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THE CHARTS
What's going on, what's coming down, and what's hanging about in the middle somewhere – that Gallup Chart rundown in full.

COMPLETE CONTROL
110 pages of hints and tips, make Complete Control the biggest Amiga tips section of all! This month: massive Gods maps, a giant Prince Of Persia guide, finding your way around Monkey Island and more!

IF WE'D KNOWN THEN...
The Assembly Line have been responsible for some of the strangest – and most original – Amiga games ever written. But what do they think of their old games now?

THE ULTIMATE AUTUMN GAME GUIDE
Here's the cure to the summertime blues – 11 pages of special previews of this Autumn's biggest games. It's The Simpsons versus The Godfather, Hulk Hogan versus Robin Hood, and it all starts on page 49.

90 SUBSCRIBE!
Get your copy of AMIGA POWER delivered straight to your door (and get to choose between Exile, Switchblade II and Armour Geddon FREE!!) Plus! Special offers! Those elusive back issues! AMIGA POWER binders! And more!
Welcome to our fourth AMIGA POWER Cover Disk, crammed with as varied a selection of games as you're ever likely to find. We've got a fully playable demo of Activision's ultra-violent coin-op conversion Beast Busters, then there're our two playable sections from Hawk's Thrust-like The Executioner, plus an inspired selection from the world of PD. The disk isn't our only covermount this month though. Full explanations below...

AND THIS IS DISK FOUR

BEAST BUSTERS
Activision's excellent conversion of SNK's smash hit coin-op adds real horror to the first person shoot-'em-up, putting you up against zombies, werewolves and a host of other fear movie refugees. It's a bonkers gun-run through all manner of ghoulial bad guys - our guide to the gore-iest starts over the page...

THE EXECUTIONER
Two complete sections of new label Hawk's friendliness addictive arcade adventure. The bits we have here are pure Thrust-inspired shoot-'em-up, but there's a lot more to the finished game than that - if you liked last month's playable section of Exile, you're in for a treat.

PLUS! THE PICK OF PD!

MAZEMAN
For many people PacMan is still the definitive 'video game'. With Mazeman you get to control a close relative of the pill munching blob. It's more fun than you could possibly expect...

PHARAOH'S CURSE
This original 8-bit platformer is a big favourite in PD circles. Brace yourself for a dose of non-stop cavern-jumping, mummy-mashing action!

DAD
No, we don't know why it's called this either! It's just like one of those old plastic toys where you have to move the squares around to get them in the right order - but 10 times as difficult!

TIPS POSTER

Not content with giving you Bombuzal and Kid Gloves on our first two issues, we're going to show you how to complete them too - and what might be better than with a giant, double-sided poster, showing you everything you could possibly need to know to take Complete Control of the two games? Simply mount it on the wall near your computer and you need never be stuck again - the only problem is deciding which side you're going to have staring at you! (Why not buy two copies and get them both?)

SIDE A BOMBUZAL
Even with a poster this big, there are just too many levels in Bombuzal to take you through them all. That's why we've done the first 50, then concentrated on the 17 coded ones thereafter, to lead you right through the game. Gary Penn nearly killed himself doing this, so you'd better appreciate the results!

SIDE B KID GLOVES
Our complete guide takes you through every last screen of Kid Gloves, showing you what you have to do (and where you have to do it) to complete the game.

Stuart Campbell, Kid's biggest fan, shows you how - you never need be stuck on that-particularly-tricky-bit-in-the-psychadelic-section-where-all-the-floors-are-deadly-to-the-touch again!

Not got either game, eh? Then quick! Flick to page 90...
START ME UP
Loading any of the programs on this AMIGA POWER disk should be an easy and pleasant experience. Firstly, ensure that you’ve got a mouse plugged into Joystick Port One and a joystick plugged into Joystick Port Two. Switch your computer off, insert the disk into the internal drive, and switch the machine back on. After a short delay, you should be greeted with a menu screen. Choose which game or demo you want to play, then either press the appropriate Function Key, or move the mouse pointer onto the appropriate small box and click on it with the left mouse button. Your chosen game should then load and run, but, just to be on the safe side, don’t remove the disk from the internal drive during play.

EMOTIONAL RESCUE
Don’t get all upset and hysterical if you have problems loading any of the games on the disk. Simply follow these three easy steps to banish duff-disk misery forever.
1. First, try starting the whole loading process over again from scratch, ensuring that you don’t have any extra peripherals attached to your Amiga.
2. If the disk appears to be corrupt, you may be able to correct it using the Disk Doctor program from the Workbench disk that came with your Amiga.
3. If all else fails, just send the disk back to us (including details of your equipment configuration would be handy), and we’ll rush a new one off to you as soon as possible. Please send the disk ONLY, not the whole magazine to: AMIGA POWER Disk Four Returns, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon BA1 2BW.

BEAST BUSTERS
Publisher: Activision
Authors: Henry Clarke, Ken Jarvis, Matthew Simmons

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?
To be perfectly frank, there’s not a great deal to explain about Beast Busters— you should be able to figure most of it out within half a second of starting play. Arcade games will already be familiar with this sideways-scrolling, first-person perspective shoot-em-up, distinguished from other machine gun-mounted coin-ops by its non-military setting and sense of humour. Principle baddies in this, the first section of Activision’s SNK conversion, are our old friends the walking dead. Set inside a decaying city populated almost entirely with animated corpses, the game is obviously another variation on the

shooting gallery theme popularised by Operation Wolf, but it does some interesting things with the basic game style—particularly in the visuals department, where it gleefully reduces hostile zombies to, well, to their ‘constituent parts.’

This AMIGA POWER preview is a generous snatch of the first level, taking place in and around a subway populated by, and rather aggressive, werewolf-style dogs. We're in the full game and not a demo, so there's no point in moving into a vertically scrolling elevator scene. Followed by a 'walking into the screen' street scene. (But

Oh dear— we just had too late to really make these fellas’ day with a couple of accurately tossed grenades. Armed corpses are hard to miss—after all, they’re blooming close to you, and there are an awful lot of the suckers. A bullet in the middle of the head has much the same effect on the baddies as stuffing a mad cow full of Sentex… and then feeding it match heads. (If you can imagine that).

AND IF YOU WANT SOME MORE...
You’ll be able to pick up the complete game version of Beast Busters any time now for the standard sort of price of £25.99 from your local retailer.

JANE'S GUIDE TO ZOMBIE STREET SCUM AND OTHER HORRORS

ARMED CORPSE
The first and most dangerous badguy, this rather revolting character pops up right in front of you, flashing a huge revolver. Since he’s so close he’s an immediate danger— get rid of him right away.

DEVIL DOGS
Just as nasty, they do a great deal of snarling and jumping around. While the dogs carry no weapons (being dogs), they are ridiculously fast and can seriously shorten your life expectancy if they get their fangs into you. Best to blast them before they get too close— and don’t start to feel sorry for the ones that look (surprisingly blue) little kids either! That sort of mistake can be fatal. The best motto for players of Beast Busters is to KILL EVERYTHING.

PICKING UP TREATS
Once the action heats up you’ll see plenty of ammunition magazines and grenades flying about the screen. Forget about the bad guys (for a split second, mind!) and shoot these instead— in doing so you’ll collect them and add them to your (fast depleting) weapon stock. For the purposes of this preview it’s merely a case of target practice, as you’ve plenty of bullets to play right through the demo from the offset. Having said that, though, a few extra grenades wouldn’t go far amiss.

SNEAKY SCUMBAGS
Of less immediate importance are the Sneaky Scumbags who creep up on you while you’re wasting the big guys. Just keep an eye out for these and make sure you waste them before they get too close— and don’t start to feel sorry for the ones that look (surprisingly blue) little kids either! That sort of mistake can be fatal. The best motto for players of Beast Busters is to KILL EVERYTHING.

Down in the tube station at midnight: child-like corpses change trains here. Don’t make the mistake of thinking these are passing innocents— there isn’t such a thing in this game.

since it isn’t, there seems like little reason to dwell on them any further.

KEEPING YOURSELF UNDER CONTROL
You can play in one or simultaneous two player mode using either two joysticks or a combination of mouse and ‘stick. On the intro screen you’ll be faced with a self explanatory options card, then it’s into the game where it’s simply a case of moving the control tool and pressing fire to release bullets. Grenades are available by hitting the left or right Shift buttons on the keyboard.

There’s no need to worry about running out of bullets in this demo, but you would be well advised to save your grenades for those special moments when large gangs of evil dead guys attack together.

Remember, keeping the angry corpses away from your character is a matter of absolute priority, because for each hit you take you’ll lose energy from your life-meter, positioned at the top of the screen.

Drill Dogs in abundance! These deliciously illustrated instant mongrels won’t settle for a few Bonzo Mushy Morsels, we’re afraid.
**THE EXECUTIONER**

**Publisher:** Hawk  
**Authors:** Andrew Prime, Stoo Cambridge, Doug Boari (sound)

**IN THE BEGINNING...**

Before we move onto this demo of new label Hawk's debut release, one thing has to be made clear. Although this playable preview features little in the way of strategy, the full game is by no means a straight shoot-em-up - there's a story behind the action, and it involves lots of visiting planets and, err, interviewing the inhabitants. The Executioner is actually an unusual sort of arcade adventure, with your Thrust-style space craft skipping through cavern systems on various planets in search of the four keys that will eventually lead you to some evil wizard guy, who (of course) has to be killed.

There are 120 planets to explore built up of six basic landscape types - Organic Worlds, Sandy Worlds, Medieval Worlds, Key Worlds, Rocky Worlds and Futuristic Worlds. This demo features two Medieval sectors for you to try out. In the demo your only task is to fly around and kill the hostile soldiers and pick up a few of the goodies you'll find scattered around - all that3 taking-prisoners-and-pumping-them-for-information-on-the-whereabouts-of-the keys business (not to mention the selling-them-at-trading-posts in order to buy some fuel) has been held over for the proper game.

**THE EXECUTIONER: JOYSTICK CONTROL**

- **Activate Weapon**
- **Engines On**
- **Turn the Craft Left or Down**
- **Turn the Craft Right or Down**
- **Tractor Beam On and Reverse**

Just one major thing to remember - easy does it all the time. When we first received this demo we started firing around like idiots, and soon paid the price. Remember - if you so much as lightly scrape against anything, your game is over and it's back to the square one. Your little Thrust-like craft goes much, much faster than it needs to, so please be dainty. Whether you're blasting around in free space or edging your way through particularly perilous labyrinthine, minimal joystick action is a must. In general, you'll never need more than a half-second burst of thrust, followed by a quick reverse.

You'd aloud be well advised to keep the auto-fire off - if you go mad with bullets they'll soon run out, and they don't come back unless your quit out of the game and start again. However, if you take it easy, the arsenal will replenish itself.

**SO HOW DO I ACTUALLY DO IT?**

Killing is but a simple matter of twiddling your space ship about, aiming it in the right direction and firing your gun - or rather, a simple sounding matter of etc etc. As those familiar with Thrust-styled games will know, it's actually rather difficult (and very frustrating!) in a nice way of way. Goodies like fuel pods and transport module can be picked up by backing into the object and turning on your purple tractor beam. There are also a few gateways which can only be opened by

**HOSTILES**

Yep, there are plenty of these to be found about the place alright. Bear in mind, most of these don't have to be destroyed, and just passing by those which don't form an immediate threat is sometimes advisable. Remember that certain objects are much more useful if you don't blast them but pick them up...

**SNIPERS**

Usually to be found guarding the castle turrets or camped out in baskets attached to cavern walls, these will fire repeatedly in the same direction, which makes them sound fairly easily avoidable, and they would be too, if not for the fact that they're usually placed in strategic positions. Our suggestion: make it a priority to get rid of them.

**ARCHERS**

Again, these chaps are conditioned to fire the same way, and won't bother you if you steer well clear. However, their arrows are pretty huge, and are usually to be found zipping across the entrances to important locations, which could cause some problems.

**FIRING FLOWERS**

Semi-concealed in the brush, most of these can simply be ignored. A good job too - they're small and difficult to get close to, so if you're going to eliminate them, do it carefully.

**BLOBS**

Once inside the caverns it's worth watching out for dribs of goo falling down from the roof. They drip regularly, so it's just a matter of timing things right to avoid them.

**COLLECTABLES**

- **Power Pods**
  Little golden pods which add to your fuel dumps. Well worth collecting.

**HOSTAGES**

- These guys jump up and down and wave their arms around like lunatics. They are extremely useful in the full game, but not much cop in this demo - it's safe to ignore them if you want.

**KEYS**

- The whole point of the exercise is to pick these up. There are only four in the whole game, and none in this demo, so there's not much point about saying anything more about them really, is there?

**TRANSPORTER MODULES**

- Grey boxes with fans at the top. Useful in the full game - they would normally help you to get from one planet to shooting at the control mechanism - these aren't generally difficult to find.

The Executioner has been written by new programming team Hawk, and distributed by Impressions. Impressions boss David Lester explained: 'This isn't just another version of Thrust, or a straight shoot-em-up. It's actually an adventure played out in an arcade format.'

**SPLASH SHOTS**

Weird little character who hides in the caverns, slinging bullets across the places where you're likely to be hanging out. Best to eliminate these guys on sight - it'll save you some trouble later on.

**HIDDEN GUN**

Fires downwards from the roof of caverns and is extremely difficult to take out. Steer clear.
THE BEST OF PD
AMIGA POWER'S SELECTION FROM THE BEST OF THE CURRENT CROP OF PUBLIC DOMAIN GAMES

MAZEMAN
Following on from last month's Amiga Invaders, this month's piece of arcade history is Pac-Man. One of the real legends of video-gaming, this was the first game that attracted significant numbers of female players into the arcades, and one of the first to have a serious spin-off effect into other areas of the media.

You should remember some of these, of course - there were Pac-Man cartoons, Pac-Man watches, Pac-Man records, Pac-Man board games, Pac-Man bubblegum, Pac-Man breakfast cereal, you name it. All of which wasn't bad going for a character who was little more than a yellow circle with a wedge cut out of it.

This version departs from the original by having some different maze layouts and a couple of minor extra features, but the gameplay remains essentially the same. Using the joystick, you guide the Pac-Man (sorry, Mazeman) around the maze, eating the small white dots and avoiding the ghosts (or in this version, they pass over the ghost pen - knowledge which may prove useful in a tight spot. Oh, and this version doesn't have any sound, so you'll have to make the 'wacka wacka' noises yourself. Get munching!

MAZEMAN CONTROLS
Simply push UP/DOWN/LEFT/RIGHT on the joystick to move the Mazeman in the desired direction.

DAD
We've got another mind-stretching puzzler for you this month, in the shape of this funny little game of block-shunting. The idea is to move the large blue block from the top left corner of the screen to the top right corner by shifting all the other blocks around to make space beside it. Simply click on the leading edge of a block and, if possible, it will move into the adjacent space. And that's pretty much it, really.

HEY! IT'S A MINI-COMPETITION!
Dad is incredibly simple to play, but immensely difficult to beat (none of us have managed it yet), so if you have a solution, write in and tell us. The first person to find a solution will be receiving five free games in the post. Full game instructions (well, not very much fuller) can be found on the disk in the file entitled 'Dad Documentation'. Good luck!

DAD CONTROLS
Use the mouse to click on the leading edge of the piece you want to move.

PHARAOH'S CURSE

In this month's visit to Deja Vu Corner, we're proud to bring you a real blast from the past in the shape of Pharaoh's Curse, a conversion of an original VIC-20 game from the same team who did last month's Frantic Freddie.

Pharaoh's Curse is a platform arcade game in the style of Jet Set Willy (the Spectrum classic that's one of the biggest-selling computer games of all time), and involves your unnamed little character on a quest to ransack the tombs of the Pharaohs for gold and treasure.

Attempting to stop him are a mummy and one of the Pharaoh's slaves, who run around either trying to collide with our hero or shoot him, and deprive him of one of his two lives. He can, of course, shoot back at them, but killing them is only a temporary solution, and they'll soon return. The other inhabitant of the tomb is a small bird - harmless to the touch, but he can provide a helping hand for our little chap. If he holds his hands in the air when the bird is near, it will pick him up and carry him away through several screens, hopefully depositing him in a place of relative safety.

Otherwise the game is completely straightforward - just run around the screens (don't worry about big drops, you can fall from any height without hurting yourself), climb up ropes, collect the flashing treasures, grab keys to open doors, avoid the little volcanoes, and generally try not to get killed by the bad guys.

BUT IS IT ANY GOOD?
Do write and let us know if you'd like to see this sort of thing on the cover disk, or if you'd prefer to see original Amiga games instead of 8-bit ports. Better still, write to Bignoria (the programming team responsible) at the address on the Pharaoh's Curse loading screen and get them to convert some real C64 classics - then hopefully we'll be able to bring you a few more trips down Memory Lane. (Or alternatively, you'll be able to see just what it was you were missing all those years.)

JOYSTICK CONTROL
FOR PHARAOH'S CURSE

JUMP/CLIMB UP ROPE/HOLD UP HANDS FOR BIRD
FIRE PISTOL
WALK LEFT
WALK RIGHT

Introducing, bizarre, totally addictive. That's Dad.
My head is thumping, and my heart is pumping the adrenaline around every vessel of my hypertensive body - the 'driving unit', that will be shoe-horned, wedged like a Colt 45 into its holster, as I am placed into the command seat of my vehicle - ready to enter the arena of play... and combat.

"Wild Wheels" they call us. Combatants who play a "game" - a game where there are two ways to lose... down on points or down on fuel - the fuel of life! Our "kit" for action are the finely honed masterpieces of engineering... machines that will pole-axe the opposition, melt them, crush them, detonate them into a million white-hot, speeding grains of shrapnel. The 'kit of death' in which many of us will experience our last, and final, blinding flash.

In the arena, the game becomes a struggle to win, a fight for life. The noise from the screaming crowd is drowned by the incessant roar of the mighty heart of this mechanoid beast, its engine pushing out every ounce of power to keep me just ahead, and delivering a heavy, sickening blow into my back as it accelerates at my command. Taking aim, I firm up every muscle ready for the great burst, the deafening scream as I unleash my lethal messenger... and its message - "GAME OVER!"

But that's just half the game story. Now YOU enter the arena...

ENJOY THE SHOW!

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WILL CARTRIDGES NEVER HAPPEN?

Amiga owners looking forward to playing huge games stored on instantly loadable cartridges are in for a disappointment. System 3—who were at the forefront of this, with highly publicised plans to release games on cartridge format—have now decided against pushing ahead.

The Pinner-based software house were working towards releasing an enormous cartridge version of their forthcoming Silly Putty later this year, but found that the costs were far too high. After doing their sums, System 3 estimated that Putty would have cost gamers a seriously prohibitive £60. The normal sized version of the game is to be launched on standard magnetic disk next month.

Supporters of the cartridge idea point out three main advantages over floppy disks:

- Larger games can be stored on cartridge. That means not just more levels or a greater playing area, but also the opportunity to pull in bigger and better graphics and sound.
- A cartridge would plug straight into the printer port at the back of your Amiga, so there would be no waiting for games to load, no messing around with multi-disk games and you wouldn't have to buy a cartridge drive. Also, with games involving many screens there is a far faster rate of accessibility between different areas of the game.
- Of more importance to the software publishers than the rest of us is the piracy question. Cartridges are exceptionally difficult to copy, thus knocking out the perennial piracy problem at a stroke.

System 3's Adrian Cale is still optimistic though. "It's far too expensive a project for one company to undertake," he said 'but if a few of us get together we could make it work'.

Programming outfit Vivid Image were working on the technical side on behalf of System 3. Boss John Twiddy explained: 'There weren't really any technical problems but it was all a matter of cost. People were interested, but they didn't like the amount of money involved. Interest has seriously subsided.'

TAKE A TIP
Are we ever going to see the Amiga version of Acne's Kick-Off like basketball game Tip-Off? Our spies tell us that Acne have the game complete and ready in their vaults, but have still not decided whether or not to release it because ofickle commitments. Acne's boss Anil Gupta was not in a chatty mood on the subject when we gave him a buzz. 'I haven't made my mind up yet,' he said mysteriously.

BIZARRE BOTTS
MicroProse are continuing their forays into the high powered world of arcade machines with a 3D combat extravaganza called BOTTS. An Amiga conversion has already been pencilled in for next year. Battle of the Solar System features lashings of impossibly large robots throwing hell and fire at one another. The so-called Warbots move around first-person perspective, 3D, land junking anything they contact. Graphics verge on the dazzling, and gameplay is even more accessible than MicroProse's last (and highly recommended) release, the excellent F-15 Strike Eagle II (AP £87 per cent). Robot fans are having it very easy at the moment—we've had the recent Metal Masters from Infogrames, Metal Mutant from Palace, and games like Michael [Powersense] Powell's Cyberfight from EA to look forward to. (We think we can safely say it's become something of a trend).

DIZZY BUSY
A compilation of old and new Dizzy games is to be released by Code Masters later this year. The Codys, who reckon full price games are 'a rip off', are rewriting some of the early 8-bit Dizzy games for the Amiga with 'some special extras'. There should also be a brand new Dizzy game included in the five title pack. Expect an arrival sometime in November at a price not unadjacent to £19.95.

CINEMAWARE BACK FROM THE DEAD
When a dodgy software publisher responsible for nothing but dogs and disasters suddenly has the great abyss nobody really cares a hoot, but it's a different matter when the same thing happens to a group of top class creative types.

Warming news then, that innovative American software developers Cinemaware have been rescued from disaster. Brit publisher Mirrorsoft, who've been handling Cinemaware's kit over here for the past five years, have splashed out on the Cinemaware name, thus allowing work on forthcoming releases like Rollerbabes, TV Sports Boxing and TV Sports Baseball to continue.

Cinemaware—who made a name for themselves with now-familiar games such as Defender of the Crown, Rockin' Ranger and TV Sports Football—were completely skint until Mirrorsoft stepped in. Now a new company has been set up, called Acnu Interactive, who will write games for release on the Cinemaware label.

Mirrorsoft's boss Peter Billota boomed: 'Cinemaware was our most popular affiliate label. I'm sure many entertainment software fans will feel extremely satisfied that we will still be able to publish their games.'

There's little mystery about the nature of the two up-and-coming TV Sports games, but you may not know about Rollerbabes. It's a fast, violent and futuristic team game (a la Speedball for up to eight) players featuring teams like the Eraser Heads (a group of school teachers), the Buzzcuts (a team of hairdressers) and, of course, the fabulous all-female Rollerbabes. Teams compete on a circular Rollerball-style track in a game that combines racing, fighting and trap avoiding.

Silly Putty would have twice as big on cartridge, and impossible to pirate. Still, the floppy version should be worth a look when it arrives next month...

...It's a 50 level arcade fantasy affair centered around an amorphous blob of jelly. There's no hacking, slaying or kicking, it's more stretching, bouncing and oozing.
WANTED: STOLEN AMIGA GAMES

Top programmer and graphics artist Kevin Bulmer is in a foul mood, and who can blame him? The author of such memorables as Guntler II and Corporation has recently suffered a burglary at his Westwinton home, the thieves responsible making away with his prized Amiga 3000, as well as disks containing tons of games code.

"The machine is full of code, animation and graphics from projects I'm working on," he said. "But, to make things worse, the thieves also got away with my back-up disks. There were hours of work there, and I'm really not looking forward to doing it all again. The inspiration has gone."

Kevin's working on Terminator if for Ocean, but luckily only a few bits of code for that game has gone missing, and the October release date still stands. However, he's appealed for anyone who comes across his goodies to get in touch.

The burglars took everything of value, so they weren't just after the computer. Somebody will buy that Amiga without knowing it's stolen. I don't want them to trash the code, just to get the games back to me. I'm prepared to pay out a small reward." Anyone who can help should get in touch with the AMIGA POWER office at the usual address.

FLAMES OF FREEDOM - IT'S PRETTY BLOODY HUGE

Maelstrom are currently polishing off the eagerly (and long awaited) follow-up to Midwinter. Eagerly awaited because a) the first game was so popular, and b) because it was actually pretty bloody good (if flawed in a number of ways), long awaited because well, we're still waiting for it, and we've been looking to review it since we began AMIGA POWER and it just doesn't seem finished yet!

**Flames of Freedom**, like its predecessor, is a strategy 'epic' which is as simple as it is (ahem) confusing. Here's the game: it's first person 3D time again as you make your way through dozens of islands (don't worry - you'll be in all the fun of the tropics, this time, as opposed to ice-covered) in an attempt to rid the archipelagos of an evil dictator type. You can choose your own character profile (sex, looks, physical attributes and psychology) before setting off across 500,000 square miles of unexplored landscapes. There's enough hardware here to fill a Chuck Norris movie, but don't get carried away with the firepower - the best part of the game should be the interaction with 4,000 or so characters who inhabit this world. Some are enemies, some are friends, and with some you can't tell. (Just like real life, basically).

1. Flames of Freedom covers a 500,000 square mile area, but you can speed up travel times on the control panel (otherwise you'd be hanging around between islands for donkey's years).
2. You can make up your own appearance (you can be man or woman, but not both) - though whoever wanted to look like this guy must have been pretty damn ugly in real life!
3. All modes of transport use the same control system, to avoid total and utter confusion. This one's a jeep, and it is possible to leap from your vehicle, Timothy Dalton like, onto anything that happens to pass by.
4. Into the submarine and under the waves. Maelstrom's Mike Singleton says drawing the waves was a real accomplishment - they act as you'd expect them to.
5. All those little brown circles on this island are people with whom you can have a chat. It's worth clicking on each icon to find out if they're going to help you or blow your head off.
6. Looks like this chap isn't one of the good guys, but there are plenty of useful folk hanging around. They may ask you to complete assignments for them before they risk anything though.

There are 13 weapons to choose from, and any one of 22 modes of transport to utilise. And - biggest news of the lot! - if MicroProse are to be believed (and who are we to argue?), the game will be with us by late September. (Hurray!)
JUST WHAT IS A CHAOS ENGINE?

The Bitmap Brothers have broken cover with the announcement of their new project—a Victorian-style shoot-em-up-with-knobs-on called The Chaos Engine. Taking the famous Gauntlet overhead-view perspective, it throws you and up to two chums into a giant four world, multi-level quest, with the survival of the world at stake! But what, pray tell, is a Chaos Engine? Well, inspiration for the Bmpmaps came from Charles Babbage's Analytical Engine, a never-built Victorian design for an adding machine currently being put together at the Science Museum in London—though (of course) this computer game version is a much more complex and dangerous proposition.

The place is Victorian England after some major global catastrophe, and the incredible brainchild of mad genius Baron Fontesque has gone horribly out of control, ripping apart the very fabric of time and space! Six adventurers—you get to pick which three you play—prepare to storm the Baron's country house and shut down the Engine, little knowing that they'll have to cross forests, great industrial workshops and other hostile zones thrown up by the machine before they reach it.

Even worse, the Engine's chaotic emissions have thrown up a vast range of hostile monsters to encounter, many of which exhibit a semblance of intelligent behaviour much like that seen in previous Bitmap releases.

In fact, much of the feel of the game would seem to be similar to that of Gods, the biggest difference (beyond the obvious gameplay variations given by the overhead viewpoint) being the multi-player option. Even in single player mode, a squad of three—controlled simultaneously—is employed, the behaviour of the characters determined to some extent by their various personalities and attitudes. This, it is said, will give even a single player the feeling of being involved in a multi-player game.

A lovely incentive was to try and provide an interactive, multi-player experience for one person, says game designer Phil Wilcock. "We've used the behaviour modelling techniques from Gods to give all the characters personalities—so that at any one time you'll be controlling one character with the other two following along, occasionally wandering off slightly if bonus items or enemies distract them. The player will be able to swap between lead characters as he sees fit—so some will be better at knocking down doors, say, while others will be skilled in combat—and, indeed, swap his whole squad around, choosing completely new characters from the overall party, at regular points in the game."

Obviously, we wanted something where we could use the Victorian setting—all those nice brass dials and rivets and so on—without being totally limited by reality. This game design allows us to put in pretty much anything we like, though we're not going to go too overboard. The idea is to create a sort of dark, futuristic version of Industrial Revolution England, a sort of Victorian holocaust. It'll certainly be ready for Christmas—though it means they get the thangy at the Science Museum finished before then of course, and it happens to go out of control and start ripping the fabric of time and space in real life! Then we might have to start thinking about putting the release date back a bit. Ha ha."

WE'LL SAY THIS ONLY ONCE...

Alternative have found themselves a nice little niche with budget TV spin-offs, but 480 'Alls will represent something of a departure. In the past, they've relied upon the fantasies of youngsters with simple affairs such as Postman Pat and Dad the Duck. '480 'Alls', which should arrive in September, may be编剧 but it's surely not aimed at ten-year-olds. so we're a bit unsure about who's meant to actually buy it. Still, expect a basic, simple, platform game, packed with bad jokes and despite the naughtiness, quite possibly worth eight quid of anybody's money.

AMIGA POWER RECOMMENDS

Looking for the cream of the crop? Then here are our fave raves from the past few months...

TOKI
(Ocean)
The closest thing yet to a perfect arcade conversion (see R-Type II this issue), Toki brings the Amiga some of its loveliest graphics ever, tied up with a game that's enormously slick and playable in the best coin-op traditions. It's not the first time Toki's so little of it, but even so you're getting a big chunk of game for your money, and quality rather than quantity is the ever-riding concern.

SPOT
(Leisure Genius)
Looking nothing whatsoever like any other board game in the history of mankind, Spot is such a cracker that it manages to transcend some of its terrible presentation, and the most obvious central character since Nathan in the Flintstones. In true classic style, it's easy to learn, yet frighteningly difficult to become really good at, and a wide range of options makes it suitable for all the family.

DEUTEROS
(Activision)
Something of a minority interest, but for fans of Millenium 2.2, Supremacy and the like it's exactly what they've been waiting for. At first you don't really know what you're supposed to be doing, but as the game develops everything becomes clear, and you get sucked in further with every passing minute, until time begins to have no meaning. One of the games of the year.

F- 15 STRIKE EAGLE II
(MicroProse)
Very possibly the best Amiga flight sim so far (Gary still prefers FA/18 Interceptor), and certainly one of the most playable. F-15 II combines just the right amount of realism and blistering action with some excellent 3D. The hefty $35 price tag may put a few off, but those who lighten their wallets for it will feel it was worth every penny.

SWITCHBLADE II
(Gremlin)
This gorgeous game has been the subject of some debate in our mailbag, with letters both for and against Stuart's glowing appraisal of it in issue Two. The fact of the matter is, though, that this is just about the most enjoyable arcade game to have appeared in the office since AMIGA POWER began, and that alone makes it something that every Amiga games player should own.

THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND
(US Gold)
Still our highest-ever marked game, this gets loaded up in the office and whenever there's a spare moment. Loved as much for the humour as for the adventure itself, there's a lot of game lurking underneath all the witty barbs and bad puns, and Guybrush Threepwood looks set to be Amiga owners' favourite hero for quite some time.
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ON A MISSION FROM GOD: THE BLUES BROTHERS HIT THE AMIGA

Oftentimes a licensed product comes along and you get to thinking, ‘Yes, of course – why didn’t anybody think of making a game of that before?’ The Original Blues Brothers Game from Titus is just like that – the characters are right, the game (from what we’ve seen of it) seems to be right, the music (potentially, at any rate) is spot on, and – hey! – there’s a two player mode automatically built in and just begging to be used.

First thing you should know is that it’s not based, not in any real sense, on the cult hit film. True, the nominal plot sees Jake and/or Elwood making his/her rather chaotic way towards a big concert opportunity – as in the movie – picking up amps, guitars, microphones and the like on route. But that’s really as far as it goes. The six gigantic levels, set in locations like prisons, sewers and underwater construction skyscrapers, are based more on the likes of Maniac games or The New Zealand Story than anything – cute, crisp graphics, secret rooms, mystery puzzles, and gameplay that includes every platform trick in the book, from floating on balloons to running along conveyor belts to jumping from lift to lift and so on. 50 frames of animation to the two main characters and a wide range of attacks and real personality to the proceedings too, and the music (‘We’ve just got to get this bit right,’ admit Titus) should be the icing on the cake – five songs are planned, with ‘Everybody Needs Somebody,’ and ‘Peter Gunn’ pencilled in for sure.

To us this looks like it could easily be the best Titus release to date – we can’t wait until a finished version comes into the office. The game is scheduled for a late September release.

The next cartoon look of the Blues Brothers spiresbodes well for the finished game.

...even if you can’t always tell what’s happening!

Oh dear...

In which some truly awful games continue to get what’s been coming to them for a very long time.

No 4 - HUMAN KILLING MACHINE (US Gold)

You’d think they’d learn, wouldn’t you! After the unmitigated disaster that was Street Fighter (see the budget section this issue for more info), USG brought out this pseudo-sequel that was in several ways – incredibly – even worse than its completely appalling predecessor.

Mind you, it’s hard to put your finger on just what it is that’s so bad about it. It’s not the animation, certainly. Both frames of it are very nice. It wasn’t any lack of lottatvity, having to knock out every single opponent three times saw to that. Having said that, it wasn’t so difficult that it became frustrating either – the fact that you could kill everyone just by repeatedly kicking them in the ankles ensured that this was a game all the family could get rewarding enjoyment from. And it can’t have been any lack of cuteness and character, the lovable little doggie in Level Two that jumped up at you and licked your face (well, that’s what it looked like, anyway) gave Rainbow Islands et al a real run for their money and no mistake. Even the music was useful – just leave the

rock-hard Quiz
The answers
1) Hard drivin’ ill: Drive Harder
2) Helter Skelter
3) Tower Of Babel
4) Plotting
5) Spindizzys Worlds
And the missing link is a bit crap, really. Each title features a built-in construction kit.

Race Apace
We hear that Storm’s big Christmas release Big Run is coming on apace. Based on a fairly obscure Jalisco racing coin-op, it’s an into-the-screen OutRun style driving game tied loosely into the Paris/Dakar rally. The music is the same as in the original game and many of the graphics have been ported directly over – only one player, but the game is looking fast and fun. Indeed, Storm seem so keen on it they’re working on another racing game for next year, based on the coin-op Indy Heat. Imagine Ivan ‘Iron Man’ Stewart’s Super Off Road Racer with little Formula One style cars instead of trucks and you’ll be more than half way there. Licensed from Leland/Trade West (the Iron Man people) it’s out due some time next year.

