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the debugger supplied with both packages

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ANNOUNCING

$\overline{A500}0$ AND $\overline{B500}0$



- - B5000 has advanced 32-bit Paged-Mode design

 32-bit Kickstart five/ten times faster
 - THE MACHINES •

B5000-40

<u>AMG</u> COMPUTING

FEBRUARY 1992

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RAM expansions made for the older A500 will not work with the new A500 Plus if they are populated to more than 512k. Phoenix have developed a range of RAM expansion units specifically for the new A500 Plus.

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The A500 Plus can only be expanded to 2 Mb of chip RAM using the trap door expansion port.

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A4000 - more amazing details

SINCE the exclusive report in our October issue outlining Commodore's plans to launch a new topend Amiga during the next year, further details about its specifications have been gathered.

The machine will be named the Amiga 4000 and will be fitted with a 68040 processor, enabling the computer to run up to five times faster

than the current 68030-based A3000. It will have multi-monitor support and is claimed to have a 24-bit graphics board as standard, with 16-bit

By John Butters

sound. The CD-ROM drive which has recently been rumoured for the A4000 appears not to have been included Experts now believe that a SCSI II

interface will be included to enable information to be transferred at up to ten megabytes per second to and from hard drives.

Technology included in the "Super Amiga" is likely to mean that it will

and will be aimed at high-end graphics applications such as broadcasting, multimedia and presentations.

The A4000 could also be employed comfortably for computer-aided design or desktop publishing work, where it would operate faster than the industry-standard Apple Macintosh, Commodore refused to talk about the A4000's details, simply commenting: "We haven't got a release date for that machine, either in the UK or US."

Sales exceed three million

Classic bundle

planned THERE is growing speculation that Commodore are to release an

Amiga 800 Classic bundle in the

near future, containing a com-

puter, hard disk drive and moni-

..........

CDTV linked with Amiga

IN A surprise marketing move, Commodore have backed down on their refusal to link the CDTV with the Amiga, the machine at the centre of the player. It follows several months of the manufacturer going

out of their way to distance CDTV from computers. They maintain that this was needed to attract people who would not consider buying a conventional computer.

CDTV, they said, was new technology because it could show text and music from compact discs. None of the firm's advertising mentioned the word computer and stores selling the player were forced to display it at least four feet away from computers.

Latest press and television advertising labels the machine Amiga CDTV, which one marketing expert said was needed because of "difficulties in explaining the multimedia concept and the undeniable cachet of the market-leading be badged simply CDTV. Commodore's Andrew Ball said: "It seemed sensible to link CDTV with one of the strongest names in home entertainment *CDTV was always going to be launched in several

stages - its potential is far greater than any games playing

He added that the firm have spent money educating people about CDTV's abilities and thought that recent promotions on Radio 1 and coverage on BBC television's Tomorrow's World programme had helped the campaign.

By mid-December Commodore had sold 8,000 machines through to consumers and the company expects total UK sales to stand at 30,000 by the end of the Christmas selling period.

Meanwhile, two more High Street chains have taken the machine on board. Dixons and Comet are to stock it at more than 30 stores each and it is to enter about 100 independents.

Reports suggest that the A800 is to be powered from a 68020 processor and all the elements will be cased together, in a similar way to the Apple Macintosh Classic. The machine will also have 16-channel sound, says a source. Industry newspaper Computer

Trade Weekly has added weight to Amiga family is to be increased this year with a machine to fill the gap between the A500P and A1500. No other details were

said he was unaware of the bundle and added it was certainly not a product they were considering releasing in the UK.



Amiga brand". It continues to The CDTV - serry, the Amiga CDTV

Six thousand balloons released

THE sky turned white over the BBC's Pebble Mill studios recently as Evesham Micros handed over a cheque for £6,853 to the BBC Children in Need Appeal at the start of their Mighty Balloon Marathon. The launch of more than 6,000 balloons was the result of months of writing tickets and was watched by millions of TV view

an A500 and colour monitor. The person

"Sitting inside a cold enormous balloon net for several hours, with thousands of balloons to inflate, isn't everyone's idea of fun," said Evesham's marathon organiser

But it was all worthwhile to raise such which managed to boost the Marath total by an extra £680," he added



Four million colours for CDTV

AMIGA CDTV owners will soon be able to buy a card to enable 400,000 colours from a total palette of four million to be displayed onscreen at any time.

Plugging in to an expansion socket at the back of the machine. Advanced Video Mode Card will sell for £49.99 and is planned for launch within the first few months of 1992.

Multimedia packs go with A3000

PEOPLE buying A3000s now get three multimedia tools supplied with the machine at no extra cost, making it more attractive to creative businesses or single media producers. The packages included are Scala, AmigaVision and

Deluxe Paint IV. Commodore consider all of them to be ideal for multimedia applications.

It is the first time Deluxe Paint IV has been packaged with any Amiga and it supports overscan for desktop video, 3D perspective and animation, and enables work with all

4,096 colours onscreen. AmigaVision is the computer giant's own authoring lan-

guage, integrating Amiga files into an icon-based flow chart and allowing users to assemble their own presentations, combining animation, audio, text and graphics

Presentation system Scala has a button-style interface and includes display backgrounds, a variety of fonts for text overlay and support for Ascii and PostScript files. Said Commodore's head of multimedia Barry Thurston:

"This latest package makes multimedia available at a realistic price for any creative business user. The Amiga 3000 is

ideal for use in corporate communications and presentations, interactive training, animation, CAD and control and simulation procedures." Price starts at £3,524.



...............

A1500 to run at 33MHz

A CARD to increase the speed of A1500 and A2000s is set to be released in the UK soon by Silica Systems (081-309 1111). Selling at £999, the Great Valley Products 68030 processor fitted with a 68882

floating processor unit will run at 33MHz, faster than any of its competitors. It will have a hard disk controller and is supplied with four megabytes of 32bit RAM which can be expanded to 16 megabytes. A spokesman for Silica said

that while the board is based on Combo technology, it remains nameless. Said Silica's Andy Leaning: "GVP's new card upgrades the Amiga 1500 to give it the processing power of an Amiga 3000. Anyone considering buying an Amiga 3000 can now buy an Amiga 1500 and GVP card and get the same specification and power for £1.575 less."

Facelift for A1500 bundle

DETAILS released for a new A1500 bundle show Commodore will continue to

direct the computer towards the family Three games will be contained in the pack - Puzznic, Toki and Elf. Deluxe Paint III, Home Accounts and The Works make up the bundle's serious con-

A Commodore spokesman said the firm were optimistic that in 1992 sales for the mid-range machine would be increased to between 15,000 and 20,000 units. The A1500 continues to sell at £999.

Unix reseller appointed director Tony Leatham said: "The A MAIOR supplier of systems solutions

have been appointed by Commodore as the sole UK Amiga Unix reseller. supplying and installing Amiga Unix platforms, software and networking products. Applied Systems Group have been

working closely with Commodore for some time on the development of Unix and networking systems for the Amiga, including Network File System. TCP/IP, MS-DOS/Unix and AmigaDOS

Commodore claim that the platform outperforms traditional vendors in its price bracket and say many early evaluators of the product have switched to the Amiga from Sun 4, 486 and 68000-based workstations. Applied Systems' technical sales

adaptability of the Amiga is increasing all the time. Amiga Unix software titles will include the most popular database engines as well as graphics and DTP packages."

Commodore's Barry Thurston added: "As an Amiga Unix reseller for Commodore, Applied Systems can now translate their developments in both environments into complete business solutions."

Commodore added that ASG work with many blue chip firms and install systems where the multitasking Amiga could be employed.

Prices depend upon the type of application and number of computers required by firms. Applied Systems can be contacted on 0724 280222.

Amiga heads for BETT

the BETT '92 education exhi

manufacturer's computers will be displayed, including the Amiga and Amiga CDTV. The Amiga will feature as an ideal system for Special Needs departments and will be shown with the Concept nown with the Concep 2000 keyboard and Toucl

argued in a policition in a policition in a policition in a providing affordable quality solutions to meet the needs of both teachers and pupils within

The show runs from January 22 to 25 at London's Barbican Centre and entrance is restricted to those working



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RIGHTS to top Amiga database Superbase 4 have been sold to an American software house only months after Software Publishing Corporation took over its developer Precision Software.

California-based Oxxi will handle all support and updates for the package, and operate technical support and distribution from Precision Software's old UK office. Other Oxxi packages are also available from the building.

SPC's Irfan Salim: "The sale of this division of Precision Software is consistent with our objectives, stated at the time of the acquisition. We intend to invest in the Superbase product line for Windows and build on the product's leading position in the CPU relational database market

on the product's leading position in the GUI relational database market. "Precision's Commodore and Atari products clearly do not fit in with our focus on PC application-based soft-

ware," he added

Oxxi can be contacted on 081-330 • 6911 but the firm are looking for new • premises and so this is expected to • change.

Swapping OS

A BOARD which will enable Amiga owners to swap between different oversions of the computer's operating system is now being imported into the UK by Aquarian PD (0703 685006).

Supplied without ROMs, MultiStart

II can switch between Workbench
1.2, 1.3 and 2 through keyboard commands which reset the Amiga and
force it to progress to the next ROM
plugged in to the board.
Complete with an easy-to-under-

stand manual it costs £39.99. ROMs cost between £36 and £48 each and are available from the firm.

Amiga best buy

TESTS by consumer magazine Which? found the Amiga to be the best buy for games players, giving the machine a boost during the runus to Christmas.

Five non-PC compatibles and four PC compatibles were examined by the magazine and while each had selling points, the Amiga was found to have the edge in terms of cost and games software availability.

The machine was criticised, however, for its user interface and disk drives. The Apple Macintosh Classic was awarded best overall buy.



Maths to be played with

six and 14 to revise and check their progress in National Curriculum maths in a fun way.

Using a series of four games, questions are asked on a wide range of maths

Using a series of four games, questions are asked on a wide range of matrix topics with correct replies taking the pupil from the land of the cave men to being tasked with saving a city from destruction by unknown creatures.

Topics covered in Kosmos Software's (05255 3942) Maths Adventure include multiplication, addition, subtraction, division, fractions and decimals. Alternatively, everyday use of the subject can be covered in money problems, shape and space, or weights and measures.

Each section can be specifically asked for, allowing students to practise individual sections of the curriculum with which they have difficulty. There are four difficulty levels, adjusted automatically to suit the child's ability.

During the exercises, the computer keeps track of a pupil's progress and if mintakes are made the correct answers are displayed outcome. Records of perfore mance are kept for each topic and these can be examined or printed as hard orgon at any time.

Price: £25.99.



_ _ _

Tornado goes 3D BUDDING fighter pilots will soon be ing objects and intelligent enemy jets

able to get behind the controls of ProFlight 2, the latest version of the Tornado flight simulator from HiSoft (0525 718181). The main addition will be

enhanced gameplay, although the firm would like to maintain Proflight 2's reputation as a serious program. This is achieved with 3D effects, movwhich will engage in dogfights. Scenery will be improved and the programmers are hoping to add run-

programmers are hoping to add runway lighting and different enemy aircraft types. Company boss David Link says it will take features from other military simulators and beat them. Upgrades will be available but prices remain to be fixed.

Citizen get Swifter

home users, small businesses and schools.

The Swift 24e now runs at 216 characters per second. It has an etwo fonts and is supplied with a free colour kit worth 638. The pri

AMIGA

Libraries share PD

become more freely available following a decision by more than 30 libraries to agree to share all releases with each other as soon as they become available. The deal came at a recent conference called by Derck Meakin, chairman of Europress Publications, publisher of Amgie Computing and its sister magazine Shareware Skopper.

we held the conference was because of the acute problems Shareware Shopper readers said they were facing in obtaining disks reviewed in the magazine."

The industry-proposed solution will involve all-formats library Advantage duplicating all disks reviewed in the shareware magazine and making them available to other libraries advertising in that month's issue.

Advantage live at 56 Bath Road,

Advantage live at 56 Bath Road, Cheltenham GL53 7HJ and can be contacted by phone on 0242 224340.

Video help arrives

is a video package just released by New Image Videos (0723 362218). Written by two Amiga experts, the video is sold with an Amiga Jargon Dictionary and

is sold with an Amiga Jargon Dictionary and Quick Technical Reference Guide which explains Amiga phrases. The Guru Meditation Guide unravels the

mysteries of Guru Meditations and enables users to benefit from the information they provide. Utility software supplied allows students to follow step-by-step examples shown on the video.

Price of £24.99 entitles customers to a postal help service.

Devpac assembly

complete
ASSEMBLY language programmers
are now able to buy Devpac 3, the
latest version of the development

system from Bedford-based HiSoft (0625 718181). It now has a new multi-window editor and an improved assembler running up to 40 per cent faster than its predecessor. A debugger is also included to aid bug hunting

and learning.

Complete with all necessary files, a linker and manual it costs £69.95.

Upgrades from earlier copies are applicable for £24.95.



Saver for laser refills

FREQUENT laser printer users can now save up to 50 per cent on the cost of replacement toner with a long life toner system developed by Beach Imaging (081-850 8344).

Compatible with most types of printers, Permajet consists of a cartridge which has been modified to enable it to be used five times, and refill bottles. The system costs £190, making the price for each cartridge £38.



......

Upgrade for Harlequin The 24-bit graphics board, Harlequin, has

The 24-bit graphics board, Harlequin, has been upgraded to offer improvement in applications such as animation and multimedia.

The enhancements give it an extra four modes, colour cycling, full-screen overlay and an increase from double buffer to six buffers. New modes are 24-bit look-up, 15-bit true colour, 8-bit true colour and 8-bit pseudo colour.

