few seconds, the gap is impassable and effectively restricts movement of both aliens and the POD.

Each level is timed, the aim being simply to stay alive until the timer runs out. An extra life is awarded every time a level is completed and thus the game only ends when all lives are lost during a level.

the gameplay soon proves repetitive and ultimately boring."

"Yawn, there aren't many games that I almost fall asleep in the middle of, but POD is one of the exceptions; within a few games it had bored me to tears. All it seems to consist of is a few psychedelic, eye wrenching screens with tons of aliens pouring out bullets at your craft. This goes on screen after screen; blam, blam, blam. Graphically POD is okay, but in the playability stakes, it's more or less a non-starter."

"Yuk! What garish colours and terrible sound. And as for graphics – where are they? Each screen is just a grid with loads of little dots, lines and blobs, representing aliens, their bullets and your gunshots. Just to make it even more confusing your ship looks like the aliens!! The simplistic and difficult nature of the gameplay soon proves repetitive and ultimately boring."

"Take a basic shoot 'em up, strip it of irrelevant scenario, take away the sound, throw in a flashy background and you're left with POD. The grid is an innovative idea, controls are smooth and the aliens fly in suitably devious formations. Unfortunately there is no atmosphere to complement the gameplay; sound effects are extremely limited and the rainbow scrolling merely obscures the action. Remove this and you're left with an uninspiring grid plus some very repetitive gameplay. One to avoid."

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 Comments:

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair

Graphics: the garish backgrounds make POD a strain on the eyes

Sound: below average, lacking originality

Options: definable keys, one or two players

General rating: a very poor shoot 'em up with little lastability

Presentation 28%

Graphics 21%

Playability 24%

Addictive qualities 18%

OVERALL 21%
I VIDEOFACE digitiser takes pictures from a video camera or recorder and turns them into standard hi-res Spectrum screens.

| VIDEOCAMERA |

Screens can be copied to printer, saved to tape/microdrive/Discovery/Beta, incorporated into other programmes (why not alter your image by, say, ART STUDIO), animated (6 different screens can be held by VIDEOFACE and changed as you wish).

VIDEOFACE is menu-driven, fast (3 pictures a second) and very easy to use — all you need is a Spectrum, COMPOSITE VIDEO signal and a lead. You can even adjust the gain (the black and white ratio) and create special effects! VIDEOFACE is a unique, most useful and powerful option — and it's also SO much fun...

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MULTIFACE can stop ANY program at ANY point and COPY it. It works every time. FULLY automatic and self-proof — 1 command, simple to use, healthy 100% error-trapped — fully error-trapped, earning for you.

As long as you know how to load a game, MULTIFACE will COPY it at a touch of a button! Having saved a game, you can continue it or re-save later as you progress. Programs will re-load even without MULTIFACE attached and run where you stopped and SAVED.

MULTIFACE is menu-driven with screen prompts and most operations are assisted by pressing a single key — so easy.

It uses the most powerful and efficient compressing for fast re-loading and for saving minimal room when saving.

MULTIFACE can also save SCREENS only and COPY SCREENS to printers. It has a built-in MULTI-TOOLKIT with unique facilities to study-modify programmes = essential for hackers!

MULTIFACE & GENIE work as a through-port and can both save to your MICROHANDLE and DISCOVERY. Their abilities are...

MULTIFACE 1 & 128

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1. command, simple to use, 100% error-trapped — fully error-trapped, saving for you.

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MULTIFACE ONE

Saves into DISKSPACE - CO tape at higher speed
Works in 48K mode on Spectrum +1 & 2
Has a built-in joystick Interface

MULTIFACE 128

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Works in 48 & 128K mode on Spectrum +1 & 2
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A unique combination of hardware software(packs) that can disassemble ANY program of ANY point, whatever the language, syntax, and architecture you use.