All Together Now
Domark are launching a couple of thematic compilations, based on sports and three dimensionality.

Grandstand:
300 Grandstand:
Tennis Tour and World Class Headboard, and the not so excellent
Gaza’s Super Soccer and Continental Circus. Virtual Worlds is a
compilation of four
Incentive games:
Castle Master, Driller, Total Eclipse and the previously unreleased
castelo Castle Master, The Crypt. That also costs £20, which the
mathematically gifted will realise, works out at £7.50 per game.

Oh No! Lemmings Alert!

Yes, we’re afraid the game that everyone’s still talking about has no intention of going away. You see, a Lemmings Construction Kit is being planned for release later this year which will allow you to design and build a series of fiendish labyrinths. According to Playmen’s Gogging it’s going to be as big as 3D Construction Kit (ie: enormous).

Lemmings nets can also look forward to a Lemmings Data Disk which will make an appearance in September, and then there’s Lemmings II which we expect to see early next year.

And if that’s not enough, there’s also going to be a Lemmings coin-op. Discussions are going ahead between Playmen’s and a number of throbbery coin-op people, and presuming an agreement is reached the Lemmings should be all over your local arcade by late autumn.

War Zone

Electronic Arts have scooped a bunch of Three Sixty games from the US which are to be launched here over the next few months.

You may remember Three Sixty from the likes of Harpoon and Das Boot and you’ve probably heard of the up and coming Megafortress, all of which reach these shores courtesy of Mindscape. Now EA is taking over their UK distribution and plans are afoot to bring us a World War II North African tank simulation called Sand of Fire almost immediately, closely followed by a multi-player action strategy game called Armor (sic) Valley.

Also, keep your eyes peeled for a game called Patriot, which will be a land based version of the frighteningly realistic World War Three strategy epic Harpoon.

Plus, first signs of Olympics Fever are showing themselves with Three Sixty’s announcement of a 1992 Olympics Simulation (the release date of which is not yet decided).

We expect quite a few developers to be working on athletics types games over the next year. Be ready for them...
EYE OF THE BEHOLDER & THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND
(Storming through)
No sooner had these two clambered to the top of the chart than publisher US Gold were releasing details of sequels. From SSI comes Eye of the Beholder II, which the San Francisco strategy specialists reckon will be ready before the end of this year. SSI have their work cut out for them - we're waiting for two other major projects to be completed, namely Buck Rogers and Gateway to the Savage Frontier.

According to US Gold, Beholder has sold twice as many as had been predicted (figures of 20,000 have been tossed about although that's for the PC as well as on the Amiga).

Monkey Island, which last month made an appearance at number ten, is to be followed by LeChuck's Revenge (Le-Chuck being the ghostly adversary from the first game). That won't be here until February at the earliest because, in fairness, Lucasfilm are up to their ears in the likes of Indiana Jones IV (that's the game of the movie that never was) and something called Dark Horse, which is apparently based on a novel about a famous American comic book hero.

CYBERCON III
(Surprisingly slow)
US Gold's bumper month was spoiled slightly by Cybercon III's absolute refusal to make it anywhere near the top twenty. An entry placing of 53 is pretty dismal when compared just last month another accolade magazine reviewers can splash out the fact that it had only been out for half of the time covered by the survey goes some way to explaining its poor performance, but you'd have expected more life from this 3D extravaganza (which we gave 88 per cent). Maybe 3D has fallen out of vogue.

Meanwhile, programming team The Assembly Line, are busying themselves with a huge project for Disney (no less). We understand that the game involves aeroplanes, but beyond that it's all a bit of a mystery...

3D CONSTRUCTION KIT
(Dismal showing, but why is it here?)
Domark's games creation program illustrates the danger of shoving a program with great potential down the user's throat. Strictly, or even loosely, a game into a game a charts. Dealers report sales for higher than the chart position suggests, and Domark claim it is outperforming even their biggest selling game to date, M.G. 29. Amiga Power praised the program with an 80 per cent rating, and buyers seem to agree. Domark's Clarke Edgeley explains: It's not something that will be

3D Construction Kit - charitably
extremely popular over a two week period, and then everyone forgets all about it. We expect this to be popular in a year's time. You have to remember that this is more of a utility than a game. She pointed out that it is often being bought in stores not audited by Gallup.

Since the chart is not regularly updated, take it in a fair light, one wonders if it should be represented at all?

WHO'S WINNING?
You're probably getting real sick of hearing about how much the summer sucked for games, but when titles such as the top two are adding up, the argument doesn't really hold water. This month's chart is split almost exactly 50/50 between full price and budget games, so the cheapskates languishing in the less fashionable regions of the chart.

One can only hope that the budget gamers are still being made up by an impression as the weather improves and names like Code Masters, Kiss and The Hill Squad could feature even more prominently next month.

THE AMIGA POWER CHARTS: HOW THEY'VE WORKED OUT

The Amiga Power charts are put together by us at Gallup (the folk who do the BBC charts amongst many others) based on a continual survey of sales in a wide cross section of shops and down the country - both independent computer stores and larger chains like WH Smith. As such they're the most comprehensive charts it's possible to bring you. Doing things so comprehensively takes time, though - the chart above relates to sales during the May/June period.

There's no divulging the charts into 'Budget' and 'Full Price' sections for us - we're sure you're perfectly capable of doing that for yourselves if you want to - so the list you see here includes games at every price point. This way, you can see just how important budget sales are to the overall market - at this time of year, with few big name titles being released, very important indeed.

Each game is rated out of five stars (five red stars for the really, really excellent game, stars for excellence are the same system as in The Bottom Line, to give you some idea of how good the things that are selling really are. Games which don't sell are just not necessarily the total rubbish - they just happen to be the ones we've never really played, so can't properly comment on. Having said that, there has to be a reason why nobody in the office has ever found it within themselves to sit down with them, hasn't there?...
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JUST WHO DO WE THINK WE ARE?

MATT BIELBY
Matt's been spending most of this month in a series of one day meetings or out on the road visiting game developers, leaving little time for reviewing. He has, however, found space to get his mind around a few of the simpler things we've received lately - it's all my brain can cope with at the moment, he confesses. His faves are platforms and 'unsual, off-the-wall things.'
Matt's been playing: 'R-Type II, and Exile from last issue.'

GARY PENN
Gary's not had much time for games this month - or anything else really. He's been too busy putting together this issue's giant cover-mounted Complete Control tips poster (in particular struggling away with every screen of Bombaru). 'I bloody hate the bloody thing,' he told us, leaving little room for comment.
Gary's been playing: 'Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker.'

COLIN CAMPBELL
Colin Campbell - deputy editor and Jean-Claude Van Damme fan - has seen every True Stories and compiling the disk from this month on - tasks everybody else hates which seem ideally suited to his talents. Outside work he's been walking his new dog and falling off his lovely Vespa scooter. He likes sports games, platforms and 'everything mut-da-games.'
Colin's been playing: 'Manchester United Europe and Toki.'

MARK RAMSHAW
Mark Ramshaw is AMIGA POWER's long-suffering production editor, though that doesn't seem to stop him spending a fair amount of time playing. His parents run a Sunderland-based computer shop, so his games knowledge goes way back, though it's adventure arcade things, user-friendly FRPs and ultra-violent Williams coin-ops that really light his fire.
Mark's been playing: 'Llamatron and Monkey Island.'

STUART CAMPBELL
Stuart, the software industry's favourite (term hem) reviewer, started life in fanzines, in particular the rather odd 'Between Planets.' In his spare time he's taken over the weekly Gary Penn Gameswatch slot in New Computer Express. His favourite games are 'ones where you battle against the enemies, not the control system or incompetence of the programmers.' (Blimey!)
Stuart's been playing: 'R-Type II - it's seriously excellent.'

JONATHAN DAVIES
Jonathan has been struggling away at an extremely unfriendly assortment of obscure strategy games this month - games nobody else had the time or inclination to go anywhere near. Imagine his surprise, then, when a decent, big name product (in this case Hunter) slipped through our Anti-Jonathan Hate Campaign net. His favourite games are 'really good 3D ones.'
Jonathan's been playing: 'Hunter, which is really good.'

RICH PELLEY
Teenage hearth freak and cute game fan Rich Pelley disappeared off the face of the earth this month, and for ages we weren't sure where he'd gone. Had he found a new girlfriend? Could he be hiding out from somebody he owes money to? Or what? Then his copy arrived, and with it a message: 'I've gone into-ailing - see you next month.' The mystery was solved!
Rich has been playing: 'Exile (I remember the BBC version),'

PAUL LYONS
Thrilled at Future Publishing's recent acquisition of Mountain Biking UK (Britain's - ahem - leading mountain bike mag), Paul has been spending every spare moment reading around on £3000 worth of borrowed titanium-framed Mains (a very posh bike indeed). That doesn't mean Amiga Format's Assistant Editor hasn't had time to look at the odd strategy product for us.
Paul's been playing: 'Eye Of Beholder (still), and Atomin.'

SEAN MASTERSON
FRF Ian's been a bit on the naughty side this month, and we're not sure why. Up and down like a blooming yo-yo he is - sometimes jokey, sometimes snappy, but most often in that odd in-between mood where you're not quite sure what he's thinking. For safety's sake, then, we've steered well clear of him for the past few weeks, which is why we've got nothing to write (Sorry).
Sean's been playing: Dunno - none of us have seen him.

GAMES

Welcome to the AMIGA POWER game reviews, twenty five pages packed to bursting with, erm, game reviews. Summer's still with us, and the number of releases really deserving of the AMIGA POWER in-depth treatment remains fairly limited - thus we've got just five of those, starting over the page.
Then, on page 72, come the rest of the full prices - some good, some bad and some simply indifferent, but all given a true AMIGA POWER once-over - with the budget and compilation coverage following on behind at page 80.
Our Public Domain reviews get boosted to two pages this issue, starting on 85, and then last (but by no means etc) there's The Bottom Line - almost 300 mini reviews of every major full price Amiga release from the last year. The complete character assassination of the year's worst - and praise of its best, of course - begins on page 95.
And there we have it - simply the most comprehensive, most flexible, most comprehensible and downright sexiest games review system ever devised. (Unless you think different of course, in which case you really should be writing in and telling us why).

IN A NUTSHELL: THE AMIGA POWER SCORING SYSTEM (AND HOW IT WORKS)
Our reviewing 'philosophy' (for want of a better word) is fairly simple and self-explanatory. Here's a brief breakdown on how it works:
1) We never forget you're being asked to fork out £25 or more for a full price game - it's a lot of money, and we believe a product has to be really good to be worth it. Half-baked ideas, cynical tie-ins and plain sloppiness just don't cut it, which is why you'll find our reviews quite possibly the toughest around. Compare the marks we give out to those of just about any other magazine - we think you'll find our wider spread of opinion tells you a lot more about the games.
2) We believe a rating system should be simple, logical and understandable - to the extent that a sentence like this one is true, which is setting out to try and explain it, should prove totally redundant. So we'll stop right here.
3) We'll nearly always broadly agree about whether a game is good or bad, but sometimes just sometimes - opinions differ quite strongly. That's when we run an 'On the other hand...' box, allowing a second reviewer to voice his or her (not that we have any girly reviewers as yet) opinions as appropriate.
4) Predictable we know, but there simply isn't a point number four.
After the perfection of last month's Toki, Activision make their bid for the title of R-TYPE II

The first level of R-Type II isn't too taxing. Beware level two though!

---

**Game:** R-Type II  
**Publisher:** Activision  
**Price:** £25.99  
**Author:** Arc Developments  
**Release:** Late August / Early September

There was a bit of a scare when Activision UK packed their bags recently and disappeared into the realms of history - yes, it was sad to see such a famous and long established name go down, but more to the point what would happen to the various projects they'd commissioned? For a while it looked like any eagerly awaited games wouldn't see the light of day at all, but slowly they started to crop up with various other publishers - Exile at Audiogenic, the upcoming Realms 3D Snooker at Virgin - and the Activision name itself resurfaced under the protective wing of Paris-based The Disk Company. And now the first releases from the new Activision are starting to come out - Beast Busters (see elsewhere this issue) and this one, R-Type II. It'll be coming your way in the late summer, and if I were you I'd start saving my pennies up right now, because this is simply the best arcade game I've seen on the Amiga in my life. Not only that, it's just about the best one I've ever seen, because I can't imagine how a coin-op could be converted better than this. But back to the start.

R-Type II was the arcade sequel to one of the most popular scrolling shoot-ems-ups in the history of video-gaming, and on first appearance was the subject of some disappointment. The look and feel of the game was very much that of the original, with a few largely cosmetic tweaks - it seemed more like something of a retread rather than a new game rather than anything else - but on playing it became clear that this was a superb game in itself. It was nonetheless only a minor success, and you won't see too many in arcades these days.

---

**ARC WELDING AND MAKING HIT CONVERSIONS**

Using together all the disparate elements that go to make up a successful coin-op conversion isn't a job for faint hearts.

Programmers Arc Developments have a fairly low-profile history in the Amiga games world (they certainly aren't one of the big names like the Bitmaps or Bullfrog or Core or even Probe), despite a record which already includes some pretty impressive arcade ports (Forgotten Worlds, Crack Down and Dragon Breed, to name three). Nonetheless, Activision handed them this tough job, so I had a word with Paul Walker (graphics and general direction) about how they coped with it.

**AP:** Did you fit everything in? We haven't spotted anything missing - it must have been a tight squeeze.
**AD:** Yes, and we worked very hard to make everything fit. The design of the game was an important part of the conversion process, and we spent a lot of time refining it to ensure that it translated well to the Amiga.
**AP:** Did you make any changes? (For example, Ocean's French version improved the parallax scrolling of the arcade version of Toki in their Amiga conversion.)
**AD:** We made a few changes, mainly to improve the gameplay and make the game more playable on the Amiga. For example, we added a new level and made some minor adjustments to existing levels.

**AP:** Is there anything about the finished article that you're unhappy with?
**AD:** Honestly, no.

**AP:** And do you think this is the best arcade-to-Amiga conversion there's ever been?
**AD:** Well, yes and no. I think our earlier conversion of Crack Down for U.S. Gold was as good, but it didn't get a very wide release. The original game was very good, but the conversion job was pretty good as well. We think we've done a good job of converting the game to the Amiga, but there's always room for improvement.
'best arcade conversion', with the most single-minded blast-'em-up of them all.

Just like in R-Type, you start off in space with a few squadrons of cannon-fodder aliens speeding towards you. If these give you any trouble, give up.

And here's your chance to be re-united with the R-Type (the remote device that attaches to your ship) itself. Zap the pod-carrying ship, pick it up, and you're away.

What you need is some extra speed. And wouldn't you know it, that's exactly what this friendly chap's going to give you - after you've shot him.

These ceiling and floor-mounted cupolas spew out large numbers of suicide ships, but watch out if a?</p>

What could be more fortunate, then, than the news that Activision were producing an Amiga version for you to play in the comfort of your own home? Well, plenty of things if it turned out like so many coin-op conversions - a half-hearted attempt at a quick cash-in from the legions of arcade devotees who'll buy the name first and worry about the quality of the game later. It hasn't of course, but why? So just what is it that's so damn good about this one?

Ooh, pretty much everything, really. This might sound silly but I can't think of a single thing that's wrong with R-Type II, at least not if you take it for what it is, a coin-op conversion.

(Rather than moaning, say, about a lack of depth or new ideas or any of that old guff. And anyway, Rainbow Islands was a coin-op conversion, and it's the best Amiga game ever - official - so there just isn't a problem there.) Purely on those terms, you'd have to give it 100% because as far as I can see it's flawless.

Of course, since this is AMIGA POWER (and also seeing as this is the real world), it's not going to get 100%, so let's have a go at seeing where it does lose some marks.

R-TYPE MEETS R-TYPE II — THOSE GAME SIMILARITIES IN FULL

What's immediately obvious about R-Type II is that nearly all the levels are basically variations on the themes of the ones in the original R-Type. Not too sure what we're on about? Then take a look below and you'll see exactly what we mean...

Level two is probably the least similar, but does feature a long tunnel with bad guys coming at you strongly from the top and bottom walls, not unlike R-Type's second level.

Whereas level three is the most strongly reminiscent of the original, containing dirty great mother ships which you have to fly around and blow bits off, corresponding to same level in the first game.

R-Type II's fourth level will strike a chord in anyone familiar with level six of R-Type. The big mazes with moving blocks and narrow manoeuvring spaces make timing of the essence in both games.

We get back into sequence now, with the fifth level of R-Type II and the fourth level of R-Type also tying broadly together. Monster aliens shoot across the screen, leaving obstacles behind.

Wait a minute, what's happened to R-Type level 57? Reach the final level of R-Type II and you'll find it, complete with those armoured snakes that shatter into half-a-dozen pieces when you hit them.

A little further into the sixth level, though, and you may begin to think you're back in the original's level five, with that big wall built of little blocks for you to cut a swath through.
day, or ones that give you infinite or ridiculously high numbers of credits, so that completing it is a test of endurance rather than skill, but some people won't like it, so a couple of marks off there.

Next comes the equally undeniable familiarity with the first R-Type. Again I personally like it. I think it gives a feel of continuity, but there are people who will feel it's simply unimaginative. One mark off for that.

'This is simply the best arcade game I've seen on the Amiga in my life.'

There's also the fact that - close as it is - it's not an exact physical representation of arcade R-Type II. The screen isn't quite as deep, limiting the play area (most noticeable on level three) and coupled with the fact that everything's slightly slower it actually makes certain sections of the game noticeably harder to complete. Two marks off there.

More worryingly, there seem to be a couple of minor bugs. When playing the game with a hard drive plugged in, some of the aliens can be caught right in the middle of a full-force explosion, yet when the dust clears they're still alive. This caused a bit of a problem once with the end-of-level two boss, and (although it happened only once) it would still be incredibly annoying if it happened to you, especially considering what a bitch level two is to get through anyway. On the very rare occasions when it does crop up, this is a serious flaw, so five marks down for that.

Lastly, there's um... Well, there's some things I haven't thought of yet, so let's take a couple of extra percent off just to be on the safe side. And where does all that leave us? It looks to me like it leaves us at the bottom of the review...

STUART CAMPBELL

UPPERS
- Perfect conversion of a game that was positively fab in the first place, and one of a fairly rare breed, a shoot-em-up with real flexibility.

DOWNERS
- Very minor bug problem, and for some people the overall feeling of déjà vu.

THE BOTTOM LINE
Magnificent effort from Activision and Arc, that puts other horizontally-scrolling blasters (and most other arcade games) well and truly in the shade.

88 FIELT

R-TYPE AND R-TYPE II — THOSE GAME DIFFERENCES IN FULL

There's no denying it, R-Type II is a very similar game to its predecessor, but - hey! - it's not a crime to look like R-Type, is it? The question is, is R-TII just a lazy rehash of the first game (now available for £7.99 from The Hit Squad, bargain fans), or does it add and improve on it to the extent that it's worthy of consideration on its own merits? To find out, we ran the two games on a couple of Amigas side-by-side and put a series of comparisons into operation.

NUMBER OF LEVELS
R-Type - 8  R-Type II - 6
So the original wins out on sheer quantity, and indeed nearly all the levels in R-Type II are based to a greater or lesser extent on levels from R-Type. All the same, the sequel packs more action into its smaller space, there's barely an inch of scenery that isn't bristling with offensive enemy weaponry.

AUTHENTICITY
R-Type - 5  R-Type II - 10
The original game made a few concessions when it was ported across to the 16-bits - as well as losing the arcade's lovely parallax backdrops, several of the aliens were significantly less formidable than their coin-op counterparts (particularly on level 6), and the programmers fiddled around a bit with some of the movement patterns (particularly on level 3). R-Type II, by comparison, is simply a flawless conversion. As far as I know there isn't a single thing missing from it, right down to the attract sequence.

WEAPONRY
R-Type - 8  R-Type II - 9
The first R-Type had one of the most impressive arrays of bolt-on armaments ever seen in an arcade game, and the sequel doesn't mess around too much with the winning formula. The only additions are a couple of different types of missiles, and an extra double-powered-up beam weapon, but the original system was so good a weapon for every occasion, and sometimes having the right device - which might have been next to useless two screens earlier - could make all the difference between a glorious triumph and a horrible disaster that to muck about with too much new stuff would have simply detracted from the classic simplicity and flexibility of what was already there.

CHALLENGE
R-Type - 8  R-Type II - 10
This mark refers not just to how hard the games are, but to how things are made difficult for you (ie is it successfully playing the game totally a function of skill, or is there a significant degree of luck involved?). R-Type does pretty well here, it's only real drawback being that if you lose your power-ups at certain stages of the game, you really didn't stand a snowball's chance of progressing any further armed only with your bog-standard laser. In R-Type II, though, the game is exquisitely tough without ever making you feel that you've been cheated. Restart points after losing a life are nearly always situated very close to power-up opportunities, and if you're good enough you should never be hopelessly stuck.

The level of challenge is just about the best-judged and most compulsive I've ever come across.

AESTHETICS
R-Type - 5  R-Type II - 10
As previously mentioned, R-Type sacrificed the backdrops in a quest for speed, but in doing so lost a lot of the feel of the coin-op. Also, sound was a choice between music and effects, which is always a disadvantage. R-Type II, on the other hand, manages to pull both off simultaneously, and also holds onto the background graphics for a truly realistic arcade experience.

TRAIN COUNT
R-Type - 6  R-Type II - 6
Neither game has any trains in it whatsoever.

So, adding up these marks in time-honoured fashion, we find the scores coming out at:

R-Type - 34  R-Type II - 45
Or, if you prefer, 68% against 90%, which is in anyone's book a pretty damn significant improvement. R-Type II isn't just some extra levels tacked onto the first game, it's a monster arcade blasterama in a league all by itself.
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A FRAME WITH TOM

Most people will have a much better time playing their pals, but there are four computer opponents to practice on. Jimmy (as in Whirlwind White) is one of the hardest, and it's hardly worth taking him on until you've got this game sewn up. Tom is the monkey of the crew, but even he's quite a nifty ball player.

The white line indicates the travel path of the MIDDLE of the ball, but the edges could clip that red, and cost a four point penalty. It's always wise to look at the situation from as many angles as possible. This also helps to plan for the next shot.

Tom breaks off and nudges the pack aside. The computer camera has swooped over the pack in order to show how it has been disturbed, although you can pick just about any angle you fancy.

Behind and above view of the early situation. Looks like I'll have to clip the pack, and play safe. Plenty of top and a touch of right is required (by clicking on the cue-ball control icons), and lashings of pace.

Oh dear, I've got mixed up in the pack, and allowed Tom to run amok among those reds. Like watching snooker on TV, this is not as easy as it looks. If you can make breaks of about ten within the first hour of play you're doing well.

Tom has edged the red into the top right pocket, and is moving onto the low-rent colours. He's using the bar along the top icon, but I prefer the other option of icons bunched up at the side.

With only one red on the table it's time to get nasty, and play some snookers. This can be enormous fun against your 'friends' who'll soon be howling with rage. Cue ball control always has been pretty dismal in computer snooker. Here it's exactly as you would expect - bloody difficult.

I'm still chasing the blasted yellow, and now I've been (unluckily) snookered. By clicking on the white line icon, and pressing the right hand mouse button, you can see the projected path of a ball after it has bounced. However, this won't show you the effects of giving the ball side spin.

I'm being beaten soundly, so it's time to get horrible.

The general idea here is to clip the yellow into that pack of colours, and leave the white at the bottom of the table.

From the creator of IK+ comes a simply astounding 3D snooker game. Could this

JIMMY WHITE WHIRLWIND

Game: Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker
Publisher: Virgin
Price: £24.99
Author: Archer Maclean
Release: September

At four o'clock in the morning, having played ten frames (and about 12 solid hours worth) of this game against a mate of mine I finally came to the conclusion that this was by far the most impressive sports simulation I had ever seen. In fact, it's something that had been pretty obvious from the word go - I'd just refused to allow myself to really believe it up till then, scared that I'd turn out to be wrong.

Snooker, eh? We've all enjoyed a few frames of snooker in the past, I'll bet, and we've all cabaged in front of the telly watching some gangly youth make millions from potting balls, so we all know pretty what to expect from a snooker simulation. There've been plenty of them, or just about any machine you could mention, over the years too - the trouble is, we've never seen anything yet which even approached adequacy.

Until now that is. It is really hard to see how this could get much better. For snooker fans, it's about as close as you'll ever get to actually owning a 12 foot table of lead and baize and having it installed in your living room. That's all I can do though - Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker has many more tricks up its sleeve too, though we'll get to them in a moment.

But first, the real acid test of a snooker game - ball movement. Often you'll see computer pool, billiards and snooker games in which balls seem to fly around at silly speeds before eventually slowing down in uncomfortable jerks. Here the balls slow down languidly, and naturally. Unlike a few early computer snooker attempts, they don't quiver as they sit there without being touched either.

The control method is equally impressive with a subtlety of angle calculation and stroke that is impossible to fault. You could play this for ever and never be able to claim that the program was to blame for a dodgy shot.

Players work from a set of on-screen icons, or they can use the keyboard. Lining up a shot is a simple matter of hitting the cueball icon (and therefore being transported to behind the white), and swinging the cue around in order to line up. Here, you can use the swing icon, or the arrow keys on your machine. Accuracy is achieved with the help of a white guiding line indicating the ball's expected path.

Then you can control the speed of cue action (to a remarkably fine degree), before adding side spin, top or spin. Then just press the central ball icon, and watch the results of your calculations.

Keys, eh? We've all enjoyed a few frames of snooker in the past, I'll bet, and we've all cabaged in front of the telly watching some gangly youth make millions from potting balls, so we all know pretty what to expect from a snooker simulation. There've been plenty of them, or just about any machine you could mention, over the years too - the trouble is, we've never seen anything yet which even approached adequacy.

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Then you can control the speed of cue action (to a remarkably fine degree), before adding side spin, top or spin. Then just press the central ball icon, and watch the results of your calculations.

So what's new? Well, yes, these controls are to be found in just about any snooker game you could care to mention, but the difference here is that this time it's actually worth taking your time over shots, with the confidence that your actions will result in a something which, as far as the laws of physics go, is without fault.

That's not all there is to it though, as we touched upon before - the game actually contains a whole host of other features too complex to go into here (and anyway, I don't want to spoil your fun - half the joy is in finding out just what you can do with this baby). Fiddling around with the Trick Shot screen is especially enlightening - you can (at least try) to get away with all manner of manoeuvres.

Another wildly impressive feature is the game-view option, which allows you to zoom around the table at will. You can do this simply by moving the mouse about on screen, or by using the icons, or even the keyboard. Movement is, just possibly, the fastest thing yet seen in a 3D Amiga game - especially remarkable when you consider just how much hardcore number-crunching is going on.
be the best sports sim ever? You betcha!

TE'S SNOOKER

ARCHER MACLEAN SEEMS PRETTY PLEASED...

A

nd who can blame him? We asked the man behind Whirlwind Snooker (and, incidentally, the excellent IK+ amongst others) how he put the game together:

'It took me about two and a half years, on and off. The story behind it is pretty weird. When I first bought an Atari back in 1981 or so I was really impressed after playing this space shoot'em-up game. That night I had a vivid dream about flying around a snooker table. I think it was a mixture of the excitement of this new computer and there being a lot of snooker on the telly at the time.

Anyway, the way the game is now so much like the dream, it's uncanny. I always tell that story. Ha ha.'

How did you manage to get the ball movement to be so accurate?

'It was a nightmare. The mathematics involved in getting balls to hit each other, with angles and so on taken into account, are immense. I had to talk to friends who are more mathematically minded than myself. That's such a small part of the game, and it took me two and a half months to perfect, but it was worth it. If you took a shot on a snooker table, and then the exact same shot on this game, the balls would react in exactly the same way.'

What pleases you especially about the game?

'The speed of it. I don't think there is another game that moves so fast. Also, you'll find there's so much you can do the more you play. Swerving the ball, for instance, is possible although not easy.'

So what's next on the agenda?

'I'm going to transfer this to the PC first, which will be a bit of a headache. And I'm also working on a pool version for the Amiga. That should include a number of different versions of the game - American, English and all sorts. With luck it'll be something really special.'

No, but the good sides of this are so good that it seems a bit fiddly to start going on about the faults. But what the hell - this is a review after all. For a start, the sound quality isn't quite there. Balls dropping into the pockets, for instance, sound far too clacky to be realistic.

I also had a real problem with the lack of statistics. If you're going to transfer a game to computer you might as well make use of the machine. It would have been splendid to see, say, a 'percentage-of-shots-potted' or average 'get-out-of-a-snooper' rate or, well, anything really. The stats they've actually provided are really quite inadequate.

There, that didn't sound flitty, didn't it? To be honest, I don't really want to knock the game at all. For having a great knock-about on or at home this can hardly be beaten. Not only is it a work of admirable craftsmanship from programmer Maclean, it's also one of those games that makes the Amiga worth buying in its own right. A gem.

· COLIN CAMPBELL
Spearheading a bit of a revival in computer sports, Domark's

Game: RBI Two Baseball
Publisher: Tengen/Domark
Price: £29.99
Author: The Kremlin
Release: Out now

Once upon a time, Atari (or Tengen as they like to be known these days) produced a baseball game exclusively for the Nintendo console, and as is the wont of software people, they subsequently got round to producing a sequel. Now their friends at Domark have produced a version of said sequel for the Amiga. Thus we have something a little strange - a sequel without a predecessor (on this format anyway). Mind you, considering the limited scope of baseball, I don't expect we've missed out on much - I mean, just how different could they have been?

Once upon a time (part two), I loathed sports at school, but at least when the summer came round, and the old baseball equipment was dragged out, I could savour a welcome respite from football and bloody rugby. Ah, happy days.

But enough of this - you want to know about the game. It's not exactly simple, but I'll give it my best shot...

'Okay, I admit it - it's very good.'

These aren't dodgy trinkets designed to disguise a dismal game - they help the game shine even more. From the 'Back To The Future' inspired theme music and the presenter's cheesy grin fixed for the camera, to the in-game sequences with graft speech samples, RBI Two Baseball oozes class. The game offers the usual one player against computer option, but it really comes into its own when there are two players, making it much more of a social affair.

...pitching/batting sequence (with some pretty nifty animation), but once the ball is actually whacked, the view changes to an aerial one, panning over the path to follow its progress.

Should this leave the main diamond pitch thing (or whatever the technical term is) out of view, the game helpfully superimposes a little scanner which charts the progress of the runners as they head for that home run. Although the characters are small in this view, they're still move in a surprisingly fluid manner, sliding into home base and such like.

For practically every occurrence (home runs, being caught out, reaching a base safely, and so on), there's a cute scoreboard display, just to give that stadium feel. Thankfully these can be skipped by a swift press of the fire button (happily after you've witnessed them for the zillionth time) or turned off completely (much more preferable).

In play, the success or failure of RBI Two Baseball kind of hangs on the various control systems used (as indeed most of these team control simulations do). Batting is simply a matter of moving the guy, then pressing the fire button when the ball is thrown. This leaves it all down to timing, which works quite effectively (after about fifteen minutes practice). Still, the chance of some extra directional control would have been nice, and the hit rate is unrealistically low for human players anyway. Pitching is a little more interactive, allowing for curve balls, fast balls, slow balls, and combination pitches. Then there's the fielding and running (which is where I really begin to have problems) but more of that in a minute. All fielders run corresponding to joystick movement, so the trick is to work out just which fielder you should be directing. If it turns out that he's not going to reach the ball in time, then chances are you've moved any other fielders several miles away. So, until a kind of latent instinct surfaces, actually getting hold of the ball in a reasonable amount of time proves a maddeningly tricky task.

Running between bases is another fairly automated affair (rather inevitably really). Other than getting the chance to force runners back to the previous base, or onwards to the next, things pretty much take care of themselves.

The scoreboard. The scores are displayed at the bottom, while above tidbits such as stadium attendance are shown.

The fielder throws the ball back to first base, but the batsman manages to slide to safety just in time. Edge of the seat stuff.

And this cute little box shows the runner currently kicking the sand at first base. He's just itching to make a run for it.

The guy in black is the umpire. Yeah, like the computer is really going to let me cheat. (Still, I guess it's nice to know he's there).

When batting, wait until the ball reaches this point before swinging the club. With a bit of practice (and a lot of luck) you'll be hitting home runs in no time (hem hem).

This is the current batsman. He's not what you'd call brilliant, with only one home run to his credit.
baseball sim hits hard and almost makes it a home run.

ON THE OTHER HAND...

Mark’s correct in saying that RBI Two is a game for baseball fans, but there are enough of us to make this a huge hit, and consequently I would have marked it some five to 10 percent higher. I too found the controls tricky to begin with, but mastering them is half the fun. Even then, RBI Two is one hell of a challenge, and it’s也是 with those little extra points which make you want to continue playing into the small hours. The only downside I can see is the excessive subtlety of control with the batman, which takes some practice, and a few less score innings. Still, after digging deep for $30, you don’t want to be lord and master of every right-handed American baseball team afterward. I would urge all with a penchant for Centrefield glory to check this out. Plus, it’s especially good as a two player game...

- Colin Campbell

‘It has that baseball ‘feel’ to it, but as a game in itself just didn’t quite click with me.’

LETS CALL A TIME OUT.

BOYS

Time in fact for some gripe, the biggest of which is that lack of intuitiveness in the control system, particularly the timing. Working out where the bloomin’ ball is going to land is bad enough, but it’s often you’ve actually got the thing in your mitts and trying passing it to a base that the real nightmare begins.

Frustrating? The concept of playing baseball with the disk was very tempting for a few fleeting moments. This may be down to personal taste, but a choice between this and a more normal (to my mind anyway) point-in-the-general-direction-of-the-base-and-throw system would have been a boon.

My second gripe concerns the actual game time (though I admit defeat on finding a better alternative which adheres to the proper rules). With each game lasting a marathon nine innings each, and an even more daunting seven games per series, it would probably be less exhausting and time consuming to find a field and play the damn game for real.