"The Harlequin+ represents the most exciting advance for the Amiga in professional video since Newtek announced the Video Toaster," commented Amiga Centre Scotland's Martin Lowe.

"The Harlequin+ provides broadcasters with features not found on any other PC platform. It offers a challenge to software developers to make full use of its additional functionality," he added.

At the time of going to press its price remained to be fixed, but the firm have pledged to offer an opportunity to upgrade to users of the earlier version.

40MHz planned for 040

AN AMERICAN hardware manufacturer is set to produce 68040 accelerator cards for the A2000 and A3000 which are designed to run at 40MHz when chips become available.

at 40MHz when chips become available.

The first SupraTurbo 68040 boards will run at 25MHz, support 64 megabytes of RAM and have a 4k data cache.

Supra expect to have the product available for both machines early this year. Supplied with four megabytes of memory, it should soll in Germany for DM 2.800 (about £965).

DO YOU KNOW SOMETHING WE DON'T?

Although Amigo Computing has scores of contacts in the Amiga world, we need you. If you have some hot news ring John Butters on the news desk now on 10:25 878888 or fax to 06:25 879966. All information supplied will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

Talk to the CDTV

MICRODEAL (0726 68020) have announced the immediate availability of a microphone and a French language tuition program for the CDIV

player.

Voice Master is a package including a microphone and interface, plugging into the machine's parallel printer port and requiring no externa

power supply.

It is designed for use with the company's interactive CDTV softwar such as Joky Karaoke, Voice FX or latest education release Asterix an

Son.

Based on the popular Asterix cartoon character, Asterix and Son prevides more than 30 hours of French study. There is an hour of spoke

Split into sections to allow students to learn in different ways, it aimed at all levels. Voice Master costs £39.99 and Asterix and Sor £34.99.

Graphics standard proposed

developers in America, two leading hardware manufacturers joined forces to propose a new standard in Amiga graphics, to be called Standard Amiga Graphics Extension.

SAGE, established by Progressive Peripherals and Software and Digital Micronics, is described as providing a fast and efficient method for Amiga software developers to support all Texas Instruments processor

PP&S say that while many firms were enthusiastic about SAGE, no firms have so far committed themselves to use it and say it is basically an "operating system within an operating system".

Budget genlock launched

AMIGA users are soon to be offered a new budget-priced genlock called Microgen from Power Computing (0234 843388).

A variety of fades are controlled through hardware and an on/off switch allows the user to swap to computer operation without the need to disconnect the genlock.

It can be used with composite monitors and has an RGB though port. Among its features are Key Invert, to enable special effects to be created "on the.fly", without the user having to go through complex proce-

Custom circuitry ensures that the Amiga will not crash and its low power design means it does not need its own external power.

Price: £199.

DIARY DATES

14 to 16 February 1992 5th International 16-bit Computer Show

Organiser: Westminster Exhibitions (081-S49 3444)

Venue: Wembley Exhibition Halls The first post-Christmas show for Amiga owners.

Which Computer? Show Organiser: Reed (081-948 9800) National Exhibition Centre, Rimmingham

7 to 10 April 1992

One of the country's top shows, but heavily biased towards the PC.

European Computer Trade Show Organiser: Blenheim Online (081-868 4466) Venue: Business Design Centre,

A trade-only show. 28 to 31 May 1992

12 to 14 April 1992

Spring Computer Shopper Show Organiser: Blenheim PEL (081-868 4466) Venue: Olympia, London

Promised to attract many Amiga exhibitors.

OVERSEAS

24 to 26 January 1992 Benelux Computer '92 Organiser: Interexpo & Media (010 31 40 464601) Venue: Eindhoven Trade Fair Building Very similar to the UK's Computer

Shopper Show.
3 to 5 April 1992

Amiga Berlin
Organiser: AMI Shows Europe
(010 49 8092 24086)
Venue: AMK Berlin
The first German Amiga show of
the year.

28 to 31 May 1992 Consumer Electronics Show Organiser: EIG/CEG

Venue: Chicago
The show opens for the first time
to the public on May 30 and 31
1992.

8 to 11 October 1992 Amiga Koln

Organiser: AMI Shows Europe (010 49 8092 24086) Venue: Koln Messe

A chance to catch up on the year's developments in the active Amiga world.

 If your company is organising a show relevant to the Amiga and it's not listed, let us know so we can include the information in the diary.

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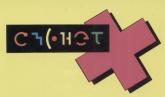
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BLUE CHIP

C'051

Eight million colours for less than £500? Stevie Kennedy

looks at **DCTV**

you feel left out of the 24-bit revolution by reason of budgetary constraints, the prospect of a pseudo-24bit add-on for less than

the price of a decent VCR may be hard to resist. HAM-E, covered in our July 1991 issue, was the first of such devices, but despite its impressive power-to-price ratio, it failed to make the impact its launch had promised. The newest contender,

as a component RGB image. To view the DCTV screen, Digital Creations' DCTV, looks set to enjoy greater suc-

idiosyncracy. The output from DCTV is in composite video form, so its images aren't displayed as sharp or detailed

cess. DCTV stands for

Digital Composite

Digital Composite Televisi

you must switch your monitor to CVBS input Initially, when the unit is first plugged in, this can be a bit off-putting because if you've been used to sharp

RGB images. you can feel a bit

deflated by the comparatively fuzzy CVBS "telly" pictures you will see on your 1084 or CM8833. For video enthusiasts, however, this should not be a cause for alarm, as DCTV is actually outputting a video-legal signal of the kind they would expect to see on tape

DCTV, just like HAM-E, comes in the form of ar external box you connect between the Amiga and you

monitor. When physical installation is complete, taking no more than three minutes, installing the software on your hard disk is a breeze, and DCTV's paint/digitiser package is up and running.

There's no need to open your Amiga - all the user need do with DCTV is twiddle the Pixel Adjust knob until the unit is properly calibrated to the signals being output by the Amiga's video chips.

At this point, DCTV begins to show its superiority over HAM-E. The latter's bundled paint package, though free, was universally received as a disappointment. DCTV's software rests comfortably at the opposite pole, being easy to use, smooth in operation on even an unaccelerated AS00, and offering many powerful features

In one powerful package, Digital Creations have crammed in a fully specified paint package, digitising software complete with image processing controls, and a powerful conversion utility. It is possible, therefore, to import an image from a camera or VCR, apply the processing tools, touch it up in Paint mode, then convert the result to any Amiga video mode you

please. As DCTV uses a 24-bit palette, it is also possible to save images in 24-bit IFF format which, though usually 1Mb or greater in size, are ideal for use in DTP packages and the like. DCTV's proprietary Display and Raw formats produce files of a much smaller size, but these can only be properly viewed with the DCTV hardware attached, and appear as horribly fudged 16-colour images in any other Amiga package which doesn't as yet support the format.

Multiple formats

Two standalone utilities are provided with the four DCTV software disks to make this sort of to-and-fro operation easier on the user. Not to be confused with the conversion options available from within the paint package, the extra utilities enable the user to use images generated in other packages with DCTV.

The first is IFFtoDCTV. Not only will it handle all standard IFFs up to full 24-bit files, it will also convert Turbo Silver RGB8 and Sculpt4D compressed files, and offers the user a range of options on the parameters of the output file.

The second, S4DtolLBM, is used when dealing with Sculpt4D's component 24-bit images, which are saved by Sculpt as separate red, green, and blue files. S4DtolLBM grabs the three files and combines them in a standard 24-bit IFF which DCTV can import and display. As with IFFtoDCTV, the user can specify vari-

ous parameters for the resulting image. So much for DCTV's communication skills. They would be of little use if the paint software was of inferior quality. Happily that is not the case. DCTV's paint

package is both powerful and friendly. There are three options once DCTV has kicked in -Paint, Convert, and Digitise. The first to fall prey to

eager mouse clicks is bound to be Digitise, so let's start there.

The on-board digitiser would appear a little disappointing at first sight. It has no instant snapshot facility and must take its images from a still source, either a camera pointed at a stationary object, or a VCR on pause. Having used it for a while, though, I found it a bit of a cracker. For a start, its inclusion puts

DCTV far ahead of HAM-E, as the latter has no builtin digitiser. The biggest surprise, however, was the quality of grabs one could garner from even a fairly poor VCR.

I tried it first with a NICAM S-VHS machine sporting a high-quality pause feature, and the results were as good as I'd expected. Next, though, I gave the unit a bash on my ratty

old VCR at home - one of those adept at making a naused picture look like a snowstorm - and DCTV made some pretty good attempts at grabbing what were rather indistinct images. Once a frame has been

imported, the digitise section has a selection of tools with which to process it. The user can sharpen the image, adjust the red, green, or blue components, or alter the (colour level) and luminance (brightness). The

latter pair are complemented by tint and contrast controls, rounding off an extremely useful and easy to use set of sliders.

The original image is stored in a buffer ready to be restored if you make an almighty mess of things, and when you're happy with the alterations, clicking on Commit will permanently alter the data. You're now ready to save the frame or shove it off to the paint section for touching up.

Here lies DCTV's heart and soul, and as a paint package there is little to fault it on. Operations are split into six main sections - Fill, Brush, Stencil,







DCTV can also excel at traditional art studies

Gradient, Color and Wells - each of which can be accessed no matter where in the package the user is currently working.

The Fill section offers four main types of fills and a host of variations on each. The gradient fill alone has eight different techniques to choose from, ranging from straightforward horizontal gradients to the quite weird looking spiral fill.

As the unit is displaying the gradients in composite video, they can look less smooth than a £1,500 24-bit card, but the results are still immeasurably better than standard Amiga displays, including even the best HAM picture.

A surprising extra is the warp fill, which wraps the currently active clip (brush) around either a cylinder or a sphere. Not as powerful as G2's Imagic software, perhaps, but a lovely touch in a bundled paint package for a peripheral in this price bracket

DCTV's brush section is where a lot of the action takes place in paint mode. Here the user chooses with what type of brush to paint, how the colour will be applied, and the size and flow rates of the painted

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this manner.

The effects available are, again, surprisingly complete in a free package. There are nine in total, any one of which can be applied with brushes of twenty different sizes. Control of paint flow is available from 1 to 100 per cent, and even the brush's X/Y ratio can

be set manually. Of the effects, Airbrush, Blend, Smooth, and Shade will be most familiar to Amiga owners, even if the quality of painting they can produce is not, but Rubthru and Water will be new to most. Rubthru enables the user to rub away part of the current image so that the picture held in the spare page shows through. If used with a low flow setting and a carefully planned spare page, Rubthru can produce

excellent effects. Faces appearing through the mist, pictures fading gently into one another, and even video effects can be rendered in this fashion. If, for example, the user enables Rubthru at a flow setting of 20 per cent, and uses full screen box fills, the spare page can be made

to fade in over a number of frames, and the sequence saved to tape as a link in a video presentation. True, the effect could be produced on a presentation package with a lot less hassle, but DCTV offers a much higher quality true video effect when used in

Unique results

The Water tool is less spectacular, but capable of results none of the other brushes could produce. It's designed to work in the same way as a water-colour artist's brush works, in that it "holds" a certain amount of paint which depletes as you brush across

the canvas. Depending on the flow setting, this will happen faster or slower, but the paint will always bland with whatcolours. The results are ideal for pastoral scenes and other soft-focus painting, such as waterfalls and the like.

Overall, the brush section is as comprehensive as any of the 24-bit paint packages we've seen, with the possible exception of TV Paint, and offers options enough to satisfy any

The remaining features -Stencil. Colour and Wells - are a little less exciting, but they all continue DCTV's theme of completeness and attention to detail. Stencil, for example, has a "colour closeness" option which enables the setting of a

tolerances. a low setting and the mask will include all colours within, say, 33 per cent of the colour you specified. If you're working against a background of a gradient fill, you can thus choose to mask in a picture gradually.

mask colour within definable This means you can choose

The Colour section gives the user control over the

colour chosen and offers four ways of defining new

colours. There's RGB, CMY (handy for anything you

might want to print to paper), HLS, and HSV, so no

matter what equipment your final picture is to be

output to, you should find a colour standard to fit

your requirements. The Wells section is

tory mixing area for the user to

experiment on new colour mixes.

a simple colour choosing

screen, but has the now obliga-

Clever custom formats

keeps with many members of DAN With DCVT attached the PS4s Ries and the banded one of the time and sevel no CVV display format, them based into DVmin it is the banded ingother as an estimation. The finished product with a Psych as an estimation of the psych and the

the normal brush size and flow settings, so it's fairly easy to use. I for one remain unconvinced how useful such

mixers are, as most computer artists aren't converts from canvas, but it has been included because DCTV includes just about everything else.

Conclusion

DCTV offers the best chance many video enthusiasts will have of jumping on the 24-bit bandwagon, and is the closest anyone equipped with a wallet of normal proportions will come to his or her own video paintbox system. With its digitising option and excellent software, it is a clear winner over HAM-E, and comes close to being the most amenable pieces of equipment I've ever used.

The only problem DCTV might encounter is that its strength could be its main weakness on a first viewing, due to its reliance on a CVBS display which might look a bit fuzzy to users of sharp RGB monitors. On good monitors, even in composite mode, this is less restricting, but on one old 1084 I tried it on, the fuzziness

and flickering made my eyes water. Apart from this, and as long as the niche market it aims for actually exists (one step forward all you video enthusiasts and small-scale producers), DCTV should sell like hot potatoes in a Russian bread queue.