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Applied magic for the Spectrum hackers.
In the beginning there was the Spectrum. Lots of people bought one. Lots of other people wrote games for the Spectrum, and lots of people bought those as well.

But there was a snag—everything used cassette tapes, which were fine for Depeche Mode but not for software. Slow, unreliable and frustrating were some of the kinder terms used for the medium.

Now the Spectrum+3, a games machine that has all its software on a disc drive... Guess what Romantic Robot has produced? Multiface 3, that's what. Plug it into your Spectrum+3, and load a game from tape. Press the red button and you can port it on to disc at any stage, yours to load in a trice at a whim's notice. Multiface 3 works by waiting for the program to load and then it takes a copy, and as the program was running at the time, it will run when the copy is loaded back later.

The tape to disc function of the Multiface 3 would be enough to recommend it to anyone. But there's more. When the red button is pressed, a whole range of functions appears. You can look through the Spectrum+3's memory, altering it at will. High scores have never been so easy to obtain. Memory can be displayed as hexadecimal, decimal or text. All of the 128K - 3's 128K of RAM can be fiddled with, not just the 48K's worth that Basic has access to.

You can also print out areas of memory and screens in a variety of different forms. The Multiface 3 can do the same types of graphics dumps as its brother Multiprint, straight text, Spectrum-style Copy and a couple of shaded screen dumps. It can't do much more than 128K - 3 Basic does, but it does it in the middle of programs.

The main purpose of the Multiface is to get things on to disc. As well as the simple Save and Load, it's got a few other tricks up its interface. You can, for example, use the disc from 48K mode. Lots of people get excited by this.

Other things that the Multiface can do is allow you to erase a file to make room on a disc, in case you need to save something in mid-game and can't get to Basic to do the deed. You can Format a disc from the Multiface, alas.

Multiface also compresses stuff automatically, and doesn't Save empty areas of memory. These two features mean that you can get (for example) more than three games on the 170-odd K allowed you per disc side. But you can turn these features off, if need be.

Everything is accessed by the traditional one- or two-line menu and single keypresses. Multiface 3 is very careful about invalid inputs, and didn't crash or otherwise misbehave at all. And I did try to confuse it.

More than that, what can I say? I enjoy a good rant, most reviewers do, but the Multiface 3 seems set on continuing the Romantic Robot tradition of doing the job reliably. I can't even complain a little. Any 128K - 3 owner will find it a wonderful device, indispensable even—I'm not giving mine back without a fight. I expect to see the usual extra programs appear for the best in due course (Genie et al), whereupon not owning a Multiface 3 will brand one a complete loser.

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LIFEGUARD is an infinite life finder. Install it into the MULTIFACE 1 or 128, load a game, press the MULTIFACE'S button and LIFEGUARD is ready to look for infinite lives, ammunition, etc. Once it finds it, your playing and score will never be the same—you'll win again and again—and for £6.95 ONLY!

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TOUR DE FORCE

Can you gain the coveted yellow jersey in Gremlin's grand prix cycling game. Tour De Force is a delightfully playable game, with original and addictive gameplay, said the reviewers in issue 49 (66% Overall). This humorous little game will prove popular with any cycling fan.

MASK II

CRASH reviewed MASK II back in issue 48 giving it an incredible 81%, saying 'MASK II is a top class game'. The tie-in element was very strong in this sequel which certainly proved popular with the reviewers. You can speed over all types of terrain using a choice of three vehicles - a sports car/jet, an armoured truck and an all-terrain vehicle. Every mission has its own objectives making MASK II exciting and addictive.

BLOOD VALLEY

Normally Blood Valley (reviewed on page 41 in this issue) would set you back £9.99, but with a subscription deal you can get the fantasy game, based on the Duelmaster series published by Armada. Free. Blood Valley can be played by one or two players - fun for all the family.