Seasons come and go, but the series still goes on (yay). I’m exaggerating just a little bit. Now to me, these gripe seem fairly important, and they’ve coloured my overall opinion of the game somewhat; but I’ll be the first to admit that they are things which aren’t simply defined in terms of good or bad, but are perhaps more down to the tastes of the individual.

PITCHED AT THE SPORTS FAN

Much as I like the idea of playing out sports on a computer, there seem to be precious few which not only capture the flavour and underlying concepts behind a sport, but which are also very playable. Sure, RBI Two is slick, and it has that baseball ‘feel’ to it, but as a game in itself it just didn’t quite click with me, particularly in one player mode. That’s not to say I didn’t enjoy it. And that’s not to say that it doesn’t really excel in some areas. But it comes across as more of one of those luxury games (you know, the ones you ask your Granny for at Christmas) than one on which you’d be ecstatic about forking out £29.99. I freely admit that it could well down to me rather than RBI Two (I know several people who think that it achieves what it sets out to do perfectly), but for £29.99 I expect to get a game which will not only be fun to play for an hour or two, but one which I’ll come back to for weeks, maybe months to come. Which I’ll run around telling my friends about. You know the kind I mean.

It’s good. Okay I admit it - it’s very good. But it could never be mistaken for a classic. Me, I think I’ll find myself a nice short-tempered to white away those hot summer nights...

WHEN THE CHIPS ARE DOWN – LIGHTEN UP

Let’s take a closer look at some of those scoreboard sequences. Cute, slick but just that little bit repetitive, at least they can be skipped or disabled completely when you get bored. It’s just as well.
Game: Hunter
Publisher: Activision
Price: £25.99
Authors: Paul Holmes, Martin Walker (sound)
Release: September

I've always kept myself to myself. Hardly any chums at school (no-one seemed particularly interested in my collection of washing machine bearings 1955-75) and my best friend's a gerbil. They even abolished telephone chitlins shortly after I started ringing them up. That made me an ideal candidate to join the secret service. I'd be able to sneak behind enemy lines

Somebody seems to have left this nice, shiny helicopter all alone. I better take care of it.

Hurrah! Another enemy installation bites the dust. Back to the copier for another spot of island-hopping.

HUNTER
The excellent titles just keep on coming from the resurrected Activision, this time

'There's masses to do and heaps of things to discover'

completely unchallenged, and I wouldn't be missed at home for months on end. My first mission was a bit of a failure, though. The beautiful blonde spy I was supposed to be seducing didn't take too kindly to meeting Conan (my gerbil, who'd gone along for the ride) and did a runner. They didn't ask me back.

HE'S A MAN WITH A MISSION Hunter gives you the chance to slip into the shoes of a man with a mission. And that mission is to make life as tough as possible for the enemy who, for unspecified reasons, have taken control of most of the map.

A quick perusal of the screen shots will reveal that the chap in question (he's the one in green) is a blocky, 3D sort of character. As well as walking about he can also swim, although his talents as an all-round, secret agent sort of guy aren't realised until he comes across some 'wheels' (or, indeed, 'rotors') or a 'hull'. The place is littered with cars, lorries, tanks, boats, helicopters and all sorts of other forms of transport, all of which he's perfectly capable of driving. Handy, that, when you consider the distances

THINGS TO DO

Once you've explored Hunter's possibilities a little, and found out what's what, it's time to start earning your keep. There are three broad categories of job to be done, each with its own map:

1. Missions
You're given an objective and a deadline. You've got to reach the objective, take it out and make it back to base within the allotted time. You're then given a new target, slightly harder to reach, and a new deadline, slightly tighter. Off you go again - with the clock still running from last time! It's like an episode of Treasure Hunt, only without Annabel Croft (more's the pity).

The question on every gameplayer's lips is, of course, can you blow up your own headquarters? And the answer? Indeed you can, but it takes loads of firepower. Several carefully-aimed bazooka shells would do the trick.

2. Action
Pretty much the same sort of thing, only you're given a long list of targets, scattered around the map, and a couple of hours to wipe them all out. You'll need to get a route planned, and it might be worth playing a quick practice game beforehand to work out where all the fuel dumps are hidden and the vehicles parked.

3. Hunter
This is the game proper, and you've got a single objective: 'Bring back one general's head.' That presumably means 'kill the chief baddie' and could also be taken to include 'Oh, and blow up as many baddies as you can while you're at it.' So off you go on a sort of adventure-style mission, collecting clues and trying to track down the general.

Entering buildings is likely to turn up a range of useful bits and pieces - equipment, vehicles and even the occasional civilian who might well be able to impart a useful titbit of information.
It's about this time of day, that I like to go for a nice, refreshing swim. (It isn't easy being a one-man army).

Left: Oh look, a helicopter. Let's dump those wheels and take to the skies.

Right: On second thoughts, I think the walk might do me good.

in the form of an epic multi-vehicle arcade adventure.

AND HERE'S A QUICK TIP (YES, ALREADY!)

Well, I just thought I'd slip one in. If you're in a tank or something and you find yourself getting chased by enemy tanks, the best thing to do is stop the engine, jump out and attack them with a bazooka or gun. They'll only attack you when you're actually in your tank, so the second you get out they'll stop firing and drive off or start going round in circles.

If you're stranded in the middle of nowhere with the enemy closing in from all sides, an aerial observation unit can be launched to give a bird's eye view of your surroundings. Various features can then be highlighted.

Why bother collecting weapons, ammo and equipment when you can just stroll in here for them? Because there's only one Store, and it's right next to your base, somewhere you won't be visiting terribly often.

The map's indigenous population tends to make its presence felt; vehicles hover unexpectedly overhead, seagulls tend to get crushed underfoot, bulls are easily provoked and rabbits and ducks make a tasty treat.

And if all else fails...

MAKING (NOT SO) SOCIAL CALLS

If you begin to run low on anything you'd better start sticking your head round a few doorways. The landscape is packed with buildings of all descriptions: houses, power stations, lighthouses, hangars, you name it. If you're lucky you might hit upon a stash of enemy equipment, or perhaps someone with something useful to tell you (although you might have to bribe them first).

Opposition comes in the form of everything from foot-soldiers (who are best squashed) to tanks and helicopters, backed up by anti-aircraft guns and missiles. Some pretty heated battles can ensue with, for example, you taking out a fuel dump with a helicopter, getting shot down, crash-landing, leaping into a nearby armoured car and nipping off with a couple of tanks in hot pursuit.

And then there's the puzzle solving/strategy side of things. For starters there are puzzles of the in-game-collecting type. Then there are other things - wearing an enemy uniform will let you sneak about more safely. And transport is always a concern. For example, your boat is running low on fuel, and you haven't got any spare. Do you risk going in search of a new one, or abandon the boat in favour...
There's a range of cars, trucks and 4WDs available. They're okay for knocking about in, but don't pack much of a punch.

Now we're talking. Armoured cars are fast and nippy, but tanks are a bit more happening in the firepower department, and better for running over people.

And, erm... oh dear. Still, at least they don't use much petrol, making them environmentally friendly (and handy if you haven't got any).

There's a real sense of urgency to some of the missions.

DOING THINGS NAPOLEON

Solo I know this has been a bit of a factual review, but Hunter's a game that's hard to fault. (And, believe me, I've tried.) It's not quite top notch, but has no serious failings. The only pinpointable thing I noticed (and even this is a bit vague) is that it has a weird sort of 'lonely' feel to it, especially considering the battlefield conditions the action's supposed to be taking place under. You're almost grateful to see a bull charging towards you out of the distance at times, and verbal interaction with other characters is limited to them saying something and you, well, just listening.

TRANSPORT

Hunter's pièce de résistance is the huge range of vehicles available to be commandeered. Forget walking – travel in style!

Eat up those miles in a helicopter gunship. They're a blast to fly, though, even worse to land, and tend to get shot down a lot, so take a parachute.

Should you find yourself needing to take to the water, there's no shortage of boats lying around, from slow, cumbersome ships to fast, manoeuvrable gunboats.

At the bottom of the scale is the humble bike. Slow, crap, and best abandoned as quickly as possible. (Get yourself a nice mountain bike instead. And a copy of Mountain Biking UK.)

Left: Wheels, wheels everywhere. And not a drop of petrol. Get me a bike!

Apart from that everything is just as it appears, rendered in fast, smooth 3D graphics. There's masses to do and heaps of things to discover. Be prepared for a slight feeling of anti-climax when you've explored everywhere and tried everything out, but things should pick up again once you start tackling the puzzles. In case you're in any doubt, then, it gets a thumbs up from me. Well worth buying.

JONATHAN DAVIES

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**Game: Navy Seals**
**Publisher:** Ocean
**Price:** £25.39
**Author:** John Meegan, Bobby Earl
**Release:** Out now

No, it can't be... Can it? After a wait longer than Kylie Minogue's for a decent song, we've finally got a complete finished copy of Navy Seals. The question is, will it be worth the wait in the same way as Kylie's 'Better The Devil You Know or, um, not. ('Predictable Opening Gambit Follow-Ups No. 2). 'Nope.'

**LEVEL ONE**

Use your cunning and stealth to set bombs on all missile crates, then its on to the next level. Watch out for terrorists though, and that all-important time limit!

Pretty (and pretty dark) intro screens pop up before - but not after - the levels.

**The terrorists only shoot at you when they actually see you. So I've no idea what he's doing.**

**Here you are at the start. I don't know what you're standing around for - the time limit's a real b****.**

**This is just about the easiest bit of the level. The only way in is to drop down from above, and that's likely to cost you a chunk of energy.**

**NAVY SEALS**

After the high standard set by last month's remarkable coin-op conversion of

**THE SAME OLD SONG AND DANCE**

I don't know, you'd think after taking such a long time over it, Ocean would have made sure that this was a damn good product, but it hasn't happened. Navy Seals is the kind of game that software houses used to churn out by the barrel-load a couple of years ago - a runny-jumpy-shoddy platform thing with no real innovations but lots of straightforward action to keep the punters happy just long enough for the next one to come out. (Cynical old sod, am I not?)

It was all very well at the time, but most of us saw through this rather obvious ploy a couple of years back, forcing game's companies to come up more original releases every now and again. Now though, and rather worryingly, Ocean seem to have decided that the market is ready for an arcade performance. First came RoboCop 2, then Total Recall, and now this, the latest in a disturbing line of remarkably similar games, all movie licenses with little resemblance to (or feel for) the respective films.

**Level three is strongly reminiscent of the venerable arcade game Green Beret, but without the subtlety.**

**Being able to shin up the lamp-posts is a nice touch - and can come in handy for foiling ambushes.**

What really bothers me, though, is that they seem to be getting slower worse. There was a time, very recently, when Ocean was a company that could be relied on for classy, polished products. Sadly, the days of Pang, Puzznic, Plotting, Midnight Resistance, Battle Command, Batman and (of course) Rainbow Islands - all excellent games and, indeed, nearly all of them fixtures in our All-Time Top 100 - seem behind us now and the standard has slipped alarmingly.

**But before I get off the subject entirely, what about Navy Seals?**

Well, it's not that bad. Which is to say that it's pretty bad, just not altogether terrible. In its favour it's got some very nice animation and a decent level of challenge, but drawbacks include a lack of depth and some of the worst juddering scrolling seen on an Amiga for years. And that's it. Except that I've got another page to fill up yet, so I suppose I'd better expand on things a bit.

First off, all of you out there with runaway testosterone levels will lap up the scenario. The Navy Seals are the US equivalent of the SAS, so there's plenty of scope for square-jawed, muscle-flexing, homo-erotic antics to thrill spotty inadequates everywhere. The plot, such as it is, involves massacring large numbers of unspecified 'terrorists' (although they all look suspiciously Arabic), rescuing weak and helpless hostages (a captured helicopter crew in this case), and then slaughtering your way...
Toki, Ocean surprisingly fail to deliver the goods with their Navy Seals licence.

BIG, HARD, CLEVER AND AQUATIC
So that’s enough scenario. How about the actual gameplay? Well, as it happens, it’s pretty much Navy Seals’ strongest point. The platforms-and-ladders-and-shooting things style isn’t anything new, but here it’s at least been fairly well executed, with lots of acrobatic moves both possible and necessary. Your performing Seals can certainly leap around with no little aplomb, although for the hardest men the US armed services have to offer they’re surprisingly weedy when it comes to falling distances greater than about six feet. It’s not perfect though – certain irritating bad guys shoot at you before they have the nerve to show their faces on screen, killing you nine times out of ten (of course) and making it necessary to learn where they are so you can be ready for them next time. As regular readers will know, this is one of my least favourite gameplay devices, and it’s particularly unfortunate and lazy in a fast-reactions arcade game like this one. Also indicative of lazy design is the extremely tight time limit on every level – something which usually feels artificial and intrusive, though in this case it actually works quite well in keeping the excitement going. (I’m not sure why, possibly because it distances the thing from its completely lame movie tie-in aspect and makes it feel more like a pure game.)

Presentation? Well, yes, it’s got some. Ahem. There’s a strange kind of schizophrenia displayed here (well, no stranger than your everyday run-of-the-mill schizophrenia, but you know what I mean) – each level is preceded by a pretty little cameo screen, but on completing it there’s nothing, nothing at all. You get a few bonus points and that’s it, not even a ‘well done’ message. The ending is also utterly, utterly feeble.

Sound? No it isn’t. The music is useless and the FX are perfunctory, to say the least. And that’s all I can bring myself to tell you about them.

And finally, the graphics are... alright. The animation is lovely in some pans (climbing up crags, swinging along under platforms) and dire in others (running, climbing ladders, swinging up onto platforms), while the backdrops are fairly atmospheric but maybe a little on the simplistic side.

Toki’s biggest flaw is a lack of variety. The eight levels are all as near as makes no difference to being completely identical. The difficulty only increases in numerical terms (either more bad guys or more rockets to destroy) and, while addictive in the short term, this rapidly leads to the onset of boredom. Technically the game looks like an ST port (I thought we’d seen the last of those) and generally the feeling is one of overwhelming indifference. - STUART CAMPBELL

UPPERS  Mo-nonsense arcade platform zapper that you can just pick up the joystick and dive straight into.
OWNERS  There’s practically nothing to it, and what there is looks like it’s been cobbled together in a bit of a hurry.
THE BOTTOM LINE  A long-awaited game (presumably because it’s been held over to tie in with the release of the bi-racial-countdownWirral move), but now it’s finally out you tend to wonder why they bothered. Playable, but extremely average in most respects.

Navy Seals is the kind of game that software houses used to churn out by the barrow-load'
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THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND

Shiver me timbers and roll out the clichés. For your delight and delectation, our resident rogue Mark Ramshaw has lashed together the complete AMIGA POWER guide to piracy (not of the software nature, of course). If The Secret Of Monkey Island eludes you, then read on — contained within is the complete guide to attaining piratehood, gaining a crew, and getting your hands on a ship. In other words, the solution to Mêlée Island, the first section of Lucasfilm's Monkey Island adventure romp. It's as easy as falling off the plank.

But try and use as little of the guide as possible — you'll find the game a lot more fun if you do it on your own!

Your adventure will begin at the lookout point (1). Start a conversation with the lookout man, as he will tell you where to begin your quest. (Anyway, he's worth a laugh or three).

Walk along the docks (2), and enter the Scumm Bar (3). Once inside, walk to the right of the bar, to the long table with three important-looking pirates seated there. Talk to them, explaining that you want to be a pirate. Continuing talking until they tell you about the three trials which must be passed in order to attain piratehood. Then go to the door at the far right, and open it. The cook will shout at you to go away. Wait for him to walk off the left of the screen, then quickly walk through the door. You will now be in the kitchen. Pick up the pot and the hunk of meat, then open the door to the right, and walk through it. Walk to the end of the jetty, causing the seagull to fly away, then quickly pick up the fish before it comes back again. Walk left into the kitchen, left again into the bar, then back onto the docks.

Go back up the cliffside, past the lookout and round the corner. This will take you to the main island map. Then go to the circus tent as indicated on the main map (11). Once you are in the forest (23), walk left until you see the circus tent, then go inside (22). Here the Fuczucini Brothers will be busy arguing, interrupt them, and ask them how much they pay you to do the human cannonball stunt.

Agree to the offer, and tell them that you do have a helmet. Use the pot as a helmet, the stunt will then take place, and you will be paid in full. Exit the tent, go back up the path (23). You will return to the main map screen (11). Go back to the lookout point (1), down to the docks (2), and continue right, until you reach the main street (5).

Here a citizen of Mêlée attempts to sell you a map. He will do this in code (as tradition dictates of course). When he asks you about Sven, tell him that you know someone called Dominique. Then tell him that you will take the map, and walk left and up to the Voodoo Shop (6). Walk inside, go to the trunk, and get the chicken. Then walk back out into the main street (5).

Walk up the screen under the arch and you will enter the second area of the village (7). Enter the right-most building (the stora) (8). Once inside, pick up the sword and the shovel. Then talk to the storekeeper. Buy the sword and the shovel, then exit the shop. Wait for a 'Psstt' message to appear, then walk to the alley (9). Here the sheriff will introduce himself (boo, hiss etc). Walk left, then back to the main street (5), left along the docks (2), past the lookout (1), and onto the main map screen (11).

Head for the house to the far right of the map. Before you get there you will encounter the bridge (4), and the toll (shriek!). The toll will initially refuse to let you past. Give him the fish though and he will. Continue along the road, to the house.

Once at the house (12), attempt to open the door. The swordfighter will answer. Ask him to train you, insisting that you help him. He will become a swordsman. Let the swordsman have 30 pieces of eight, and when show him your sword when he asks to see it. The training will then commence (13).

In order to gain enough experience to fight the swordmaster, go near to the fork in the road (17) (don't actually aim directly for island wait for a pirate to cross your path. You will then have to duel with him, in both swordplay and wordplay. By getting pirates to insult you, you can learn thai insult and then use it yourself. Then, if the pirate is clever enough and knows the reply, you can also learn that. Continue to fight pirates here until you build up as many of the twenty possible insults (and associated replies) as possible. To get an idea of what you need, check out the insults box. Listed are the insults, and their counter replies (though you can use any until you actually learn them).

Some replies are suitable for more than one insult. This technique is needed when you actually face the swordmaster, who will use insults which you haven't previously encountered. If you've collected enough insults (gained the replies) already, you should have a suitable reply to counter-insult her with.

Once on the main map screen (11), walk to the fork in the road (17), then go back into (re-up) the screen. Here you will see a yellow plant. Pick up the yellow petals, then go to the chasm with the signpost. Push this sign, and a bridge will appear. You will then be free to walk right, until you reach the swordmaster's house.

Once at the swordmaster's house (24), walk over to her and start talking to her (it will take a few lines). She will then give you a T-shirt which should ensure that everybody believes in your swashbuckling.

The next step is to recover the treasure. Go back to the entrance to the woods and look at the map (which you purchased from the citizen of Mêlée in the main street (5)). The dance steps are actually directions. Back means move back into the screen, and right and left simply mean left and right off the current screen. Once these moves have been carried out, you should find yourself at a clearing (25). Walk to the right and use the shovel on the bit of ground marked at X. The treasure is actually a T-shirt. Read the message on the T-shirt, then walk back left, and out of the forest onto the main map (11).

It's then time to pay a visit to the governor's mansion. Go back to the village, right along the docks (2), left through village, until you reach the house at the far left (18). Here you will encounter the deadly pirate/pirates. Use the yellow petals on the hunk of meat, then give the meat to the poodles. You will be able to open the main door and enter the mansion (19). Once inside an ever-so-slightly bizarre sequence of events will take place (you won't be able to control any of this). Once this sequence is over, go back out of the mansion, right back along the path into the village (7) and into the jail (10).

Once inside, talk to the prisoner, go back out and into the store (6). Talk to the stokekeeper and ask him for a breath mint. Once again a bizarre sequence of events will unfold, leaving you in possession of the fabulous idol. The sheriff will stop you before you get a chance to leave. The governor will then appear and send the Sheriff away. Once you've finished talking to the governor, walk left to the front door, and open the door. The sheriff will appear, and whatever you say to him, he will throw you off the dock.
Mêlée Island – from The Secret Of Monkey Island
Here you will meet Meat hook (16), who will tell you that he doesn’t like visible, inform him of the kidnapping, and your intention to get a crew together. He will then set you a test: once he has opened all the doors to the unspeakable horror he will run away. Open the little door, and tickle the murderous winged devil. Meat hook will then agree to be in your crew (who could refuse anybody so brave?)

Go back onto the main island screen (11) and return to the swordmaster’s house (24). Tell her that the governor has been kidnapped, and she will offer to join your crew. Walk back to the path, out onto the main map screen, and go east to Stan’s Ship Emporium.

Once you’ve entered Stan’s Ship Emporium (21), Stan will immediately attempt to sell you everything. Tell him that you don’t have much money to spend, and that you want credit. Stan will turn you down, so tell him that you want to think about it some more, and leave. Before you go, Stan will give you his card and a compass (which always points to Stan’s Emporium - how useful).

Go back into the village (7) (via the usual dock-side route) and go back into the shop (8). Talk the shopkeeper and ask for the credit note. When he asks whether you are employed, say yes, and he will get the note from the safe. Make a note of the combination when he does this! The shopkeeper then asks you about your employment, and will decide that you are lying. He will then put the note back into the safe (double check the combination). Ask him to go see the swordmaster one more time. Once he’s out of the door, walk to the safe, then use the PUSH and PULL commands to open the safe. PUSH will turn the lever to the right by 90 degrees, and PULL will turn it left by 90 degrees. Once the safe is open, get the credit note, then go back into the main street (7), back to the main island map (11) and back to Stan’s Ship Emporium (21).

Stan will still be there. Ask to see the cheapest ship again, and tell him that you have a credit note. Ask Stan to talk about the extras. Whenever he tells you about one, tell him that you can live without that particular piece of junk, and go onto the next one. Once you’ve discussed all the extras (there are quite a few, so be patient) ask Stan just how much he thinks that the ship is worth. Tell him that you don’t want it, and start to leave. He’ll call you back, then tell him that he’s right, and make him an offer of 5000 pieces of eight for the cheap ship. He’ll agree to this.

Walk left out of the yard, back onto the main map screen (11), and back to the dock (2) at the south-west of the island. Here Stan will greet you, giving you some literature, and after a tearful moment, your crew will join you, ready for the adventure ahead.

Okay, that’s the hard bit out the way. All that’s left now is to set out on the high seas, in a heroic bid to rescue the governor and defeat the evil LeChuck. No problem for an accomplished pirate. (And no, we’re not going to tell you how to do it – not yet, anyway. You don’t want us to spoil all the fun, surely?)

Thanks to Matt Evans for his help (and refusal to spoil things by giving direct answers) when I was desperately stuck in the mysteries of Monkey Island.
LEVEL ONE
Here it is! Brought to you by our very own Gary Penn, the first instalment of the Prince Of Persia Playing Guide. With full level maps, and helpful hints on key areas, you can while away night after Arabian night on this absolute corker of a game. Here we go...

LEVEL TWO

POTIONS

- SMALL RED POT: Restores one unit of energy.
- SMALL BLUE POT: Removes one unit of energy.
- LARGE RED POT: Restores energy to full and adds one unit for good measure.
- GREEN POT: Magic potions. These are few and far between. The effects vary and are detailed in full where appropriate.
TRIGGERS
- Opens its corresponding gate.
- Closes its corresponding gate.

LOOSE TILES
Some tiles collapse on touch. To find out which tiles will fall, jump straight up (ensuring that you won't push a loose tile above). Any loose tiles on the same level or that immediately above will wobble. To safely remove loose tiles from below, without incurring an injury, simply use careful steps to position yourself to face the right-hand edge. Jump up then hold down the fire button, ready to take a careful step to the right when you land. These loose tiles invariably lead to secret passages, and more often than not to a lovely hidden potion or two.

THE GUARDS
The guards have acute hearing. They turn to face the direction of suspicious sounds—such as heroes running. However, the guards cannot hear careful steps, so put them to good use when you'd rather not alert a guard on a platform above or below you.

SPIKES
Simply careful step through them.

RAZOR GATES
Take careful steps right up to the edge of the gate until you can walk no more. As soon as the gate has shut, take a careful step through it.

SWORDPLAY
Most of the guards are aggressive opponents who can't wait to skewer you. As soon as one moves towards you, thrust. Practice parrying them immediately trusting with the first guard. You need to master this as some of the later guards don't move until you do.

AND FINALLY
Here's a challenge of sorts from Prince Of Persia's author, Jordan Mechner: Try completing Prince Of Persia without actually killing any guards. It's difficult, but not impossible to parry their blows and pass them before running away.

PRINCE OF PERSIA
Next month: Our giant *Prince Of Persia* guide continues, with levels five to twelve — if we can fit them all in, that is!
If you're stuck in Rainbow Arts' marble-shunting puzzler, or if you're just fed up with playing the same old screens, then wave goodbye to snooze away misery with AMIGA POWER! Courtesy of Lesley and Andy Haywood of Selby, here are the level codes for each of the game's 100 levels, including the password which lets you access the screen editor, so you can design your own levels to your heart's content. (NB Not all of these passwords worked on our pre-production version of the game, but they should be okay for the real thing).
Who better to bring you the AMIGA POWER guide to the Bitmaps’ Gods than Bitmap Brother Eric Matthews? This month, level one. Take it away, Eric...

General Advice
Gods is split into four levels with each level containing three ‘worlds’.

There is more than one way to complete each world and no world needs to be fully completed to finish the game. There are many hidden puzzles and sections which do not need to be solved but which can provide rewards.

The difficulty level should gradually increase from level one to level four. If you come across a section in the game which seems particularly difficult to complete this may be an indication that there is no need to complete the section to finish the game. Such difficult areas are generally ‘bonus’ sections which if completed will reward you with treasure. Some words have ‘short cuts’ which enable the level to be completed quickly but you may lose out on treasure and other bonuses by taking them. It is up to you to experiment with the game to find out what is best to do.

Monsters
In Gods, all monsters have attributes that define their strengths, weaknesses and behavior. The attribute which sets how many times a monster must be hit before it dies is called the alien’s ‘hit point’ attribute. A weak (low hit point) monster would have perhaps ten hit points whereas a stronger monster could have two hundred and fifty or more.

As you progress through the game you will notice that the monsters become more intelligent. This means that they will be more effective at carrying out their objectives, to either kill you, avoid you or steal treasure. In general it is not wise to attack thieves as they are usually helpful.

Weapons
Weapons also have attributes which define their behavior and effectiveness. The weapon’s ‘hit point’ score determines how powerful it is. For example, to kill a monster with twenty hit points would require twenty throws of a one-hit point weapon (such as a knife) or four throws of a five hit point weapon (such as a fireball). Obviously, with weapons, the higher the ‘hit point rate’ the better.

A weapon can either stop when it hits a monster or travel through it. Weapons which can travel through monsters are more effective as the weapon might do even more damage to another monster behind the first. Also weapons which go through monsters cause more damage to each monster. This ability of weapons should be taken into account when choosing the right weapon. For example, in a situation where you are firing at three monsters in a line, a throwing star (two hit points) will be much more effective than a mace (three hit points). This is because the throwing star will do at least two hit points damage to each alien (a total of six plus) whereas the mace will only achieve three hit points damage in total.

The third characteristic which should be taken into account when selecting weapons is whether or not the weapon collides with walls when it is thrown. Weapons which go past walls are more effective. The value of the weapon reflects its usefulness.

Potions
Correct use of potions can be helpful in completing many sections of the game. Because you can usually only carry three items in the inventory it is not always wise to buy too many potions in the shop as there will then be no room for carrying other objects that may be necessary for solving the puzzles.

If you are familiar with the section of the game after the shop, try and think ahead and plan which potions would be most useful and where you would be most likely to use them. Then you can decide how many potions it is safe to buy without risking having to drop a potion when you don’t want to.

Power Potions
Power potions are used to increase the effectiveness of weapons. Buying or picking up a power potion increases the damage done by ALL of your weapons. A weapon that is powered up once will have one extra hit point and fire in two directions. A weapon that is powered up twice will have two extra hit points and fire in three directions. After being powered up twice, weapons continue increasing in hit points each time you get another power potion.

Small power potions power up weapons once. Large power potions power up weapons twice. The same effect can be achieved by picking up or buying multiples of the same weapon. For example, buying an axe and a large power potion is the equivalent of buying three axes.

Considering that power potions affect all the weapons, they are a far more economical way of increasing weapon hit points than buying multiples of the same weapon. (See separate potions pages.)

In level two, three and four the power-ups increase in value to 17,500 for a small and 32,000 for a large.

Extra Lives
Extra lives are plentiful in Gods. They can be found in treasure rooms but they can also be awarded for clever play and for scoring points. It’s simply a matter of experimentation. Extra lives can also be given to help a player who happens to be doing badly (they’ll just show up if things are getting real nasty). And there are special tasks with extra lives as reward.

<table>
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<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chicken</td>
<td>restores energy</td>
<td>0.00500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apple</td>
<td>restores energy</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapon +1</td>
<td>standard</td>
<td>0.01000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weapon +2</td>
<td>intense</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weapon +3</td>
<td>wide</td>
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<td>Bread</td>
<td>restores energy</td>
<td>0.01300</td>
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<tr>
<td>Small health</td>
<td>restores energy</td>
<td>0.04000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Magic potion</td>
<td>freezes aliens</td>
<td>0.04000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shield</td>
<td>invincibility</td>
<td>0.05000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magic wings</td>
<td>effects familiar</td>
<td>0.06000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Power potion</td>
<td>increases weapon</td>
<td>0.06000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Large health</td>
<td>restores energy</td>
<td>0.08000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Starburst</td>
<td>restores energy</td>
<td>0.10000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Power claws</td>
<td>effects familiar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Power potion</td>
<td>increases weapon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shield</td>
<td>reduces damage</td>
<td>0.20000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra life</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.20000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiar</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.30000</td>
</tr>
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</table>
The first key the player will need is the treasure key to open the treasure room. The world key is in the treasure room and opens the door to the end of this particular world.

Hidden Puzzles
1. Shortcut
   Reset the lever (1) & (2) to move block (A). This will reveal a water chrysalis and power-up and teleport the player to (B).
2. Special bonus
   The second puzzle is progressive, in the sense that by finding one hidden puzzle the player will then be able to find the next. There are four parts to the puzzle:
   a. Blow up the trap with lever (4) and then pull lever (3) to reveal an iron treasure chest.
   b. Reset lever (4) and pull lever (5) to get a fire chrysalis.
   c. Pull lever (7) within 2 mins from game start to make platform (C) move.
   d. Press hidden switch (D) to get the fire chrysalis.
   e. Finding these four puzzles will mean that you can find the final part of the puzzle in World Two.

World Two
Get the trap door key on the left of the screen to open the trap door on the right. Make sure that you go over the top platforms as the bottom route is more difficult but will give you bonus chrysalis. Collect the vase and take it to the stores at the bottom of the map, making sure that you collect the room key on the way. Get the world key from stores to exit on the right.

Hidden Puzzles
To get to the treasure room:
1. Kill the monsters on the ledge to the right of lever (3) to receive a trap door key. This will let you close the trap door above lever (5) by pulling lever (4). You will then be able to jump down and open the treasure room door.
2. Push all 4 hidden switches (E), (F), (G) and (H) to open the trap doors which form the base of the treasure room. All treasures will then fall through onto the floor beneath the room.

The Shop
Buy shrunken and normal arc

World Three
Pull switch (2) to close the trap doors and blow up the spike in the pit. Get the giant jump and jump up the trap doors (alternatively can wait for two minutes and a teleport chrysalis will appear to move you up, although you will not get the special bonus). Get the trapdoor key on the top platform to open the trap door to the right. Go up the ladder which lead up to the tower. Go up the ladders to the bridge and jump across the platforms to the left to collect a trap door key.
Go right and collect the teleport key. Open the door by pulling lever (11) and this will teleport you to the platform on the far left of the map. Collect the door key. Go right and pull lever (7) and drop down through the trap door. Pull lever (8) to teleport you to the top door on the right. Pull lever (9) to enter the treasure room and collect the lightning bolt. Pulling lever (10) will open the door and take you back.

Collect the world key and go down the ladder and when you reach the bottom platform you will receive a trap door key.
Pull lever (12) and go down to defeat the centurion protecting the temple.
Go up the ladder to the temple and enter the door to exit the level.

Hidden Puzzles
1. To enter the treasure room.
   Kill the wave of monsters which appear to the left of lever (3). They will give you a trap key. Reset lever (3) and which will then give you a shield when you pull lever (4) to protect you when you drop through the trap door to the treasure room.
2. To move block (f).
   You have to get to this point with more than 2 lives and more than 80,000 points and within 140 secs. from the start of this world.
3. Special bonus.
   Kill the Centurion without collecting the lightning bolt. You will then receive a gold treasure chest.

The Centurion Boss Guy
Watch the Centurion as he throws out fireballs and note the point where they bounce the highest. This is the place you should stand to kill the Boss without getting hurt. Move backwards and forwards at the same time as the Centurion.

Shop
In the shop you should buy the Magic Axe and spend the rest of your money on Power Potions.

**WEAPONS GUIDE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weapon Type</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>HP</th>
<th>Stop on Walls</th>
<th>Stop on Aliens</th>
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<td>Knife</td>
<td>05,500</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>YES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Throwing star</td>
<td>05,500</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Mace</td>
<td>07,500</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<td>Axe</td>
<td>10,000</td>
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<td>Fireball</td>
<td>12,500</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Magic axe</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spear</td>
<td>17,500</td>
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<td>Time bomb</td>
<td>20,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lightning bolt</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
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</table>
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AMIGA POWER PRESENTS

THE ULTIMATE AUTUMN GAME GUIDE

As everyone knows, summer's a dead time for games. That's why the big software houses are releasing pitifully few A-grade products over the June-August period - games players are meant to be out playing football and chasing girls rather than sitting hunched over their computers. No, the big, exciting releases are all being saved for autumn, 1991's peak release period. Come September we'll have big name licences, original concepts and top creative teams coming out of our ears, so what better time to settle back, put your feet up, and dream about things to come? It all starts right here...