DCTV is a product of Digital Creation Inc Phone: 0101 916 344 4825 Distributor: Silica Systems (081-309 1111) Price: TBA (not more than £500 - could be as low as £399)





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Musical

At last, Bars & Pipes Professional has arrived. Paul Austin looks at a music package that understands the essentials of composing



plumbing



Looks community, but it country be simpler. Accessors to communicate with the outside world, flag settings to leap to the vital points, and group selection for speed





ost sequences are fairly similar, the only difference being the number and variety of extrafeatures. As a result, choosing one is relatively simple – a brief glance down the features list and all the examinal questions are answered.

After all, the vast majority of sequencers are little more

have a que very many property or sequences are totle manufact engineering platforms. In goes the raw material and out pops a multitrack masterpiece. This is just about perfect if you know exactly what you want from your finished piece, but if we're honest... does anyone?

If you're essentially a composer rather than an engineer,

poul be well aware that real music is 90 per cent inspiration and 10 per cent planning. It just happens – you hit a chord, play a rifl, and suddenly there's a song in the making. With most sequencers this "suck it and see..."

approach isn't easy, but with Bars & Pipes Pro it couldn't be simpler. If you're a songwriter rather than a producer theresimply isn't another sequencer that comes anywhere near. It is stunning, and a pleasure to work with to boot.

The program's primary strength has to be its openended and flexible approach. If you want to try something new it actively encourages you to have a bush, and if it doesn't work out everything can go back to where it was without any risk of damaging the original data.

As you may have noticed from the screenshots, the phrase Bars and Pipes doesn't simply refer to measures and instruments. In fact, a pipeline is the soul of the sequencer, through which all the Midi information passes.

On the main track screen the pipelines start on the left, flow through the sequencer and emerge on the right. Once



ensical decisions are made simple thanks to the friendly song construction window and the useful addition of

there, they enter a final section of pipe, prior to leaving the package and heading for the synths or modules of your choice. The clever bit is what can be added to the pipeline to after the raw Midl data flowing through it. This is where the ToolBox makes its mark.

As the name suggests, the ToolBox is a collection of gadgets that do all manner of wondrous things to Midi information. The variety is impressive and increasing by the day as more tools are added in the form of expansion modules. These modules contain numerous tool aimed at a specific areas such as multimedia, studio work or simply to enhance creativity.

Using a tool is simple – just select it from the box with the trusty rodent and drop it into the pipeline on either side of the sequencer.

If tools are placed in the pipe on the left of the sequencer, the actual Midi information within RAM is altered to reflect the chosen effect. However, if a tool is

Editing options – what's on offer

stions, and here again Bars & Pipes Pro isn't found wanting.

Doale fedding on any septence formy on the cell window which will digitally acid as a with stradest manical most mell and most thind for the most the cell, not the military pour of brunts, a plying indicator or cere as a revert list. A special pluk for the firms is the option to price in nutation brunt, complete, with lying and choice disciplination. A special pluk for the firms as any support and the susual any of call and put combinations, but all only in the firms as any support and the susual any of call and put combinations, but device only editing plants in which is some a produce of the susual and put the combinations to all done the important of the susual any of the cell plants are supported by the cell plants and the cell plants are supported to the cell plants are supported to the cell plants are supported to the firms and cell plants are supported to the cell plants

A few more tools than come with the package as standard be even with the default collection, wandrous sounds await

placed to the right side only, the data leaving the program

and bound for the instruments is altered.

You can experiment as much as you like. If a particular
effect sounds dreadful you can remove it at any stage, with-

out permanent damage.

Another huge bonus of the ToolBox format is its flexibility. For example, if you were to place an Echo or Delay tool onto several tracks, you effectively get a separate signal pro-

cessor for each.

This is because a complete copy of the tool is given to each track. Once in place, a simple double click and the tool reveals its very own requester. As a result, each track

can be fine tuned to suit your particular taste.
It's even possible to build macro tools from individuals,
so if you even particularly front of a harmonised effect with
a touch of modulation and a little delay, you could combine
all three into a single tool which would then take its place
alongside the others as a permanent resident.

Flexible tools

Tools aren't limited to single tracks – they can be employed on entire songs or just selected sections. They allow complex re-channelising of tracks on both the incoming and outgoing pipelines. It's even possible to apply tools to indi-

outgoing piperines. It's even possible to apply occurs of the vidual notes. Amazing...

There are a reasonable selection of tools bundled with the software, but I doubt it would be long before anyone

could resist the temptation of the additional modules. The number of tools on a track is limitles, as indeed is the number of track themselves — the only restriction is the amount of available memory. Two maps these is about right — synthing less and you could be tracingliny. Although the program will work with one mapships, it won't thank you for it. Ban & Pipes Po is big., and work reen come close [Institution of the country of the property of the p

to explaining many of its features—there simply isn't enough space. Usually such a statement means weeks of misery with a manual the size of a phone book, but that's not the case with Bars & Pipes Pro. In fact it's guite possible to dive straight in

and git results.

The entire design, layout and approach of the program is friendly and instinctive. For example, to mute a track you click on a tap until the flow stops. To overdub, click again and two pipes flow from the sequencer. Once more and a single pipe appears, allowing

only pre-recorded data to emerge.

This simple and logical approach filters right through the package. Consequently the excellent manual becomes more of a handly reference than a con-

stant companion.

Tracks can be recorded individually or as groups – up to eight groups can be assigned in any song. Selection is simple and from then on all of the component tracks as one. Tracks can be easily merged or re-recorded and individual parts can be marked and edited with the aid of

12 flag icons which at along the top of the Track screen. Up to four auto-locate points can be defined throughout the piece. Automatic punch-in and out loom drop the sequencer into record mode over a pre-selected section. Loop icon allow sight attempts at a specified section, after which you can choose between any of the eight to use in your creation. Eaft markers allow you to define sections freehand or via their beat or measure. Even a stop icon is available to the sequencer work Tunn.

de on forewer if left unstitended.
Like all modern sequencers, Bars & Pipes Pro has adopted the familiar tape deck format to control recording and playback. The usual fast forward and rewind functions await alonguide play and record, which can function from the start of the track or from the position lest stonged at.

Along with the old standards are buttons to activate the various flag options, plus a useful option to play and record at 3/4 and 1/2 speed – very handy if you're struggling with a tricky bit. It's even possible to assign transport controls to hot keys on your master keyboard.

Tempo – and time keeping in general – are very well catered for, with four definable tempo speeds waiting within the tempo palette, plus a separate tempo map which allows you to add time changes graphically.

All of the above, plus a dual SMPTE and BPM display – in fact a full complement of SMPTE options – are available with the usual

The standard track and transport combination, where most of the hard work happens. You can have things as clean or cluttered as you like...

Power players

ementh the friendly exterior beats the heart of a very serious sequencity, with , ange of system-exclusive commands and SAPITE policy. As mentioned earlier by also a range of dedicated modules for multimedia and vicke applications, to drew the DTV point home, Blue Ribbon Soundworks are presently developing thems which vill operate with CVPS VIZ multimedia card. The combination on

To diske the DTV point home, Blux Ribbon Soundworks are presently developing distons which will operate with GVP's V-24 multimedia card. The combination of s. Kr. Pipes Pro, SMPTE and the IV-24's PP (Picture In Picture) could mean that, is. Kr. Pipes Pro may well dominate DTV and musical combinations on the

rich could make the pickup a studio standard within the direct to dok market. Even if the package intri adopted by the big Jooy, your creations can only make the standard by the pickup of the pi

other power options include complete Alleux support plus Big 5ys, which alleus transmitting and receiving of system-excluder information. This is also for finding and saving paths back to your supervision between the control of the complete of the complete plus fine separate Midl ports, or the very serious, there's also an option to use up to fine separate Midl ports, or the very serious, there's also an option to use up to fine separate Midl ports, and a total also Midl chamils to choose from Oblicatory you'd have to meet in perpenying testil explained port but that's a small price to pay for the almost discovered city. The control of the control of the serious and the control of the control o

array of timecodes and with both internal and external configurations.

When you've created a classic, added the effects and

edited out the odd mishap, the final job is the misc. As you can see from the screenshots, Bars & Pipes Pro comes complete with its very own onscreen mixing desk. How

thoughtful...
Just like its infinitely more expensive hardware relations, it sets both the volume and pan (stereo position) of the sound. The limities number of faders are controlled by the trusty rodent, and as in the track screen groups of tracks,

can be combined and adjusted as a single unit. Individual fades or groups can be faded up and down on plusback. If you're not sure about a particular mic, you can save it to the clipboard and experiment with another. When you're happy, just sit back and watch the faders automatically mix your masterpiece while you guzzle down a well-amend coffee.

As you've probably guessed, you're listening to a man in love... this is the sequencer I've been waiting for. Cute, cuddly, powerful and perfectly formed, what more could a muso want? This is a program written by musicians for

muckians.

If you're a composer looking for a sequencer that will inspire rather than restrict, there's quite simply nothing that comes even remotely close to Bars & Pipes Pro. If you're serious about, your music and are willing to pay serious money to enhance It, look no further than the best creative package in the business.

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Can you protect your garden from bugs in Morgan Henry's shoot-'em-up?

ugblaster is a game in which you are given control of a small, mobile insect-aliler and charged with the task of keeping your garden free of infestation. The bugs are out to ruin your prize roses and only by furious defence will you avert the shame of having your neighbours peer over the bask fence with a smughly supprice expression on their faces.

The game is quite difficult to matter, as your remote bugblatter travels a locklower than most of the baddiss, inaddition, its initial firepower is feeble enough to make killing beedles a purticular pain in the nether regions. Those T-80s of the insect world can take four or five shots from your pashnoter without harm's so before enturing out of doors, its best to tool

up on the armaments screen. Killing kit

To start with, you have only £200 to spend on armaments, and some of the equipment on offer is too expensive. Your basic peashooter, however, will fire only ten shots before it pauses to reload, and you'll quickly appreciate how limiting this is.

The armaments on offer are, from top to bottom and left to right, faster shots, more peas, long range peas, basic peashooter, three-way peashooter, concentrated three-way peashooter, five-way peashooter, mushy peashooter, speed up, better steering, and energy. The exit button takes you

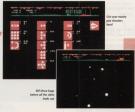
ge peas, to the game. ree-way If you take my advice, you'll invest in

not the loonies who insist on driving a car designed in the thirties with

on exhaust loud enough to wake the dead at thirty paces. Bugblaster's biiles are of a less annoying type, as they travel much slower than ladybin and mostly in a straight line

When a beetle comes omcreen, run off to a reasonable distance, the turn and face it, hooting as tast as you can straight at its chops. Si or sever shots should bug the blighter. If you're too slow, and the beetle reaches shell win run and round, bitting you once on each pass until you put but of your misery. At times like this, a three- or five-way peathoater i imulatable, as you can hit the beetle veveral times in one orbit.

Garden guardian



a three-way peashooter at first. It should be just inside your price beachet and should leave enough change to take on an extra ten peas or faster shots. With this armament, the first level – with its single bug – is a doddle. As you progress, however, so will have to earn enough bug money to buy ever more expensive weaponry until you are to insects what Amold Scharzenegger is to scriotwitten.

The bugs

So what of your fearsome foes? The withering worm, the battle-hardened beetle, and the lascivious ladybird? The bugs are the easiest to deal with, but they are tricky to catch if you have no speed or steering power-ups, and can become tougher if they are allowed to eat one of the mushrooms left behind by the ladybirds.

Ladybirds die with a single shot, but travel across the screen so fast that you're unlikely to hit them in time unless you're luckly enough to be fining in their direction as they appear. When the spores they leave behind begin to grow into mushrooms, be on the lookout for worms trying to feast on them. A bug fresh from the fungooid fleshy will belch rudely and become a lot haider to kill.

Slime!

The beaker at the top right of the screen contains slime which slowly leaks out into the garden, and acts as a time limit. When it has all leaked out, the bugs will turn and head straight for you like cockroaches at a tin of tuna, so have an eye on your speed of eradication.

At the very top of the screen there is a thin line representing your energy. Every time a bog hits you, this is diminished until a gory giggle heralds the end of your insecticulal career. You can stock up, on energy at the amaments screen, but this is expensive, and use precious bug money you'd probably rather spend on military hardware.

Given a sound defence and arms acquisition policy (shoot very last and with the best kit you can afford), Bugblatter provides a challenging and addictive game. But rush in with fittle thought for hardware and you won't last more than a level or two. Have fund sbruary 1992 Amiga Computin



but who can ettack from my base le

Dictator

Author: Steven Pugh The game Maggie tried to win but couldn't - can you succeed in becoming Dictator of all Britain?

Dictator as a game type should be familiar to marry computer users. The idea is to build your strength from lowly beginnings, wage war on your neighbours, humble them into the dust, and then tramp all over them with large airtread boots. The British, in the past no mean players at the real McCoy, don't call these games empire-builders for noth-

You kick off as the nominal lord of about half of Britain. Some of your counties are strong in industrial output, some are better for agriculture, but all of them must be defended. To do this, you have to raise an army

Armies, of course, take a few bob to raise and feed for a year (as the Chancellor recently discovered), and you have only enough cash initially to create a few units. Most counties already have a couple of army units stationed in them, but you'll need more.

Strategy

Dictator is all about strategy, and that means finely balancing all of the factors which affect the outcome. These are the value and income generated from a county, your popularity there, the relative industrial and agricultural strengths of each county, the tax rates you set, and military power

On the first turn, there's no point in attacking arrywhere as the computer will use this turn to build up military force in the counties from which attacks are to be launched. It's up to you to decide which counties are most important to you, then

Remember that income is generated as a tax, so there is little point in upping the tax rates in poorer counties. Use the handy maps on the main game screen to find out where your strengths lie before

There are county-by-county maps of

monetary value, income generated, popularity, and military units, so there's enough information on hand to make general decisions before clicking on a particular county and getting down to the nitty gritty.