DEFLEKTOR

The programmer of Highway Encounter and TLL, Costa Panayi, spawned this puzzling and addictive game. Using a series of mirrors and other assorted polarisers, fibre optics and absorbers you must guide the laser from one end of the maze to the home receiver - thus completing the circuit. The concept is simple but the resulting game is fiendishly difficult. We first looked at it in Issue 47, when it gained 77%. 'Simple, but cleverly effective' commented one enthusing reviewer, 'it's very addictive' said another.

VENOM STRIKES BACK

To appear on the Spectrum soon... In the third of the MASK series you must penetrate the VENOM base and rescue your son, Scott Tracker. Eradication of the evil Miles Mayhem would also be nice - it was he who kidnapped Scott in the first place. Sure to be another great game in the MASK series.

NORTHSTAR

Another Exoton clone it may be - but there's no doubting the superb implementation of this Jon O'Brien programmed game. The reviewers raved about it in Issue 49 - it gained a CRASH Smash - saying 'the graphics are superb' and 'it's compelling and successful'. It's not just a simple shoot 'em up - Northstar requires strategic planning as well as a strong trigger finger.

BASIL THE GREAT MOUSE DETECTIVE

In the first of an exciting new licensing deal with Walt Disney you can take the role of the eponymous rodent in this exciting arcade adventure. Your mission is to find your old friend Doctor Dawson, who was kidnapped by the evil Professor Ratigan. The atmospheric graphics and sound make Basil The Great Mouse Detective a guaranteed favourite with all cartoon fans.

CYBER NOID THE FIGHTING MACHINE

Through a new marketing deal Gremlin Graphics have got their hands on Hewson's latest amazing game (see page 12 of this issue for more info) - and now so can you. Raffaele Cocco, of Exoton and Equinox fame, gained a massive 96% from the CRASH reviewers for his latest arcade quality game. Jump in his amazing fighting machine and blast away all and sundry. The ultimate in shoot 'em up fun!
As all good gremlins know, you can't afford to be without your latest issue of CRASH if you want the lowdown on the high jinks of the Spectrum computer world. Missing your issues of CRASH means you'll be missing out on...

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This offer is subject to availability and closes on May 4 1986. Subscriptions ordered by April 6 will start with Issue 52. Subscriptions ordered between April 6 and May 4 will start with Issue 53.
EASTER EXTRAVAGANZA

COIN-OP PRODUCERS are giving away licences left, right and centre this month. Activision have recently gained the computer game rights to four arcade hits. Sega's *Afterburner*, the hugely successful flight simulator, is the one that everyone's looking forward to, but it won't be out until the end of the year. They also have the amazing *R-Type*, licensed from Taito, in which you blast your way through the monstrous Bydo empire. Sega's other two Activision deals come in the form of *SDI* and *Time Scanner*. In *SDI* you must seek out hostile forces, and *Time Scanner* puts you at the controls of a sophisticated pinball machine.

Ocean, voted the Number One software house of 1987 by CRASH readers, try to sustain their success into 1988 with three tremendous arcade tie-ins. The game to play in the arcades at the moment is *Operation Wolf*, and in a few months time, courtesy of the Manchester software house, it'll be the game to play on your home computer. Ocean are also sitting on *Typhoon*, the Kornami arcade game, and SNK's *Guerilla Wars*. All three shoot 'em ups should be released in autumn.

DEATHWISH

You can't keep a good game down and following Ocean's huge successes *Renegade* (89%, Issue 44) and *Green Beret* (88%, Issue 28) come *Target Renegade* and *Vindicator - Green Beret II*. In *Target Renegade* you're back on the streets beating up punks and Beastie Boys fans as only you know how. What's been seen of it so far suggests something even better than the original. Both games should be out in the very near future.