So how does the AMIGA POWER Ultimate Autumn Preview work? Well, quite simply, we've selected around 60 full-price titles that'll be making the news over the coming weeks. This little lot represents the bulk of the major league games on offer during the months of September, October and November, each one scrabbling for its slice of the market. All the big names are here, plus a few unlikely selections (and a fair smattering of games originally intended for spring release now held over for the autumn boom), so there should be something for every taste. If you're thinking of splashing out for all the games on offer, take a deep breath. Your total bill for the software featured over the next 10 pages would be in the region of £1,800.

THE SIMPSONS

Publisher: Ocean
ETA: Mid-September

Briefly: No surprise that cartoon phenomenon The Simpsons should appear in their own computer game. Little shock that it's Ocean who've got the licence either - after all, much of their success is based on similar clever deals. Make no mistake - lots of cash and legal wrangling have gone towards bringing you this game.
Plot-wise things are fairly vague. Top Simpson Bart has come over all queer and turned himself into a conscientious member of the Springfield community - he's decided to protect his long suffering neighbours from the perils of the modern world; the most obvious of which are (you've!) aliens who've dropped in for a spot of human munching! The problem is, nobody else has the faintest clue what's going on because (and here's the special bit) Bart's the only one with a pair of X-Ray specs allowing him to spot the aliens through their human disguises. Or at least, so he claims...
Ocean have done enough sideways scrolling blasters (for that's what it all boils down to) to know what they're doing here, and you can rely on other members of the infamous Simpson family to make suitable appearances. There's even a topical environmental message - Bart says 'Save the world, man!'

On the upside: Cyrixes may fear The Simpsons will turn out to be a load of hogwash slapped together in an entirely unpleasant attempt to extract dollars from dimwits (remember the Turtles?), but there's something they've forgotten. You see, Simpsons creator Matt Groening designed the original Nintendo console version, and has insisted on a veto on the Ocean game himself - after all, he's not going to want public interest in Bart and Co to be cheapened by shoddy merchandising.

So, if Groening likes it, there's a fair chance we will. And with Ocean's track record in this field, and the fact that the game designers have actually thought of giving an objective and a story to the thing (they've been forgotten before), hopes are currently held quite high.

On the downside: Given the high profile of the character, and the fact that this is THE licence tie-in of the season, it's easy to be tempted into expecting too much. Remember, it'll be a sideways scrolling romp - it'll be lots of fun, but it won't be winning any awards for originality.

The other, more serious problem, is one of timing. Ocean haven't had their normally efficient act together this year, and product after product has been irksomely late. The question has to be asked, will we really see the Simpsons this autumn - or even this year? - at all?

What's its chance? We're prepared to take bets at extremely generous odds that - presuming Groening is impressed - this baby is going straight to Number One.
WIZKID
Publisher: Ocean
Programmers: Sensible Software, authors of the famous Wizball (of course).
ETA: October

Briefly: Anyone who has recently found themselves wedded to a Sky receiving kit will know all about the antics of these American wrestling chumps. Here's your chance to become - if that's the right word - Hulk Hogan, Ultimate Warrior or British Bulldog.

On the upside: It actually has a lot going for it - it's a cult sport with a huge following, it's packed with colourful characters, and has the requisite violence quotient fitted standard.

All in all, ideal material for a computer game.

On the downside: Some people find all that grunting, groaning and man-handling just a tiny tad ridiculous.

What's its chances? We're in real meat-head territory here. A winner.

SMASH TV
Publisher: Ocean
Programmers: Probe
ETA: November

Briefly: Long awaited coin-op conversion based on vicious game show of the future. Essentially, you're stuck in close combat with fancy high-tech weaponry on both sides. We're being told that this makes 'War of the Worlds' look like carnival day in Notty Ash' and are warned to expect 'total carnage'. Yeah, like we're really quivering with fear...

On the upside: Prime conversion material, with grandiose intro sequences. 50 different arenas, loads of guns, hunky graphics, sampled arcade speech and optional game-view variables - basically, the whole caboodle. This conversion is actually being handled by ZZKJ, previously responsible for Super Hang-On and Super Monaco GP, which hopefully eliminates any problems with the fact that...

On the downside: ...there's a hell of a lot happening in the original, and that's not going to be too easy to duplicate.

What's its chances? If Probe fouls up there really will be trouble. Still, we don't expect them to.

SPORTS ACTION RUGBY
Publisher: Audionic
Programmers: Derton Design, regular Audionic programming team last responsible for Wreckers.
ETA: October

Briefly: Yes, it's a rugby game, featuring both action and strategy bits. The first of a new TV Sports-style series from Audionic.

On the upside: There aren't many rugby games about...

On the downside: ...but that's because they're usually so bad. Rugby certainly isn't the sexiest sport for conversion.

What's its chances? Sports Action Rugby will be launched to coincide with the Rugby World Cup (in which the home countries are expected to perform well) which should help boost its profile. We're hoping it'll be the first rugby game that's actually worth playing, but keep an eye out for Donkey's World Class Rugby too which, if the publisher claims, will be 'Kick Off' when it arrives this October.

Hype and gory: Rugby's World Cup has kicked off an Amiga games chase.

THE GODFATHER
THE ACTION GAME & THE ADVENTURE GAME

BONANZA BROS
Publisher: US Gold
Programmers: Tierex
 ETA: November

Briefly: Sideways arcade adventure featuring two amusing brothers from the school of absolute virility. Our facts have decided to break into famous people's houses and steal back all the dodgy kit that's been deposited over the years. Naturally, this isn't to the taste of innumerable security guards and homeowners. Prepare to be chased by men with big sticks.

On the upside: Your chance to nick every television in Beverly Hills. The coin-op's unusual computer-generated graphics system looks distinctive...

On the downside: ...but how well will it translate onto the Amiga? US Gold are using the word 'comical' to hype this, which is always a bad sign.

What's its chances? Any game which doesn't involve saving the earth from pollutants rescuing some lush chick gets our vote.
**SIM EARTH**

Publisher: Ocean
Programmers: Maxis, the creators of Sim City, did the PC original, but the Amiga version's down to Probe.
ETA: November

Briefly: Remember controlling an urban sprawl in Sim City? You certainly should — the game's an all-time Amiga classic for its charm, its usability, its cleverness and — yes! — its originality. Now designers Maxis, with the help of Probe, have gone one bigger — well, actually a whole lot bigger — with an evolution simulation of the world.

You control emerging lifefoms from outrageously witness ancesbes to just plain common-or-garden witnessless humans. It's a huge point and click journey through countless problems and puzzles testing both common sense and higher forms of intellectual prowess. If your lifefoms are croc, they'll die of one of dozens of causes: self destruction, disease, that kind of thing, and even if they're happening organisms, you're in for a rough ride. Games certainly don't get much bigger than this.

On the upside: It's probably one of the most ambitious projects yet to be undertaken on the Amiga and we have to take a tip-top programming job as read if the game's to succeed. The PC version has been around for six months and has enjoyed success among the sort of games players who've hitherto been satisfied with computer chess, war strategy and flight sims. National newspapers even get their hooks into Sim Earth, with many stories appearing along the lines of 'games finally growing up'. It's not the sort of thing Ocean specialise in publishing, and it has to be seen as some sort of high-end flagship for them.

On the downside: We've played the PC version and, it must be said, it's far from perfect. It's difficult to get into and it has a tendency to come across as a bit of dull environmental sermonising. Fun is most certainly not the keyword here — it's unlikely to be anywhere near as accessible as the excellent Sim City.

What's its chances? It looks good simply to have on your shelves, even if you never quite get round to playing it. For that reason alone it will do well, and while it's unlikely to reach the top end of the charts, we're willing to bet that copies of Sim Earth will still be passing over the counter at your local computer store at the end of '92.

---

**FINAL FIGHT**

Publisher: US Gold
Programmers: Creative Materials (action game) and Delphine (adventure version).
ETA: September

Briefly: Take 10 hours worth of Godfather movies and you should've picked plenty of opportunities for arcade-style action sequences (quite how they can be linked together into a pleasing game is another matter, however). Expect plenty of severed heads, gratuitous murder and massive scale back street slaughter. The adventure version is perhaps a more obvious bet — linking Mafia intrigue with Delphine's successful Cinematique system could be a winner.

On the upside: The rich, swirling and incident-filled Godfather backdrop should add a good deal of depth to the action game, while the adventure has almost limitless potential — it just depends how well they manage to tap it.

On the downside: They're big projects but we've heard very little about progress. The adventure game is a particular mystery — just how will it make sense of such a complex plot? It'll take some clever game design work, that's for sure.

What's its chances? The notion of Godfather games is an excellent one, but we'll reserve judgement until we know more.

Plenty of scope for a cracking game in The Godfather.

---

**SUPER SPACE INVADERS**

Publisher: Domark
Programmers: In-house
ETA: November

Briefly: The nastiest (and firstest) bad guys in the galaxy are back, beeping and blopping their way earthwards. Your job? Simply enjoy the death-fest.

On the upside: Simple unpretentious fun is always a winner and this should capture an appealing B-Movie tongue-in-cheek feel. The coin-op original featured all sorts of weird saucers — including Invaders on a mission to steal earth cows! — so expect more than a straight and humourless waste-'em-all.

On the downside: A nice idea as a one-off, but let's hope the release schedules don't start getting clogged up with nostaligic updates of prehistoric game styles. Hopefully the basic gameplay won't simply feel too thin to warrant serious consideration in 1991.

What's its chances? Super Space Invaders made a respectable impression in the arcades, and most expect a similar performance on the Amiga.

---

**RACE DRIVIN'**

Publisher: Domark
Programmers: Walking Circles
ETA: November

Briefly: First there was Hard Drivin' (which was sort of OK), then there was Hard Drivin' II (which wasn't so OK). Now there's Race Drivin', apparently the official sequel to Hard Drivin' as opposed to the unofficial sequel. On dear, it's all very confusing. Anyway, this one features three different tracks containing loads of loops, hoops and corkscrews to zoom around. One of the tracks is the same as in Hard Drivin', one's ridiculously challenging, and the third is just plain tough.

On the upside: Good programmers in charge of converting a good coin-op.

On the downside: Neither previous home game captured the thrill of the coin-op sufficiently, mainly due to shaky updates and a lack of speed, and there's a danger that the same will apply here. The new game's got to be different to the other two also — what's
the point in buying the same thing three times?
What're its chances?
The whole Hard Drivin' concept of steam
some while ago – it's going to
take quite some game to
rekindle a decent-sized level of
interest.

**Mig-29M SUPER FULCRUM**
Publisher: Domark
Programmers: Simis, last
responsible for (spook!) the
original Mig-29.
ETA: September

**Briefly:** Follow up to the
highly successful Mig
simulation of earlier this year
using much of the same code.
This is based on a completely
new piece of kit which is due
to be unveiled at the Paris
Air Show.

**On the upside:** Expect
plenty of variety in gameplay
– this isn't just a list of
standard missions to
complete. You'll be playing in
a global scenario, so actions
over which you have no
control will drastically alter
battle plans. The plane's
different too – most
noticeably the full 360° view
bubble canopy.

**On the downside:**
Might be disappointing for
strict flight sim enthusiasts
who expect absolute parity
with the real aircraft.
Nobody's going to believe
Domark's new tech specs
on a Soviet fighter which has
yet to be launched – they'll
have to take even more
plausible licence than is usual
with flight sims.

What're its chances?
Polished and professional
flight sims always do well,
and (judging by Simis' past
performance) this should be
worth a look. Not likely to
chart top though, as the game
will be sold as both a mission
disk for existing Mig-26
owners and a stand-alone
product so sales will be split.

**PIT FIGHTER**
Publisher: Domark
Programmers: The London
branch of Teque, the
conversion specialists.
ETA: October

**Briefly:** Pure brutality
whisked straight from the
pinnacle of coin-op coolness
last year (it was Atari's fastest
selling arcade machine ever).
No plot as such, just a rabid
scrap between chunky
characters who get down
to wrestling, kickboxing...

---

**CRUISE FOR A CORPSE**
Publisher: Delphine (US Goud)
Programmers: Delphine's adventure
game team, who of course had previous
success with the similar Future Wars and
Operation Stealth.
ETA: September

**Briefly:** It's time to don
damn silly
moustachio and
implausible
continental
accent and
get looking
for a
murderer in
this Sunday
night's
Agatha
Christie
TV
move of an
adventure. You, as a Hercule
Poirot-type character, strut
around a luxury cruise
(circa 1920), being charming
yet enigmatic
until your host (a Greek
shipping magnate)
takes a trip to
that great
tax
dodge in
the
sky. Is there a
world famous
detective
onboard? As
luck would
have it...

**On the upside:** Delphine uses a trade-marked
operating system for its point and click
graphical adventures called Cinematique,
and it's actually rather good. Future Wars
and Operation Stealth were near (and both
Top 100 games) and Corpse promises to
be an improvement on both, providing
plenty of characters to interview and a
labyrinthine plot to fill those long, um,
autumn evenings.

**On the downside:** Cinematique
might be
good, but
let's face it –
nothing done
on it so far
comes close
to being as
funny or user
friendly as
LucasMil's
current
adventure system. The game will
be undeniably good, but the
improvement will have to be
to truly compete with
the likes of
Monkey Island. Also,
we've been waiting a long time for this
one. It should have been out last year.
Delphine have something of a reputation
for being late.

What're its chances?
Definitely a no
game for anyone
who likes their
action thick
and fast, but
bound to do
well with the
older gamer.

Interviewing techniques
have been the bane of
many a game. Will Cruise
fare any better?

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**WILD WHEELS**

Wild Wheels: High hopes for something out of the ordinary.

Publisher: Ocean
Programmers: Red Rat, the Manchester-based team behind games like
Lombard RAC Rally and MicroProse International Soccer Challenge.
ETA: October

**Briefly:** It's soccer or wheels in multidirectional 3D land. There are 10
different vehicles to choose from and plenty of opportunity to bang them into one
another. Red Rat reckon they've come up with an original idea and are keen to
dispel any fears that this will come across as just another football game but
without the legs. Some elements of strategy are being thrown in, so teams are
made up of customised cars suited to differing tasks.

**On the upside:** A smart combination of beat-'em-up, strategy, racing, sports and standard shoot-'em up. Sprites are huge and move easily. Red Rat's
track record suggests they know exactly where their strengths lie.

**On the downside:** Football games with strange angles are invariably
useless which is why Red Rat are desperate to play down this label. A stopwatch
commented: 'It's not just a football game with cars – it's a wild, crazy, fun game
which looks great'.

What're its chances? Red Rat have been around for eight years baring
out bright, though not sparkling games. Hopes must be high that this'll be the one
to really put them on the map.
ALIEN STORM
Publisher: US Gold
Programmers: Tiertex
ETA: September

You know what to expect from Alien Storm (Sega screenshot). Pseudo 3D Battlezone at its best.

Briefly:Oops! Some chap has let loose a million and one man eating alien slime suckers, and they're taking the overnight shuttle straight to their favourite take-away spot, Planet Earth! What's the solution? Well, why not dust down some uncommonly large Ghostbusters-style guns and give these fellas a good seeing to? Alien Storm was an exceptional coin-op which proved virtually impossible to leave alone.

On the upside: Horrible aliens and lots and lots of shooting.

On the downside: It's about as intelligent as a Pit Bull that's just guzzled fifteen parts Special Brew, through a straw.

What's its chances? Said qualities ensure massive success.

TURTLES 2 - THE ARCADE GAME
Publisher: Image Works
Programmers: Probe, who did the (actually rather good) 8-bit versions of Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles.
ETA: November

Briefly: It was a smash-hit as a coin-op and for good reason. There are plenty of the tricks and effects which made the Turtles popular in the first place. Image Works are already proclaiming that the Amiga version of this all-action beat-'em-up will be 'identical' to the coin-op.

On the upside: A wonderful coin-op. Probe will be working flat out to turn this into the definitive conversion.

On the downside: 16-bit versions of the first Turtles game have left a bad taste in the mouth. Youngsters around the country think the Turtles are passé already...

What's its chances? ...although we reckon quality of gameplay will be the essential ingredient this time around. Another potential Number One.

ELF
Publisher: Ocean
Programmers: Nirvana Systems, a professional 16-bit debut.
ETA: September

Briefly: A colourful and gadgety platform arcade adventure with plenty of bad guys, a cute mix of useful objects to collect, and an assortment of harmless characters to make use of. Shades of Ocean's hit coin-op conversion Rainbow Islands in the look and feel, with plenty of platforms and teasing puzzles plus 'a host of delightful graphical tricks not yet exploited in similar games'.

On the upside: Good arcade adventures are always fun, and ingenious, unusual ones (as this promises to be) are more welcome than most. Elf certainly looks attractive and has gained much favourable pre-publicity.

On the downside: Elf is Nirvana Systems' first effort (they're all straight out of university) so while we can expect something different, it's highly likely that mistakes will be made. The game was to have been ready last month but has since been put back to September, and the quality of Elf's sound is said to be somewhat short of ideal.

What's its chances? Remarkably good. The Nirvana kids are admittedly an unknown quantity, but the fact that it's Ocean who have signed these guys (and the fact that Elf isn't a licence to in of any sort) would seem to bode well.

Oturun Europa
Publisher: Ocean
Programmers: Probe, who have more conversions than we've room to mention under their various belts, though Turbo OutRun, Golden Axe (and toot!) the surprisingly good 8-bit versions of Turtles spring to mind.
ETA: September

Briefly: Seven stage race across Europe in everything from jet skis to fasted up Yamaha GP motorcycles. Not a coin-op conversion, but US Gold's own, slightly off-the-wall, spin-off interpretation of the original game, it offers plenty of thrills with such lovelies as unkindly policemen, secret agents and international terrorists.

On the upside: Lots of potential for a more varied race game than most. This version of Outrun Europa is very different to the one put together by Probe in 1986, featured in many magazines, but never released.

On the downside: The original Outrun coin-op was so good it set itself as the de facto standard in racing games, but although home versions hit number one spots the conversions left a great deal to be desired.

What's its chances? If Probe gets this right it will be a winner. It should at the very least be amusing, at best lots of fun and a big hit. (If no MP decides it encourages racing on public roads, that is.)
ROBOCOURT
Publisher: Millennium
Programmer: Chris Swirel
(James Pond)
ETA: November

Briefly: Another cutey platform game with an environmental message, and the follow up to the surprise hit James Pond. This time it's out of the deep putrid sea and onto the earth to chase a dirty old scientist with designs on world domination.

On the upside:
Perfectly reasonable of Millennium to milk some more from the remarkable James Pond success. Expect plenty of new ideas superimposed on an old game-style.

On the downside:
Yes, it's that age-old sequel grumble again.

What's its chances?
Probably won't repeat James Pond's advances.

FOOTBALL X
(Working Title)
Publisher: Krisalis
Programmers: In-house
ETA: October

Briefly: Standard football management affair featuring all four English leagues and the Vauxhall Conference. Some 1,500 players are packed in, plus the likelihood of an endorsement from a senior football league manager. Smart money is currently on George Graham, Terry Venables or Alex Ferguson.

On the upside:
Krisalis made a hugely impressive job of its Manchester United game, so we can hope for something of quality. The firm says this will be a management game for those interested in the quality end of the market.

On the downside:
There are far too many of these games as it is, and most of them are dire.

What's its chances?
There are so many sports management games out there each new one will succeed or fail on its own merits. (Fingers crossed that this'll be worth booting up...)

LOTUS TURBO CHALLENGE 2
Publisher: Gremlin
Programmers: Magnetic Fields, who seem to have become real driving game specialists following Supercars and the first Lotus.
ETA: October

Briefly: Photographic accuracy is the key to this game, based on the Lotus Turbo Challenge series. The object is to drive around the track in the shortest possible time.

On the upside:
Excellent graphics and sound, plus a good challenge for the player.

On the downside:
Small tracks can make the game feel repetitive.

What's its chances?
Highly likely to be a great game.

FLAG
Publisher: Gremlin
Programmer: Ian Harling (the man behind Ocean's Lurk Patrol) and Simon Cook
ETA: November

Briefly: If you imagine a rather cartoonish distended papoosh-you've got the general idea. We're looking at another isometric 3D landscape here, the main feature of which is a couple of villages separated by a river and linked by a single bridge. It all looks fairly happy and peaceful, but there's a catch — a wizard's curse means that every 21 years the two settlements must take arms against one another and try to capture the other's flag. The winning village wins peace and quiet for a couple of decades, while the losers are forced to serve a malicious wizard and generally have a grim time of it. Players make use of various local characters including magicians, spies, warriors, villains, builders and even dragons.

On the upside:
Novel twist on what is essentially an old school strategy game.

On the downside:
...but these 3D iso-things power games are beginning to get a tiny bit tiresome.

What's its chances?
Fair — but 3D isometric things are a bit of a fad at the moment and Flag will have to be pretty special to stand out. The Ian Harling connection promises some gorgeous visuals though.

CAPTAIN PLANET

Captain Planet: Tony Crowther is hoping to repeat the success of Captive.

Publisher: Mindscape
Programmer: Tony Crowther, the man behind BomberHill and Captive.
ETA: October

Briefly: Anti-pollution is the big thing running through this season's line up of games, but none are as blatantly optimistic as Captain Planet. Based on the ecologically sound superhero of the same name, the game is being crafted by Tony 'CAPTIVE' Crowther, which seems to suggest that it'll be really rather good. Mr Planet is apparently a big name in super hero circles and is destined to take the place of Turtles, Killer Tomatoes and Real Ghostbusters in the Saturday morning cartoon slot. Captain Planet is surrounded by sugary characters who are dedicated to cleaning up Earth's act — each has his or her own special powers (related to the basic elements) and the game allows you to utilise all during different levels.

On the upside:
Mindscape spent a hell of a lot of money on this licence, even though the name has yet to really make an impression outside computer games magazines. The decision to launch in October seems to suggest that they've guaranteed a game that will appeal to all ages. Plenty of atmosphere and colour.

On the downside:
No problem if you can stomach the pseudohuman ecological sentiments.

What's its chances?
Certainly one of the big releases of the year, and a healthy chart placing seems pretty much guaranteed. Possibly, just possibly, a Number One.

MYTH
Publisher: System 3
Programmers: In-house
ETA: September

Briefly: Gods and goddesses, heroes and villains come together in this action adventure game which features a number of Greek myths. Players control Theseus, Hercules and other legendary heroes as they fight their way through various challenges.

On the upside:
There are four huge levels of multidiagonal scrolling landscapes, sweetly animated characters and a smattering of action to keep you on your toes. Puzzles were neat in...
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Briefly: Less of the extended racing track feel of the first Lotus, and more of an OutRun style road race across America, this second game has a very different feel. Up to four players can compete (linked computer capability is planned for some spectacular simultaneous action) but the split screen effect has gone in one player mode to allow a bigger, more detailed play area. You'll notice the word 'Esprit' missing from the title - that's because certain stages put you behind the wheel of the Elan, a slower but better handling sports car, instead.

On the upside: The first Lotus was one of the best Amiga into-the-screen drivers, and early word has that this improves on it in various significant ways.

On the downside: Sequels aren't necessarily an improvement - look at Gremlin's own Supercars 2.

What's its chances? Gremlin is expected to make a big play of the extra capabilities of the new Lotus - things like the linked Amiga trick and that, backed by the high reputation of the first game, should see it do well. Course editor, disk to be released later should prolong its appeal too.

TURBO CHARGE

Publisher: System 3
Programmers: In-house
ETA: October

Briefly: It's another high speed chase with you and flash Italian sports cars pitted against more of those crazy drug dealers.

On the upside: It'll be fast and violent...

On the downside: ...just like hundreds of other driving games.

What's its chances? There's no reason to expect anything special.

DIE HARD II

Publisher: Grand Slam Video
Programmers: Tierplex, converters of hundreds of arcade licences including Strider and home-grown sequel Strider II.
ETA: October

Briefly: Airport based cat-and-mouse actioner based on the high budget and the ultra-violent movie of the same name.

On the upside: Non-stop, roller-coaster ride of a plot and high body count make it a natural for

Briefly: Canny oriental memory/strategy game involving the parking off of identical tiles until none are left. It's similar in concept to the original Shanghai but Activision has thrown in a bag full of new tile layouts, dicky animation and sound effects. You play with nine different layers of tiles, and can only move certain ones at any particular time, so it all gets just a wee bit complicated.

On the upside: Chinese puzzles are impossible to leave alone, and we expect this to be clean and crisp. Little extras like allowing players to create their own tile layouts make Shanghai II special.

On the downside: £3 99 (gulp)...

What's its chances? Seriously baffling price which could harm a good game's chances.

3D GOLF

Publisher: MicroProse
Programmers: The Thought Train, a new team of programmers in their professional debut.
ETA: September

Briefly: 3D Golf is ahem, golf in three dimensions.

On the upside: Up to four players, 10 computer opponents, the graphics look good and we're promised lots of highly detailed gameplay.

On the downside: We reckon no one needs more than one golf game, and since PGA Tour Golf (Electronic Arts) is so brilliant, this might be in trouble.

What's its chances? It should put in a solid performance in Britain's bustling software stores, although chart glory seems unlikely.

SILENT SERVICE II

Publisher: MicroProse
Programmers: In-house
ETA: September

Briefly: Comprehensive World War II submarine simulation which attempts to supplement the commendable successes of its predecessor. This time there are better graphics, more scenarios and better sound. You can battle alongside the Japanese in the Pacific, or attempt to sink Allied shipping in the Atlantic. Attention to detail and all manner of missions add depth to the game.

On the upside: Bound to be atmospherically impressive and 'deep'. The original game clocked up sales of 625,000 worldwide and won 'Simulation of the Year' award in six countries.

On the downside: No matter how accurate and painstakingly put together, submarine games can be deadly boring.

What's its chances? Excellent. Not a chart topper, but a suitably MicroProse-like attention to detail puts Silent Service II on a steady course for all-time-classic land. It's the kind of game you'd still be happy to buy in a couple of years time.

HOME ALONE

Publisher: Acclaim
Programmers: Capstone, the people behind last issue's 'interesting' Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure.
ETA: November

Briefly: Frolicsome arcade fun based on assorted sequences from the surprise hit movie. (You know, it's the one about the little kid who has to defend his family's house from a couple of particularly stupid burglars.

On the upside: Capstone are a Miami-based gang who seem to take delight in transferring, erm, 'odd choices of movie to silicon. Bill & Ted (the game) isn't all that hot in its own right, but fans of the movie got a kick out of it. Home Alone seems likely to repeat that.

On the downside: We don't hold out much hope for the gameplay - it's likely to be the sort of thing that wouldn't get a look in without the movie licence.

What's its chances? While the video slumps its way to the top of the charts, the game is likely to put in a mediocre performance. Not a cynical licence rip-off, but it's unlikely to be regarded as a classic.

Silent Service II: In at the deep end.
CHINTO'S REVENGE

Publisher: Millennium
Programmers: In-house
ETA: September

Briefly: Very Japanese cartoon adventure sporting state of the art graphics and animation. Guide the unfeasibly large sprite of Chinto into an evil castle, avoid all the traps, do away with all the guards, and save your sweetheart.

On the upside: Pictorially spectacular (if odd) journey featuring imaginative quirks and high emotions. Just what you'd expect from a game heavily influenced by Japanese comic culture.

On the downside: There's still a question mark over how successful they'll be with gameplay...

What's its chances? Let's hope for something out of the ordinary.
There's still more that could be done with the Amiga's graphics capabilities, and this could be a step in the right direction.

NEBULUS II

Publisher: 21st Century
Programmers: Infernal Bytes (debut)
ETA: September

Briefly: Remember the original Nebulus? It involved working a frog-like character up and through a series of tower complexes, picking up useful bonuses and disposing of useless enemies. It was a smash hit. This version differs in that you have to climb down towers as well as up. Naturally, there are more bonuses, more baddies and prettier graphics.

On the upside: The original was sensational and rates highly among many people's all-time favourite games. A sequel is long overdue. 21st Century (themselves a sequel to the now defunct Hewson) badly need a hit, so hopefully they'll pull all the stops out.

On the downside: Though original programmer John Philips is helping out, he wasn't interested in re-working the game himself – a real shame. The sequel will have to do interesting things with the basic concept to be worth the effort.

What's its chances? No hiding behind licences here – with a product like this it all comes down to how well they've done the game.

MAGIC POCKETS

Publisher: Renegade
Programmers: The Bitmap Brothers, responsible for... But, ah! You know the rest
ETA: September

Briefly: Magic Pockets is the Bitmaps' first attempt at writing a cute platform game. True to form, they haven't been able to resist the temptation to give the graphics the metallic look that's become their trademark. Central character The Bitmap Kid, who bears an unnerving resemblance to Nathan, of Image Works' Blut fame (But we did it first!) shouts the Bitmaps, finds himself on a quest to retrieve some of his lost toys from the...

LAST NINJA III

Publisher: System 3
Programmers: In-house
ETA: September

Briefly: According to System 3, Ninja III 'takes you back to the very core of the Ninja's spiritual power' with battles taking place across levels depicting the four elements. All very interesting, but just how violent is it?

On the upside: The 8-bit boys have already had their versions, and response has been close to organic. One magazine fell itself into a state of nirvana and handed out a 100 per cent rating! Fighting effects are said to be state of the art – certainly more has been made of them in this game than previous versions – while gameplay is basically a souped-up version of the same collect-object-to-use-on-puzzle-in-a-later-screen affair. Still, this promises to be much more of a console-style product than previous Last Ninja games.

On the downside: Despite healthy C64 roots, System 3 have yet to make any mark at all on the 16-bit machines. Certainly, Amiga versions of the previous Last Ninjas have been disappointing. The whole thing will be a complete turn-off if fighting isn't your thing too.

What's its chances? It all depends on whether a 16-bit audience can be persuaded to go for it, really. Still, System 3 deserve to make their big 16-bit breakthrough, and this could be the game that will do it for them.

REALMS

Publisher: Virgin
Programmers: Steve Turner, Andrew Braybrook and the Graftgold team.
ETA: September

Briefly: The look is obviously Populous/Powershuffle based, but Virgin are at pains to play...
that down. This is far more of a straightforward strategy game they say, in fact based on an uncompleted idea Steve Turner had five years ago for a Spectrum game. You control one realm — a network of, say, five or six towns linked by trade routes sending taxes to the capital — and have to build up its strength (in terms of cash, armies, health of the people), defend it against attack and eventually defeat your opposing computer-controlled realm. It's all to do with controlling the flow of communication, apparently. One of the most exciting of the various projects that came up for grabs following the collapse of Activision UK.

On the upside:

Programmers Grafitoid rarely put a foot wrong, and have worked successfully with Virgin before (on Ivan 'Iron Man' Stewart's Super Off Road Racer). They have to be seen as a major plus. The fractal map, battle sequences and general presentation are spot on too, and, of course, games using the Populous style viewpoint are hot at the moment.

On the downside:

Though we've seen a number of demos, the gameplay has yet to be fully worked out yet — and that'll make or break the game. That the same basic idea could have worked on the Spectrum could prove either a strength or a weakness — a brief description of the basic cutting off of supply routes routine sounds suspiciously simple to us.

What's its chances?

Could, and perhaps should, be one of the big hits of the autumn — the talent is certainly there, and since the game was actually started before Powersmear there's been time to iron out all the glitches. It could get lost in the flood of similar product (Megalo-Mania, Utopia, even Populous II itself when that eventually comes out) due towards the end of the year.

REACH FOR THE SKIES

Publisher: Mirrorsoft
Programmers: PSS
ETA: September

Briefly: Another chance to change the course of history in this recreation of the Battle of Britain. Reach for the Skies could be PSS's most ambitious project yet.

A C A T R A Z

Publisher: Infogrames
Programmers: In-house
ETA: September

Briefly: Now here's a novel concept — you have to break into Alcatraz, the infamous 'hell-hole' prison and part-time asylum. The plot has it that the island penitentiary has somehow become the off-shore base for a large and dangerous drug ring. Written in the style of Infogrames' previous hit Hostages, you control a team of SAS-type commandos on a mission to go in there and, well, kick some ass...

On the upside: Nice graphics, loads of screams, loud music, eclectic gameplay. Hostages had its fans.

On the downside: ...but we don't know all that many of them (except for Gary, anyway). Whether it can make any significant improvement on the original concept is a moot point. If not, expect predictable, standardised thrills.

What's its chances? Written for the charts. And likely to be one of Infogrames' biggest hits to date.

Explosive split-screens in Alcatraz.

FINAL BLOW

Publisher: Storm
Programmers: Stephen Hooper and an in-house team at The Sales Curve, Storm's parent company
ETA: September

Briefly: Final Blow is a fairly straightforward arcade boxing game based on a Turbo coin-op. The Amiga version offers ten opponents — a few more than in the original — each of which has its own particular characteristics (a week chin, a powerful right cross etc), various lighting moves, a league system, and that's about it. Impressively big spites though.

On the upside: Boxing games are popular in the arcade, and this one perhaps more so than most. The large graphics make the game initially impressive, and the programmers have made laudable attempts to widen the percent completed version we've seen already looks like a winner.

Redland is no Bubble Bobble, but it's amping fun anyway
**INDIANA JONES AND THE FATE OF ATLANTIS**

Publisher: Lucasfilm (US Gold)
Programmers: Ron Gilbert and a Lucasfilm in-house team.
ETA: November

**Briefly:** US Gold are releasing two new Indy games, the first time they’ve NOT been based on the hit films. The action game is being put together by Attention To Detail (the Night Shift people) in this country, features a 3D isometric viewpoint and introduces a female sidekick to our hero. Meanwhile, the potentially even more interesting adventure is being worked on by Lucasfilm in the States. Plot details are currently vague: Indy battles Nazis, goes to locations in North Africa and Monte Carlo amongst others, and at some point visits (you guessed it) Atlantis – but it is confirmed that the game uses an improved version of the Monkey Island style point-and-click system and draws heavily on the characters and situations featured in the three films.

Perhaps the most exciting thing though is a new three ways to play idea – the game adapts itself to your preferred style of play, presenting you with the

**In search of the fabed city of Atlantis.**

**Elvira II: The Jaws of Cerberus**

Publisher: Accolade
Programmers: Horrorsoft, Birmingham-based programmers of the first Elvira.
ETA: October

**Briefly:** Fantasy role-playing game located on the sets of three horror movies, thereby allowing for plenty of typical horror film type characters and lots of cheap gags. Cerberus, the three-headed dog from Greek legend, appears at the end, although we’re not quite sure why.