Once you do, you'll find each county can be developed in several ways. At the top of the screen there is an information line giving the county's name and its owner, and below that is Dictator's equivalent of The Big Red Button. Click on the asterisk beside the WAR button and click on a neighbouring county to instigate

Tax rate

hostilities.

Before you do this, of course, you'll have thoroughly analysed the data on offer in the lower two-thirds of the screen. No? And you attacked anyway? Ah well, I don't suppose anyone will miss Essex.

You can set the tax rate for industry and agriculture separately, but note how the income figures change. If you decide you want a certain amount of income from a county, and it has a low level of agriculture, don't inflict high taxes where there's little chance of a high return you'll only annoy the natives. Instead, it would be better to increase the state burden on industry. They deserve it anyway for making such a mess of our trade

All values are altered by dicking on the +/- boxes beside each of the county's attributes. Tax rates start at ten per cent and military units, where there are any, will usually number only two. You'll need at least four or five units to ensure the defence of a key county, but as each unit costs £5,000 to raise, this can be an

expensive exercise. Dictator calls for a lot of good judgement on the player's part, and the computer is a very difficult opponent to beat. Whether played against a friend or the computer, Dictator is excellent entertain-

ment.

Picturesque

Spritely performer

Shareware Cturesque is a shareware pr am, so if you like it and intend i i it, please send a ES donari

Disk functions

Brush bonanza

lace. This is because AMOS itself do



Flexible zoom

When you click on zoom, you are given a three-way split screen with the main magnified image in the middle and two smaller pictures on the right-hand side. The top one is a half-zoom representation of your picture, and the bottom one is a zoomed-out image.

Using these you can see with ease any changes and how they affect the look of the whole picture. The buttons on the zoom control panel will scroll the magnified area in four directions, increase or decrease the magnification, or set sprite hot spots. As yet,

the magnify option supports only freehand dotted drawing, but shareware registered users can hope to see this enhanced before

You might find the zoom function a little slow when scrolling the area around, but the speed of operation is reasonable considering the program was written in AMOS, and just as good as many a commercial package I can think of.





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The Directory Manager

Author: Chris Pettet TDM is a directory utility along the same lines as SID and Disk Master. It has fewer features than either of these programs, but as a consequence it is smaller and easier to use. This makes it a prime candidate for squeezing onto your Workbench system disk, and should present beginners with few problems.

Devious devices

On loading, the program shows a fairly standard directory manager screen, with two large windows and a selection of gadgets to click. The first thing you'll notice is how neat and presentable the program is, with its 3D look, sensible use of colour, and no-mess gadget strip.

The central gadget strip is where all the action takes place, but nothing can be done here until some sort of directory has been loaded. To do this, click on one of the windows to activate it then on the

Please make sure you list ALL Workbench

and other files necessary for the program to

progs which run from Workbench, but please If you ensure your program is as compati-

ble as possible with a wide range of Amigas, it

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Submission name.

device you'd like to examine from the list at the top of the strip. If you'd rather go straight to a particular directory, you can click in the strip above the window and type in the path as you would in

Once your list has appeared you select a file by clicking once on it. The file will be highlighted with a small green arrow to one side. Now that the file is selected, you can apply any of the operations available through the gadgets.

Copy, rename, move, and delete are the most common of all AmigaDOS commands used, but you can also add comments to a file, set its protection bits, make a new directory in the current directory, or print files. You must, of course, be using a disk with the correct print files in situ, and must be attempting to print an Ascii file.

All change If you don't like the set of devices we've

used on the gadget strip (SYS:, DFO:, DF1:, DF2:, and RAM:), you can add your Think you can do better?

vn. Click on the thin blank strip above the top gadget and you flip to the other five selectable devices.

These will all be set to SYS: at the moment, but they're easily changed.

Press the D key and a list of device gadgets will appear. You can now set these to any device or logical device set up with an assign statement. Click on OK to go back to the main program and press W to write these device preferences to the config file found in the CoverDisk's S: directory

For a fuller explanation of TDM's features, see Chris's documentation on the CoverDisk.



SwapCols

took decidedly odd when used on a VB2.0 machine. You could go to the

GREP

Primarily for programmers, the Global Regular Expression Search and Print utility (GREP - phewl), is designed to make life a bit easier when you've generated a huge source code file and you need to find a particular expression or variable name Using it, the programmer can select a set

of text files, specify a search expression complete with CREP's own flexible wild cards, and the program will produce a file containing all instances of the expression it managed to find, complete with the lines in which they occurred. This not only helps in tracking down rogue sections of code, it also enables the coder to see an expression

in the context it appears in the listing



What a year!

1991 has seen the Amiga Completing Controlls up to an attempt to strength. On the Boulean Amiga I/O and shareouse programs are more more and programs of the Boulean Amiga I/O and shareouse programs are more more and program which was been also been as the Boulean Amiga I/O and a strength of the Boulean Amiga I/O and a streng niga nite, and you'd like it Isunched in the best possible way, you kno

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th its fast graphics and low price, the Amiga ikes a wonderfully inexsive Computer Aided Design, or Draughting (CAD) platform. For quite a while, CAD was high on Commodore's priority list in its educational strategy That enthusiasm seems to have waned a little, but some superb systems were helped along by that policy.

Add an accelerator board and a deinterlaced display to your Amiga, and you have a system capable of competing with the very best at a fraction of the price. You don't believe me? The biggest exporter of CAD packages in the UK just happens to have its roots in the Amiga market. Some large companies have Amigas in their drawing offices, because for rapid redraws they cannot be beaten.

CAD packages. None of them are toys, yet they run on what most people think is a games computer. It just goes to show that most people are wrong...

The great contenders

Four CAD systems are reviewed here. ranging from under £100 to over £750. All of them are capable of producing good, accurate drawings on dot matrix printers or pen plotters.

Starting from the high end, DynaCADD offers complex 2D and 3D facilities presented from a graphical shell. DynaCADD is well established in the PC and Atari markets, but we will see how it fares against Amiga-developed programs. Coming down a notch in price we

have X-CAD 3000, a new release from

Of mice and menus

Mouse

All systems use the mouse in some form or another - DynaCADD and Plans use the convention used by AutoCAD, where the right mouse button finishes or cancels a command. The mouse position with these systems is given by full-screen crosshairs. which are very useful for aligning entities by eye.

In contrast, the X-CAD programs use a normal mouse pointer in the shape of a cross. This makes manual alignment difficult, especially on a hires screen, as the mouse pointer sprite is always displayed in low resolution.

thing of the past. For packages coming from the same publisher, it's strange that X-CAD 2000 and X-CAD 3000 use different menu systems in their 2D editors. 3000 uses a large horizontal text menu, containing every possible command root. Selecting a menu item brings up a smaller menu of subsidiary options and so on, until the command

is complete X-CAD 2000 has a series of menu "trees" which show all available options in clear type, and other options ghosted. This is an extremely flexible system, especially when combined with user defined vertical menus, which allow a small degree of customisation in the package. X-CAD 3000 can mimic 2000's menus through user defined dynamic menu trees - producing these trees is quite complex, however.

Since the same program is used as the basis of the X-CAD 3D editor, the menu system is a straightforward vertical menu. My only criticism is that it can be rather slow to respond to commands - apart from that, its use is selfevident

All X-CAD modules use a system called IDENTS (Interactive Digitise and Entity Selection) for entity selection. It combines absolute co-ordinates, relative co-ordinates, object snapping and object masking in one very powerful menu, accessible by all commands.

Plans has few of these refinements. It uses standard Intuition menus with kevboard short cuts and function key modifiers. Numeric input is placed in a large requester which shows all the current settings at once, and allows any or all of them to be changed. The system seems very strange at first, but with practice becomes quick and flexible.

Menus

There is no standardisation in menu handling, either. DynaCADD uses "icon pads" which change according to the command chosen. For example, to insert text one would activate the Insert icon in the main pad, then activate the Text icon in a subsidiary pad, and then choose one of the text entry modes in a third pad.

There are 60 of these icons arranged in a vertical strip one quarter the width of the screen. Consequently, each icon is very small. requiring extremely good eyesight to tell them apart or even to work out what they represent at all.

DynaCADD does have one great advantage over any of the other packages - a built-in scientific calculator. All of the other systems require you to have a calculator handy for those difficult sums. Calculator output is directed straight into the current command, so mistyped numbers are a

So here are four of the top Amiga Quick on the

Computer-Aided Design is an area where the Amiga outshines other machines. In the first of a two-part feature, Stewart C Russell begins his round-up of some powerful software



色のい旦

icons, and the preeked text

Applied Vector Technology Ltd. X-CAD has been around in various guises for many years, but this is the only version to combine 2D editing with 3D surfacing features.

Originally designed to fit the educational/hobbyist market, X-CAD 2000 is probably the cheapest 3D CAD system available anywhere. Although it doesn't have some of its stablemate's more advanced features, it still offers very solid features at a very attractive price.

Both X-CAD packages use an external 3D editor, with the majority of the work being carried out in 2D and later joined together as 3D entities. This system keeps the size and speed of the 2D editor reasonable, but causes delays when adding that extra dimension.

You may still see the older X-CAD products (X-CAD Designer, Professional and 2D) floating around. They're worthy, but have been fully replaced by the new packages. X-CAD 2000 is basically Designer plus some 3D and a little extra. X-CAD 3000 is essentially X-CAD Professional plus all of the X-CAD 3D system.

Raw speed

Lowest in cost, but certainly not in ideas, comes Plans. This particular system started off as shareware more than three years ago, but has been revised and expanded into a very competent commercial 2D draughting system. Never before reviewed in a news-stand magazine, Plans has some real surprises in store.

The main reason for the existence of CAD is time saving. Editing traditionally produced drawings is a slow and difficult process, but electronic paper doesn't leave any eraser marks. Ideally, we would like I screen redraw times to be as low as possible, so that the machine does not intrude upon the creative design process.

It would also be nice if the package could do its design calculations as quickly as possible, but this depends more on the computer power, rather than on the cleverness of the CAD author. Basically, you can't change that unless you buy a quicker

Since Plans does not support 3D, a 2D speed test was used. A fairly simple drawing was imported into each package (using

DXF with DynaCADD and the X-CAD, HPGL with Plans) and the redraw time

Both the X-CADs turned in the rather impressive redraw time of 3.5 seconds. Next up was Plans at a more pedestrian 6 seconds, and last was DynaCADD at 6.3. All these speeds were taken from a rather wheezy A500 with a plain vanilla processor.

Three-dimensional work is slow, especially where surface calculations are involved. With large models on a 68000-based system, the redraw time can be minutes. My advice would be to stick to simple 3D line entities if you have anything less than an A3000. X-CAD 2000 specifically misses out on 3D surfaces to keep its complexity (and price) down while keeping its speed up.

The conclusion? More money spent doesn't necessarily quarantee more speed, but a fast program will return

reads, with three orthogonal projections and one undated OFF . . MINZO ×2 1 000 000 SIN COB THN In SIN COS TAN . M1 H2 H3 M4 R1 R2 R3 R4 ← 1/x -/- π CHL CLR MCL ? DynaCADD's scientific colculato it such a good idea that every CAD package should have one

> much better value in the long term time is money for everyone.

Text and This is the only entity creation part of

the draughting process that will be dealt with in any great detail, for all the systems reviewed have an adequate toolbox of lines, arcs, curves, hatches and whatever else is required to make

up a drawing. Text, however, is much more spe cialised. It used to be that CAD people were happy with the default font built in to the plotter, but now more refined fonts such as Times-Roman and Triumvirate are the norm.

DynaCADD has stunning text support. Not merely does it have some beautiful fonts licensed from Compugraphic, but it has a minimal text editor built in. Add to that a good number of text sizing and placing modes, and you have something very, very special.

Ditek have even addressed the fact that complex fonts take a while to draw, so are crossed out (or greeked) at small size on screen. In the unlikely occurrence that you get bored with the supplied fonts, a rather neat external vector font editor is supplied.

Dimensions are particularly cute in DynaCADD. All the options are presented in a large graphical requester, which shows small examples of each dimension type. You pick the one you want, add any tolerances, and stick it on to the page. Neat. X-CAD 3000 supports multiple fonts,

although the range is not nearly as nice as DynaCADD's. Fonts can be edited within the program by drawing out a matrix of characters on a page and saving that out as a complete font.

Text handling in X-CAD 3000 is more than adequate for most applications. A particularly neat feature allows numeric labels to be incremented as they are inserted onto a part - perfect for pinout labelling. X-CAD 3000's dimensioning is every

bit as capable as DynaCADD's, but all

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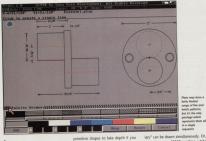
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range of line and but it's the only package which represents them all

the parameters have to be chosen from text menus. While it won't take long to learn these menus, it's nowhere near as

intuitive. Text management in the lower budget programs is less sophisticated. X-CAD 2000 can only use one very plain font, but has fairly powerful text placement and sizing commands. Plans can make use of user-defined fonts, but the text placement commands are limited

to simple size, justification, slant and rotation manipulations. Neither X-CAD 2000 or Plans can handle tolerances, but the former has all the main dimensioning commands found in 3000. Plans has very rudimentary linear and angular dimensioning, but these are really all that are required in a 2D package.

My review copy of Plans does not automatically apply dimension lines when measuring - the dimension line has to be placed manually, and the leader lines added later. This has been fixed in v2.1, so you will get neat dimensions if you buy the package now.

3D support

We in the UK are supposed to be metric (FX: muffled sniggering from the engineering industry). Plans hails from the United States, where they use English units, which really means Imperial units Confused?