As far as CRASH readers were concerned the biggest and best game of 1987 was, without a doubt, *Driller* (97%, Issue 47) - scooping five awards, its graphics generation system, Freescape, took 14 months to programme and Incentive are determined to make the most of the innovative technique. The next game to come from the small Aldermaston software house is *The Dark Side*, also programmed by the Major Developments team. It's set 200 years further into the future on the moon Tricuspid (also the name of a valve in the heart - Biology mnemonic). Your main objective is to prevent the giant weapon known as Zephyr One from destroying Tricuspid. Your equipment comprises nothing more than a futuristic space suit, a quad laser, a protective band, and a jet pack for extra mobility.

The Dark Side makes use of all its predecessor's features and several new ones. At £9.95 (£5 cheaper than *Driller*) it should sell as well as CRASH hot off the press.

GOTHIK ADVENTURE

The long awaited *Gothik* from Firebird is now ready for release at £7.95. You play the part of a young warrior who must find...
 Shoot or bo shot in Cascade's 19 Part 1 - Boot Camp, out soon. The game follows a 'grunt' (foot soldier) through the rigours of an army training camp - sequels will feature the young recruit in a real war. The programmers went to the Yorkshire moors to see what it was really like. Can you stand the pace?

GREMLIN BYTES

The Magic Bytes label (previously distributed by the now-defunct Ariolasoft) has recently been bought by Gremlin Graphics who will be marketing a whole range of exciting products under the title. First off will be the rinky dink Pink Panther. The famous cartoon character takes a job as the butler of a wealthy home owner, but the devious feline finds the opportunity too great to miss; he decides to relieve the rich employer of all worldly possessions. It's not as easy as chucking the stuff out of the window though. Oh no; as in the popular cartoon series, you must avoid the detective advances of the infamous Inspector Clouseau. The game is enhanced by a version of the legendary tune.

Another gift from the gods

Gremlin Graphics have just the thing, Hercules, that well known slayer of the damned, comes chopping his way on to the Spectrum at the end of April. Hercules has murdered his sleeping children due to a curse laid upon him by his wicked mother Hera (she won't be getting much for Mother's Day!). In response to his pleas for mercy, the gods send him to the stem King of Argos (no relation to the chain store, we trust) who sets Hercules 12 terrible tasks. He needs your help to complete them before the gods get tired of his attempts.

Gremlin's next release Alternative World Games, which should be in the shops now, takes you all around the world to compete in a range of national pastimes. It's obviously a parody of the Epyx Winter World Games series featuring offbeat events such as...
ALTERNATIVE SOFTWARE have announced their imminent release of BMX Ninja at £1.99. Using your cycle ninja you must battle against skateboarders, fellow BMX riders and ninja scooters. It’s all a test of skill and endurance; will you be able to produce the bunny hops, wheelies and back flaps able to outwit your fellow contestants? In true budget style, again from Pontefract-based Alternative, there’s Future Bike Simulator, programmed by pole climbing, boot throwing, sack racing and running up walls! Each country has its own alternative national anthem – for example the Can-Can in France. A multload, of course.

20TH CENTURY FOX

Following in the controversial steps of Game Over (Ocean), Barbarian (Palace) and The Legend of the Amazon Women (US Gold) from Martech comes Vixen. This game seems destined to reach new depths of sexism in software. You play the part of the Foxy Lady of Granath (really) who, with her magic whip (honest!), must enter a cave complex and destroy the evil creatures that prevent her progress. The animation of Vixen and her fox double are digitised from the real thing (whatever that is).

Grand Slam (formerly Argus Press Software) have a whole batch of interesting releases for the next few months. First off, on the QuickSilva label, is Chubby Gristle – a story about a fat man who wants to get fatter! Then coming in June, on the Grand Slam label, there’s Peter Beardsley’s International Football. Based on the exploits of the famous Liverpool/ England footballer and from the same programmers that brought you Gary Lineker’s Football (52%, Issue 49) it’s said over four different landscapes and should be available in late June. The latest in armoured vehicles should be cut in August (just in time for the Motor Show).