**On the upside:** We thought the original Elvira was pretty poor – too much disk access and not enough game. However, Accolade says it was their biggest seller in Europe thus far so they must be doing something right.

**On the downside:** Elvira’s got potential as a licence, but if they can’t get it right perhaps they’d be better pensioning her off.

**What’s its chances?** Strong (if what Accolade say about the first game is to be believed).

**BARBARIAN II**

Publisher: Psygnosis
Programmers: In-house
ETA: October

**Briefly:** You’re bound to be told a hundred and one times that this has nothing whatsoever to do with Palace’s head chopping frenzy of the same name, so we promise not to mention it again. Anyway, this one’s a scrolling arcade adventure in typical Psygnosis Style (with a capital S). Check out the 2,000 frames of sprite animation, 50 divergent enemies, and six levels of continuous action.

**On the upside:** Anyone who’s familiar with Psygnosis arcade-style games will have a rough idea of what to expect. Plenty of atmosphere, nice sound effects, and scrupulous attention to detail.

**On the downside:** Gameplay has suffered many times before in the pursuit of demo-like animation.

**What’s its chances?** It’s competing against a lot of coin-op conversions in the action stakes, but will almost certainly hold its own.

**MERCENARY III**

Publisher: Novagen
Programmers: Paul Woakes
ETA: October

**Briefly:** No prizes for figuring out that this is the third in the Mercenary series (which seems to have been going on for almost as long as Coronation Street). Fans of the previous two will be expecting plenty of...
CONSPIRACY

Publisher: Accolade
Programmers: Accolade US
ETA: October

Briefly: It's a weird one. A straight modern-day pictorial adventure based on the 'mean' streets of New York City, the story is told entirely through text and static digitised pictures. Accolade are calling it the first fully digitised adventure, giving us some 350 images to play with. As its title, the plot-line sounds like something off a railway cafe billboard - CIA agent is killed in posh hotel and you are the prime suspect. Caught between the real murderers and a bunch of grey-suited agency boys, you've got 24 hours to pick up seven files located around the Big Apple and get to the bottom of it all...

On the upside: Some tasty images from the big city wrapped around an easy to play, icon driven, digital thriller makes for quite an unspoken government of the day in any way you see fit. Balancing use of your surveillance, pursuit, interrogation, search, removal, heavy assault, disinformation and infiltration departments, you must go about your business, removing dangers to your government in any way you see fit - without being caught doing it. It's no good simply assassinating everyone, as you'll be found out. Government connections will be made, and they'll be booted out of office - the opposite of what you're trying to achieve. Various tasks have to be accomplished - using whatever methods you see fit - to keep you in the game, while a sub-plot involving your loyalty to another, more shadowy, organisation complicates things.

On the downside: Static, rather grey looking graphics and adventure game approach will put many off. There's a strong chance it'll be one of those products with an exciting and interesting premise which never really manages to make anything interesting out of it.

What's its chances? Providing it doesn't get totally lost beneath flashier titles, very good indeed. Possibly something that'll be more of a hit with PC game players than their generally more arcade-conscious Amiga cousins.

Don't make the mistake of thinking this the definite list of Autumn releases - there's far too much planned for this peak release period to possibly mention here, and we apologise in advance for any we've missed out. (Just check out this little lot from Ocean alone - Hudson Hawk, Terminator II, Space Gun, Billy the Kid, Epic and Darkman) Phew! Happy shopping!
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IF WE'D KNOWN THEN...

...what we know now, we’d have done it all rather differently. Or something like that, anyway. Adrian Stephens, Andy Beveridge, Martin Day and Ricardo Pinto make up THE ASSEMBLY LINE, the usually innovative, always interesting and often quite weird force behind games such as Interphase, E-Motion and recent success Cybercon III. Just why, we asked them, have all your games been so, well, odd?

EARLY DAYS

Adrian: I did all sorts of things – Killer Gorilla, Mr Ew, Crazy Painter, Flip, Ping Pong, lots of old BBC games...

Martin: While I did an Arkanoid clone called Impact and something called Helter Skelter for Audiogenic; a bit of programming on Fernandez Must Die, and a rather nifty assembler program development system called 'Shism', which is used by the Bitmaps, Realtime, Vector Grafix, The Sales Curve, Psygnosis...

Ricardo: ...and I did Gyricon on the Spectrum, the 230 version of Elite, and a good deal of the early game design for Carrier Command back when I worked at Fambird.

Andy: I was involved in that too – I used to work for the programmers Realtime and did some little bits for Carrier, as well as the first version of Battle Command. It was nothing like the game they came out with in the end though.

Martin: Basically, what we’re trying to say is that all the stuff we did before we formed The Assembly Line was crap – except for my ones of course!

A FEW ODD LITTLE BITS ON THE SIDE

Martin: In between all the Assembly Line stuff, I’ve been doing quite a few bits on the side – Ricardo doesn’t want me to, but it helps to pay the rent. There was Exterminator for Audiogenic for one, a coin-op conversion that I think improved on the original – the arcade game had some beautiful 3D in it, but the collision detection was way out. Then there was Xenon 2, of course. This was great – it was designed by the Bitmaps, and though I just did the coding, for a game like that it’s actually quite a major thing.

Pipe Maria was the other one. John came up with the game design for this. Its beauty was that once you’d got the idea, the rest was very easy to do. People said it was very original, but really it wasn’t – it was inspired by a number of other games, though I couldn’t tell you what they were. Timing was perhaps the most important thing – it came out after Tetris, but before the flood of puzzle games, and made quite a name for itself.

INTERPHASE

Adrian: This one started back in 1988 when I went to Mirrsoft with the ideas and 3D routines, knowing I wanted to write a game but not having the faintest idea about game design. For various reasons nobody there came up with a proper framework for it either, so in the end I found myself in the ridiculous situation of working on a project for one and a half years with no clear idea about what it was I was actually working on! Eventually a chap called Dean Lester, now at Tectonic, thought something up and there it was, we had Interphase.

Looking back at it now, I’d say the game is alright, but it’d have been a lot better if I’d known what I was aiming at from the start. It was a bit abstract, perhaps – I know Mirrsoft are now a lot more wary of taking on games like this. It’s a lot easier to sell something where anyone can easily grasp what’s going on.

Now to find out how you can get Interphase cheap, flick to page 92!
E-MOTION

Andy: This was initially designed by a chap called John Dale who used to work with us. I think all that 'new age' stuff that surrounded it was basically due to the rather mellow graphics – we certainly didn’t think of it in those terms at all. It was a very minimalist game, and while all the reviews said, yes, here’s something that’s completely different, nobody seemed to want to buy it.

We tend to fit into that category a lot actually – of programmers who everybody talks about but who never produce big hit games. I think it’s because we’ve often tended to out-weird even ourselves – we’re aware of it and we’re trying not to do it any more. I think you’ll find that all our new stuff is much more accessible.

Adrian: The reason it looks like it does is that I can’t draw, and neither could John, so we ray traced all the graphics. It really started off as a demo we did to impress people – things like putting the bits of string in that tie the balls together we added because they looked nice, not particularly because they contributed much to the game.

Ricardo: I think the thing is that these guys are technically brilliant programmers, but having recently joined them I can see that they haven’t always had the support in terms of game development and style that they need – that’s hopefully something I can bring some team. We have a great belief in 3D games and will continue doing them – perhaps because the infinite number of views makes them so close to reality – but hopefully we’ll be coming up with more accessible games using the same style.

CYBERCON III

Ricardo: Well, it’s a very fast game, but that’s not actually the important thing. Too many 3D games are really little more than graphics demos with a plot tacked on – it’s a trap we’ve fallen into ourselves – but here we’ve really concentrated on the game side of things. Playing it is actually a very intense experience – after a bit you really get to feeling you’re in this place, and it can get genuinely scary at times.

Andy: I think one thing we’re proud of is that we’ve not cheated at all in Cybercon. We’ve made a conscious effort to get it all down to earth and understandable, while at the same time give people real value for money. We’re very aware of the fact that £25 is a lot and we really have to deliver at least £25 worth of entertainment.

I think the only thing we’re disappointed about is that the front end is weak – we really wanted a highly polished Psygnosis-style intro sequence, and felt the game deserved it. Having said that though, we haven’t compromised at all with the actual game.

This is the first product Ricardo has worked on with The Assembly Line, and he’s brought a lot of role playing type ideas to it which has been a real help. He’s also really pushed us to try and create feelings of tension and atmosphere. It’s a very emotionally draining sort of a game – some sequences can give you a real feeling of vertigo, others, especially those featuring the Animatror, our movie-style monster that just won’t die – are genuinely frightening.

VAXINE

Adrian: A lot of people had a lot of trouble with this – I think I’m the only person I’ve ever met who can properly play it! What happened was I wrote this ray traced thing, decided I wanted to generate sprites with it and ended up with something that looked like Vaxine. I couldn’t think of what to do with it after that though, and it was only after John came up with his idea for E-Motion that it began to turn into a game. We put the strings in because they’d looked nice in E-Motion, but then we had to try and think of a purpose to the game play. I wouldn’t really recommend it as a way of working – to come up with something that looks pretty and then add a game to it.

Ricardo: I think it’s something that did work as a shoot-em-up, but people don’t seem to want to play it that way. It’s often referred to as a puzzle game, but it’s just Defender in 3D really. Once people get their minds around that, they’re often a lot happier with the game. Of course, it doesn’t make getting to grips with the ‘slightly unusual’ control movement any easier...

Now hurry to page 92 for the bargain of the century!

THE FUTURE

Andy: We’re doing a flight sim with a big difference – which we can’t tell you about yet! – for Disney Software, using Gouraud shading, a very sophisticated technique for making objects appear much more solid and rounded which has yet to appear in a game. You don’t get sharp lines between planes on a shape anymore, and the results are just stunning.

Beyond that we’ve got ideas for simulations, maybe for other projects, though we normally only like to have around three or five on the go at any one time. We’ve learned a lot from doing Cybercon as far as making the gameplay work, but that’s really only the beginning. And then, of course, Ricardo is threatening to take up programming again, and show us all how it’s really done...!
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ZEN AND THE ART OF FILM CONVERSION

As a whole new crop of big name film conversions limber up for the chance to grab big wodges of your pocket money this Christmas, Matt Bieby asks some pertinent questions. Like how do you go about converting a film? Why do people bother? And why on earth do so many of them turn out to be completely crap?

WHY CONVERT A FILM IN THE FIRST PLACE?

The answer to this one's easy. It's money, isn't it? With a strong film licence to tackle, not only do you get all the gigantic publicity of the film - not to mention that generated by the rest of the associated merchandise - boosting your game in the eyes of the punters, you also get a strongly identifiable image mums and grannies are far more likely to pick up as presents than any coin-op based title (and certainly any original games). Provided the film's a hit - and that's a big risk - this really can be a licence to print money. Movies have international appeal too - perhaps more than any other medium - which (as they say) can't hurt.

HOW LONG DO YOU GET TO DO IT?

It all depends on the film. If your software company has picked up the licence to an oldie - a movie that's been around for a few years - you've got yourself a bit more flexibility. Domark tend to do one Bond game a year - every other one it's a tie-in with the release of a new film, and so simply has to be finished in time to hit the shops when 007 'fever' is at its peak, but for other game there's less of a rush. This tends to be a back catalogue product - The Spy Who Loved Me most recently - and because the release doesn't really have to tie in with anything in particular the programmers get a lot longer to concentrate on the actual game. (Hurrah!) We'll go into how much time you get for a current film in a moment.

HOW IMPORTANT IS CHARACTER?

Very important Indeed, we'd say - probably a lot more important than any of the actual events in the film per se. (If you don't believe us, just think about the upcoming Terminator II game for a moment - it's the idea of this big, unstoppable robot Arnie that sticks in your mind, not any of the actual plot twists, which you probably don't know anything about anyway).

US Gold's Moonwalker is the perfect example of where trying to stick with accurately representing a film can cause problems. Compare it - with its two characterless puzzle game-style overhead-view maze chase-arencds, acceptable Op Wolf sequence and giant robot ending - to the Sega arcade game (and Megadrive conversion) of the same name. The big problem - well, one big problem with the US Gold game is that you hardly ever see the Michael Jackson character. In one scene he's in the form of a giant rabbit on a motorbike, in another he's a car, in a third he's got his back to us and in the last he's a giant robot.

On the other hand, Sega's coin-op puts a nicely represented Michael Jackson on screen the whole time, yelling and whooping and kicking his way through some Rolling Thunder-style beat-em-up action. The game may not be so closely tied to actual events in the film, but it says 'Michael Jackson' much more successfully - and incidentally creates a much more coherent game too.

It's a problem Domark's Bond games suffer from to perhaps an even greater degree, the most recent of which have put 007 in cars and boats and things so we can hardly see him at all. Even in the brief scenes in Licence To Kill where he does appear in person, it's in a very distancing overall view. It's an unfortunate situation where a conversion of an average coin-op like Spy 'Secret Agent can say 007 'to us far more loudly than the real Bond, simply by virtue of the fact that the character's visible on screen all the time.

Domark's John Kavanagh conciludes the point - "Yes, I noticed it when my little nephews were playing Ocean's Robocop - because he's there in the middle of the screen all the time, you can shut at him, talk to him and it all becomes much more personal. It's something I've been very aware of with a new (currently unlinked) Bond game we're working on, initially for the Sega Master System, though it might come over to the Amiga. It's not based on any particular film, but it's more a generic James Bond game - it's a sideways viewed shoot-'em-up a bit like Rolling Thunder, animated in the Prince Of Persia style, in fact, imagine 007 meets Prince Of Persia and you're half way there."

Ah yes, that sounds much more promising.

HOW DO YOU DO A FILM CONVERSION IF THE FILM YOU'RE TRYING TO CONVERT DOESN'T EVEN EXIST YET?

Well, you've got problems, haven't you? You've got to live with them though - this is exactly the situation that happens with most of the film-based games. Remember,
release dates for both film and game have to be near-as-possible the same, and that means both mediums have to be developed side by side. For a brief rundown of the processes you have to go through... Hans' Fergus McCaughan of Probe - the example we're using is current top-secret project Alien III.

**Step 1**
What usually happens first - and this is certainly the way it's worked with the new Alien game - is that we get sent a film script. That's all - no pictures, no illustrations, nothing else at all. This will arrive a minimum of six months and a maximum of, say, a year before the game is meant to be released - it's got to be finished so it can be tied in with the big publicity that surrounds the cinema release of a film, after all.

**Step 2**
We take five photocopies of the basic script. I keep one, and copies go to Jo Bonar and Neil Young (the two producers here), to the potential programmer and/or graphic artist and - perhaps most importantly - to an independent storyboard reader. The chap we use is actually a local English teacher, and he does a lot of the drudgery work breaking down the script for us.

'First he produces a 1000 word summary of the film, including all the key elements, so we can all easily see what the movie's about at a glance - film scripts are long things, you know, and take some working through! Then he'd do us a separate sheet detailing all the characters - he'd describe them (as much as he's able to from the script), pick out all their visible character traits and personalities. He's very good at this - when we eventually get to see the film (which may not be until after the game comes out) you can tell that he's been getting it right nine times out of 10.

'The third sheet he does for us describes all the locations found in the film - so we know what to aim for as far as settings are concerned, and then last he describes the technology used. Do people use guns or knives? What's the transport like? This sort of thing - he may make suggestions that we look at other films or comics or whatever to get an idea about what he's on about. For this project we've been looking at the two existing Alien films and the Aliens spin-offs for ideas and simply a sense of atmosphere.'

**Step 3**
Well then use all this information to come up with a basic draft of the games design, which we'll send to the publisher - in this case Mirrornet. With Alien III the person we're dealing with is Tony Beckwith, and he'll add his own ideas to the ones we've thought of.

**Step 4**
Because we're doing two versions of Alien III, things split pretty naturally here. Jo is more into action games, so he seemed a natural to take charge of that version, while Neil is much more into adventures style products. The two of them come up →

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**12 FAMOUS FILM CONVERSIONS — WHAT WENT RIGHT AND WHERE THEY WENT WRONG**

**ROBOCOP 2**
Publisher: Ocean
Programmers: Special FX
Released: Christmas 1990

![RoboCop 2 image]

In a nutshell: You can't deny that this has better graphics and rather more variety than Ocean's original smash hit RoboCop game, but it smacks uncomfortably of a programming-by-numbers job all the same. Occasionally twitchy controls and an offputting lack of restart points make progress less of a joy than it should be - this is, without a shadow of a doubt, a very tough game - and though presentation is good and slick, the highly relentless, samey nature sets wearing after a while. Certain points in the game prove almost impossible to pass consistently, and users may find their hair out in a nasty sort of frustration. Great sound though, and a very professional polished look. Special FX normally do a good programming job, and this is no exception.

Looking back: Colin Gordon is project manager at Ocean, and worked on Robo 1. There were actually lots of versions of this game. A chap called Andrew Deakin here did the Spectrum/Amstrad game design, Painting By Numbers came up with a totally different platform game style that made it onto the Nintendo and C64, while Special FX came up with a more clunky, robotic feel for the 16-bit. The Amiga version is the most violent one, with the shoot-'em-up aspect much more prominent - it's hard to make any hard and fast rules about it, but different games designs often tend to work better on different machines. The sort of lighter, bouncy platform style that looks so good on the Nintendo doesn't seem quite appropriate to the Amiga.

**PREDATOR 2**
Publisher: Image Works
Programmers: Arc Development
Released: May 1991

In a nutshell: Very disappointingly, you can describe this 'film conversion' in two words - Operation Wolf. Taking its cue from the near future gang war background to the film, this four level shoot-'em-up sees you as a wire-frame Danny Glover character busting street gangs and drug barons for much of the game. Lots of baddies alike, but they all look and act much the same - and the Fred himself doesn't turn up until very late in the game. Simply very average, very see-it-all-before, and sharing the movie's disturbing tendency to make all the bad guys black (still, the hero is too, so that's okay).

Looking back: Paul Walker is director at Arc Development. The Operation Wolf-style game design was suggested by Mirrornet from the off, but we came up with the details of the game design. The Predator himself doesn't appear in the early stages of the game because that's the way it's worked in the film - we were trying to remain faithful to the source to some degree, but it turned out we were the only ones! 90th Century Fox actually started making some of their own suggestions for the game which included stuff that just doesn't appear in the film! At one stage they wanted 'fountains in the background which, when shot, splashed water on the Predator revealing where he was - goodness knows where they got that idea from, it certainly wasn't in the movie! Thinking about it now I'm not sure the Op Wolf-style was such a good idea - it's been done so many times before.'

**BACK TO THE FUTURE PART 3**
Publisher: Image Works
Programmers: Probe Software
Released: April 1991

In a nutshell: A bit limited and thin perhaps, but after the utter disaster of the first two Back To The Future games this caused huge sighs of relief all round. Built up in traditional film conversion style, out of a series of sub-games based on suitable action scenes from the movie, we get an Op Wolfstyle shooting gallery, an isometric 3D pie-piece throwing affair, two versions of a horse back chase and a running along-the-top-of-a-moving-train conclusion. This last bit is particularly thrilling/frightening, but things keep to a consistently slightly-crap-but-good-fun-all-the-stuff standard throughout - even the normally-tricky-to-animate horses from the first bit look good. Lightweight but amusing, just like the movie.

Looking back: Jo Bonar of Probe was producer of the project. 'We hadn't seen the film at the time, but we knew we was a western and had a copy of the script, so we picked scenes from the film that sounded good and interpreted them with a good deal of artistic licence. We added baddies to the opening sequence with the horses for instance - they're not in the film - and turned a very brief pre-piece throwing moment into an entire sub-game. I'm particularly pleased that our shooting gallery bit, which ended up much like the film sequence.

'I think maybe why this game worked better than the other Back To The Futures is that it had a consistent theme - the Western one - which they lacked. BTTF 2 was all over the place - like the film - and too confusing, while the first just plain wasn't any good.'

---

Oops! Creative use of artistic licence aids BTTF Part III.
with the core elements of their various games, phone the programmers they decide they want for the job, talk it through with them and see if the basic idea is feasible, and then the two games will start to evolve in different directions. They'll evolve a lot too – to be honest, it's very rare that an original spec for a game will turn out anything like the finished product at all!

Step 5
'The thing most people find really odd is that we've often seen the film we're trying to reproduce the whole time we're working on the game versions. With something like 'Alien 3' it's not quite as bad as it can be, because we've got the first two films to give us the general idea, and will still get photographs and perhaps a few sketches from the film company during production.

'One nice thing that sometimes happens is that you get to visit the film set and see how things are doing. About half way through 'Alien 3' we went to Pinewood where they're filming it, saw the technology and the settings and with what the characters look like – the Aliens themselves are really scary, until you touch them and discover they're made of plastic! – and get a real feel for the film. We actually got to see a lot of the stuff we got to be included only after we had been visualising in our heads, and that helped out a great deal.'

Step 6
And then, of course, the game gets finished and the film comes out. Of course, with 'Alien 3' we're only half way through the project, and while they've finished the principle shooting on the film it's not been edited or anything yet, so we can't really tell yet how they compare – both are due around Easter next year, so it could be a long time before any of us can tell!

HOW DO YOU MANAGE TO MAKE ONE GAME APPEAL TO PEOPLE ALL AROUND THE WORLD?

You don't – or rather, you have a lot of trouble doing it. Quite often, different computer formats end up with totally different games, even though they're all packaged and sold as the same. Check out RoboCop II for instance (see RoboCop II box) and it's going to be a similar situation with RoboCop III – while Probe Software in Croydon are working on the 8-bit incarnations, Ocean have a very different (and by all accounts very impressive) solid 3D version being put together for larger machines.

All this is a bit haphazard though – increasingly, software houses are aiming to get at least two versions of the same title ready to be sold side by side. It worked for US Gold/LucASFilm with their two versions of Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade (see box), and a similar split is being used for both The Godfather games and Alien II. Here's Fergus McGovern of Probe again, commenting on his two versions of Microsoft's Alien II: 'It used to be that someone like Mirros had to just get the licence to a film property in Europe, but now they tend to acquire the world wide rights, so it's much more important to them that game design is right – there's even more money at stake than before! More specifically, they've got to make sure that the software works well for all the abilities across all computer formats and all territories, and it's fairly clear that that's a pretty tough order for any one game.'

BATMAN
Publishers: Ocean
Programmers: In-house
Released: Christmas 1989

In a nutshell: By common consent, the best arcade-style movie conversion yet, and as good a representation as any of the (now perhaps over-familiar) Ocean way of doing film licences. Batman starts and finishes with massive, eight-way scrolling platform shoot-'em-ups, the Bionic Commando-like use of the bobbin to swing around on, and then there are a number of set pieces throughout the game, each of which is an iconic moment from the film.

Looking backwards: Colin Gordon of Ocean: 'At Ocean the general feeling was that we couldn't go wrong with this one – for a start, the film was such a hit, but I think we knew we had a winner in the game too. I think the reason the game was so successful was that people perceived the game as being of a high quality – it was like having four individual full-priced games in one box. Though you might think it's a bit of an easy game to convert, we still found there were quite a lot of planning to do on it – there are all sorts of sequences we toyed with but never included in the game.

At one point we were even thinking about doing a vertically scrolling shoot-'em-up in the Xenon 2 mould – it would have involved the Batman attacking the Joker at the parade – but we're glad we dropped it. Into the screen Batman sequence we went with the end was far more distinctive.'

INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE
(ADVENTURE)
Publishers: Lucasfilm (US Gold)
Programmers: Ken Gilbert and Lucasfilm Games
Released: Mid 1989

In a nutshell: There were two Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade games – a perfectly decent arcade-style platform romp put together by Tientelle and Westwood looks a lot in its own right, and then this, Lucasfilm's point-and-click adventure extravaganza. In many ways this points the way to the future for film licences – with single companies now striving to control the world rights to big films, at least two versions of the same game now look like being a Good Idea.

Looking backwards: Colin Gordon of Ocean: 'This one had a bit of a troubled history. Active Minds, a Manchester-based programming group, submitted a good game design and they started work on the project, but as things progressed it became clear that they were slipping quite a long way from the original concept, not to mention going late. In the end the project was finished in-house, and ended up rather more of a compromise than we would have liked – it wasn't bad, but the game could have been an awful lot better. Originally it was going to have more depth than we ended up with – one nice idea we never implemented was having the action freeze and then freeze from the first scene onwards. Then the picture would expand again, unfreeze itself, and you'd be back in the action – it helped create the feeling of paranoia and that nothing was what it seemed that permeated the film.'

TOTAL RECALL
Publishers: Ocean
Programmers: In-house
Released: Early 1991

 Odd cartoon-like sprites in the disappointing Total Recall.

Hmm. Graphics aren't the high point of indy the adventure.

people are taking the moment, not least US Gold with their forthcoming Godfather-adventure games. There's not much more to say here, really – Indy And The Last Crusade remains not only one of the best film-based games, but one of the best games of any type. A joy.

Looking backwards: Mike Wilding is Project Manager at US Gold: 'Well, obviously this was put together by Lucasfilm in the States, but unusually they'd send us demo versions and ask us to comment on it – particularly on the manual and some of the interactive stuff. It was very good and open of them really, and we were happy to help. Quite how much it really helped the game I'm not sure – after all, Lucasfilm know what it's doing – but it was nice to be asked.'
Because of that, we decided with this new Alien that we needed to do two sorts of game - an arcade-style action game, and a more sophisticated 3D arcade adventure/strategy product. The second one is looking very exciting. While I can't tell you much about it, but the atmosphere is much more like the first film than the second, so there's going to be lots of that very tense walking around corridors stuff, never knowing what you're going to find around the next corner - or above you or behind you for that matter! The idea that you can come up with a 3D game of the same sort of quality as, say, Cyberon III - but with Aliens in! - is very exciting indeed!

**WHAT HAPPENS IF THE FILM PEOPLE CHANGE THE STORY AND DON'T TELL YOU?**

This can be a real problem when you're trying to make a game out of a film that doesn't even exist yet! One classic example is with Ocean's NIGHTBREED. Colin Gordon of Ocean explains: 'Despite the fact that we had quite close ties with the director Clive Barker and the movie in general, this proved a difficult project. It was quite a risk for Ocean to take it on at all - the whole idea sounded great on paper, but it was never very clear how much the finished product was meant to be a horror film, how much it was an action adventure, and how much weight this mystic and/or psychological stuff should have.

In many ways the ideas behind it was a bit too complicated and involved to transfer to the action game format at all - I actually think the less well known interactive movie version was more of a success, since it could reflect events of the film more clearly and pull you into the movie character.

'The real problem, though, was not only did we have a very complicated story, with a number of different elements, we also had a plot that kept changing. Also, the goals seemed to be moving all the time. For instance, in the script the local sheriff and his men were made out to be a bunch of neo-Nazis called The Sons Of The Free or something - and that's how we depopulated them - while in the film they just come across as a bunch of rednecks (see NIGHTBREED). Worse, we have chief baddy Doctor Decker/The Mask die at the end, but the film put in a sort of twist ending where he comes back to life again right at the end which we knew nothing about! Thus the game and the film isn't totally different endings, which isn't exactly an ideal situation.'

**HOW MUCH ARTISTIC LICENCE CAN YOU TAKE?**

Now this is a tricky one - as a game developer you're obviously caught between two stools. On the one hand, you're doing your best to make a good, playable, satisfying game of the thing, while on the other you've got to represent the film properly (not to mention get everything approved by the powers that be at the software house that's going to publish the game, the film company who own the original property, and even - increasingly - the agents of the main actors who star in the film!)

When working on Back To The Future Part III, Jo Baron of Probe played fast and loose with the actual plot of the film. 'We found we could make all sorts of minor changes to the storyline in Back To The Future Part III,' he explained: 'and nobody would mind. They certainly helped add to the game. On a subtle - well, fairly subtle - level we made the two train drivers Marty and Doc encounter in the speeding loco sequence much more aggressive than the two rather passive blokes who appear in the film, simply to add drama. That was the least of it, though.}

### THE UNTOUCHABLES

**Publishers:** Ocean  
**Programmers:** In-house  
**Released:** Christmas 1989

Warehouse shoot-'em-up from early in The Untouchables.

**In a nutshell:** The episodic nature of the film makes it less of an obvious candidate for computerisation than some of Ocean's efforts, resulting in a rather different style of game. Built up from six very different stages (though all could broadly be described as shoot-'em-ups in one way or another) and lacking distinctive comic book-style characters (set in '30s Chicago, it's populated by lots of men in nacoats and ties), it's perhaps not very well focused, but it does make a brave attempt at representing all the action scenes from the film, incorporating some side-scrolling chases, some Operation Wolf-style scenes, and an interesting overhead viewed bit.

**Looking backwards:** Colin Gordon of Ocean: 'This was all done in house, with an awful lot of people working on it in a very structured way. When you watch the film certain scenes stick in your mind, and we tried to recreate all of those, which is why there are so many different sections. One of the advantages of doing an older film like this is that there's less of a risk that your game is going to come out nothing like the film - we had video of the movie around that everybody could watch. I think we did a successful job on this one, considering the constraints - I don't think you'll ever get what you could really call innovative software out of film conversions, but you can still get good, characterful action games. You've always got to have a good guy and a bad guy and stick to a pre-set look and events, but within those constraints there's a lot you can do.'

### MOONWALKER

**Publisher:** US Gold  
**Programmers:** Talentsoft Software, new defunct  
**Release:** Christmas 1989

In a nutshell: Oh - as they say - dear, it's hard to know where to begin with this one really - the dreadful fantasy/film-cum-Michael Jackson promotional vehicle that it's based on doesn't do the programmers any favours, it's true, but they've decided to try and stick to the movie, rather than junk much of the plot and concentrate on building a good game around the Michael Jackson character, and that has to be a mistake. Two very sparse looking overhead scrolling chase things, an odd Op Wolf localarea and, erm, another thing don't a great game make. In retrospect, they'd have been better juggling faithfulness to the film and going for a straight action game (a is the excellent Sega Megadrive Moonwalker version).

**Looking backwards:** Colin Gordon of Ocean: 'This was all done in house, with an awful lot of people working on it in a very structured way. When you watch the film certain scenes stick in your mind, and we tried to recreate all of those, which is why there are so many different sections. One of the advantages of doing an older film like this is that there's less of a risk that your game is going to come out nothing like the film - we had video of the movie around that everybody could watch. I think we did a successful job on this one, considering the constraints - I don't think you'll ever get what you could really call innovative software out of film conversions, but you can still get good, characterful action games. 'You've always got to have a good guy and a bad guy and stick to a pre-set look and events, but within those constraints there's a lot you can do.'

### NIGHTBREED

**Publisher:** Ocean  
**Programmers:** Painting By Numbers  
**Released:** Late 1990

In a nutshell: Despite Ocean's unusually close ties to the movie - a heavily made-up Gary Busey actually appears in a crowd scene as a monster! - the action game, like the film, tended towards the poor side of, erm, 'poor'. Abandoning Ocean's usual lots-of-different-levels approach, the odd running around-a-map-and-try-to-deal-with-the-creatures-you-find design fails to work because a) in the film, you're not quite sure whether you're meant to think of the monsters as good guys or bad guys, confusing matters, and b) it's a bit intrinsically crap anyway.

**Looking backwards:** Colin Gordon of Ocean: 'There were originally meant to be three versions of this - the action game, a sort of Cinerama-style interactive movie and the role playing game, though in the end only the first two came out. I think some of the flaws of the action game certainly are the flaws of the movie - in the script, the Chief Of Police and his men were  a bunch of neoc-Nazis, and that's how we portrayed them, but in the film they just came across as a bunch of stupid rednecks who had some mysterious supply of military-style guns. The whole thing about whether the monsters were good guys or bad guys sounds very intriguing on paper, but when you actually get down to making a game of the idea it doesn't quite work - in the end, the monsters and the rednecks both appeared as baddies for Boone, the hero, to get past, and it all got rather confusing.

'Thats why I think many people prefer the interactive movie version - it's easier to portray a complicated movie, or one that works on a number of levels, in this way.'
outragously we utterly made up a whole host of baddies who attack the Doc in the first part of the game! None of them appear at all in the film — goodness knows where they came from! To be honest, that runaway buckboard sequence sounded very exciting in the film script when we first planned the game, so we were a bit surprised to see the movie and find it hardly lasted any time at all. The nice thing was that the film company were suggesting things we could do with the game all the time — making such a big deal of the pie-plate throwing sequences was their idea, for instance, and it worked well. The problem in computer game terms with Marty McFly is that he's a totally non-violent character, so you can't have him shooting anybody. The pie plates were ideal — violent, yet not violent at the same time. Nobody at Lucasfilm seemed to mind all the jokes we incorporated into the shooting gallery sequence either, though I was slightly disappointed when Steven Spielberg rejected one of my ideas. I wanted to have a little ET ride past the moon on a bicycle at one point, but I guess he thought it was too silly. On the other hand, you can't muck around with something so much that you lose the integrity of the product. People have to believe in it still, explains John Kavanagh of The Kremlin. 'In The Spy Who Loved Me we could get away with quite a list — we added a speed boat chase that doesn't really appear in the film, for instance, and turned the underwater sequence into a sort of Xenon III — but that worked because it's acceptable within the concept of Bond. Much as we might have liked to, we couldn't have had a giant squid or something come down and attack 007's Lotus — people would have just thought it was silly!' SO WHERE DOES THAT LEAVE US? Well, to be honest, I'm not really sure. It's certainly clear that there'll always be good or bad film conversions, just as there will always be good or bad of any sort of game. What does seem increasingly obvious though is that as more and more UK companies find they're competing on the much less forgiving world stage (not just in cosy old Europe) it becomes more important than ever that they get the game exactly right. One thing that seems almost inevitable is that having two versions of the same licence will become much more common — and will result in some very good games. The high-end versions are perhaps the most exciting — the potential profits to be made from an Indy Jones adventure as good as Monkey Island, or an Aliens III game as good as Cyberon III are incredible, which makes it well worth publishers while to provide the right programmers with the time and support to do it — something which has to be good news for the game players.