The upshot of this is that metric units are of secondary importance in Plans. If you want to use them, you must supply a negative value for the dimension precision. Just one of these things we have to live with, I suppose.

Plans doesn't support 3D at all, although you could use its isometric were really determined. DynaCADD, on the other hand, has

3D support built-in to the main editor, which supports multiple views on one page. With judicious use of this system, the traditional "three views plus auxil-

if running on a 68000 machine, while you wait. This kind of drafting isn't light on CPU time.

Every DynaCADD 2D entity can be drawn in 3D, and extruded or swept round a path to create surfaces. The only limitations on what can be created are storage, processor time and your patience.

X-CAD 3000 is only slightly more limited than DynaCADD. Lines, arcs and points are the only entities common to the 2D and 3D editors, while surfaces can be planar, curved or solids of revolution This covers just about everything

that can be manufactured, so the limitations are not great. Two-dimensional features created

in the main editor can be added on any construction plane, then the fea-

tures worked on as desired. The resultant surfaces can be rendered in a fairly crude manner to give

some idea of the true appearance. Sculpt it ain't, but it does the job adequately and quickly. X-CAD 2000 has simplified 3D sup-

port. The number of construction planes is limited and surfaces are also not supported at all. At the price, any 3D support is an excellent deal indeed.

• In part two next month, Stewart C Russell looks at import and export features, user support and much more, concluding with the definitive Amiga CAD package verdict and buyers' quide.

A question of standards

Intuition's Preferences printer routines are much maligned. They work - if a little slowly - with just about any printer to a reasonable degree of accuracy.

Plans is the only program to use Preferences for its dotmatrix output, and the results are as good as you'll get out of any CAD system. The tricky bit is actually dealing with the Preferences program itself - the printer entries are not well documented, and worse still, are biased towards US paper

Some Preferences drivers - notably the HP Deskjet and Laserjet - are not capable of outputting to a full A4 page, so you may have to use a larger border with these printers. X-CAD 2000 uses the "any printer you want as long as it's

Epson compatible" approach. Although it is limited to 72 dpi on a 9-pin Epson and 180 dpi on a 24-pin, the results look good because the dots are square rather than oblong.

X-CAD 3000 is a little more flexible, but only just. In order to create a dot matrix printout, one

must first create a raster plot file at the correct size and resolution. This file can be filtered through a driver to get hard copy on the printer. This would be a great system if

there were more drivers. Only the Epson dot matrix and HP Laserjet monochrome printers are supported, plus the (expensive) Xerox 4020 colour inkjet and the (very expensive) Mitsubishi G500 colour thermal transfer printer.

The first two drivers cover at least 95 per cent of the world's printers, but it's the five per cent left out that make all the noises about incompatibility. DynaCADD uses custom drivers for its dot matrix drivers. Only a few are supplied with the package, but others are available from the supplier. As shipped, you get Star 9-pin, Epson 24-pin. HP Laserjet (which also works with the Deskjet) and Roland drivers

Curiously enough, DynaCADD can also output IFF pictures at up to 300 dots per inch via one of these drivers. It's also the only program to support background plotting directly, and also output to a PostScript device

The PostScript output was particularly well formed, but then again, most output from a really good laser printer looks good. DynaCADD also claims to output to Encapsulated PostScript for DTP use - this it does, but it fouls up the actual size of the drawing in the clip.

The net result is usually a tiny little drawing in a great big empty box - a shame, really, because this would be seriously useful if it worked.



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SOFTWARE MANAGEMENT GROUP

150c Main Street, Bingley BD16 2HR Tel: (0274) 562999 erhaps the biggest news in ray tracing has to be the release of Real 3D v1.4. With competitors like Imagine, something special was needed to stamp Real's authority on the market.

As a result v1.4 was born, with a huge array of very impressive additions. At the forefront of its expanded repertoire is the stunning selection of free form editing

The new tools appear on the pull-downs and within the ever-expanding selection of onscreen icons. Using them makes the creation of irregular objects a dream. But the fun doesn't stop there...

Once created, these new organic shapes can be easily edited thanks to another long-awaited edition point editing. Now Real can hold its own with Imagine in the only area in which it was previously outgunned.

Within the expanded modelling functions are a selection of up to 24 different ways of bending and twisting free form objects. Perfect smooth curves, hollow spirals, instant mountain ranges extruded from flat surfaces – in fact just about anything a twisted mind can imagine.

As you'd expect, there are two versions of the package. For the economy minded there's the standard version, which doesn't include the more sophisticated features such as the macro functions, Boolean operations and 24-bit output.

The professional package, however, boasts the full complement of features and contains a turbo optimised version that supports power processors such as 68020s, 68030s and 68040s, with or without maths co-processions of the complement of the compl

A superb example of 24-bit rendering

sors. All versions require at least 1Mb of memory, but for professional users 3Mb are recommended – which furnily enough is exactly the same amount of space as the beast will occupy on your hard disk.

the beast will occupy on your hard disk.

Apart from the structural differences between the two versions, there's the addition of extra ready-made materials, textures, objects and fonts, all packed onto

the four disks of the Pro version. As the standard package boasts only two disks, the support material has been heavily slashed.

If you're interested in spending your Christmas cash, the professional version will set you back £305, including VAT. For the beginners' version you'll only have to cough up a piddling £110. Cheap at half the price. For more information get in touch with Alternative Image. £10 533 440041; &x 9533 440656.

Imagic and the IV-24

As you've probably noticed from reviews of GVP's latest brainchild, the IV-24 graphics card – which will practically walk the dog, do the dishes and collect the kids – has one major failing, which is the lack of a decent paint package.

Micro paint, the package bundled with the IV-24, is a little said to say the least, and as a result CZ Systems have stepped into the breach and are offering a version of their very own Imagic paint program, which presently resides solely on their own VD2001 24-bit graphics care.

The IV-24 version will follow the same format as it does within VD2001, with two complementary modules. The first is simed at those interested in the basics of 24-bit art, and the second for the professional user. Of course, G2 will be happy to supply you with both, no doubt complete with a slight discount.

ProPage bugs sorted out

It seems only a short while ago that Gold Disk released ProPage v2.0, which was immediately suffocated by the sheer weight of reviewers desperate to outdo each other in their wholesome praise of the package. So why the new version?

The secret is that ProPage v2.1 hasn't really been upgraded at all. What the legions of wildly enthusiastic reviewers forgot to tell you was that ProPage v2.0 suffered from a few bugs, all of which have now been ironed

The new version has a much smoother feel to it, and you no longer feel the need to save a document every two minutes in case there's a glitch or a crash, in addition, the print to dot matrix option is much improved. There is a landscape printing option, and a long-needed page offset control which, in combination, complete the printing options for those with dot matrix printings.

Apart from these changes, there's little to report, other than that possibly the best of the Amiga's DTP packages is now as reliable in operation as it deserves to be. Full marks to Gold Disk for taking a responsible attitude towards their product.

attitude towards their product.

Gold Disk can be contacted on 0101 213 320 sono



The price of the new package isn't yet decided but it's a fair bet that both packages will retail at around £350 apiece. A little expensive, but if you're serious about employing the IV-24 as an artistic platform rather than just a multimedia display board, it's a price

you'll have to pay.
You can contact G2 for further details on 0252
737151.

ProWrite 3.2

Users of New Horizons' wordprocessor have long suffered in silence while the likes of Protext, Excellence and the new upstart Wordworth stole the glory and the accolades of reviewers this side of the pond. With the release of version 3.2, this could change some-

The upgrade follows similar lines to that of Wordworth 1.1 (see last month's Updates) in that PostScript is now directly supported from within the program. However, New Horizons have obviously taken a long look at ProWife, and have set to pids some of the omissions from which ProWrite 3.0 suffered.

PostScript, being the language spoken by all self-

|- Band Fged

MIGA

respecting laser printers, has become the de facto standard for everprocessors to aim for. It would have made its appearance in Amiga applications long ago were it not for the machine's market placing—firmly below the business filled where laser printers are most commonly found. Nowadays, the Amiga's image has improved and software houses are trampling each

other underfoot in the rush to embrace the standard. Unfortunately, New Horizon's implementation of PostScript is not as next as Wordworth's, though just as capable of producing the goods. There are only four PostScript fonts on offer, and page scaling is not present on the PostScript print options screen, though it can be found in the page setup screen. This has its advantages, in that if forces the user to

in advantages, if the rivers we went in the work of the hink about scaling before going to the print menu, but there really should be a horizontal and vertical scaling function on the PostScript options screen, and ProWrite still has no equivalent of Wordworth's rotation facility. In all, though, ProWrite v3.25 PostScript printing is a major improvement on previous ver-

A second printing improvement taken on board by x32, and already found on Wordworth, is the High quality print option for owners of dot matrix printers. When this is enabled, ProVivite will use a font twice the size of that chosen by time, then scale it down for printing. The result is text of a higher dot resolution and thus fewer jeagles. The option works as

well as Wordworth's UltraPrint option (using the same technique), and for users with a denuded fonts directory. New Horizons are offering the ProFonts1 package, which has a variety of fonts and font sizes to make high quality dot matrix printing a bit easier.

nign cleanly occ manny primary acu executed. A nice touch is ProWrite's automatic scaling of Workbench 2.04's Compugraphic fonts. If these are used in a document which is then printed to a dot matrix using the High option, ProWrite will use a double size font and scale it automatically, relieving the user of the need to check his or her fonts directory.

Together with its direct PostScript support, this places ProWhite in direct competition with Wordworth for the crown of the Amiga wyshwyg wordprocessors. However, I can't help feeling that it will lose the battle, as the program's other features haven't been upgraded with v3.2.

The overall look has been cleaned up, and now the program has a decidedly Workbernch v2.0 feel to it, but the spell checker hasn't been improved and is still a bit slow for my liking, though Wordworth itself is quite a bit slower than Protest in this area. In terms of lying speed, there is little to choose between them.

Wordworth y 1/5 support for built-in printer forts;

Wordworth v1.1's support for built-in printer fronts and its more comprehensive use of PostScript give it a distinct edge in the user friendliness department. As it supports the direct loading of ProWrite documents (among others) and as Digita are offering a £40 price cut on trade-ins for your old wordprocessor, it still seems a more attractive buy.

For details about ProWrite (or any other New Horizons title) phone Silica on 081-309 1111.

Image information

And of the 24-bit images used in this month's

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Coo-er! Postscript direct from the program!
New traffs what I call program!

A W Pose 1

Trownish — the king of the Analgo processors

TVpaint and G2 get together

As you may know, the Amiga Centre Scotland has long been the leading light in 24-bit applications. This is primarily due to their Harlequin board, which has been, and still is, the benchmark against which all newcomers are judged.

The resolution and flexibility of the board certainly make it special, but this sin't the only thing that put the Harlequin at the forefront of Amiga art. After all, any hardware is only as good as the software it runs, and fortunately Typaint is very good indeed.

Into I now, the package has ran exclusively on the ACS board. Great

news for the Harfequin, but perhaps not so hot for the opposition. Fortunately, the Harfequin monopoly has finally been broken. As a result the best package in the business is now on offer to users of CGS VD2001. At present, only v4 of the package is available, even though the Harfequin is already employing v5. If you're after regular updates, it could be worth enoughtn about continued support for the board.

However, it's difficult to imagine much scope for improvement, as the present version has all the features of the original TVpaint plus brush mapping, which allows you to wrap any brush image around any shape. The only noticeable omission is the lack of support for the VD2001's farme guidabing abilities. Unlike C25 your limagic paint package, Wheinit

can't grab direct from a live video source.

As a result, it does limit the package as a first choice, as you need to invest in module one of the Imagic system to employ the board's impressive grabbing skills.

Of course if you already have the ability to grab, an upgrade to Viyaint will give you a state-of-the-art videographic workstation that many a graphic artist or production company yupple would eat his or her portable phone for... For further details contact the Amiga Centre Scotland on 031-SS7 4242.





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Ionathan Maddock checks out what's cool and hip in the world of external floppy disk drives

Golden Image 3A-1D

The first thing you notice about the 3A-1D is its unique two-digit LED track display which indicates the position of the maganite read/write head in the floopy disk drive. The reason for the track display is that, in theory, you can

To the beginner these digits don't mean a thing - they're just pretty nice to look at. But to someone who's got a bit of skill and experience and is always on the lookout for viruses, it's quite a handy gadget - but you should protect your disks - this will guarantee that you won't be troubled by the

Normally size isn't that important, but in the case of external floppy disk drives it is a very important factor indeed. In fact, the smaller the better as far as I'm concerned, because with all the other peripherals on my desk there

Compared to other drives, the Golden Image 3A-1D is absolutely huge very long and wide. The only reason I can find for this is that it incorporates

Included in the package is a large manual. This might seem strange at first - why does an external floppy needs so many instructions? - but it becomes blindingly obvious when you flick through it and find that it's in

three different languages. So from a large manual you only get 14-odd pages of technical information. Who wants to read a book about external drives

it detects its presence fairly quickly. because it has been silenced by some anti-click circuitry. It also has a stan-

It's nice apart from the huge size. It Amiga owners - you can impress all

To be honest, the track display makes it more interesting than most drives on the market, but is it just a Supplier: Eyesham Micros Tel: 0386 7655500

Feat	ures				
Look	15				
Valu	e				

me tring most people hate about ro-Amiga is the amount of disk swapping that has to be done. This is most infuriating, especially when you are playing a game and you have to swap disks several times just to get to the next level.

you had an external drive, but there are question to be asked, like which one do I buy? Which is the best? And more importantly, which one gives rea value for money?

backup utilities (ahem) and anti-cicks which stop the drive clicking when there isn't a disk in it. Are these advantages or disadvantages? Are the driver well designed? If you accidentally spill your drink and it goes all over it, will it be safe? Also, be wary of the amount of power that some of these drives need. It's not too bad for anyone who owns anything but the ASOO, but if you do own an ASOO, then you must pick your external floppy

When using a program that takes a lot of memory, always remember to take out your external floppy because if you don't, even on a 1Mb ASO0, your Amiga will crash. Most drives these days have an on/inff wirch at the back, so you don't have to unplug your external when using a memory-consuming program. Almost every external has a through port built into it. If you have more than

'daisy chain' your drives together

Drive Sommanas (3)

Zydec

This disk drive is made by Zydec, a company based in the US. Zydec normally produce good equipment that is well marketed and well packaged. How does their floppy measure up to their own standards?