Roadstar XRI, which takes you across land, sea and air, comes from talented programmer John Phillips of Nebulus (85%, Issue 47) fame. Then, for release in September comes another shoot ‘em up, Netherworld. Asimodius – The Angel Of Death is another arcade adventure from Hewson waiting for a November release. Following closely after that is Raffaello Cecco’s (CRASH Smashes, Exolon and Cybernoid – The Fighting Machina) next mysterious game, as yet without a name.

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Accolade (the producers of Hard Ball, Ace Of Aces and Psi-5 Trading Co.) have recently signed up with Electronic Arts for the release of their next sports simulation, Mini-Putt. Their latest sports release is based on the whacky activity of crazy golf. The game comes complete with theme courses (films, countries and arcade games) and three types of obstacles. Power and precision is needed to master this latest comical release.

Hewson’s releases for the next year contain many exciting products. Next from the Abingdon offices comes Marauder, written by Mark Kelly. In the same style as Commando it scrolls vertically.

CURIOSER AND CURIOSER

ALTERNATIVE SOFTWARE have announced their imminent release of BMX Ninja at £1.99. Using your cycle ninja you must battle against skateboarders, fellow BMX riders and ninja scooters. It’s all a test of skill and

Softstorm Developments. Straddle your jet-powered armoured bike and prepare to battle with fellow riders as you race through death alley. It comes from the same team that brought you M.A.D.’s UCM (85%, Issue 47). Following Hewson’s tremendous success with their first Rack-H release, Ocean Conqueror (issue 45, 77%) comes Battle Valley. From central HQ you must capture all the terrorist bases and destroy the enemy missile. You are aided by a chopper to rebuild broken bridges and a tank to protect you from the aggressive enemy forces – all for £2.99!

Budget software names get crazier all the time. Top Ten Hits have Dusty Droid And The Garbage Gobblers OK Yahll- featuring Simon, the super yuppie and Don’t Say It, Spray It!

Then from Firebird you’ll be seeing Muggins The Spaceman, Ninja Scooter Simulator, Blow Out and Pogo Stick Olympics. Mastertronic not wanting to miss out on the fun, have got Super Trolley.
It is 3028 AD. Planet Earth is governed by all powerful rival corporations. In deepest space, a lone asteroid, rich in Minorthian Crystal, is on a collision course with a sterile moon.

As Commander of a robotic space mining team, it is your awesome task to reach the asteroid and mine the crystal before the catastrophic cosmic collision - and before your rival corporation's team gets there first.

In this pulse-pounding race against time, the opposition is ruthless, the rewards fabulous and stakes appallingly high.

Encounter a critical race against time for survival!
APRIL is going to be one helluva month as far as comedy videos go. Kicking of the month to a hilariously amusing start is the hilarious Outrageous Fortune (Rank, 15). It stars the wild dwarf, Bette Midler, alongside the equally funny Shelley Long. Both are having an affair with the same man, then, unexpectedly he dies in a mysterious accident — this is when the fun really starts! It's out now.

Also from Rank this month you can see Richard Chamberlain in the sequel to the poor 1985 second remake of King Solomon's Mines (it was first made in 1957 and successfully remade in 1950). Allan Quatermain And The Lost City Of Gold (Rank, PG). Both the prequel and sequel were shot at the same time.

Dillon stars as an up and coming drug dealer respectively. Goldberg, as per usual, carries the whole story on his shoulders and does a great job.

David Lynch’s superb cult movie, Blue Velvet, should have reached your screens by now. Isabella Rossellini and Dennis Hopper play a kinky nightclub singer and a sadistic kidnapper/drug dealer respectively. Blue Velvet was very powerful in the cinema, but I have my doubts whether it can be carried over to the small screen. Certainly not for the weak stomached!

The end of April finally sees the release of the hilarious Raising Arizona (CBS/Fox, 15). Starring Nicholas Cage and Holly Hunter in a hilarious comedy about an odd couple who kidnap a child because they can't have their own. You need to have a strange sense of humour to appreciate it to its full. Beverly Hills Cop II (CIC Video, 15) is all set for release next month.