As far as the action games are concerned, it seems clear (or at least, it seems clear to us) that a) you've really got to have the main character from the film in the centre of the screen the whole time for identification's sake alone, not hide him in cars or rabbit suits and b) that one consistent game mechanic provides a far more pleasing and cohesive game, one that will work on its own terms without the film link being necessary at all. (After all, film makers pay fast and loose with novels when they transfer them to their medium, and it makes sense for games creators to do exactly the same in turn.) The challenge — making something that's a success in one medium really work in another business — is a lot easier than computer games, and at last it seems like publishers and developers are tackling it head on. Let's settle back and see what they come up with, eh?

GHOSTBUSTERS II
Publishers: Activision
Programmers: Foursfield
Completed: Bratfart Image Works
Released: Christmas 1989

In a nutshell: Absolutely dire, and as clear an example as you could possibly hope for of the potential dangers you're up against doing film conversions. Quite clearly, the putting-together-a-series-of-limited-sub-games approach just doesn't work — or at least, it doesn't when the sub-games are as thin and limited as they are here. Sadly, this fails to work as either a representation of the film (despite the nice digitised pic ('explanation') pics that appear between levels, if you hadn't seen the movie you wouldn't have had the faintest idea what was going on) or as a game in its own right — the scene the first sub-game was based on (swimming on a rope down into a ghost-infested sewer) was all but cut from the film, while the rampant Statue Of Liberty from later on is spectacular, but gives you too little to do. The best bit — an all out assault on the chief ghost — involves some tricky climbing slowly down ropes stuff (your wacky little Ghostbusters are apparently killed by any drop of more than about three feet), meaning nine times out of ten you're never going to get to the climax at all. Lots (and lots) of disk swapping too: it not only dull experience, but a frustrating one too. The current groundswell of opinion in the AMIGA POWER office has it that the game in fact provides a perfect reflection of the movie — that was utterly crap too!

Looking backwards: Activision no longer exists in the form it did then, leaving only programming team Foursfield to provide any insight into the development of this game. Unfortunately they refused to comment at all.

THE SPY WHO LOVED ME
Publisher: Domark
Programmers: The Kremlin
Released: Christmas 1990

In a nutshell: Licence To Kill aside, the only halfway decent decent Bond game. Taking the Lotus-cum-submarine that was the star of the film, and building a Spy Hunter style vertically scrolling shoot-'em-up around it, this game gets away from the combination-of-thin-sub-games-adding-up-to-nothing-very-much-at-all problem that bags so many film conversions. Occasional puzzle and Op Wolf-style sequences spoil the continuity a bit, and the far-away-from-the-action viewpoint prevents the Bond character really coming through, but generally a successful game — if one that doesn't really try and reflect the bulk of the movie at all.

Looking backwards: John Kavanagh heads up The Kremlin, Domark's in-house programming team: This was a very successful game — the Bond stuff always does well, and

Licence To Kill
Publisher: Domark
Programmers: The Kremlin
Released: Autumn 1989

In a nutshell: James Bond hasn't been treated well by computer games. In fact, they've generally been crap, failing to capture the character, the outrageous action sequences and the general feel of what have to be the most eminently convertible series of films of all time. This one, cut up into six distinct vertically-scrolling parts reflecting sequences from the film, plays well in a limited sort of a way, but the viewpoint allows little Bond character to come across, and the general 'down to earth' feel of the film makes the whole proceedings seem very ordinary. Not bad by any stretch of the imagination, but one that fails to really capture the spirit of Bond.

Looking backwards: John Kavanagh of The Kremlin. 'The Bond people are very security conscious — I was allowed to read a copy of the script, but I wasn't allowed to take one with me. I guess that's so that if I decided to sell the story to the papers I'd have no evidence to back it up! We did get lots of still photos of all the scenes though, and we studied them in some detail — I think we got the look of the movie spot on. Again, we decided on a single game mechanic — another overhead view scroller — which seemed to work for all the scenes we wanted to use. At one point we toyed with doing a horizontal scroller instead, but Ocean have done so many of those I'm a bit sick of them, and anyway, at the time the Spectre and Amstrad were a lot more important than they are now and since they don't work too well at horizontal scrolling that had to be a consideration. If we tackled the game again it might be different.'
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HART MICRO

COMPUTER CONSUMABLE SPECIALIST
Welcome the AMIGA POWER games review section (Part Two). Budget games reviews start on page 80, and our PD coverage on page 85, but first let’s get on with the rest of this month’s full price releases...

BRIGADE COMMANDER
Publisher: Electronic Zoo
Authors: TTR Development
Price: £25.99
Release: Out now

Brigade Commander is billed as ‘a new concept in computer wargaming’, with the following justification: it’s played in real time. It also comes with a built-in editor, as it seems to be the fashion these days, and a whole range of different scenarios. Half of these are supplied on the accompanying Operation Desert Storm data disk and are based on the events of earlier this year, in which four of the game’s authors apparently saw service.

So what’s all this about real time? Well, traditionally, wargames are more or less direct transcriptions of their paper-based counterparts, meaning that each side has to take it in turns to move and attack. While you’re doing that the computer sits back and lets you get on with it, and once you’ve finished you do the same for the computer. Brigade Commander does away with such courtesies. It’s every man for himself, so while you’re sitting there wondering whether to hide your tank division in the forests or make a break for the coast, the computer’s units have very likely outflanked it and wiped it off the face of the earth. (The basis: it’s a system that works very well, and adds an element of urgency to what is undoubtedly the most boring sort of game of all.

In fact, the whole thrust (if you will) of this game is one of streamlining and simplifying. Most of the game’s operations have been cut down to reduce the amount of time you have to spend fiddling about with lists of numbers. Clicking on a hex - the map is built up from these - brings up a list of the friendly units on it, along with a list of the actions they can perform. If you want to move some of them, for example, click on the relevant units, select Move and then trace out the path you’d like them to follow. Attacking is similarly straightforward. Underneath this apparent simplicity, however, are enough complex strategies and options to keep the most hardened of pros happy. All the usual types of unit are catered for (and you can, of course, design your own) along with such niceties as mine-laying and cargo-carrying.

It’s nice to see so much thought being put into a wargame - they’re usually just endless rehashes of existing games. The result is something which deserves a much wider audience than it’s likely to get.

Call it blasphemy, but I reckon if they put a bit more work into the presentation they might even sell a few copies.

(Jonathan Davies)

PROFLIGHT
Publisher: Hi Soft
Author: Nick Brown
Price: £39.95
Release: Out now

As even its manual points out, Proflight is hardly the most innovative game ever: it’s a flight sim, and in all

Unusual, atmospheric and just a little bit

MAUPITI

a cool shandy and get yourself embossed (surprise, even more surprise!) in all sorts of intrigue.

The first thing you discover is that some poor girl’s been kidnapped. Naturally, being the adventurous type, you get straight down to a spot of detective work, exploring the locality and interviewing the dozen or so inhabitants of the island. You discover the usual group of suspects - mad communists, raving homosexuals, handsome housewives, disillusioned young men from Europe and, of course, the obligatory mysterious old fisherman.

There’s not too much searching to be done, since at least one of these biker types characters shows up at every turn. Interaction is good though - you can talk to them by picking any one of about twenty questions, you can follow them, you can bribe them, you can even indulge yourself and give them a good old fashioned beating. We wouldn’t recommend it though - the latter option might be a lot of fun, but you’re running a huge risk of ending up with the contents of your head plastered all over some bar-room wall. As you might expect, Maupiti Island falls short of a five star rating in the hospitality stakes.

If all sounds suitably intriguing, doesn’t it, but how well does it actually work as a game? Well, you first thing you have to say is that it’s illustrated deliciously, punctuated with some charming sound effects and music which give the whole affair a leisurely, almost holiday-like feel. It certainly rates highly in the atmosphere stakes.

Gameplay-wise it works quite well too. I usually have a big problem with graphical adventures - they rarely let you do just what you want, and I tend to get frustrated. Here, however, if you want to look at something (even the most humdrum object) you
Going in for a strafing run through a (rather spacious) village. The church on the left is a nice touch.

Fairness there are tons of flight sims already available for virtually every known breed of home computer ever invented. (Even the BBC.)

Actually 'ton's of flight sims is quite an appropriate collective noun to use because, as someone once said, you can tell how good a flight sim is by how much it weighs. ProFlight comes in at a slightly disappointing 1.2 lbs (700 grammes) though, so (as the theory concludes), it looks like it's little to get excited about.

The author explains in the blurb that his reason for writing such a game was that he wanted to create a flight sim that isn't afflicted by the simplicity of others. And you must admit, he has succeeded. Here you get to pretend that you're piloting a Panavia Tornado, one of the fastest aircraft in the world, and yes, I can deny it, it all seems extremely realistic. In fact, far, far too realistic.

Okay, let's play the game. First you select your way through a few menus (twisting absolutely everything imaginable), give your plane the once over and a number of one-key presses later you're airborne. Now you can select the map, set a destination, flick on the auto-pilot, and sit back and relax. The graphics are fast, but not outstandingly stunning (you can have different around-plane views, though), so how about a glance at the manual to find out exactly what can be accomplished?

Here you'll find over 160 pages of information explaining everything from how to pull off various complicated manoeuvres (barrel rolls or stall turns, anybody?) to top graphs illustrating the 'drag co-efficient' (whatever that is). The snap is, you see, that as pointed out at before, ProFlight is so accurate down to the very last detail that it has become more like a serious simulator real fighter pilots would use, and far less of an enjoyable computer game. More evidence backing this up is the combat option – it sounds pretty good but, unless you've had considerable flying practice, it's a joke.

For serious flight sim buffs with excessive amounts of patience, ProFlight will no doubt be fulfilling their wildest dreams. But for everyone else? A bit of a nightmare, really. • FICH PELLEY

**The Bottom Line**

An overly complicated, visually unimpressive and off-puttingly expensive flight sim which is far more of a sim than a game. It has a reasonable amount to offer, but only if you stick at it. (And it's got horrible business program-like packaging too.)

52ペーセント

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**French, this is not your run-of-the-mill game.**

**ISLAND**

usually can. Just bumbling around the locations in the game checking everything out can be nearly as much fun as unearthing deadly secrets or whatever.

Of course, there is a downside to all this. There's no way that Maui is going to give you more than (maybe) a dozen hours entertainment – it's simply too small. Still, for mellow types who get their kicks watching Sunday afternoon movies or walking in parks, this

provides an excellent alternative to rabid death rushes or sugary platform games.

To sum up, here is a small and almost perfectly formed game full of lovely visuals, interesting characters, and providing a limited smattering of action and suspense. Yes, I'm afraid it can be summed up by one of the blandest words in the dictionary – it's nice. (And no, it's not as good as Monkey Island.)

**COLIN CAMPBELL**

On our first meeting Bruce reveals that he's never 'been with' a girl. Oh dear.

It's the mysterious fisherman. He's very religious (and a bit spooky).

**The Bottom Line**

Charming quirky French adventure but too tiny to be a classic. It's obviously been crafted with care, attention and a splash of love – worth a look if you can afford a little luxury.

73ペーセント

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**AMIGA POWER**

**AUGUST 1991**

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**DISCOVERY**

**Publisher:** Micro Illusions

**Price:** £29.95

**Authors:** Sylvan

**Technical Arts:** Out now

'An interactive, educational space adventure.' That's the only clue I was given that this, the latest in AMIGA POWER's hate campaign against me, is (please, no) a game for the younger player. How much younger isn't specified, and neither is the exact nature of the education promised to the lucky infant.

At the heart of Discovery is a walk-around-collecting-things game. The idea is that you're aboard a spaceship which has run into trouble, and you've got to salvage it by collecting fuel crystals which are scattered around its decks. And then there's the 'education'. Every so often you'll come up against a security door. To get through a question needs to be answered, the type of which is selected from a menu at the start of the game.

There are questions on spelling and maths of varying degrees of difficulty and, err, flags. Get the answer right and the door will open. Get it wrong and you'll be given the answer and the chance to try again.

There are three main problems, as I see it. Firstly, although the process of walking from left to right, up and down ladders sounds simple enough, I couldn't get to grips with the control method and keep failing down holes and dropping off ladders. If I can't do it, it's hard to see how this 'younger player' is going to fare much better.

Secondly, the program makes extensive use of the Amiga's built in speech synthesizer. That's right, the one supplied on your Workbench disk which you probably loaded up briefly on Day One and immediately wrote off as a useless curiosity. The result is that our prospective student is likely to be asked such questions as 'Speelk Wrinplintsthi?'

And thirdly, and perhaps most fundamentally, this whole business of asking questions and marking them right or wrong hardly marks the latest advance in educational techniques. There's more to educational software than quiz show-style questions and answers. • JONATHAN DAVIES

**The Bottom Line**

An unimaginative crack at the trickly educational market. Still, somewhere must be coming up with better ideas than this.

52ペーセント
TANGRAM
Publisher: Thalion
Price: £26.93
Author: Thomas Behrends
Release: Out now
Tangram is an Amiga version of an ancient Chinese puzzle game of the same name, one which more traditionally involves wooden blocks and various 'frames'. The idea is to place your blocks in the frames (the shapes of which are always the same, though their numbers can change), so that all the frame is completely covered without overlapping. It's a very simple concept, and has been converted for computer use without expanding upon it, except for the rather cramped addition of a time limit for each of the 200 screens supplied.
Control is very easy - the pieces are moved around with the mouse, rotated with a mouse button, and placed with the other button - and the Amiga puts its spare processor time to good use with some pleasantly oriental-type music. The question is, are these enough to justify buying the Amiga version instead of spending a quid on a wooden-block original? And, let's be honest, isn't the Amiga incredibly picky about having the block positioned pixel-perfect, but other than that gratuitous irritation it's practically invisible - you don't gain by playing it on a computer at all.
With most board game conversions, you at least get a computer opponent, but that isn't applicable here and it makes buying the game in software form something of a waste of time and money. It's not that Tangram is a bad game - the wooden original has a lot to be said for it - but this computer variant is utterly pointless. • STUART CAMPBELL

CHAMPION OF THE RAJ
Publisher: Image Works
Price: £25.99
Authors: Level 9
Release: Out now
A game set in my favourite Indian restaurant? Apparently not, as soon became clear when I studied the box more closely. It's actually set in India in 1860, when Queen Victoria was a mere twinkle in her mother's eye and the country was split into several warring kingdoms ruled by people like the British East India Company, the Marathas, the Sikhs and a few minor players like the French.
So, we've got a country divided into lots of territories, and they're all fighting each other. What do you reckon you've got to do? That's right, pick a side and try to conquer everyone else. As a true patriotic, I, of course, plumped for the British (erm, actually they're the easiest to win with), and it's possible to have up to five chums playing the rest. The battle takes place on the rather tidy map in the middle of the screen, which can be scrolled up (painfully slowly), and with much disk accessing to reveal a set of icons underneath. Attacking a neighbouring kingdom is a case of clicking on it and selecting the 'attack' icon. Unless the computer decides otherwise you've then got to lead your army in battle, which means clicking on more icons as the battle progresses to tell them when to charge, retreat and all the rest of it.
As you might expect, there are the inevitable 'arcade sequences' which crop up every so often - sword fights, shoot-em-ups, elephant races. I'm sure you know the routine. And I hardy need tell you that you'll need to keep an eye on your cashflow in order to finance your operations, buying more troops when necessary. The real question is, how is it actually different from Defender of the Crown which it's obviously quite closely related to? Well, it's set in India

BEAST BUSTERS
Publisher: Activision
Price: £25.99
Authors: Henry S. Clark, Ken Jarvis, Matthew Symmons, Andy Pang
Release: Out now
And this month's Operation Wolf clone is...
I've never been a fan of the arcade gun games, but Beast Busters was one that I did pump a good deal of cash into. The three-player option, the touches of humour (watch out for the birdmen on the third level, that's all I'm saying) and the zombie gore factor (bits of bloodied corpses flying around like snow in a blizzard) made it much more fun than the usual hormone-substitute anorezame, and a trip to the seaside was never complete without a quick slaughter of the undead. (And then we used to go and play some video games, but that's another story).

Anyway, this long-awaited conversion has been rescued from the ashes of Activision UK, and boasts all the features of the coin-op, except for the three-player capability (the maximum here is two). The graphics have been very authentically reproduced, and all the original levels are included for that authentic full-scale massacre experience. This is one conversion that looks very like the original. That's not normally the big problem with coin-op conversions, though - the main question is usually over the gameplay, so how well does Beast Busters hold up?

Well, Amiga Beast Busters plays very much like arcade Beast Busters - or, at least, like arcade Beast Busters would if you used to bung two quid into the arcade machine at a time. In common with many Amiga conversions, you get several 'credits' to play with (five in this case), and with 6B, by the time you've used them all you've completed half of the game on your first go.

The difficulty level is very badly-judged, being extremely low until certain points where a particular enemy will leap out and kill you in a second flat (no exaggeration). In fact, it's not so much of a difficulty curve, more like one of those lines you get on heart monitoring machines in TV hospital programmes, where the little dot moves along quite sedately, then suddenly leaps up to a peak with a high-pitched 'ping', and settles back down to a straight line again. This makes the game very short or lastability, as most people will complete it on the first day or get bored trying. Beast Busters is another competent conversion job, and certainly looks very nice, but even devotees of the original won't really get their money's worth out of it. • STUART CAMPBELL

THE BOTTOM LINE
Technically flawed (it slows down when there's a lot happening) but basically a good translation that's just too easy to be a good way to spend £25. • JONATHAN DAVIES

THE BOTTOM LINE
It has its moments, but falls headlines into the old "not enough to it" trap. The arcade bits are okay, but a bit like a sitting room without a seatie.
CHAOS IN ANDROMEDA
Publisher: On-Line
Entertainment
Price: £24.99
Authors: Kirk Marino
Release: Out now
It’d be pretty worrying if, whilst mucking your way through an early morning bowl of Honey Nut Loops, you received a letter from the future informing you that you are about to be transported through time and space on a top-secret mission to rescue the important Mr Yai and save the planet of Andromeda.
In the real world as we know it this is very unlikely to happen, but in the make-up fantasy world of computer games it could well take place. In fact it just has, and in an icon-driven role-playing adventure sort of way. At first glance you probably won’t see much, as everything is extremely small, including your character and objects which are so tiny that they’re not even shown. The scrolling really is an embarrassment too. But graphics aren’t what’s important here – it’s gameplay.
And luckily the gameplay is far more complaint-free. The trick, you see, is to build up your powers, use objects and solve puzzles to negotiate your way through the huge playing area – without (naturally) doing something stupid, such as falling from a bridge or getting yourself attacked by other characters. Partially you want to avoid being attacked because the long sequences are so cop and, partially because, since you don’t have lives as such, a lot of save-gaming has to take place as insurance in case you get hopelessly killed.
However, let’s not be too picky. When all’s said and done, I rather enjoyed Chaos. There’s far more to it than I’ve got room to mention here. Take the robots, for example, which you move about as separate characters. I haven’t got room to mention them. Nor can I squeeze in a word or two about the considerable interaction with other characters. I’d love to go on and on about ages (more money, you see) but I won’t. I’ll stop there and think of something to put in the Bottom Line box. • RICH PELLEY

MOONBASE
Publisher: Mindscape
Price: £35.99
Authors: Wesson International
Release: Out now
You’ve built your own city in Sim City. You’ve gone on to run the world in Sim Earth (well, you have if you’ve got a PC) and countless other games. There’s only one place left unpressed. It’s time to glance warily skywards, screw on your helmet and head for... the moon.
It’s cold, quiet and covered in craters, but in no time at all you’ll have discovered the necessary combination of menus and icons you need to start, continued smoothing things out and showed building all over the place. These can be picked from a wide range of structures, from habitation modules and laboratories to recreation facilities and greenhouses (for growing food). What you put where is up to you, but there ought to be a method to your madness – everything’s grind to a halt unless it’s plumbed into a decent emittor of power generators and heat extractors. Manpower is important too. There needs to be enough people to run everything, and they’ve all got to be accommodated and fed. The other headache is finance. To start with you receive an annual grant from NASA, but this soon dries up so you’ll need to become self-sufficient as fast as possible. Cash has to be generated by building mining and manufacturing facilities, and these in turn need to be staffed and powered and... it’s a complete nightmare, really.
Sounds a bit boring, doesn’t it? But it’s not! As with all these ‘build a world’ games, Moonbase is deceptively addictive. Once you’ve worked out what’s going on (the manual’s not terribly helpful here, mainly consisting of a bare novella interspersed with tips and a short summary at the back) it’s almost impossible to put it down. There’s an enormous amount of depth to it, and everythng’s been finely balanced so you’re constantly teetering on the brink of disaster. I’ve only got two major criticisms: a) as your creation gets bigger, the monthly update slows down horrendously, and b) having built a fully self-sufficient moonbase, and filled in the whole playing area with bits and pieces (which doesn’t actually take very long), all the fun suddenly evaporates and you’re left with a very basic trading game.
Moonbase is unfortunate in that it slips so neatly into the Sim City category of games, and therefore has such high standards set for it before it even begins. Not that it’s in with bad company or anything. It just isn’t anything new. I’d like to say ‘it’s out of this world’, but that would be a slight overstatement (and a crap joke to finish on). • JONATHAN DAVIES

GHOST BATTLE
Publisher: Thalion
Price: £23.53
Authors: Erwin Klindhofer, Henk Nieborg
Release: Out now
Ghosts’n’Goblins has been the inspiration for some terrible crimes in the world of computer software, and I’m afraid this is another one. Let’s get right down to the brass tacks straight away, shall we?
Good Points: nifty sound effects, a bit different from the usual bangs and zaps; pretty graphics; three difficulty levels; reasonably slick presentation.
Bad Points: utterly execrable animation, featuring the worst jumping and ladder-climbing I’ve seen in a very long time; slow gameplay; baddies that seem to appear out of the ether, even from somewhere that you’ve just visited which was quite definitely a baddie-free zone; hundreds of unavoidable ‘appearing-from-nowhere’ traps (my pet hate in arcade games); quite spectacular lack of imagination in all areas of plot and game design; huge amounts of dull trekking around in what it later (much later) transpires was entirely the wrong direction(s), not that there was any way of guessing beforehand; enemies that need to be shot a dozen times before they die – even the cannon-toting ones; teeth-grindingly infuriating smug message at game-over time; everything else.
Though superficially class-lookng, Ghost Battle is an utterly tacit game, and a real bind to play more than twice in any given 24-hour period. The game’s cover blurb says it all, really – Thalion. Sometimes, it’s frightening... • STUART CAMPBELL

THE BOTTOM LINE
Amiga Power August 1991

The less-than-impressive main scrolling map screen of Chaos In Andromeda.

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THE BOTTOM LINE
Boring, boring, boring boring boring, boring Everything that’s wrong with full-price Amiga software in one handy package.
(Exception the sound). There is still one console who couldn’t find a better use for £23 than this.
HALLS OF MONTEZUMA
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Price: £25.95
Authors: Strategic Simulations Group
Release: Out now

As AMIGA POWER’s newly-appointed Really Complicated Strategy Games That No-one Else Wants To Review Because They Take Ages To Work Out And Then

Tom Clancy’s thriller comes in from the cold and onto the Amiga.

the rather off-putting window and icon heavy display of Halls Of Montezauma.

Turn Out To Be Crap Editor, I was delighted to be presented with SSG’s Halls Of Montezauma. This is all I need were the words furthest from my mind as I cast aside my final revision, cancelled all appointments and settled down beside the fire with the 524 page manual.

At first glance it looks overwhelmingly similar to every other wargame (lots of flashing square, movement phases etc) the only major anomaly being the eight different scenarios to choose between.

They all involve the US Marines, following their history through action in Mexico.

THE CARDINAL OF THE KREMLIN
Publisher: Accolade
Price: £24.99
Author: Capstone
Release: Out now

W hen a new game based on one of Tom Clancy’s techno-thriller novels landed on my desk I expected to be thrown head first into a sea of three letter abbreviations, military jargon and worryingly plausible conspiracy theories. And — would you believe it? — I was right.

Not that any of that’s a bad thing, however — it certainly helps build up the Cold War atmosphere a treat. Here’s a game in which the assumed gruelling for respect for all things military aside — successfully and excitingly allows you to (as Clancy puts it in the manual) ‘participate in the events beyond our daily life’. In particular, events surrounding the development of a working SDI system by the US military, with the aid of the CIA, under the protection of the FBI, and in competition with the KGB. (With me so far?) Of course, this is all milk and honey to Clancy fans, who love nothing better than to gorge themselves on politics, corruption and the secrets of the powerful.

As head of the Central Intelligence Agency (there’s no messing about in this game!) and chief of the so-called Star Wars

Launching the Star Wars kit. Note the reminders at the bottom of the screen.

project, you must control the development and defence of your own missile-destroying satellite laser system while undermining the Soviets’ project. At your disposal are scientists, soldiers, spies and satellites which you must deploy around the world.

Each area of your influence is represented by a button on screen (there are ten) which you use to hire, fire and generally delegate. For example, to start with you’ll need to choose your most trustworthy programmer to head your computer department, checking how smart and how reliable, the candidates are on a series of easy-to-read meters. It’s all fairly simple click and select strategy stuff, and though there are plenty of tasks to undertake, it does have a tendency to become rather tedious after a few hours — a bit like

attemping all your ironing in one go.

Of course, it’s not as simple as that. For a start, you’ll have to watch out for employees burning out (or getting themselves kidnapped) and take steps to prevent it or correct things once it’s happened, while at the same time keeping in touch with your spies and events further afield. Your main concern is to get some of your own lasers into space before the Soviets can complete their development program — something you achieve by a) getting your stuff finished as fast as possible and b) making your best to hamper the Soviet project by sending a commando against them.

Unfortunately, this potentially most exciting bit turns out to be something of a disaster — you’re thrust from a reasonably captivative strategy game into a two dimensional seek and destroy sequence of masterful banality, and it mucks things up a treat. It would not look amiss in an infant school programming class. (It’s amazing how much the programmers think they can get away with...) It’s a shame, because as strategy games go The Cardinal of the Kremlin is busy and believable without being overly complex. The manual is simple enough, and it takes no time at all to get playing. For the most part it is a graphically acceptable and smooth (if rather uninspiring) ride, but ultimately you’re left with a feeling that the various tasks don’t seem to connect terribly well.

Generally then, a weak attempt to transfer Clancy’s slightly dubious (but undeniably readable) works to silicon. For fans the best bet will still be Grandstand’s The Hunt for Red October, which succeeds where this game fails — in mixing good strategy with exciting action without hurting either.

— COLIN CAMPBELL

THE BOTTOM LINE
Believable and reasonably captivating strategy affair spoiled completely by an inane arcade sequence, positioned ludicrously at the centre of the game. Clancy fans, like the rest of us, should expect a good deal more.

51 PERCENT

CHALLENGE GOLF
Publisher: On-Line Entertainment
Authors: Jason Crown, Steeny Scott
Price: £24.99
Release: Out now

Releasing a new Amiga golf game so soon after Electronic Arts’ classic PGA Tour Golf might be seen by some people as rather unfortunate timing, but if the game’s good enough, there’s always room in the market for one more. The problem with Challenge Golf is that, in a nutshell, it simply isn’t good enough. The graphics may be a bit on the crude side, with lots of right angles and sudden edges, and the sound is minimalist even by golf sim standards, but neither are terrible. It’s the playability that’s really lacking here, the ‘feeling is simply wrong. The ball never really seems to go airborne half the time, it almost never goes anywhere remotely close to where you aim the cursor, and when you reach the green you’re confronted by a putting sequence that’s
MANCHESTER UNITED EUROPE

Within five minutes of booting this up I had Lee Sharp emerging from an
untidy midfield melee, skipping through the left wing and crossing
over for Mark Hughes to make a subtle touch before rocketing the ball
into the goal.

The little Sparky character rolled
over towards the crowd and
performed his victory salute before
being mauled by tiny team mates.

Any student of the ways of Old
Traford will happily admit that this is
glorious realism.

I have to confess to a love of
Manchester United football that
verges on the obsessive so please
forgive this review's ridiculous
enthusiasm. But honestly, this really
is a marvellous football game.

Man Utd Europe is viewed in
the familiar waydow view three
dimensional fashion with the
computer choosing which player the
joystick dictates to at any time.

Unlike so many football games this is
done exceptionally intuitively, so
there's none of that frustrating
hanging around while the program
tinally decides to nominate a
character to chase some rampaging
centre forward.

There are bagfuls of controls at
your disposal but you won't need to
wade through a manual to learn them.
Tackling, shooting, dribbling and so
on come naturally and swiftly. Too many games are
obsessed with making you work to attain skills which would be
elementary to any half-decent footballer - Manchester Utd lets
you get on with trying to win games straight away.

Having said that though, we're
not talking about a simple stroll

... toward the European Cup Final in
your first campaign - Manchester
United Europe provides a learning
curve which is sensible while
challenging, and winning games is
no breeze. Still, at least when you're
beaten there's nobody at fault but yourself - you can't blame the
game's controls, which makes for
such a refreshing change (I've
broken more joysticks than I care
to count after grappling with certain
soccer simulations).

Harrah! United are in the leads, thanks to one in the corner of the net from McClair.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Packed with options, but none of them can
help Challenge Golf overcome a basic lack of
playability. Nowhere near the level of PGA Tour (not
even as good as World Class Leaderboard, in fact).

FRENETIC

Publisher: Core Design
Authors: Rob Toone, Jonny Gee
Price: £20.99
Release: Out now

Core seem to be suffering from a spot of
creative block at the moment. After
some top-notch product, first they release a
straight clone (Warzone, 65% from us in issue 2), and now they've
come up with this, a vertically-scrolling
shoot-'em-up taken directly from the
Xenon 2 text. The problem for me is
trying to find something new to say about
it, so here goes.

No, I'm sorry. It's gone. Frenetic is a
shoot-'em-up that more or less completely
fails to stand out from the crowd in any
way. The levels (of which there are eight)
all have that 'seen-it-before' look to them
(example, level one is from Battle
Squadron; level two is from Xenon 2, and
level three's from Battle Squadron again),
and the gameplay doesn't do anything to
dispel the feeling. The bolt-on power-ups
are pure Xenon 2 once more, and the
most 'different' thing about the alien is
that you come across multiple-hit baddies
rather than 10 in most games (hardly a good point in my book). Action-
wise there's plenty going on, though,
and the faster-than-usual scrolling

backgrounds create an effective illusion of
speed, although the game isn't actually
any faster than the average. Oops, it's that
'A word again.

Frenetic is a zappy enough little
blaster, and very nicely put together, but if
you compare it to something like Aliens II
(also in this issue), it very quickly starts to
look decidedly second-rate. You can see
what they've been aiming at, but none of
the promises made to us by the
programmers when interviewed last issue
really seem to have come off. Even at the

Core's uninspiring kill-'em-all Frenetic.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Great, wonderful, superb (though not
without imperfections). Beats the hell out of all	hose terrible football games you've tried before.

reduced £21 price point, you're not
getting an awful lot for your money here,
and I can't recommend it with any great
sense of conviction at all.

STUART CAMPBELL.
Gunboat + Afrika Korps

Publisher: Accolade
Price: £29.99
Authors: Tom Laughry, Roseann Mitchell (graphics)
Release: Out now

From the outset, Gunboat has more in common with F-19 Stealth Fighter or M1 Tank Platoon than it has with, say, Operation Wolf. It's a simulation of the uses to which American River Patrol Boats (PBRs) have been or could be used. Hence, in the scenario selection you can run on missions in Vietnam, Colombia and the Panama Canal. The scenarios form a loose plot. Your first missions are in Vietnam because 'that's where it all began'. As you're promoted for successfully completing missions, you can move into the Colombian operation zone. The very best will be put on assignment along the Panama Canal. Designer Tom Laughry claims there's an earthquake-driven rockfall in one scenario which he put in there because he was working on the game through the aftershocks of a fact 7.1.

But you don't have to go on a mission immediately. You can practise on either the bow or stern gun positions or try your hand at the helm. There are a number of settings to take care of which fall into the category of pregame miscellany. These include setting the detail level to high or low (standard flight sim territory) and the slew rate for steering or firing weapons and choosing the firepower itself (.50 caliber Brownings and M129 grenade launchers being standard). PBRs recently sent to Panama mount the GE M134 Minigun and these too are available from the arsenal. Once you're out at station you kick power into the weapon system (or the boat itself) and begin your cruise down one more Viet-sim creek. A gunner can send instructions to the pilot and vice versa. You can abdicate responsibility for the vessel as a whole while you're familiarising yourself with any one particular piece of equipment but you'll soon feel confident enough to control every aspect of a mission. (Anyway, it makes sense to tell the pilot to rotate the water jets left to avoid an incoming missile.)

One thing you have to cope with right from the start however, is night combat. To this end both gun positions are fitted with powerful searchlights, the trace off being that they give away your PBR's position. Land your cone of light on the enemy and you've as good as got them in your sights. Another habit you should get into is that of asking for target ID in order to avoid problems with 'friendly fire', though frankly there didn't seem much call for it on the early missions. Perhaps it's something which complicates more confined and difficult combat situations later on.

My first mission, I confess, felt like something of a turkey shoot. I'd had a few hours at the various stations and the only thing I wasn't familiar with was the program's time compression routine. I was soon hot tailing it (well, trying to pull a 33mph turn in a river boat) away from a jetty choc-a-block with a waterfront community of an NVA armour unit. I actually got out of there with boat and crew intact but wasn't in a position to do anything constructive afterwards. You can meet the opposition in almost any manner of its choosing. There are riverine concrete bunkers, HInd helicopters, infantry, sampans, PT-76s – you name it. Gunboat has as much going for it in terms of detail as many a tank or flight sim, but it's not without its faults. The graphics are a busy mix of filled polygons and what look like expanded sprites but semi-animated is the best word for the sprites, which sometimes look too large. What really takes a bite out of the playability is the response speed which is too slow to be useful on many occasions. Much of the sluggishness is deliberate and probably conveys some of the difficulty of overcoming the inertia of the PBR. Still, enjoyable and atmospheric fun on SEAN MASTERSON
sets Kerpe aside from its counterparts, then they'll no doubt be shouting about that too.
And unfortunately, there's no one who can stop them. All the most fanatical strategy nut should keep away from this unimpressive desert ram. RICH PELLEY

THE BOTTOM LINE
It's a war game, and it's on the Amiga. A slightly dubious combination, really. Dull. Another one meg only game.