The drive has a standard Citizen mechanism which more than copes with most situations. It has all the

The drive has a standard Clozen mechanism which more than copes with most situations. It has all the usual fittings, along with a through port and an on/off switch. It doesn't have an anti-click device fitted, but it doesn't click and is remarkably quiet, so that hardly mat-

The metal case is fairly standard and it's got some cooling vents in it, which in the case of external floopies is a big no-no if you spill that coffee then fit's bye-bye floopy. It does have a fine mesh over it to stop any bits getting in and ruining the

It is really easy to use – just take it out of the box, flick the switch to turn it on, plug it in and then boot up the computer. However, it suffers quite badly due to a lack of gimmicks like

It doesn't really look that interesting in its rectangular box, but it does get the job done. If you are looking for a nice ordinary drive with no gimmids then this might be useful to you. Overall, it's pretty average, and there are much better drives on the market.

Supplier: Evesham Micros Tel: 0386 7655500

Features
Looks
Value

Overall

Overall

Computing's features editor's desk. drives since I was in nappies. If you want two main features - the through port and the lovely little on/off switch.

This reliable drive will last for ever and ever. According to our features editor, his clicks noisily with the best of them. I have been reliably informed that Cumana now make the drive with a handy anti-click device built-in, making it a lot quieter. You could possibly call it an Amiga internal drive that's been ripped out of the machine and used as a external.

pared to other externals, but as my mother used to say, shop around. You can normally get one of these for around £60 to £65 - if you have a good look

around. Boring it may be, but although it do what you bought your extra drive for in the first place - be an extra drive - reliably and efficiently. The latest version is quiet (even though our old one isn't!) and is a fairly good buy. Average.

> Price: £74.00 Supplier: Ladbroke Computing

Featur	es				
Looks					
Value					
		Г	П	Г	



Power PC880B

This drive contains more gadgets than Batman's utility belt (well, perhaps not that many). The PC8808 has three modes, all of which can be selected with a handy little switch. In normal mode, it behaves like a perfectly nor-

This means that no data can be written to any floppies, so a virus cannot infect any disks at all. You still need to check for viruses, because the drive doesn't know what a virus is - it only stops a virus writing itself to one of your disks. A very good idea by Power that is well implemented.

The other main feature of the PC880B is the controversial disk backup hardware. This feature is called Blitz, and when used with the supplied software it will attempt to copy any disk and get past many forms of copy protection. It won't crack all protected disks, but it will backup many that can't

Now this is a very dodgy subject indeed. FAST (the Federation Against

that isn't your own work. Personally I

good, is quite cheap and comes with earned pennies on. An excellent buy.

Supplier: Power Con	
Tel: 0234 84331	58
Continued	

Value Overall

Roclite RF382C

Looking for an ultra-fast, ultra-thin, external floppy disk drive? Maybe you should look at the Roclite RF382C. This baby looks mean in every sense of the word. It's very thin indeed, in fact no thicker than a box of matches. For size you can't

The drive is made by Roctec, a new company who make floppies, hard disks, expansion cards and other such peripherals. A500 owners are in for a bonus because the Roclite doesn't take up much power at all:

If you are looking for a really fast drive, then this one is for you. It is almost are no nasty holes in the sleek, black casing, so any spillages won't ruin it.

The drive is available in either Amiga dard features such as the through port

very well indeed - it's quiet and fast. Overall, this is the sleekest drive of all those on test, with its black casing. A name for the future, I think.

> Price: £59.99 Supplier: Silica Tel: 081-309 1111

Feature	5				
				Г	Г
Looks					
					Г
Value					
Overall					

Power Dual Drive

sible size, and

although it's a bit on

can get the dodge

Now this is a bit special. The dual drive from Power gives pact case. It's quite heavy, but for a dual drive is very slim indeed. It has its own 5V DC power supply, so that the power is not drained from your Amiga.

operations can be carried out between the computer and either drive or from one drive to another. Both drives possess the unique Power anti-click feature so that they do not

click when empty. It will operate as a standard read/write 880k external floppy drive, but like its single sister, the Power PC880B, it has the anti-virus and Blitz options.

lust as a quick reminder, the anti-virus function prevents write access to the boot block on all drives (including the internal). Remember, this function only prevents viruses from placing themselves on the boot block - it doesn't stop importantly, always write-protect your disks. This drive also has Blitz - the dodgy backup/copy device. I don't really see

FAST. It also has the Price: £120.00 Supplier: SWca Tel: 081-309 1111 Overall it's great. I

Fea	tur	es				
Loc	ks					
					С	
Val	ue					
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Conclusion



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AIMICE/A 191=1 US:(

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Turbo Charge

Sold flushed from the praises law/ofted upon Last Ninja 3, System 3 are was trached from the peases rawarded upon Lust Perga 3, 398 all set to unleash Turbo Charge on the unsuspecting public. set to unleash runor charge on the unumpetand public.
In Turbo Charge you take on the role of the now familiar "cop with a sports car who finds that to restore justice and passes to the with a sports car who spas that to resore guine and people you know the world he must "drive very fast and shoot people". You know the world the mast invelvery task and smoot people. Tou know the folia he's always being told that he's "off the case", or that he's got

of more nature to crack it.

Apparently, it features a "unique driving control" that makes Turbo. Charge startingly different from every other driving game in the "24 more hours to crack it". wardy annumpy congress from every other anying game in the world is also asks that you Take care, take over, but be sure to take wome, is now one true you. Lake each take one, but do sure to take.
"em dead or alive." And, no, we don't know what triey're on about. Turbo Charge should be cutting up the traffic near you now. Price

RoboCop 3 breaks the mould

ned thread Benini, the applied The Machaine returns to one circums screene in the his fear within the control of the control



Agony

Once again, those many Liverpudian lovelles at Fryg-nosis have pushed the graphical capabilities of the Amiga a little bit further. The guilty game? Agony, In Agony (as you undoubtedly will be), you take the part of an owl remarkably like the one in the the part of an owl remarkably like the one in a Psygnosis logo. Said owl must then flap through it screen, three-level parallas scrolling, 3.5Mb of grap ics, 1.5Mb of sound and up to 144 colours onscrea at any time. No idea what all that means of couri

Featuring the usual Psygnosis frills and spills, Agony should be out late December/early January,



Humble pie corner

you may have nettered that some Germans god in the works laid morth, in more ways service. As well as burggering up the screenshoot for formula One Coard Pool, Baby So and June 1994, their poly over chance and to stake the families designed to get

the except waspit - Agen breed is not by Cerein at al. 25 by Town 17 Acet it Tom 13: head brette. Melph Brown, has droubly demanded emorclass costs Son for the personal control of the personal control o Date and proposed process of the control weekford, we will be control to the cont dip to, name under only be resumed as your is were tracked with our anyears. scapegoal. Now, somebody hold him still.

Wild West World

Die Hard 2 more rum meening. This time from slam seeing as the original Die Hard slam seeing as the original Die Hard never made it any further than the never made it any further with the lies, we'll have to make do with the istmas, and John McClane's wife restands, and John incomes with mogul was bank vunster broke within, it his gun, rolls around, gets mucky wears a lot. A sure-fire box office hit is Die Hard 2: Die Harder should be out as





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Gamer contemplates its navel after stuffing itself with turkey

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Biffa's plan for world domination continues, with HakPak papers

rowning under a sea of Midget Gems may be the ultimate childhood asy, but if it ever actually came true the shock could be

too much for some. dget Gems are those lous sweets that have been variously described as "like wine gums but harder", "brilliant", and "those things broke my tooth you know". They come in assorted colour and flavours, from liquori to strawberry, and are shap something like a cup cake turned upside down, and shrun

Now this begs an interesting question: how the hell do you know it is upside down? Is there some kind of microscopic message that reads "this way up" that we only become aware of on a subliminal level?

Or is it some kind of primitive instinct that has been handed down through the genes of gen-erations of dedicated Midget Gem eaters that makes us all blissfully aware of exactly which way und the conical confectionery should go? Or some kind of plot by some crooked political faction to subvert the nation's sweet

Imagine the effect if all of a sudden the people were told that their favourite sweets had been the wrong way up all along never will a milk carton be opened the same way, people will be forever juggling their bags of Monster Munch in an effort to suss out which end to But what has all this wibble

got to do with a game? Probably very little but the rous sin ity between the antagonists in this game and the afore-men

tioned Midget Gems is quite disturbing. It made me wonder. Why? Well you see it all started like this...

The Sorcerer's apprentice decided, in a very Mickey Mouse kind of way, that sweeping the floors and learning to cast "Ban-ish Earwax" and "Remove Navel Fluff" spells was no longer enough. Yes, the impatience of youth was beginning to become ssible to bear It all came to a head when the

Sorcerer had to go on some urgent errand (apparently Spells 'R' Us were having a bulk shift of bat's wings and the guy just couldn't afford to miss out) so he told the apprentice not to touch anything – especially not the big, interesting-looking case which has nothing of interest in it. No sir, not that one.

Curiosity suitably aroused, the operntice could hardly wait for the old codger – he was at Methusaleh's twenty first - to go so he could grab a

shufti at the spell book and get the case open. tes later, strain under the weight of the dust which the sorpaid cerer

someone to painstakingly apply to the day for that book to the copious

it was all-consuming, draw-ing in, seducing ne apprentice. Soon he found the spell he needed - "How to open a big, interesting-ing case which has nothing of est in it at all. No sir, not that

one". Uncanny.

He recited the spell: "He's 'ere, e's there, 'e's every flamin' where e's Brian McClair, 'e's Brian McClair", and soon there was a glowing ball hovering just in front of his nose. He gathered it in his shivering hands and flung the orb at the case. It disappeared into The case began jumping around

the table in that drawing-pin-upyour-behind manner that

schoolteachers the world over are familiar with. Smoke billowed from under the lid. Then it all stopped. The place went quiet. No-one made a sound. nce, real

Convinced he had failed in his first meanderings into own-up magic he went over to grown-up magic he went over to the case and stared at it, only to be flung back in surprise as the case's lid flew open and out came millions upon millions (well, quite a few) of Midget Gems. Sorry, Fuzzballs.
"Drat" he thought. Or some-thing. He had to think fast, he

had to cast a spell that would put them all back in the case -then no-one would be any the wiser. Obvious really. "Always look on the bright side of life



GANER February 1992

When the Sorcerer returned the apprentice/Fuzzball was qui-etly blubbing to himself in a corner. "Blub. I should have listened to me mother and joined the bank like she wanted. Blub.

The air was turned blue as the Sorcerer returned and made some swift mental calculations as to what exactly had gone on - he was clever like that.

was clever like that.

The punishment was simple.
Clear the 50 chambers of the castle of every single little furry thingy, then maybe the Sorcerer will see fit to return the apprentice to his human form, and let him keep his job

Cue fifty level platform game. The objective is simple. As a uzzball, you must negotiate the stricate one screen levels and ollect all the jewels - which are there for no reason that I can thom out, but they do help the ameplay. Oh, and shoot all the

Sounds easy, but there is a lot more to it. If you can do it then it perfectly acceptable to just take the jewels and forget the Fuzzballs, but in practice this is

There are four different kinds of Fuzzball - green, purple, black and red. Green are the easiest to get rid off, red the worst. The principle of destroying them is quite simple - using the little balls that you can spit you hit them enough times to turn them into mini versions of the next

This mini ball will bounce for four times giving you the chance to touch it and get rid of it completely. If you don't manage to uch it, then it transfers to the mext and more dangerous colour, green to purple, purple to black and so on. Each colour

Fuzzball has its own behaviour pattern. Green will just move back and forth in a confined space, purple will do the same until you jump onto the same platform when they will race towards you, black will race back and forth over several platforms, turning when you jump onto their route and red will do the same but an awful lot faster.

The Fuzzball you control must jump around, across, up and down the numerous platforms of the level. Often the route around the screen must be planned very carefully because it is impossible to get off certain platforms. Some to get off certain platforms. Some of them you won't need to go near, but once per level you will find one with a jewel on that must be left until last, and it won't always be particularly obdiwon't always be par

The later levels need a lot of thought before even moving as to exactly how they are going to be tackled. It will often be a little less than clear as to exactly what you are going to have do. But that is all part of the challenge. Graphically it can't be faulted—

it possesses that coin-op feel that Parasol Stars has, but goes one better. It gradually progresses through four distinct graphical styles, that provide a variety in the backgrounds to keep the

nterest up. With the added bonus of a high class animated not of amazing the above, it will beguite the player from the

The sound is a initially a bit as the intro tune sounds as h it would be more at home the ST, but in game it proves to the point where you n almost fail to notice that there are only about three differ-ent sound effects. A game like this needs a lot of unnecessary sounds to liven it up and make it more enjoyable, and to give it a chance of standing up against

other games in the genre. other games in the genre.
The playability is superb - the levels are all challenging and there are no easy levels to give you a rest. The main Fuzzball is extremely manoeuvrable and provides lots of fun. This, though, also presents a problem - for less

UDIO PLAYABILITY Difficulty means it lasts longer but may prove a turn-off for

666

experienced gamers the high dif-ficulty level right from the start will prove to be turn off, but for hardened joystick bashers it will be a gods

The biggest thing in its favour is its price – £20 for this kind of game is very keen marketing, but it does mean that it is a very strong game at a very good price.