Axel Foley (Eddie Murphy), the wise-cracking Detroit cop, returns to Beverly Hills to uncover the Alphabet murders. All the old team are back, plus a few new ones — like Brigitte Nielsen, and the director at the B-14-year old Top Gun fame) whose influence is very evident.

CIC also have Brian De Palma’s The Untouchables (CIC Video, 15) waiting to burst into your home. Sean Connery (who has since gained an Oscar nomination for his performance) stars with Kevin Costner (who can currently be seen on the big screen in No Way Out) as the tough cops in the age of prohibition. Anyone whose seen the recently re-run TV series (on which the film was based) will know how fascinating and enthralling the whole story is. Don’t miss it!

Ennio Morricone again provides a superb soundtrack. Getting on into May you can expect to see two great comedies both from RCA/Columbia.

Roxanne stars the tremendously talented and highly regarded Steve Martin as a fire chief whose undying love for a young girl (Daryl Hannah) can not be stopped — even by the tremendously long nose he has. Then following quickly in its footsteps comes Woody Allen’s latest self-indulgent, but largely amusing film. Radio Days is another trip down memory lane revising the times when all the family used to huddle up around the wireless for a bit of entertainment and fantasy. All good, clean fun. I wonder if they'll bring out Video Days as the follow-up next century!

Lastly, all of you that have been waiting for five years since E.T. first came out in the cinemas will be happy to hear that CIC Video have finally gained the video rights for it, and are set to release it in... Autos? ‘What’s the point more release than possibly never’ which was Spielberg’s first reaction to the suggestion of a video release. E.T. is the biggest grossing film EVER, taking an amazing $700 million worldwide, and gaining nine Academy Award nominations, so the release should be quite an occasion.

ABOUT TIMES TOO

FOR ALL those aspiring Yuppies out there — there is now a newspaper for YOU! Early Times is aimed mainly at the 18-14-year old group and is published weekly from Garth Publications. 'The independent newspaper for young people' shows strong influences from other newspapers. The Independent (indeed it was this paper that provided the inspiration for its founder Dr Barry Weightman), providing clearly-produced photographs and a large amount of illustrations.

Early Times covers a wide range of subjects chosen for its specific interest to children. There are sections on cookery (containing recipes similar to those on the BBC's Why Don't You?), lots of TV coverage (mainly on the soaps) and general informative and review sections on film and theatre. Early Times also has a large amount of news from all parts of the world of interest to or concerning the younger generation — like the Winter Olympics, the televising of the American Congress and even such issues as the Russian involvement in Afghanistan. There is also a very interesting (but rather cynical) 'agony aunt' column — youngsters also have problems — and a comprehensive listings section.

Early Times is definitely worth looking out for — and has a lot of backing from newagers so it’s not hard to get, thank goodness. But fifty pence is a large chunk out of someone’s weekly pocket money.
YOUR SPEC. Order the first issue now. Send 50p and an A4 SAE to: P & J, 48 Westbury Road, Balston, Northwood, Middlesex HA4 7EE. If you have POKEs, Pokes, maps for help with any game, or new or old send a large SAE to: Paul Ryan, 292 Northway, London SW19 2EA.

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PEN-PALS CRASH, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1BQ. Make sure you write to arrive at CRASH by May 3 and then just stick back and wait for the letter box to appear. Remember, ballpints are forever.

If your ad hasn’t featured this month, don’t despair! We’ll do our best to get it in ASAP onto (as you say in classifieds), and if the worst comes to the worst (which it hasn’t for three months now, but we’re still waiting) you can always send the ad in again.