COHORT
Publisher: Impressions
Price: £29.99
Author: Edward Grabowski
Release date: Out now
Anyone into battle sims will probably remember Roke's Drift. Cohort uses an improved version of the same gaming system, but takes a step back in time to the days of Imperial Rome. Here two opposing armies face each other across one of four Fields Of Honour. There are seven unit types for you to muck around with - light, medium and heavy infantry, light, medium and heavy cavalry and archers - and you can choose to either use a preset selection or compose your own army of up to 16 units.
What sets Cohort (and Roke's Drift) apart from the majority of wargames is the way that the game's been designed. Cohort's characters are cute, fully animated people who walk, run, charge and fight at your command. The combat arena is many times bigger than the screen and you can either scroll around under mouse control or jump to a specific location using the full screen map.
While it was an interesting way of doing things, Roke's Drift had some rough edges - it's nice to see that things have been improved upon here. The icon control system is much better for a start - things are clearer, and you can now move units as a single group and group them in formations. However, it's still too complicated for it's own good - actions such as attempting to regroup a unit in battle often have hilarious rather than strategic effect, as the legionsmen jostle with each other to get past. And although the manual talks about the different tactics that the Roman legions used against enemies such as barbarian, Macedonian and Carthaginian armies, you never get to see them - your computer opponent is always just another bunch of Romans.
Although the game has its flaws, Cohort has a lot of immediate appeal. I was locked into it for a couple of days before its attraction started to fade. The control system is still not all it cracked up to be and silly anomalies (such as the cavalry sound effects still working when there are no horses on the field) take their toll.

PAUL LYONS

THE BOTTOM LINE
A fine off-set battle sim, more accessible than most. Not worth £29.99 though. One meg only too.

From the makers of the great Eye Of The Beholder comes this. Oh dear, it's useless...

RENEGADE LEGION INTERCEPTOR
Publisher: SSI (US Gold)
Authors: Scott Bayless, Graeme Bayless, Todd Mitchell
Price: £24.99
Availability: Out now
For the rest of us, however, this is a bit of a dog. The main problem is a severe lack of action. What happens is this: you are presented with an 'empty' squadron of space fighters and given a mission. Your first task is obviously to 'fill them up' by choosing pilots, picking ships (from a list of 301) and loading them up with weapons. (It is possible to design your own ships, but it soon becomes clear that this is a waste of time.) Once all the fiddling fiddling around with hardware and pilots is over, the game proper begins, much of which involves getting yourself embroiled in some epic space battle or other.

So how does this bit work then?

Well, battle commences on a grid divided into loads of hexagonal shapes. Your guys are facing the other guys, and the first thing to do is move your ships into a good battle order to get into good firing positions. It's best described as the pencil and paper game Battleships on the move, and yes, it really is that simple. Just pick an enemy, aim, and fire. He'll be doing the same to you of course, but hopefully not as well.

The trouble with this is that no amount of careful picking among the vast selection of sophisticated kit is going to make any real difference at all - most of the time you're going to win anyway. The alien sequences are ugly and easy, the bug guys are amazingly stupid, and it's all over very quickly.

If you manage to retain your interest, things develop a bit as the game goes on. Pilots gain experience, building up credits which allow you to buy bigger, better ships, and fit nastier weapons. All very well, but it's a bit vacant and pointless really when the dodgy kit you started off with is perfectly capable of doing exactly the same job within minutes?

So what should we make of it? Well, the programmers have clearly had a whale of a time designing battle cruisers, inventing alien races, and dreaming up heavy duty sci-fi scenarios, but in all their excitement they forgot to do very much with the actual game. If you're the sort of person who enjoys leafing through technical manuals of starships that won't exist for another millennium or two, then this is just possibly, what you've been looking for. Otherwise, it's a terrible waste of time. It's hard to believe that this is the same publisher that came up with Eye of the Beholder.

COLUM CAMPBELL

THE BOTTOM LINE
Lots of impressive sci-fi hardware, but precious little opportunity to use any of it. One for the sci-fi nuts, rather than those after a game. One meg only.

The (relatively) outstanding graphics of Cohort. The way ahead for wargames?
BUDGET

And here we go, straight into the budgies. It's the normal selection of re-releases and original games - GBH, by the way, is the name of Gremlin's new cheapie label.

BARBARIAN
Publisher: Kixx
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

It's good news for fans of one-on-one beat-em-ups this month, with Kixx releasing both Street Fighter and this controversial game from 1986. It was controversial because a) it had a mildly suggestive picture of the infamous Mara Whittaker on the box (strangely missing from this version) and b) because it was thought by some people to be excessively violent. The central scene involves a decapitation sequence, with blood spurtling from the neck of the defeated warrior. It all seems like a bit of a storm in a tea cup these days, perhaps because the C64-like graphics couldn't possibly upset anyone anymore, or perhaps because it's such an average game that it just isn't worth getting worked up about. As these kind of things go, it's quite good fun, and certainly a lot better than Street Fighter (reviewed over on the right there), with good sound, some nice humorous touches and a fair degree of challenge. Any game in this field, though, is always going to be compared to the mighty IK+, and in that light Barbarian looks distinctly second rate. • STUART CAMPBELL

BIONIC COMMANDO
Publisher: Kixx
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

In its day (1986 or thereabouts) this was thought as one of the better examples of the coin-op's art. It sounds quite exciting, but all that really proves is how little people were prepared to settle for in those early days (particularly when a game carried the tag of coin-op conversion), because this is absolutely dire.

The arcade original was novel and great fun, with the telescopic arm adding a new dimension to the platform game, but in this conversion the all-important smooth scrolling has been replaced by a God-awful push scroll system which completely (and I really do mean completely) destroys the playability. It's a shame, because the graphics are very faithful and the sound is fab, but the game is quite unbearable to actually play, and even £7.99 is too much to spend on some pretty pictures (pretty by 1988 standards, anyway) and groovy tunes. You'll give yourself a headache if you buy Bionic Commando, so, um, unless you want a headache, do not bother. • STUART CAMPBELL

FOOTBALLER OF THE YEAR 2
Publisher: GBH
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

Another average football game rises from the grave at a budget price.

This game provides a different slant on an old favourite, the football management sim. Instead of being the manager, you take the player's perspective, trying to make a name for yourself as the country's top goal-scorer by means of a strange combination of arcade sequences, tactical planning and gambling money on your ability to answer football trivia questions (?). It's an interesting concept, and initially makes for a pretty engrossing game, but repetitiveness soon rears its ugly head, and you notice that it's possible to simply keep gambling on trivia (the same questions - many of which are out of date now - repeat fairly frequently) until you've got enough cash to buy a measure of success. There are also a couple of annoying illogicalities (at one point you're told that to win an international cap you must score twice in that week's match - but you don't have a match that week), but this is still reasonable entertainment. You can do much better for the money, though. • STUART CAMPBELL

LED STORM
Publisher: Kixx
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

This is yet another Kixx re-release of an obscure (so I've never seen it) GapCom coin-op (see also Bionic Commando and Street Fighter reviews), and, if I can get straight to the point, it's another duffer. LED Storm is a vertically-scrolling race game, not unlike the classic (i.e. incredibly old) arcade machine Burnin' Rubber in several ways. Except it isn't.

What it is actually a memory-test game, as the screen moves too fast for you to react to anything that comes at you, so your only chance of success is to crash a lot and remember where it happened for the next time you happen to be whizzing past that point in the game. It also suffers from a very limited horizontal scrolling and pretty useless music, and as a whole it's simply uninspiring.

You'll get a couple of hours entertainment out of it if you're lucky (and undemanding), but you should really be looking to set your standards rather higher. Not good, not exactly crap, not anything very much. • STUART CAMPBELL

IMPOSSIBLE MISSION II

An early platform classic gets a new lease of life.

Platforms, puzzles, and acrobatics make Impossible Mission II a real classic.

The Bottom Line

Different and reasonably good fun, but don't expect to come back to it much after the first few goes.

The Bottom Line

Terminally flawed conversion that isn't worth considering unless you're a real masochist. More of a Chronic Commando than a Bionic Commando.
**SHARKEY'S MOLL**

Publisher: Zeppelin
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

The Op Wolf style main screen of Sharker's Moll - complete with bad grammar.

There seems to be something of a glut of Operation Wolf Type shooting games on the market at the moment. Recently we've seen Predator 2, Beast Busters, Operation Wolf itself on budget re-release, and now this cheezy from Zeppelin set in Prohibition Chicago in the 2020s. All this means is that the usual aliens' soldiers are replaced with sharp suited mobsters and the graphics become rather weedy Molotov cocktails (or Molotov's as the screen rather annoyingly insists on calling them). Otherwise it's the same old kill-everything gameplay, and it's done perfectly competently without any glaring flaws or outstanding flair. It's tough enough to be challenging without ever really stretching you. There's a nice touch at the end of a level (I won't spoil it for you), but basically we're in text land here.

Op Wolf games are usually pretty short on lasting appeal, so if you really want a new one, at least this one will only set you back eight quid. - STUART CAMPBELL

**SUPER CARS**

Publisher: GBH
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

Continuing what seems to be a trend in the software biz at the mo, Gremlin have followed up the release of this game's sequel, Super Cars II (surprisingly enough), with a budget re-run of the original, perhaps for fans of the later games whose appetites have been whetted (or maybe just to make some more dough without writing any new games). Whatever, this is a great game, considerably more playable in my opinion than its much-feted offspring. Your car handles better, the courses test your driving skill more than your powers of memory or your weapon capability. The tracks are short enough to avoid repetitiveness and boredom (a problem with SCII), and there are also fewer cars crowding the wider roads, so you get a chance to build up a bit of speed now and again (SCII was a very stop-start affair). In its own right though, Super Cars is an excellent overhead-view racer in the Super Sprint mould, even if you own the sequel, I'd strongly recommend you splash out on this. - STUART CAMPBELL

**STREET FIGHTER**

Publisher: Kixx
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

Martial arts, minus the art, in the appalling-beyond-belief Street Fighter.

This conversion of the Capcom coin-op was one of US Gold's flagship releases back in 1988. The huge graphics of the arcade game concealed some pretty basic gameplay, but it was still reasonable fun. Sadly, that's not something you can say about this version - it's utterly dreadful. The graphics come across pretty well, but the actual animation is disgraceful. It's incredibly slow to play and unresponsive to control, and the level of challenge is simply non-existent.

On my very first go I won 19 of the game's 20 bouts, and on forcing myself (well, several large men with crowbars had to force me actually, but that's a technical point) to play it again. I completed the whole thing. When you consider that IK was also available at the same budget price, you'd need to be particularly stupid to even think about getting this game. Don't be fooled by the pretty screen, this is pitiful trash of the very highest (or should that be lowest?) order. - STUART CAMPBELL

**IMPOSSAMOLE**

Publisher: GBH
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

Less ridiculous at £7.99 than it was at full whack, but Impossipamole is still a bad buy.

This is hero of the game) before they can be persuaded to clear off, and this makes the levels a real chore to progress through. My pot hat, the invisible danger syndrome makes a few unwelcome appearances too, and generally you'll see that a complete lack of imagination has been employed at almost every point. Impossipamole is slow and tedious and a bad buy at any price. - STUART CAMPBELL

**THE BOTTOM LINE**

As good gameplay wise as most games of the type, and the unremarkable aesthetics are only to be expected at the price. Perfectly respectable if Op Wolf is your thing.

**THE BOTTOM LINE**

The music is pretty appalling, but - hey! - nothing's perfect. A superior game to its big brother, at a third of the price. A serious bargain.

**THE BOTTOM LINE**

Even if you love beat-em-ups, you'll hate Street Fighter. How USG can have the brass neck to release twice is totally beyond me.

**THE BOTTOM LINE**

If you're a Monty fan, don't buy this game - it'll ruin your happy memories. If you've never heard of Monty, avoid it in its own right.

**THE BOTTOM LINE**

A cracking little game with an epic feel that belies its size. Forget all the flash licences - if you're going to buy a re-release this month, get this one.

**THE BOTTOM LINE**

It's quicker by lift in Kixx's classic Impossible Mission II. The map at the bottom of the screen is built up as you move towards the enemy complex.
JOHN LOWE’S ULTIMATE DARTS
Publisher: Kixx
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now
This is Another Computer Darts Game, distinguished by the fact that it’s packed with options allowing you to play against 16 of the world’s top players, play alternative games including ‘darts soccer’ and ‘darts cricket’, play against a churn using a real board and have the computer keep score (?), compete in various tournaments or exhibition matches, as well as all the usual computer darts stuff. Control is by the traditional wobbly hand method, and is no more or less useful/accurate/irritating than in other games of the genre. The football and cricket games add a degree of lasting appeal, but there’s nothing here to seize the imagination. • STUART CAMPBELL

VIOLATOR
Publisher: Code Masters
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now
If the Codies spent as much time on the instructions of their games as they do writing the ridiculous crap that they put on the back of them, the world would be a happier place. Luckily, Violator isn’t a game that needs a lot of explaining, being another Flying Shark/SWIV/Sidewinder clone, similar to the Codies’ own recent Kamikaze but considerably better. Violator features polished graphics and scrolling, compared favourably with full-price games in this field. The gameplay is good too, the only drawback being the number of hits your helicopter can absorb, compared with the instant destruction resulting from collision with enemy vehicles. Overall, this is a very impressive product which will keep vertical fag fans occupied for many an hour. • STUART CAMPBELL

THE BOTTOM LINE
The crap sound is the only disappointing element of this already rather fab little game. (I’m not convinced about the slightly 00er title thought.)
55 PERSENT

System 3 in ‘jolly good compilation with only one duff game shock, horror revelation!

PREMIER COLLECTION
Publisher: System 3
Price: £24.99
Release: Out now
The first thing to note about this compilation is that it contains no The Last Ninja, as the box states (which never came out on 16-bit anyway), but Ninja Revival, the latest, updated and improved version. Having got that out of the way, let’s take a look, in time-honoured fashion, at each of the games in the pack individually.
Starting at the top, IK+ has already been well covered in AMIGA POWER. No.50 in the All-Time Top 100, 85 percent as a budget re-release, there can only be one thing to say about this utterly wonderful beat-'em-up, except that previously we may not have mentioned quite how fab the music is. So, to put that right, IK+ has completely brilliant music to go with all its other completely brilliant features, and if you don’t own it by now there must be something wrong with you, pal. (And by the way, did you spill my pint?)
Next best is Filmbo’s Quest, which is a cute platform arcade thing with gorgeous graphics and colour, but which is prone to become a little repetitive after a couple of hours play. Even so, it’s the kind of thing that would be a real snip at budget price, so as part of a compilation it certainly doesn’t let the side down any. A lovely game for those idle days when you can’t be bothered to think too much.
Thirdly, the aforementioned Ninja Revival. We’ve got something of a love/hate relationship with this (as with the other games in the series) – some people love them for the undeniably lovely graphics and mammoth game task (which ensures lots of lastability), others hate them for the horrific control system which makes the arcade fighting sequences a real pain in the neck, and causes frustration levels to reach unheard-of levels when trying to pull off a particularly tricky jump that needs pixel-perfect precision. Personally I tend more towards the latter camp, but if you’re prepared to invest some time in learning the moves, this one will keep you off the streets for quite a while.

RAMBO III
Publisher: The Hit Squad
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now
The title screen of this game credits the programming to ‘Elmer Fudd’. If I’d had anything to do with it, I wouldn’t want my real name made public either. This is a 1989 movie licence of the old school – it’s a quick cash-in job where the programmers look a couple of popular game elements and bung them together, adding a central sprite that looked a bit like the character from the film. They doubtless sold millions. The fact that all the people who bought it went back to the shop the next day and said ‘Give me my money back, this is disgracefully slow and tedious crap with some of the dullest gameplay I’ve ever come across and music that I wouldn’t feed to my cat’ is neither here nor there. I’m not going to tell you any more – I don’t want to get you interested in this garbage. Enough. • STUART CAMPBELL

THE BOTTOM LINE
The graphical bit where Rambo loses energy to gradually become a skull is quite funny, but if it’s not worth eight quid.
14 PERSENT

The very yellow Tusker.

The classic IK+.

The 15” Ninja Remix.

The cute Filmbo’s Quest.

System 3 have put this out at the respectable price of £24.99, and at £6 a throw none of these games are a bad deal. There’s a fair mix of styles, and the four games will entertain you for at least as long as an above average full-priceer, so if you’re not too desperate for high-octane thrills (if you are, buy IK+ on its own) you could do a lot worse. • STUART CAMPBELL

THE BOTTOM LINE
A bit of a bargain at the price, and diverse enough to keep you going for ages. If you didn’t already have any of the games in this pack, snap it up.
80 PERSENT
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with any game from this column! Pick from list in column 4.

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- **Elvira** £29.99
- **Eternitor** £19.99
- **Eye of the Beholder** £21.99
- **Feudal Lords** £16.99

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## Compilations

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- **500K RAM Expansion** £24.99
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## Best of the Public Domain

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(2D = 2nd Drive Mb = Megabyte)

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**AG 01: Star Trek: Super Star trek mode: tv series, featuring superb digitised graphics and sound (2D-Mb3 disks)**

**AG 02: Star Trek (Agatton): Strategy game by Tobias Richter, Germany's N°1 Trekker! English version (2D disks)**

**AG 04: Monopoly: full version of the classic property trading game!**

**AG 05: Pacman-Multiflower version of this addictive arcade classic!**

**AG 06: Various: Cosmosoiid, Amoeba, Eighty-Eight, A Black, A White, Tales, Yatchee, Stone Age, etc.**

**AG 07: Board and Card games: Chess, Othello, Knossos and Cribbage**

**AG 08: Space Invaders: Arcade Classic version! Plus: Lander, Amoeba...**

**AG 14: Fliescatter: Boulder style game. Almost Commercial quality!**

**AG 15: Castle of Doom, Adventure game with excellent graphics and digitised sound.**

**AG 24: Drip: Arcade style game with digitised sounds and smooth sprites!**

**AG 27: Star Trek (US): Space strategy game. Captains the USS Enterprise and rebel Koons! (2D-Mb3 disks)**

**AG 29: Chess: Superb Multi Feature version with variable level of play! Plus: Star Fleet, Kamikaze Chess, Tumbling...**

**AG 32: Return to Earth: Elite style**

Space trading game with excellent graphics and digitised sound.

**AG 34: Drip: Arcade style game with digitised sounds and smooth sprites!**

**AG 35: Cave Runter: Superb commercial quality Boulderdash style game!**

**AG 36: Wizqys Quest: High quality arcade puzzle game, very addictive!**

**AG 38: Star Trek - The Arcade game:**

Vertical scrolling shoot-em-up...

**AG 40: Metagracenal LLM: Classic shoot-em-up by Jeff Minter, ex C64!**

**AG 41: Wet Beaver: Original pong game with extra features and track! (3D) Craptacular!**

**AG 42: Games Galore: 9 Games: MazemArk, Trek Trivia, Pharaohs Curse, Ghost Ship, Monopoly, Dad, Cat and Mouse etc.**

**AG 43: Games 1: Gridrunner, Classic Jefferd Minato game. Vertical Arcade style: Invaders- shoot-em-up.**

**AG 45: Seven Tides: Speedball style 1 or 2 Player Options, playable as Kick Off 2! Brilliant!!!**

**AG 46: Megaball: Arcade computer, but with no editor! (2D disks)**

**AG 47: Super Amish: version of the Commodore 64 game: Boulderdash! Great!**

**AH 01: Adventure Game Solutions:**

More than 100...Dungeon Master, Sierra, Ultima 1 to 5, Infocom...(2 disks)

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All prices include VAT and first class post! Guaranteed return of post delivery on all stock items!
The AMIGA POWER Public Domain section gets an extra boost this month — up to two full pages in fact— simply so we can cover more games. 'But why?' you may be asking. Well, it's simply this — PD may be free, you see, but it most certainly ain't crap, as your host Stuart Campbell explains.

RATINGS: ****** Excellent ******* Nearly there ******* Very good ****** Has its moments ****** Flawed ****** Dire

W e've had a few letters this month from people who're still not sure exactly what Public Domain software is, so here's a quick recap on all it's various forms.

True Public Domain (also known as Freeware) is software which is released without copyright restrictions, which means you're free to do what you want with it, at any old time. You can copy it, give it to your friends, stick it on the front of your magazine — anything at all as long as you don't change it or charge money for it. Most people get theirs from PD libraries, who don't charge for the software but do take a nominal fee for the cost of the actual disk, postage and packaging etc. — usually between one and three pounds.

Shareware, on the other hand, is software which is released in a very similar manner, but if you do keep and use the software, you're asked to send the author a small donation towards the cost of producing more games. Usually, as an incentive to 'register' in this way, the author will then send you full documentation, updates of the programs, and so on and so forth. Obviously it's easy to just keep the disks and not send any money, but this is extremely poor form, and threatens the whole concept of Shareware — if nobody pays, authors will simply stop writing the stuff. If you do partake of any Shareware, do the decent thing.

Then there's Exclusiveware, which is simply PD which is only available from one PD library, usually as the result of a deal which involves the PD company paying the author a small royalty for every copy sold. This sometimes makes it slightly more expensive than normal PD, but not to any significant extent.

Licenceware (a relatively new idea) is an extension of Exclusiveware, and isn't really PD in the true sense at all. It's software which is released by PD companies, but the author retains the copyright, which means it's illegal to copy it. The price is usually higher than ordinary PD (but still much cheaper than most budget software), and the profits are split between the author and the PD firm.

The addresses on these pages aren't the only places you can get the games reviewed here from - most are available from most libraries at various prices and on variously-compiled disks. The named companies are simply the nice people who sent us our own copies. Any PD companies out there who'd like a little plug, send us some stuff (games only, no demos thank you) to have a look at and we'll see what we can do.

That's it for now, other than to say that if you've discovered some particularly good (or, indeed, particularly bad) PD game that you think the world should know about, drop us a line (or even a copy of the game, if you can manage it) and we'll check it out (and credit you in the mag, of course). So with that, on with this month's fabby freebies.

PHARAOH'S CURSE
(SEVENTEEN BIT, disk Games Galore 5)

This is a conversion of the old VIC-20 platform adventure by the same team who brought you last month's wonderful cover disk game Fraction Freddie. (STOP PRESS — Pharaoh's Curse can now be found on the cover disk of this very issue!) It's well worth getting for this alone, but when the disk also includes a sweet little Packetman game (STOP PRESS AGAIN! — this is on this issue's cover disk as well), a good version of Pingo, a Monopoly clone, a couple of nice puzzles and more besides (I), then the asking price of just 89p begins to look just a little bit on the ridiculous side.

Pharaoh's Curse - the VIC classic is back.

UNIVERSAL. Unless you're completely gaga, this is another disk that you really must have, and it's still good value even when you've already got two of the best games from us.

VERDICT: Excellent, excellent, and once more excellent. Hours of fun for all the family. ******

BLUE HOUSE
(NEW WAVE)

This is a bit of a strange fish, being a cross between Thrust and... er... a box. What happens is you fly around in the normal manner, through smoothly scrolling and tricky landscapes, and attempt to land on various stations and platforms scattered throughout the area. When you do, there's a short pause and the game leads up a new piece of demo music, while displaying the title and credits of it at the bottom of the screen until you land somewhere else. It's a really novel way of presenting demo tunes, and the game's challenging and playable at the same time. Some of the music is lovely (and some of it's by Menier), but you should have everything), and you'll keep playing for ages to hear more new tunes.

VERDICT: Different and refreshing, and a really nice piece of PD that wouldn't work any other way. Very good indeed. ******

BATTLE PONG
(SEVENTEEN BIT, No. 1056)

They can't be serious... It's 1981 and someone's given the Arkanoid treatment to Pong, the original arcade bat-and-ball game. This updated version includes all the features you remember and love the (balls, ife, er, ball, um...) but with NEW, IMPROVED, EXCITING extras like a prettily (ah) backdrop and (Lord have mercy on their souls) power-ups.

These are mostly pretty obvious, including bat reducers, bat expanders, freeze capsules, and the creation of a moving obstacle on the centre line. In fact, gameplay isn't dissimilar to an overhead-view version of the classic French one. Shuffelpuck Café, except a bit more limited by the format. The main drawback with Battle Pong is that the computer opponent is almost unbeatable.

Pong — the ORIGINAL video game, given a bit of spit and polish for the Amiga.

but with adjustable speed levels and a two-player option you should still be able to win considerably more than 68% of the time, and add a bit of entertainment out of this.

VERDICT: An extremely silly idea which provides several hours of absurd fun. Ideal material for PD, I'd say. What the hell, why not? ******
LLAMATRON (Available from various PD suppliers)

We jumped the gun on this one a little bit in issue two, but now Jeff's actually finished the Amiga version and it's looking every bit as good as the ST one, and sounding even better. For those of you who missed it, it's an update of Williams' classic arcade shoot-'em-up Robotron, fiddled around with to add Jeff's inimitable feel (you know the kind of thing - sheep, goats, yaks etc) and provide an even zappier experience for aficionados of the coin-op golden oldie (which includes everyone on the AMIGA POWER team). Robotron's unique double joystick control system has been cleverly implemented here, and indeed, there's also the option to actually use two joysticks for complete authenticity. Not that it's all improvements - a couple of the new features are distinctly irritating (particularly the laser gun) and the graphics have a slightly cluttered and unclear look (in Robotron you could tell at a glance who the bad guys were, but in Llamatron it's all a bit less instinctive) - but all the same this is a highly classy piece of freebie software. Wait a minute, though. Llamatron isn't strictly free - if you like the game and decide to keep it, Jeff asks that you send him a fiver as a shareware fee. Then again, in return for that you'll also get a big llama poster, a newsletter, and a copy of Jeff's original version of Gridrunner (first released in 1986), so you've got no cause for complaint. Remember, with shareware you try before you buy, so if you don't like the game it won't cost you a penny. (But if you do like it, please play fair and send Jeff some cash - we'd like to see this idea encouraged). Not that you're very likely to not like it - if you're a zapping fan, this'll be right up your street. VERDICT: An excellent game that deserves to be supported by anyone who's ever paid out £25 for crap and has been cheesed off about it. *****

TRIX (SEVENTEEN BIT, No 841)

This is quite easily the best version of the magazine's classic arcade game Enchanted Chess with Enemies game Quadrant on the Amiga, and it's made all the more timely by the impending release of Volfied. Tanto's coin-op follow-up. It's a full-featured copy of the original, but it also comes on a disk with 10 other games, including a version of the board game Sorry, a video poker game, a crude but fast Missile Command, a good Cthulhu, and several other card and puzzle games. It's worth the paltry £8.99 asking price for Trix alone, and the fact that all of the other games are worth having too makes this a bargain of the highest order... VERDICT: A strange mix of games to find on one disk, but an entertaining one. ****

AIR ACE (SEVENTEEN BIT, No 1062)

This was programmed using Pweise's Shoot-'Em-Up Construction Kit, and it's given it a distinctly professional edge. It's a Flying Shark-style scrolling blaster, and it's one of the trickier games I've come across this month. There aren't any great innovations on display, but the gameplay (for one or two players at a time) is time-mess and challenging, and the attention to detail (right down to the way the screen keeps scrolling for a while after you've lost your last life, just like in the arcade) is lavish. If you're a Flying Shark fan, you shouldn't miss this one. VERDICT: Tough and pretty blaster that I pass a good few happy zapping hours, at a price that belies its commercial look. ****

UTTERLY SCANDALOUSLY GOOD BARGAIN OF THE MONTH

AMIGODDS (START PD, disk No. 761)

The first thing to say about this disk is that it isn't just Amigodds. It also contains Tanto, a brilliant and incredibly slick version of the old two-player game where you have two tanks shooting at each other across a mountain range, Rollerpdee, a fairly pretty and zippy Centipede game, Avaria, a simultaneous three-player Tetris clone, and Cave Runner, a very classy Boulderdash game. Amigodds is probably the star of the disk, though (if only because you need two players for Tanto), being far and away the best Asteroids game on the Amiga so far. It's packed with options (including the chance to turn the graphics into a perfect replica of the Atari VCS game of yesteryear) and plays a real Swiss style of the classic game. The whole disk is beautifully presented, and to be able to get it for less than two quid is living proof that miracles can still happen. Restore your faith in humanity and get it now. VERDICT: Every true games lover should have this in their collection. If you like your Amiga, give it this. ****

GRIDRUNNER (SEVENTEEN BIT, No 971)

Following on from last month's review of Jeff Minser's Metagalactic Llamas, here's another conversion of one of the man's ancient zapasters. Gridrunner. It's essentially a Centipede clone with a few added features, but as a fast and violent single-minded blaster, it was unbeatable in its day and it's still pretty good fun now.

SEVEN TILES (START PD, disk No 689)

This game is billed as a cross between Speedball and Kick Off, and that's pretty much a spot-on assessment. It's a frantic future-sport game with tiny little players bombing around on a metallic pitch, and apart from the slight problem of not really knowing which of your players you're controlling at any particular given time, it's a great fun. There isn't really a whole lot to say about it otherwise, except that it's a lot of fun, especially with two players, and though it misses the outright violence of Speedball, it's easier to get to grips with than Kick Off. And, the continuous crowd noise can get a bit grating on the ears after a while. Not that I'm trying to stop you buying it, you understand. VERDICT: A cracking little game that holds its head up pretty respectfully against its major-league counterparts. ****
Thinking about NOT buying the next issue of Amiga Format?

Tut tut!

This picture of King Tut is known by more people in more nations than the pharaoh ever was. It's the symbol of Deluxe Paint, probably the finest piece of graphics software ever written. Deluxe Paint is used by nearly all Amiga games programmers to create the graphics for their games, simply because it's the best.

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Also on this extraordinary Coverdisk is a playable demo of Magic Pockets, the latest platform extravaganza from the Bitmap Brothers. You've laughed at the idiots who played it on TV's Motormouth: now give the real thing a go for yourself!

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AMIGA POWER / MICROPROSE F-15 STRIKE EAGLE II COMPETITION

If you've got any sense at all you'll have already nipped out to spend your cash on a copy of MicroProse's astounding military flight simulation F-15 Strike Eagle II. We reviewed it last month and lavished a praiseful 87 per cent on what we reckon is quite possibly the best flight sim yet seen on the Amiga.

But that's all yesterday's news. This month, in 'conjunction' with MicroProse, we're giving away SIX flying lessons to anyone with enough savvy to answer this unbelievably dim-witted question. (You'll also have to be amazingly lucky to get picked out of the huge box we've set aside for all the entrants, but we'll gloss over that for now).

So how do these flying lessons work then?

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Note that there is NO AGE RESTRICTION on flying tutorials, so this is open to absolutely everyone. The winner will be skipping along to his or her local aerodrome later in the summer, and clambering into one of those little Cessna or Piper aeroplanes. (Unfortunately, if you want flying lessons in an F-15 you'll just have to go away and join the US Air Force).

Your trainer will teach you the proper way to fly one of these beasts, so it's not our fault if you cock things up and find yourself buying a fair-sized area of arable land.

Get on with the question!

OK, answer the following question (correctly). Pop your answers on the back of a postcard, and post it to us at: Amiga Power's Up In The Air Competition, 29, Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon, BA1 2BW. Don't forget to add your name and address, and be sure your entry gets here before August 31st (this year).

At last, the question: If you want to fly you'll need to learn how to use a map. So, here's a test of your navigational abilities. You are on a runway in Reykjavik, and you have to fly, in a straight line, to Nairobi. Simply list all the countries you have to fly over. (Clue: get an atlas and a ruler.)

RULES AND REGULATIONS
- The closing date for this competition is August 31st 1991.
- Entries received after that will be made into paper planes.
- On all matters relating to this competition the editor's decision is final.
- As ever, employees of Future Publishing and MicroProse are not eligible to enter this competition.
AMIGA POWER BACK ISSUES

Copies of the first three issues of AMIGA POWER are still available – though perhaps not for long! Each one costs £3.50 including packing and postage within the UK. To order yours simply fill out the form opposite and send it with a cheque or postal order. (Everything else you need to know is explained on the form).

1 (May 1991)
Who do Renegade think they are?; Work In Progress: Birds Of Prey; The game I wish I'd written – veteran coders speak; Rainbow Islands Players Guide; over 40 new games reviewed, including Exila, Gods, Cybercon III, Eye Of The Beholder, Railroad Tycoon...
Plus! On the disk: Bombuzal – the complete game!

2 (June 1990)
Creation, 'Bob', Populous II – Bullfrog interviewed. 20 Amiga classics for £10.99 or less; Eric Matthews; Rainbow Islands continued; over 40 new games reviewed; including Monkey Island, Switchblade II, Hero Quest, Wonderland...
Plus! On the disk: Kid Gloves – the complete game!

3 (July 1991)
Thunderhawk, Retro, Freenie – Core interviewed. What's so special about CDTV?; If I were not in this industry – game authors speak; Powermonger in the style of Salvador Dali; 10 pages of tips; over 40 new games reviewed, including F-15 Strike Eagle II, Deuteros, Toki...
Plus! On the disk: Exile special world, Prehistorik preview, three top PD games!

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EXILE
We presented an excellent playable demo on last month's cover disk, now here's your chance to get completely embroiled in the fascinating world of Audiogenic's incredible Exile, the future of arcade adventures. AP rated at 89 per cent.

ARMOUR-GEDDON
Psygnosis' massive multi-vehicle 3D strategy arcade adventure has topped the charts — and it's not hard to see why. Beautiful 3D, oodles of planes, tanks and the like to bomb about in, and tons of ultra-violence — it's the bee's knees. AP rated 87 per cent.

SWITCHBLADE II
Gorgeous pseudo-Japanese graphics, wonderful scrolling and playability coming out of its ears — that's Gremlin's simply stunning Switchblade II, perhaps the Amiga's best ever arcade-style platform game. AP rated 87 per cent.

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Welcome to The Bottom Line. Every month AMIGA POWER lists the important full price games released over the past year, complete with price, publisher, points for (or 'Uppers'), points against (or 'Downers') and, of course, the all important Bottom Line. Entries are updated every month, with around thirty new games added and a similar number of older ones removed each time, while ratings are out of a simple five stars (or six, if you count the especially super duper red ones as an extra star) and are explained below. And that's more or less it - your complete guide to the last year's games. Now you've no excuse for buying a piece of crap software again!
Upners — Fairly interesting management sections with some neat battles. Downers — Two appalling arcade sections blow its chances. The Bottom Line — Unbalanced.