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ware these days. It probably shake off the worrying stereotype that together. Then again, maybe they are all The chapette behind this is clearly no

exception, as the scenario for this "interesting" puzzle game shows. A blighter named Dr Devious - ex-politician, ex-taxman, ex-DPP - has come up with a plot the forefront of public life.

honed and focused in a garden shed, Dr Devious built a weapon. A weapon so powerful and so, well, devious really bending down to pull them back up he realised that he would soon be a very rich man.

The weapon was a feat of molecular physical fondling. Or something. It could turn any object into a cubist representation of itself (he fancied himself as a bit of an art buffl and then luggle it ment/public toilet completely useless. Dr Devious has the power to put them all



tion-beating shoot-em-up where you have it Dr Devious. Or do you?

of a surface at another angle and land

on that. Very strange. To move the

pieces. IJ can pull, lift and carry, throw,

or drop them into place. As the levels

get harder it gets more difficult to work

move to and how the hell you are going

back, but it will cost the world's governments big money. This is where JJ Maverick comes in, controlled by your good selves. Only he, the world's best special agent, can save the day. Only he has the talent, the nerve and the dramatic aftershave to do it. If you want to know what he looks

like, pick any guy from a Gillette advert, especially one of the yupple types, and This is a weird game. The first thing

you are presented with as you start is basically a collection of nondescript blocks that need to be moved into a transparent frame. When they are all in the right places, the screen updates to reveal what the object is - essentially an excuse to parade some truly fantastic artwork, and for you to pat yourself on the back. The controls are unusual to say the

least. After the tutorial style of the first seven or eight levels, JJ Maverick becomes fully mobile. This involves the rather disorientating concept of every vertical or horizontal flat surface having its own gravity, so JJ can jump out from a wall, then be attracted by the gravity

PLAYABILITY

nzied frolics, but it gets a little too tricky for some tastes.



things that shoot at you, bonuses to try to and to, and the whole thing is against the clock. What a complete nightmare.

It soon becomes one of the most frantic puzzle games this side of Lemnature of the thing, and the iffy controls, it is definitely an acquired taste. But I've always been into acquiring new and different experiences - just ask my (that's quite enough of that - Mary Whitehouse Depti

Enjoyable, more challenging than Anneka Rice, and excellent graphics - a worthy reward for struggling through the levels. Yes, it is eccentric, esoteric and some other word beginning with e and ending in ric.

The fifty levels there are will take a lot of playing, the hair-pulling factor is enormous and you won't stop battling with it for hours - if the joystick doesn't go through the monitor first. Fab.



The Gorgeous Gamer Giveaway moves up a gear this month with some barnstorming Hollywood prizes. At great personal risk, the Gamer team have been glued to their telephones grovelling to various companies for some truly gibber-worthy prizes, often staying up until the early hours to make sure that the prizes are of the utmost quality.

As we said, this month's Giveaway has a distinctly Hollywood feel to it. You name it, we've got it! The glitter, the tinsel, the limousines and the plastic surgery. Prizes? We've got videos of Kevin Costner's Prince Of Thieves Icourtesy of Warner Bros), RoboCop 2 (MCEG Virgin Vision) and The Simpsons (Fox Home Video), plus Robin Hood, RoboCop 3 and Simpsons games! Some much sought after videos and some much raved about games could be winging their way to you, just for the price of a stamp. Bargain city or

You don't have to enter all the sections, so if you only want to win Robin Hood then leave the others blank. We won't think any less of you for it. Of course, you've nothing to lose by going for all of them, but you won't be able to win them all. That would be greedy. Oh yes.

An arrow escape

You too could be squeezing into your bright green tights and a-twanging your bow string with a copy of the excitement in Millenium's Robin Hood arcade adventure

The movie is a highly successful blend of swashbuckling skullduggery and Indiana Jones-style adventuring, and is worth watching just for Alan Rickman's psychotic Sheriff of Nottingham. And the good news is that that Bryan Adam's record doesn't crop up until the end credits, so you don't have to listen to it again.

The game fared equally well, earning a mighty 85 per cent. Picking some juicy quotes at random from the review tells us that "there's no lack of things to do", it's got "plenty of scope and tons of lastability" and

that the Sheriff of Nottingham is actually Prizes worth winning? You're not wrong,

matey. We've got five Gamer bundles to give away, containing the Prince of Thieves video and the Robin Hood game, and all you have to do is answer the Robin Hood question on Send it to us at the address over the page.

pouch win the goodies.



Ena Sharples

Just tick the right answers to the following question and send in the coupon: Who played Robin in the crap British film last year that nobody saw?

Patrick Bergin Patrick Moore Roger Moore

RoboCop compo

If you want the cracking video and even crackinger (?) game then just answer this question and send us yer address:

In RoboCop 2, which sad ex-Coronation Street star puts in an appearance?

Brian Tilsley Hilda Odden

Simpsons compo Dying to get yer mitts on the Simpsons goodles? Then answer this

Where does Homer Simpson work?

A power plant

Drive Thru Burgers Please turn the page and fill in the coupon on the other side A game does not have to be heavily advertised. based on a film, or a licensed property to be special...



enough you may even remember the "Rubiks Cube". Now from Budapest in Eastern Europe comes ABANDONED PLACES. a game of such size and quality that it is said, will change the way we all play Fantasy Role-Playing Games...

.. from time to time

comes from the

strangest places.

something very special

Remember "Tetris", if you think back long

The Great, Corgeous CANTEL Giveaway II

Clunk click

RoboCop. He's a fairly popular sort of chap, isn't he? All that stomping about and shooting the bad guys. currently selling like hot cakes on video and Ocean's ground-breaking interactive 3D RoboCop game is gaining accolades left, right and centre

know about and it's great. No messing, plenty of effects that'll make your eyes pop out. Naturally, we've got five copies of RoboCop 2 on video and ten copies of the RoboCop 3 game

hot off the presses. To be in with a chance of

and send it in to us. The first five get copies of the vid and the game, then five runners up get the game

Unfortunately, RoboCop 2 is just too squishy for anyone under the age of 18, so no kiddles can enter this part of the giveaway. It's time to start creeping to your older brother



introductions needed Loresume, so we'll get straight

videos and ten copies of Ocean's Simpsons game. The video sets contain four videos each, with two episodes of the hit TV series per video So that's er um...eight episodes. If you want Bart and Co to keep and cherish forever, then you need

do no more than answer the guestion overleaf and send it to us post-haste The first three out of "the bag", as we say, will win

a complete video set and a copy of the game. Then the next seven will win the game. Generosity just oozes out of every pore.

Our decision is final. Anyone who means will have their phone num ber passed on to Biffs. Not a pleasant thought.

3. All entries must be received by 6 February, 1991. Any ro

Answered all the questions you want to answer? Just fill in this boring bit, do a bit of nifty scissor work and send it to us at:

> Gamer Giveaway, Gamer, Europa House, Adlington Park, MACCLESFIELD SK10 4NP

Name:

Address:

Phone Number

If you entered for RoboCop2 please sign the following legal gubbins. I am over 18 years of age, honest guy, signed:

Management Jee

here are definite downsides to this job. One of a is hundred word review of a shool-tem-up when you know full well that everyone in the entire universe knows exactly what the scenario is. Allow me to reproduce the industry Standard Shool-Em. Up Scenario Creator, free with Anigo Gamer.

Amight camera. The year is (Insert four numbers here, the first one must be higher than 2). The human race is being threatened by the evil (Insert name of allen race here, word must have ratio of one vowel to every four consonant to be realistic). You must palot the new breed of strainly (inner name of starship) here, must start with an X or a X or sound like a diffuse Ford cand, designed to be (Insert hyperbole here).

But things go tragically wrong, as you and your fleet by linto the might fluor domain to much enter high fluor domain to much enter and the might fluor domain to make the control of the might fluor depart, they are anothered by the insert allen name herel, and you are the only one fit puells for a paragraph about how only you can do it and that noone die is strong enough to face the challenge. Conclude with something along the lines of Have you the still, with and reflexe to do the still.

That's about it really. Any names you think of or any little muances can be incorporated into that little template. Brilliant, isn't it? But, fair play to 6m, the Zoo have included a wee novella in the manual to pad it out a bit. Actually, it is the manual. It's reason-

able, but hardly original. Electronic Zoo claim this is the fastest two-way scrolling shoot-em-up game to date. They're not wrong, it does scroll brilliantly fast – the only problem is that most of the time you'd rather just sit there

only problem is that most of the time you'r arther just ist there and fire and not have to worry about flying into things. The majority of the aliens, you see, have very static patterns moving in a formation about a fixed point, so the last thing you want to be doing is racing back and forth like the proverbial yo-

yo.

But if you like needless speed
then this could be the thing for
you. The gameplay is simplistic - most levels are played
against the clock, giving you
a set length of time to defeat
a series of aliens, or you
don't make it on to the next

a series of aliens, or you don't make it on to the next level – and as you defeat each one, the ship is powered up to the next level of fire-power. If you die, you lose one level of power-up. Graph-

nl. Elecically it is very simple, but it had
fastest
to be so it could cope with the
fem-up
iwrong,
iwrong,
is t - the
t of the

on in smore. There are very few exprites onscreen at once, there's only basic landscaping at top and bottom, and nothing in between y to give you any idea of speed when you move off the edge of the landscape.

the landscape.
This is often crucial as you may have to move off, turn around and come back on to attack, but if you don't know how fast you are going then it may all go tragically

going then it may all go tragically wrong. The sound relies all too heavily on one Uzi sample for the gun, but the tune is ace, and sounds like a chill-out room at a rave. What more could you want after a heavy blasting session?

blasting session?
Playability int as bad as you might think, it's good fur and quite a challenge, but if you'd deern't add up to all it should. This is probably because they couldn't animate the sprites as fast as the ship. It will provide a new twist for shoot-om-up fans, but only the real addicts. Ah well, not a but ty least.

VISION

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Sook leging that there
in result to cred.

A U D I O

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bit supplies and ere late
before, gases.

PLAYABILITY

G G G

ADDICTION

ADDICTION

68%

February 1992 GAMER

20

nor old Jimmy and Billy Dragon. Their lot is not a happy one. Not only do they keep having to nip around all over the world to rescue their "babe", but they've in a beat-'em-up ever - Jimmy and Billy Very butch. Might as well just call them Smeg and Bep. Or John and Norma. An unhappy lot indeed.

Well, they ain't out of the fire yet Despite having finally dumped their kidnap-prone missus, they're still "doing the business" and kicking rear ends all over the globe. The reason? Stones. Yes, it ened old gypsy dude who told them to risk life and limb and go and fetch some spooky bricks back from various foreign climes. And being stupid gets, Jimmy and Billy go along with it.

Now this but aren't there a series adverts for a certain brand of bitter in which two

jolly northern working men's club types travel the world and talk about - gasp - Stones?

Could this be the world's first bitterem-up? Is there a bonus level where you have to earn extra lives by making unimaginative semi-racist jokes at the locals' expense and laughing

in loud raucous tones? Er. actually, no. Thank God. It is, pop pickers, merely a vres twist our heroes into a selection of fighteye and a Weapons can

from shoos, as can extra lives. energy and special The shop sections try to inject a little

bit of novelty into the proceedings, but tions mention nothing of the shops, so there's no way of knowing what weapons you'll get, or what moves, or anything. It's all hit and miss until you can suss out what you'll get for yer

The instructions really are dismal. They tell you how to perform the various moves, but there's no mention of how to get extra coins, or what special actions are available. It seems a bit pointless to include a feature like the shop in the game and then not explain

it. I don't know. Grumble, grumble. That aside. DD3 is a competent beat-em-up. times before, but it's slick and smooth so we'll let that pass. Things have been planned well, so there's none of your

And so we come to those last few 'summing up" paragraphs. The graphics rould have been better. The backplenty of boxes and things to leap about on. The sprites look suitably, er, spritely and they skip about in a jolly, if some what mincing, fashion. But they lack that extra "shazam" that makes you go

trickling stream/tune at the beginning and some solid FX. As with the graphics, the sound is good but not good enough

To be fair. Double Dragon 3 is a lot better than most of the lacklustre beat-'em-ups that the software houses churn out. Unfortunately, it's not different enough to make you go "Oh yeh, Double Dragon 3. That's the one with the famous cottage cheese sub-section.

Instead, you'll probably go "Oh yeh, Double Dragon 3. That's another Double Dragon game isn't it?". Ah well, another day, another beat-em-up.

Daniel

Eating a spicy curry the night before gives you lone distance fighting power



se rancid armoits send the thugs flying



of different fighters in one-player mode. Meet "Sunry"



akes your eyes water just oking at it, doesn't it? 10 GARGER February 1992



Attack of the Mutant Pylama People





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beat em-up fan hide under the sofa. That's because vectors and polygons tend to imply [hushed

polygons tend to imply Inushed whisper! strategy and simula-tors. Eek. Grown up games! There's no fun in that, matey, I'm off, But before you run away to

lets Susan slug it out with a rival of your choice.

This has many advantage: Fis-one it allows you so get uned to the controls. Secondly it lets you sus out the kind of tactics you can expect from your various.

nd simulation can spice up your of-the-mill boxing game. To call 4D Sports Boxing a box ng "game" is perhaps a smidge insulting. It's more of a boxing simulator. You control the creation of up to ten boxers, build up their skills, and then step into their shoes for the fights.

fighting, but emphasising the wrong elements of training will mean that your boxer isn't prepared for his opponent and will promptly get his head stomped good and proper. Not the healthi-est of positions to be in.