THE CLASSIFIES

CRASH BACK NUMBERS

I HAVE CRASH for sale. Contact: Ian Buck, Cuckoo Pen, Aughton, Cullingbourn, Kingston, Marlborough SN4 3SA. Tel: 02654 286

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WINNERS & PRIZES

HERE'S LOOKING AT HESWON

Issue 49

Larry Bagwell of Devon EX10 6CO was overjoyed when we told him that he’s won the regional prize for the Spectrum Personality contest, which means that he wins a copy of the Four Smash Hits compilation. Not bad for a guy who doesn’t own a Jaguar! Larry also receives one of the 51 copies of the Four Smash Hits compilation – containing such games as , Enzo, Ramos Ranch, Undead and Zynaps. Due to an editorial cock-up we were giving away 25 copies of Four Smash Hits, we are in fact giving away 50 of them. If you’ve got the bottom 25 of those 50 copies in us, count yourself lucky! They happen to be: Andrew Wilson, Eiss RMD 9GQ; Johnsthe Dor, Scotland ML10 6HT; Peter Wilson, Cleveland TS26 2TX; Stephen Martin, London N1.2; formerly of Midtown West Indies 250A; Jonathan Bell, Surrey KT21 1NQ; Jim Buxton, Manchester 359 4OC; Nicholas Sweeney, Cleveland T86 3SE; Steven Cooper, Cleveland T83 5DU; Andrew Brooks, S.Yorks. S10 9HL; Sam O’Donnell, Lincolnshire LN3 1PX; Nicholas Holland, Berkeley 8LE; Richard A Lamb, Surrey CR0 82H; Simon Penfold, Swimley 8X 1AF; A Graeme, Buckinghamshire B8 5DQ; Andrew Holme, Chesham HP4 3X6; Wayne Gooch, from Newton Le Willows 8TH; and Michael J Brown who lives in Yorks. The 20 runners-up who will each receive a framed EPR0M FANZINE!

WANTED CRASH 1-46, will not separate £15 including P&P. All CRASH freebies. Issue 1-46, will not separate £15 including P&P. All CRASH freebies. Contact: Graham Persson. Tel: 048 525 237 ask for Andrew Holme

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IT ALL ADDS UP TO A TERRIFIC INCENTIVE

Issue 49

All winners, please allow 26 days for the delivery of your prizes. All queries regarding commercial communications sent to Frank K, CRASH, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1BQ. Please don’t ring Frances as she has enough trouble reading through your prizes as it is.
BE A PIRATE OF THE AIRWAVES
WITH A CORDLESS TELEPHONE FROM HEWSON

HEWSON’S Cybernoid, the lean mean fighting machine, has soared to success this month with a CRASH Smash rating of 96%. Contracted by the Federation to deal with a pirate raid, the sleek, sophisticated ship has an arsenal of weapons to wipe out the insidious invaders. But imagine for a moment what it must be like for the pirates: one long round of drudgery, taking bit parts in other people’s games, emptying the Federation coffers with nothing but a rattling, shuddering heap of junk machinery between you and the cool, dark sky. The heroes get all the good ships, insurance rates are astronomically high and the chances of you returning home to enjoy the odd tot of rum and a bit of laserplay are slim. Even in the 23rd century a pirate’s lot is not a happy one.

Wouldn’t it be great, therefore, if you could design your own customised battle machine – one with just as many extras, add-ons and innovations as Cybernoid has and more? The Federation run would be far less dangerous then; you might even make it home to enjoy some of your well-deserved spoils in the cosiness of your personal pirate den.

Would-be pirates look no further – CRASH is giving you the chance to design your own machine. Just draw the best equipped pirate ship you can think of, with as many boosters, blasters, fixtures and fittings as you like.

Two outright winners, whose entries are judged to be the most innovative designs, will be rewarded with a Commtel 828 cordless telephone – a great way of communicating with other pirate ships.

Five second-prizewinners will steal away with a Cybernoid sweatshirt, while 25 runners-up will receive a copy of the game.

So, grab your pencils and send your entry to: COME TELL HEWSON COMP, CRASH, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB to arrive by May 3.

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...to be an RT undercover cop?

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