CHAOS STRIKES BACK
Microsoft $24.99
Upners — Complex and intriguing puzzles, very user-friendly; great sound. Downers — Old fashioned looking. The Bottom Line — Engrossing role playing adventure using the Dungeon Master game system.

CHASE HQ II
Ocean $24.99
Upners — Well, it’s not as distasteful as the first conversion. Downers — But still terminally average; it always leaves a bad taste. The Bottom Line — It looks as bad as it tastes as Miami Vice.

CHUCK ROCK
Core Design £24.99
Upners — Heaps of character with some good animation in the gameplay for once. Downers — A tough shallow and a touch easygoing. The Bottom Line — Pretty brilliant platformer, one of the Amiga’s very best.

CHUCK YEAGER’S ADVANCED FLIGHT TRAINER 2000
Electronic Arts $24.99
Upners — Averable air force of planes, a fully animated instructor, missions and external view. Downers — A complete lack of speed, bad disk access and null perspective put the damper on the whole affair. The Bottom Line — Low-flying flight sim — tails to stay with the competition.

CHIP’S CHALLENGE
US Gold £24.99
Upners — A veritable air force of planes, a fully animated instructor, missions and external view. Downers — A complete lack of speed, bad disk access and null perspective put the damper on the whole affair. The Bottom Line — Low-flying flight sim — tails to stay with the competition.

CODENAMEN: ICEMAN
Sierra $34.99
Upners — Good, but not the most impressive of puzzle games.

DEATH TRAP
Anco $24.99

DEFENDER II
ARC £24.99
Upners — Defender, Defender II and Stargate in one package. Downers — Only purists will appreciate the arcade visuals, one or two essential features are completely absent. The Bottom Line — Game over.

THE COLONEL’S BEQUEST
Sierra $34.99
Upners — Idly intriguing whodunit, with that ever so familiar Sierra style of presentation. Downers — Terrible graphics, hours of tedium. The Bottom Line — Overpriced and over here. You know you don’t want to know.

COMBO RACER
Gremlin £19.99
Upners — Ultra fast 3d and a track designer up the longevity of the game. Downers — Half sound and a totally ridiculous two-player option. The Bottom Line — Looks sparkly, but its far from being a disaster.

COMMANDO
Elite £19.99
Upners — Unusually recreated coin-op blast-em-scorer. Downers — As fashionable as an anorak. The Bottom Line — Classic stuff, perhaps somewhat overhyped for something so primitive.

COUGAR FORCE
Tomahawk £19.99
Upners — A few ingenuity touches. Downers — Appalling— designed gameplay with very little actual action. The Bottom Line — A rip off of its own game without the original’s good features.

DOMINATE
US Gold $24.95
Upners — Gorilla-gave the numerous video interfaces spice up a bit. Downers — The actual game is dull and the game, and the waiting between levels is monstrously. The Bottom Line — A bog-standard game up with knobs on.

CYBERCON III
US Gold £24.99
Upners — A near perfect arcade conversion; nifty animated man dragon sprite. Downers — The zillion sideways shooting shots of your dragon. The Bottom Line — One instinctively knows when a conversion is right.

DEUTEROS
Activityon £25.99
Upners — An incredibly huge and absorbing game, with challenges that seem perfectly paced to be in tune with the player’s game. The Bottom Line — Average player. Downers — They parts aren’t actually up to very much, and the copy protection makes it doubly deplorable. The Bottom Line — A reasonable 3d routine masquerading as.

EDD THE DUCK
Impulse £24.99
Upners — Rainbow Islands-inspired gameplay makes some sort of sense. Downers — But the whole thing just doesn’t inspire, and the difficulty is placed too high for an audience. The Bottom Line — Your skinny duckling does not like you.

ELVIRA, MISTRESS OF THE DARK
Accolade £24.99
Upners — Elvira’s gorgeous graphics really draw the player in. Downers — Play the game itself is high on imposibility and takes five disks! The Bottom Line — Falls apart after gratuitous disk swapping.

E-MOTION
US Gold £19.99
Upners — Weird graphics and mind-numbing gameplay set E-Motion apart from just about any other game. Downers — The writing is not up to much as it is too difficult to get your mind around the Bottom Line — Possibly the most expensive game you will ever play.

EUROPEAN SUPERLEAGUE
US Gold £24.99
Upners — As conversions go, it’s not a complete nightmare... Downers — But there’s been an entirely original arcade original is dull, dumb. The Bottom Line — A reasonable conversion of a terminally average game.

FUTURE BASKETBALL
Hawson £24.99
Upners — A surprising amount of excitement and well presented gameplay. Downers — Confusing initially, but once you’ve played it for a while it’s confusing. The Bottom Line — Great fun, but it doesn’t really make it in the long run.

FUTURAMA
US Gold £29.99
Upners — In The Future Man’s Speechbubble 2. The Bottom Line — Doesn’t have the depth of The Bifurcated classic, but enormously fun all the same.

FUTURE LEADER
Intergalactic £24.99
Upners — An ambitious attempt at a visually stunning coin-op. Downers — Everything else. The Bottom Line — If you know you can’t do’it why bother trying?

GALAXY FORCE II
ActiVision £24.99
Upners — A brilliant Je Smith Jim Davis graphics. Downers — Crappy Steve Davis gaming. The Bottom Line — What a wasted licence. For die-hard fans only.

GARFIELD
Empire £24.99
Upners — Garfield doesn’t actually appear in the game much. Downers — Judging spirits, Garfield is the same as the man himself, terrible sound - take your pick. The Bottom Line — It’s enough to reduce you to tears.

GEAZZA II
GEMX £24.99
Upners — Brilliant graphics, exquisite sound, beautifully simple mechanics. Downers — Worn graphics. You can change your mind if you’re not into puzzlers. The Bottom Line — One of the best puzzle games to date.

GERM CRAZY
Electronic Zoo £25.99
Upners — Not quite as expensive as Miniscapes Ill & Die. Downers — But well in its own right. The Bottom Line — Another half-baked idea, not thought through properly. (Where do they all come from?)

GHENGIS KHAN
Intergrames £39.99
Upners — A surprisingly deep and fairly well detailed historical strategy game. Downers — Ridiculously expensive for what it is, and requires a fairly large amount of manual reading. The Bottom Line — A bit of a cliché, but good if you like that sort of thing.

GODS
Reneage £25.93
Upners — Lovecraftian. Downers — Quirky, quirkilyชี for a platform game. Downers — Not quite as good as it’s billed out to be, but still quite enjoyable. The Bottom Line — Don’t believe the hype, but pretty darn good all the same.

GOLDEN AXE II
Sega £39.99
Upners — Great sound effects, great sprites. Downers — Does it. The Bottom Line — Great sound effects, great sprites.
original. Downers—infamously tough, later part of the Bottom Line—Don’t let just be the use of graphics is a wonderful brain-bender.******

**QUEST FOR GLORY II—TRIAL BY FIRE**
Sierra $40.95

Downers—Sorry, don’t think of any. Or, if you do get to the point of getting your money. Downers—But no game to put down, that real-time generated, oppressively drab game. The Bottom Line—Possibly the worst Aria game you’ve ever seen. Avoid it like an bad tempered tiger with a toothache.****

**RAILROAD TYCOON**
MicroProse $29.99

Downers—Frightening amount of depth. Downers—Very low to get into and very slow even when you do get into it. The Bottom Line—If you go to a lot of time to invest in it, it will work a lot better.****

**RALLY CROSS CHALLENGE**
Anco $19.95

Downers—Well-programmed Super Sprint racing is great fun with multiple players. Downers—Limited lasting ability. The Bottom Line—Still one of the best in its field, and that’s more down to the competition than anything else.****

**RANX**
Ubi Soft $24.99

Downers—Totally ideologically unsound. The Bottom Line—Totally ideologically unsound.****

**RED STORM RISING**
MicroProse $24.99

Downers—Unbelievably realistic. The best of its kind. Downers—Almost total lack of moving graphics. The Bottom Line—A strange’s overall; but if you really want a submarine experience this realistic, go join the navy.****

**REVELATION**
Kriisal $19.99

Downers—Next idea—a puzzle game based on Lara Croft. Downers—Too complex to just pick up and play—bad news for a pulper. The Bottom Line—Not bad, but could have been better presented (and who thought up that utterly meaningless rams)?****

**RICK DANGEROUS 2**
MicroStyle $24.99

Downers—Quintessential action-packed, immensely playable and packed better than Rick 1. Downers—Not as good as all that dissimilar, and still packed with far too much of the inexcusable waste of the inexcusable rater. The Bottom Line—Loveable.****

**ROBocop**
Ocean $24.99

Downers—Great graphics, excellently presented excellence. Downers—Awkward controls, some awkward game drifting, and its all a touch too formulaic. The Bottom Line—Could have been a good game.****

**ROGUE TRAPPER**
Kriisal $24.99

Downers—Fairly entertaining arcade adventure with devous but logical puzzles and an excellent seeking collectable comic. Downers—One life—one chance and you’ll never get to the start of the first level. (Aaahh!) The Bottom Line—Great fun for the persistent, and good licence for a change.****

**SHOCKWAVE**
Digital Magic $24.99

Downers—Lame looking last decade quality Afterburner/Star Wars style. The Bottom Line—Tactical sections get in the way. The Bottom Line—A potentially good game but hamstrung by the increasingly annoying interface. Downers—Not much brain- expanding involved. The Bottom Line—An anemic performancer.****

**SIRIUS 7**
CRL $24.99

Downers—Technically adequate. Downers—No thought, no imagination, no game, no fun. The Bottom Line—Almost as acting-packed as Xenon 2. In pictures.****

**SKI OR DIE**
Electronic Arts $24.99

Downers—Skate Or Die but with snow. Downers—Skate Or Die but with snow. The Bottom Line—Fun (for a while) with friends, but basically an old fashioned, uninspired collection of unimpressive sub games.****

**SKULL AND CROSSBONES**
Dorna $24.99

Downers—It will be a long time before we get to see another one. The Bottom Line—Still one of the best Star Wars-inspired releases on the Amiga.****

**SLARGLIDER II**
Radical Software $24.99

Downers—Instant blasting appeal, with extra depth for those who want it. Downers—Gaming low repetitive in the long term. The Bottom Line—Still one of the best Star Wars-inspired releases on the Amiga.****

**SPEEDBALL II**
Image Works $24.99

Downers—The ultimate future sport game to date—fast, brutal, indescribably enjoyable. The Bottom Line—This is how to do sports, seriously technically nothing to shout about. The Bottom Line—Run of the mill.****

**ST transports**
Electronic Arts $24.99

Downers—Very tough game, with many levels of difficulty. The Bottom Line—One of the all-time greatest games. Buy or die, and absolutely.

**SPELLBOUND**
Psyoplace $24.99

Downers—Well-drawn backdrops, and, erm, it’s a puzzle game. Downers—Almost no in-game sound, practically nothing in the way of action. The Bottom Line—A bug-boring arcade adventure—thing that’s overpriced by £20.

**THE SPY WHO LOVED ME**
Dorna $24.99

Downers—Looks good, but gameplay is nowhere near enough for such a price tag.****

**SHADOW OF THE BEAST 2**
Pygmosi $34.95

Downers—Looks good, but graphics are...and, er...that’s it. Downers—Your first few games will be excellent, but then a strange gap begins to appear between them. The Rogue Dealer is nauseous. The Bottom Line—$34.95.****

**SHADOW OF THE BEAST**
Ocean $24.99

Downers—Looks meek, it’s close to the arcade game, what else do you want to say? Downers—Very tough to play, with some very difficult puzzles. The Bottom Line—There’s about as much game in here as there is in an average game with graphics from Greendland stamp on it.****

**SHANGHAI**
Activation $19.99

Downers—Based on an ancient Chinese legend, so you know it’s going to torture your mind, and it does. Friendly presentation hides the multi-player against the clock games are action-packed and challenging. The Bottom Line—For the most tormented blast fan. Downers—Shitty fiddly graphics can play havoc with your eyes. Nothing a halfway-decent monitor won’t cure, though. The Bottom Line—Scarily gripping for a game with no moving graphics. The first time you do it you’ll want to take out an advert in The Times to tell everybody.****

**SPINDIZZY WORLD**
Activision $19.99

Downers—Another example of an 8-bit classic brought up to date with a space-blaster playing area and loads of new features. Downers—You can get to grips with and the graphics could be better. The Bottom Line—Super-gameplay, some great additional and total, frustrating as hell, but nonetheless a masterpiece of 8-bit updating without losing the original spirit.****

**SPIRIT OF EXCALIBUR**
Virgin $24.99

Downers—Plenty of variation, and it certainly all looks lovely. Downers—Flatly slow, and the different sections are hard to gel together. The Bottom Line—If you’ve got a few hours to kill while you’re addicted to the Bottom Line—It’s everything that’s bad about sequels, and bears all the hallmarks of a rush job.****

**STUN RUNNER**
Tengen (Dorna) $24.99

Downers—The music isn’t entirely crap. Downers—Highly repetitive, extremely primitive, a terminal lack of enjoyment. The Bottom Line—We’d rather see a great conversion of Galaxian than something that makes a pop’s ear of a game they knew they couldn’t convert in the first place.****

**SWY**
Storm $24.99

Downers—Looks, sound, graphics, comes with a neat two-player cooker—and all in one formidable. The Bottom Line—There aren’t any (unless you find all those drab military-style colours a bit depressing). The Bottom Line—Franche— one of the best shoot ‘em ups we’ve seen.****

**SWORDS AND GALLOVE**
MicroProse $24.99

Downers—Uses the classic trading game style to great effect. Downers—Easy to complete, and the stupid omission of a save game option knocks a battleship-sized hole in the game’s sail appeal. The Bottom Line—A minatory, not a major release, but strangely compelling despite the flaws.****

**TETRIS**
Informages $19.98

Downers—Well, it’s still Tetr. Downers—But it’s probably the worst version yet seen on the Amiga, and certainly it’s the worst ever to emerge. The Bottom Line—Complete stink. (Stick with the PD version.)****

**THEME PARK MYSTERY**
MicroProse $24.99

Downers—Great, feed, looks and sounds lovely. Downers—Aren’t you just the most goddamned pointless. The Bottom Line—Games which mix adventures with the Bottom Line. The Bottom Line—Suffer for it, and Theme Park Mystery is no exception.****
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Address your letters to AMIGA POWER, Beaufort Court, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon, BA1 2BW

Dear Sir,
If I may, I'd like to make a few comments on some of the letters you published in your last issue. The subject is, of course, the excellent games on magazine-cover disks.
1. The industry argument against cover-mounted games seems to be that weaker software companies would have to produce consistently higher quality products to justify their high price tags, and that'd be good for all of us? Or is it aimed at sub-standard, 'let's print some money' games like Here Turtles to occupy the charts for weeks while classics suffer?
2. Will the ELSPA members who don't publish cheap re-issues or budget software want that stopped as well, so that having good quality games available around the eight to 10 pound mark doesn't damage the sales of the dull expensive software?
3. Will Public Domain software be removed from cover disks, as this must affect the sales of PD libraries?
4. I take it that not every software company is a member of ELSPA. If this is the case you couldn't put games from non-ELSPA companies on your magazine? (Of course, that might mean losing ad revenue from members, so forget that one, I suppose).
5. Aren't you just as guilty? After all, you computer mag companies put up disk on the covers of your magazines and then charge us £2.95 for the privilege of owning a 'free' game! All that's happened is the software publishers have spotted you doing it and saved enough's enough! Yours.
JEFF DUELL, North Shields

Who killed Matty Penn?

It's the question that's been rocking the industry. Here are a handful of sample entries to our US Gold/Cruise For A Corpse competition we ran last issue - the winner (who of course gets his/her very own Commodore CDTV!) will be announced next issue. The scenario we set up leading to the crime is too long to explain here - you'll have to either go back to the last mag to refresh your memory or simply pick it up as we go along.
Anyway, here are some suggestions...

It's very simple. Matt Beiby did go to US Gold. He waited in an office for one of the US Gold reps when he noticed a CDTV just lying around. No. One knew he was there so he grabbed the machine and took it straight to Gary Penn, because Gary was desperate for a CDTV.
Gary had no games though, so going around the office he told everyone it was his birthday, and they all went out shopping, looking for a CDTV game for him. Gary became bored in the office on his own, so he decided to borrow one of the cleaner's audio compact discs. What he didn't know was that playing normal compact discs actually killed him!!!
It killed people by blasting them to death with sound. Gary sadly died.
So, as Commodore were so secretive about the CDTV I can now exclusively reveal that, wait for it, Commodore Did This Wie murder!!!

PAUL MARSHALL, Warrington, Cheshire

So 'playing normal compact discs actually kills you', eh? Sorry, neat (well, neatish) ending, but you rather over-stretch credibility with that middle bit, I'm afraid.

4.15pm. Minutes after Mark Ramshaw leaves for the dentist, the ad sales girls (Alison and Susanne), having realised that Penn was not only having affairs with both of them, but also with a purple spider-plant named Mildred, engage Penn in conversation whilst injecting him just below the knee with nail varnish remover.
4.30pm. As Penn staggers around the office singing a selection of Oasis and In My Life by the beatles, the 'lads' of the team, believing him to be possessed by some evil spirit, force-feed him copies of games such as Kawasaki, Ghostbusters II and Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles. Penn, naturally, is dead within minutes.
4.45pm. The staff, overcome by guilt at their terrible deed, flee to a small Caribbean Island equipped with only their favourite Amiga games and a signed photo of Lesley Judd.
Therefore, Penn was killed by the entire team (excluding Mark and the two Matts). MARK WALLACE, East Finchley, London

Sorry, trying too hard to be funny gets you nowhere.

After Mark Ramshaw left for his dental appointment there was a phone call saying a bomb had been planted in the office. It's Gary Penn's responsibility to make sure all the rest get out and to phone the authorities. While the staff are clearing out onto the car park, Matt Beiby is sprinting from the phone box where he made the hoax call. He dives into the back way unnoticed.
Gary Penn is about to ring the bomb squad when Matt Beiby sneaks up behind him and smothered him with a three foot cuddly toy replica of Kid Gloves, which just happens to be sitting on Alison's desk. Now Matt thinks his worries are over. Gary Penn will no longer be blackmailing him for selling AMIGA POWER secrets to US Gold.

NIA CONNELLY, Rhyl, Clwyd.

And so it goes on. Did Matt do it? Or Commodore? Or even the ad girls with help from the 'lads' (which seems to mean just Colin and Stuart) or what? The winner, and perhaps a few more entries, will be revealed next month. Meanwhile, get cracking on this month's extraordinary competition, and you could be flying high.
ELSPA TALKS! COVERMOUNTED GAMES – RIGHT OR WRONG?

There’s been a lot of talk lately – both in the industry and, judging from your letters, on the streets – about complete games being given away on cover-mounted disks. The whole controversy blew up around the launch of AMIGA POWER and our early promise to give away a complete game with each issue, so it’s a subject that’s affected AMIGA POWER readers (and potential readers) more than anyone else.

That being the case, we thought it a good idea to call up Roger Bennett, General Secretary of trade body ELSPA (the European Leisure Software Publishers Association), to explain the situation. Here we go...

(Brrring brrring).
Hello, it’s AMIGA POWER here. We’d like to ask you a few questions about cover mounted disks and why the industry’s so dead against magazines putting complete games on them.

Well, first off I’ve got to stress that ELSPA itself doesn’t have any mandate allowing us to tell anybody what to do, we can merely act as a forum for discussion and give advice. What happened with the cover mounted disk issue was that a number of software publishers saw that with AMIGA POWER offering complete 16-bit games you had the possibility of a magazine-cover mounted war starting similar to that which has developed in the 8-bit market, and they saw the opportunity to put a halt to it before it got going. Our argument is that coversmounts have killed the full price Spectrum software market, and it was for the good of us all to prevent that happening with the Amiga.

But couldn’t you equally argue that cover-mounted games keep people interested in using their computers, buying magazines about them, reading about more games and makes them much more likely to go out and buy something they really want?

Well, that’s certainly not the view of the majority of our members. The industry looks at games as having three ‘windows of sales opportunity’ as they say. First, there’s selling the game at full price, somewhere around the £25 or £40 mark. Then there’s the second window of opportunity where a product becomes available as part of a compilation, selling for a similar sort of price. Third comes the budget games releases, when it’s felt that a product has outlived its useful life on other formats and it then becomes reasonable to make it available for about a fiver. We don’t want to damage our chances of selling games at any of these price points.

And what’s wrong with cover-mounts being a fourth ‘window of opportunity’?

The problem is that there would be pressure to covermount games that haven’t yet been on compilation or budget release, thus denying software houses secondary ways of earning money from their products.

But it’s still the software house’s choice – surely nobody’s forcing anyone to covermount a game they think they’ve got another use for?

The other problem is one of perception. What’s the point of software publishers packaging games in nice boxes with good manuals and trying to make software something that’s simply nice to own and worth £25 or whatever when magazines are giving away loose disks? Coversmounts are undermining the perceived value of what a game is.

But no more so than compilations or budget releases, which are equally ‘undermining’ the concept of a game being worth £25. If Xenon 2 was worth £25 two years ago and it’s only worth a tenner now surely it’s logical that it’ll be worth about, ooh, £2.99 a bit further on down the line and be ripe for coversmounting? After all, you can buy stand-alone Amiga games for that sort of price now anyway.

But at least they come in nice packaging so their perceived value is higher. The software publisher isn’t just selling a few disks and bits of paper, he’s selling something you might call ‘a dream’ in a very real sense, and that dream is tarnished when a game is put on a magazine.

What, even when a magazine devotes two or three pages to explaining a game they give away, thus doing a much better job of presenting it than most software packaging? Imagine a situation where magazines put their disks in nice boxes, like the Spectrum mags do with their compilation cassettes. The ‘dream’ wouldn’t be the same at all then.

ELSPA members are worried enough that a single stand alone game is being sold with a magazine and thus eating dramatically into the time a purchaser would otherwise spend with bought software. If they saw double disk issues or compilation disks becoming the norm it would be great news for the consumer, but it would really damage software sales and put some companies out of business.

Cutting back on coversmount games will actually be good news for the games player in the long run, because only through software houses being able to continue making decent profits will there be the money about to invest in new games.

So there you have it. Whatever you think about the ELSPA arguments, Roger is undeniably right about one point – no magazine (AMIGA POWER included) window of opportunity can stop putting software on the covers, they can merely be persuaded to stop in the interests of the software industry. We’ve made the decision that, things being as they are, no more complete commercial games will appear on our coverslides for the foreseeable future. Yes, (in the short term at least) that’s bad news for you, but it’s what makes sense at the moment. (Just don’t expect this to be the last word you see written on the subject, that’s all).

Thanks Jonathan. Mind you, not everyone loves our reviews. Take, for example this next letter...

Dear Amiga Reader,
I am a person who hates inconsistency and unclerliness, especially in reviews! I have been a reader of Amiga Format, your sister magazine, since I bought my Amiga, and have only just bought the second edition of AMIGA POWER. What throws me is the differing views on the game Mega Traveller I. I know people can have slightly different views, but you and your sister paper are seriously out of step.

The original letter for Amiga Format received a grading of 70%, with comments on it like 'Having completed the game, I can honestly say it wasn't worth the bother.' You say it is 'absolutely superb game' and give it 88%. And look at your 'tippers' and 'Downers!' Amiga Format are critical of the 'eye-watering' scrolling, the 'pathetic' moving graphics, the Interloper and a 'very naff version of Asteroids' and claim that you get very bored with the tiny-to-accumulate-money stuff. Then they finish off by questioning whether it will run in 512k.

On the other hand, AMIGA POWER gives a little trouble with swapping disks for fully up to spade - a small comment on the graphics next to the picture. You say (or rather, Stuart Campbell says it) it is 'completely and totally fantastic'. And nobody, but nobody, clearly states if the game is capable of playing at 640x480 or not. Please, please, please could you make it policy to always tell us if a game requires a megabyte or not? (A nice big sticker near the title of the review would be really nice!) If I am going to spend £60 pounds on a game I really want to buy a good one, and a magazine like yours would be great for this if only I could believe the reviews.

I am also sending a letter to Amiga Format, to ask them to get it together, so don’t feel slighted. The layout and simple grading of games in your magazine is great – better than Amiga Format’s few points bit – but less has it consistent and clear! Yours sincerely,

Ben Rees, Taunton

First of all, Ben, we may be ‘sister magazines’, but what you have said about Amiga Format makes me seriously think about our position. I agree that there are problems with the product, but I am sure that we can sort it out - and we will see if the reviews for Mega Traveller I show that we can.

Dear Sir, While visiting my local software shops the other day, I noticed that they were all selling many of the newest games at knockdown prices. Software and Billingfords were both selling the game at £9.95 each, while it was £7.99, while The Killing Cloud, LMS II and Call of the City were all sold in at £14.95 each. This Corporation mission disk, Nightbreed and a sprinkling of budget titles were sold at under £5. While a single Sheffield shop normally would have had a sale of some kind, it’s rare to see prices as low as these at the same time. I enquired at the counter. The shop assistant claimed that these cheap prices were due to the current recession, a sales slump and the fact that the majority of big releases are rushed out for Christmas.
Is Sheffield merely an isolated case or is it the same nationwide? These stories must be feeling the unemployment sting very badly - already, one local store had to start selling shelves with various pans, board games and metal miniatures just to draw in more customers.

Even worse, the software companies themselves must be in a bad way at the moment. If the shops are reducing their prices in desperation, the software houses will probably sell more games, but at the same time make very little profit. Already, according to Underwood and I wonder who will be next. Add to this the continual threat of piracy and we have big problems, although this may be taken the issue just a little too far.

Any comments you may have on this matter will be gratefully accepted. Do you think I'm blowing it all out of proportion, or am I just being realistic?

Yours sincerely,
STUART HARDY, Sheffield

What tends to happen is this: Many shops - and we're talking about the sort of independent computer stores here, not large multiples like WH Smith - will reduce the price of a full price game by around a fiver, four or five months to get rid of the shelf. They won't usually do this with big selling, successful games like, oh, Eye on the Beholder or Secret of Monkey Island, but with games that are doing less well (choose your own). The reason for this comes down to the dealer's share of the profits, not the software company's, so it doesn't really affect them at all (except, of course, that if a certain company gets a reputation for producing poor quality software, dealers will stop ordering their games).

With the summer being traditionally a fairly lean time for software sales - though with one as miserable and rainy as this it's hard to see why - discounting gets more common.

In particular the case you're describing though, it seems like an awful lot of discounting isn't doing any good and on games like Breed and U.M.S. II, which I'd expect to be doing quite well. Since you say it's happening in a lot of shops in your area, perhaps a local price war's going on, with each shop trying to undercut the other? It's happened before, after all.

Yeah!

I thought Yeah, why not? New mag. New broom (etc). New hair cut. Why don't we try it? (Tell them how brilliant they are and I'm guaranteed to get published.

Although I will concede that AMIGA POWER is good, I can't see any reason to publish letters to that effect. Neither can I see any reason to write letters to PR officers and software houses who feel aggrieved at unfair reviews. I don't recall going to schools and saying that your 40% mark was inadequate 'cos he didn't like your story in the composition. The fact is, these people are happy enough when they get their 90% mark (and face it, every other game does in certain mags). They don't get their PR officers to write in saying 'I'm terribly sorry, but we really do think that review was wrong. In all honesty we think 22.2% would have been more accurate.' I say, perhaps software houses should be allowed in the letters pages. Let them give their opinions to each other instead.

And c'mon, there's more: What I really want to know is, are there any snooker simulations on the Amiga? Being new to the world of Amigas I don't know these things. Lastly (was that a sigh of relief?), why can't AMIGA POWER be different in the way it does its reviews? Why should we take the word of reviewers - or anybody for that matter? Why don't you pick, say, five of your readers to give a review of upcoming games - I'm sure they'd do it, then get a mark out of 20 from each? Add them up and you've got a mark out of 100. Easy. Where do I sign up? Regards,

RON HEALY, Dagenham

Well Ron, the reason we published all those 'You're Brilliant' letters (all three of them) was because they represented an overwhelmingly large proportion of our mailbag, and the job of a letter page is to represent the views of its readers, isn't it? Simple as that. As for the software house complaints, shouldn't we provide a right of reply for them, just as we do for anyone else?

If you're after snooker games, why not look out for 's forthcoming Jimmy White file-in, programmed by Ascher Maclean, due around September. You should always check along this line if there's no doubt about it, it really is the bee's knees.

And finally, apart from the games, our reviews are in the spirit of the life, why don't you try trust your opinions (or those of any other individual readers) any more than those of an experienced game reviewer? And if you don't, you just have to 'take anybody's word for it' and the difference between the reviewer being a reader or a professional journalist?

Dear Mr. Bielby,

As a 32 year old MD of a beautiful glossy magazine (enclosed: a copy of a mag), I would like to add my congratulations on one of three AMIGA ads I was very impressed with the cover disk on issue three, with Exile in particular being totally absorbing. The standard of your cover disks far exceeds anything else available (not that I read anything else)

I have to confess to doing little on my Amiga other than gaming, and at my age I have to say that you're making great progress.

How do you see the budget (is £2.99 and of the market affecting full price games, if at all? I assume you wouldn't find an Exile, Gods or Xenon 2 quality game at this low (£2.99) price?

Yours sincerely,

STEVEN NICHOLS, Cotswold Life

Swindon

And he did as well (enclose an issue of the mag, that is). To make a vague stab at answering your other point, only 'Prism' are currently putting out Amiga software at £2.99 and their current range (see last issue) goes from the terminally average to the divergent. Most budget stuff costs less than a pound and includes a lot of excellent older games. The current £2.99 games are impudent stuff, and are generally perceived as of a different class. I don't think they'd affect them in the slightest.

No room, no room! I'm sorry, but we're out of space. There's just enough left to suggest that if you've got something to say... jot it down, bung it in an envelope and send it to us at the address printed on the previous page. We'll certainly be interested to hear from you, and who knows - we might even print the blooming thing!
Neil Young is one of two producers at Probe Software, developers of many of the Amiga's most successful coin-op conversions and film tie-ins. Games like Back To The Future Part III and Super Monaco GP, Turbo OutRun and Golden Axe spring to mind, though things to come seem even more interesting - Neil is currently embroiled in projects ranging from the Amiga Sim Earth to Mirrorsoft's ultra-secret Aliens III...

That's all by-the-by at the moment though - what we're interested in here is what he thinks of other people's games...

**F-15 STRIKE EAGLE**

Procon

This is okay I suppose, but for me it falls between two stools - it isn't the incredibly detailed, absorbing sort of simulator that really starts to take over your life, and it's not the you-can-get-straight-into-it-and-have-fun sort of flight sim you're going to find in F-29. Despite the fact that they're all very 'good', I find I never get very excited about Procon simulations, and this one's no different. In fact, one of the games we've played most in the office over the past few months has been F-29 because it's exactly the sort of arcade plane game you'd expect Ocean to do - it's fast, it's got lots of good blues in it, and it's great in head-to-head mode with two linked computers. It's much more my cup of tea.

**THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND**

Lucasfilm (US Gold)

Ah yes, now this I'm very impressed with. It's just the kind of game that appeals to us here, a very carefully refined product. It's obviously put together by real professionals who know exactly what they're doing. It's not really what we tend to think of as an adventure game though - it's more of a sort of interactive cartoon game, as it were.

**THE KILLING CLOUD**

Image Works

I think Volker Grafix did some very tasty 3D stuff, and I liked this game a lot. It was very atmospheric certainly, and I liked the whole idea behind it, though I thought some of the still graphics could have been done better. I'm not sure how well the game plays though - I haven't got very far into it.

**HERO QUEST**

Gremlin

I didn't like this much. Mainly because the combat was poor. The game certainly looked really nice, but they've tried to convert the board game too closely - it should have been more like an isometric 3D Gauntlet sort of thing. Having said that though, I've been very impressed with the current crop of Gremlin products - they've not really had a duff one since Supercars.

**GODS**

Renegade

I'm not thrilled I'm afraid - this has very nice graphics, and the Bmpaps are good chaps with the right attitude, but they need to be more careful with the stuff they're releasing. I didn't like Cedadcr at all - I thought it was really poorly done generally, and the sprite didn't seem to relate to the backgrounds properly - so if Magic Pockets isn't good then the reputation is going to slip a bit. Gods certainly isn't the game it should have been.

**ARMOUR GEDDON**

Payday

Well, I loved the intro sequence, but I don't care for the game that much. I think it's boring - we've seen it all before, and for me it had a very 'so what?' feeling to it. There's no real suspense to it either. We hadn't read the manual - I really don't think you should have to, a game should explain itself, at least in some shallow way - so I couldn't get off the factory screen for ages! It's very nicely done, like all their products, but it doesn't seem to have the gameplay. And don't you think it's odd that when they do something that REALLY is playable, like Lemmings, they seem to compensate for it being good by throwing all their usual rice presentation out the window? Eh?

**GERM CRAZY**

Electric Zeo

What a pile of crap! And wasn't the advert awful too? It looked like they tried to save money on an artist and got someone at the company to draw it themselves! I'm not convinced the whole idea for the game was any good in the first place, and I'm certainly not sure about the execution, but that advert will have soured its chances from the off. People will look at the picture and who'll be seriously tempted to give the game a chance?

**BRAT**

Image Works

There was a very nice intro sequence on the front of this, but the game itself didn't really appeal to me. There's an ancient game called Flip And Fop - or something like that anyway - from First Star, which was a similar isometric 3D tie thing and seems to have been a big influence for this. Me, I liked the first version better.

**WONDERLAND**

Virgin

Now this is something I like. The new windows environment is good, and will presumably give Magnetic Scrolls a system which they can now use on a number of other projects, and I found it all very friendly. This was one I could just pick up and use straight away. The graphics are nice too. I'm actually a big fan of good adventures - I really miss the old Infocom products and I'm glad to see them getting a re-release. The Hitch-Hiker's Guide To The Galaxy is one of my favourite ever games.
THUNDERHAWK
AH-73M
ATTACK HELICOPTER - 73M

WATCH THE HORIZON...
ATARI ST & CBM AMIGA