So, you've created a boxer using the remarkably simple 'Create a Boxer' section. Fairly obvious. You now can enter your

Once you've mastered the moves available, which is pretty easy, then you'll be ready to go only, then you'll be ready to go for the 'main event', where you can get beaten to death in a pro-fessional capacity, rather than as a rank amateur. Going back to the moves,

apparently you can perform a variety of "showboat" actions. These include jigging up and down, goading your opponent

and generally acting like a right old prima donna. Unfortunately, these only work when you press the second Fire button on your

That is, of course, assuming you have two separate Fire but-tons. As most people will have





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sygnosis have never been ones for beating about the bush. The latest example of this is Avenger, as flight sim based on the F-14 and the F/A-18. While only a working ititle, the scenario is all too clearful Deset Storm, get those Iraqis out of Kuwalis, torch the Revolutionary Guard and don't get killed.

None of this "might be set in the Gulf. Possibly" business for Psygnosis. And after the top notch work that Ed did on Armour-geddon, he was the natural choice for a vector-based flightsim.

The game can be played in two ways – as single missions or as a campaign, but all will be based in one of the planes flown from a carrier. A campaign will be made With barely a pause for breath following the success of Armour-Geddon for Psygnosis, Ed Scio is working on a new flight sim for them. Gamer travelled to the industrial North East to get mauled by a large labrador

up of single missions, but their result will affect the outcome of allied activities on the ground.
For example, if you successfully fly a mission to knock out a bridge, then enemy troop movements will be restricted making movement of, say, a tank convoy

on the other side of the river a lot easier. The game will include a number orking on a new
mer travelled to
a East to get
e labrador

new for the pilot of the F
has hit own nav
Graphically, and
Graphi

of mission types that haven't been seen before on computer. No-one could forget those stunning imager recorded through the later bomb-guiding system that stuttered across our TV screens in the spring. Well, this feature has been introduced into Avenger.

You can fly in either plane as the laser almer, using you immense skill as a pilot to place that laser beam right where it should be so that your partner in the other plane can drop the bomb without worrying, or an F-14 will be able to excort a computer-controlled F/A-18 on a bombing mission over enemy territory. You could proba-

bly do one over friendly territory as well, but the chaps with the blg moustaches might not be overly

Before all this begins though, Ed has plans to include a line vector mission planning screen, where waypoints can be plotted for the autopilot to follow. Similar, I'm told, to the system used during the actual

Accuracy, in equipment at least, has been a big thing with Ed on this project. While accurately reproducing the boredom of long distance flying is not always good on the playability front. Ed wanted as much of the real weapony and cockpit equip-

ment in there as possible.

Both of the cockpit bitmaps represent reasonably accurately the real thing, but the real accuracy is the equipment found for use in the F/A-18. This includes a Velocity Search that picks up moving objects and something called

a Track While Scan, which allows the radar to lock on to one moving target while looking for others. Not all of this is available to the pilot of the F-14, because he has his own navigator to do all

this for him.

Graphically, while being vector based, the little touches will all be there. Fully movable flaps on both planes, animated alteroates being the little planes, animated alteroates building the little planes. The little planes was possible than you could shake a telephoto sens at. This will make just flying to and fro an almost cinematic experience, with various pre-pregrammed pans and swoops included to make you look more included to make you look more

like Tom Cruise than Tom Cruise.

The real innovation, though Ed can't understand why no-one has done it before because he reckons it is dead easy, is the fully >



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ELSPA Chart

Blimey! Nine new entries twelve climbers and nin fallers, but the big news is that the entire top five is made up of full price titles all of which are Gamer Golds (have we got taste or what?). And there are only three budget titles in the whole top ten. Lotus II, at und the stamina to mair tain its climb up the chart ith Mega-lo-Mania not far

behind.

But there are still a lot of big titles waiting in the wings to make a huge entry
- First Samurai, Pit Fighter and Formula One Grand Prix for example, and of course. Populous II. the sane man's tip-for-the-top this Christmas. Don't dis count Cliff Richard though the could do it. Not or got some three or four title: waiting in the wings, and one of them will surely do the business, won't it? The top quality of Jimmi

White's Snooker ensures ity after all. And finally, me weeks after the Worl Cup, Domark's rugby sim is still holding on. What it needs for a boost is a data omen in pubs. That wou

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Talking Shop is sponsored by HMV and features a software chart compiled by Gallup Ltd. This chart is the copyright of the Europea Association 18 GROWER February 1992

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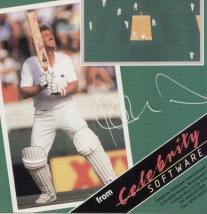
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from the Captain's side of the plane and so you only use the left side of the

THALION = £34.99 = 1/2 meg = Joystick/mouse/keyboard = Out now



vever exciting it may be limited to seat 10B on a

grand, learning to fly even the smallest reach of many and a trip into a multimillion pound simulator used by airlines is limited to spotty little kids writ-

programmers on the Krypton Factor. This is, perhaps, why flight sims on home computers are so popular. The Amiga has already seen its fair share though, with the exception of ProFlight, they are little more than shoot-em-ups based on fast military

Serious fliers have really been limited to trips in a single-engined Cessna. courtesy of Flight Simulator 2. It used to be the best, but is rather sluggish compared to other software and desperately needs updating

German software house Thalion have rolled out what can only be described as the best yet in Amiga simulation. Written by a Luftwaffe pilot, A320 Airbus puts you in the left-hand seat of a modern fly-by-wire jet of the

Just like the guy that flew you to Corfu. it starts with a visit to flight briefing. A simple flight plan must be filled with details of the route, number of passengers IPAXI, fuel weight and freight. The latest weather at the destination is printed.

During flight, the weather can deteriorate and the odd emergency means that you need to have a diversion airport planned. This happens mainly at the higher levels of the simulation. Unlike other sims, the view is only

instrument panel and windscreen. The view can be moved about though, so you can look to the left or right of the plane

There isn't an option to look diagonally First Officer's wina little strange

With it being an airliner, there is no need for a rear view.

Control is split between the key board and mouse or joystick. The mouse appeared to give the best results but it's probably one of those things that's down to an individual's choice. The keyboard commands are easy to remember and well placed.

The medium-sized airliner has one engine on each wing. They have to be started separately and once the power has stopped at 17 per cent they are

increased together to get the plane rolling forward.

It starts with the place sitting on the nearest taxiway to the runway threshold, and so it's simply a case of turning on to the strip and straightening up on to the centreline before banging the power up for take off.

Once the speed has reached about 150 knots you should be able to get airborne. Lift the gear and you're on your way. It's as simple as

Finding the destination demands the use of genuine Jeppesen navigation charts, which are supplied in the box. Radio frequencies for beacons along the route must be entered into overflown.

With no instructions from air traffic control, they are a necessity unless the plane is to be flown around in circuits at one aerodrome. Actually, this isn't too much of a bad idea until you get the hang of things.

They say what goes up must come down and so once overhead the airfield you have to prepare to get the plane safely onto the ground. The simply as ILS, is an important piece of equipment for this bit of the flight.

Used for guiding aircraft towards the runway they, like beacons, transmit on certain frequencies. These can be found with other approach details in the 240-page manual and are



Flight Plan VER DEBU × ok FROM P08 FREIGHT x188Kg x188Kg FUEL

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again, the same as those used by commercial pilots. Two bars should appear on a dial

on the right-hand side of the instruthese crossing at their centre and if which direction to head in to get on

speed using throttle, brakes and flaps and don't forget to lower the landing gear. If the undercarriage is lowered. to green - if they don't you better start

As the runway nears, a little light in the cockpit flashes to show that you've overflown the outer marker - a beacon our miles from touch-down. Closer still

Providing the landing goes as lanned the engines are put into reverse thrust to help out the plane's speed and the let should be then be taxied off the runway. It sounds easy,

Help is available through the autopilot. The A320 will be flown automatically at the correct height, powerdirection and can even land itself. This is especially useful if the runway is cow-

ered in low cloud or fog. None of the program's features appears to have been bunged in as an afterthought. Even the clouds have

craft pops out on the other side rect places. So, for example, if you lift

two you'll be flying over the Rhine. In



different shades of grey before the air All major airfields from Southern

from Frankfurt Main, within a minute or

addition to runway lights, every airfield has almost complete approach lighting. The exception is VASI lights which are used by pilots making visual land

LAYABILITY

ings to show whether the approach is above or below the correct path. The only other niggle is that the to sooil the simulation. Maybe they can

more than once in the office. packed game. This is one for those wanting to see what flying is really like.

As an indication of its realism, A320 Airbus has already been endorsed by Airbus Industries as the most realistic Lutthansa, who will supply plots wing to people who progress from the

Upgrades to the program are aready on the cards and will be available for a small price as each is released: Jeppesen have agreed to self

updates to charts at trade price.

At the end of the day, smooth graphics, realistic flying and good effects make this the Amiga simulator which others are going to be judged.

February 1992 CANCE

Lettuce page

Got a question? A problem? A grumble? A gnu? We're here to set the record straight...



AUDIO GGG

How good is the music? Are the sound effects worth pumping up the volume for?

PLAYABILITY Is the game easy to get into? How much

fun is it to play? PLAYABILITY let's you know. ADDICTION

GGGGG So it might look great, and sound fantastic, but will you still be playing it in a month's time? The ADDICTION

GONGED

Dear Gamer It's nice to see a separate games section in your magazine, as being a "gentleman of leisure" (ie. retired!) I have recently discovered the wonderful world of computer games as a hobby. So I was wondering if you could help explain your ratings system to me, as I'm not at all familiar with how magazines score computer games.

As far as I can tell, the overall percentage has no relation to the individual marks out of five. Just what do each of the scores mean?

Ernest Wood, Southport

This letter was sent to our colleagues at ST Gamer. We feel the point it makes applies equally to Amiga Gamer, so to clarify matters we've put together this rather handy guide to the eerie world of the Gamer Gong!

Gamer Gongs. If that were the case, then a game could get a high mark simply because it had excellent sound and graphics. So to keep things fair, the overall percentage is an all-round summary of the game, with vision, audio, playability and addiction

For each review, the Gamer team put their heads ther (not a pretty sight with Biffa) and decide what percentage the game deserves, thus each

Hope that sorts out the confusion!



Abysmal, Turgid, Despicable

Must try hard

Not very good at all

PLAYABILITY

rdering on excellent Better than most.

Are we cheating?

A voung centleman who identifies himself only as "Chris" from Reading accuses us of cheating by reviewing unfinished software. His proof, it would seem, is the fact that we awarded Terminator 2 only 40 per cent, while another magazine gave it a rather generous 63 per cent. He also cites the Thunderhawk "incident" from ST Gamer where we marked the

game up after the review because changes were made to the program when the game hit the shelves. He demands a response, and never ones to back down, we're prepared to Firstly, we would never review "unfinished" soft-

ware. What we sometimes have to do, as do many other magazines, is review "pre-production" versions of a game. This is when the software houses send us the game, without all the

fancy packaging and frills, but with the game intact so the review can be published at the same time as the game is released. If we had to wait for every game to be tarted up and put in a big box, you'd probably have bought the game by the time you read the review. This is not cheating, as it is done with the permission of the software houses who send us the

disks for "review purposes" Nor is it confined to Gamer. Pick any exclusive review from any computer magazine and it's almost quaranteed to have been reviewed from the pre-production version. It wouldn't be exclusive if the game was already released, would it?

Now to answer Chris' comments on Terminator 2 and Thunderhawk. Firstly, the version of Terminator 2 we reviewed was in fact the fully finished, boxed product complete with T-shirt and everything. We did not mark it down because we didn't see

the "in the shops" version. Any games mag would tell you the same.

the finished game, but rather because we thought it was crap. That's what a review is - a matter of opinion. Therefore, another magazine may have liked it - but we didn't. You have to decide whose opinion you value most.

The Thunderhawk incident was one of those errors that happens in the fast-mouing world of publishing. What had happened was that we were given a pre-production copy to review, by Core Design, and this version did not contain a training

We felt that this spoiled an otherwise good game and marked it accordingly. When Core released the game, they included a training option. We were informed of this and we changed the mark accordingly. We were

all happy with this arrangement. No big deal. Surely it is better to acknowledge our mistakes and let you, the punter, know if we change our minds or make an omission, than to be wimps and hide our errors? So yes, we do review pre-production software, but then so does every other games magazine in the world and if we didn't then all the magazines would be hopelessly out-of-

date. We have to review games before they are released so that the reviews appear in time for the release maybe preventing you from buying a duff game, and steering you towards

the ones to look out for. We're sorry you feel cheated by this system, Chris, but we're sure you'd rather hear about the games early, than have to wait an extra two months for the same review of



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You move your ship out into the open

unusable to the aliens and knocks off a

which do their best to harass you. This

EMPIRE = £19.99 = 1/2 meg = Joystick = Out now

Grey squares will appear in the open play area, and sometimes disappear. If or the ability to fire jolly impressive laser

You get 1 000 points for each "normal" alien you trap. The bonus for trapspace he is trapped in - the smaller the area, the bigger the bonus. Trapping the big alien is not the only

you collect the bonuses in a certain way

revealed - it may be a speed power-up. Graphics are all a little boring, look

ing very much like the kind of uninteretting superfluous detail you get when you have 32 colours but can't think of anything do with them - my mother would have called it 'too busy'. The sound follows trends in being surplus to requirements - a nice soundtrack would

has resulted in effects that go all over builds tension in a way that frustrates very quickly and makes you want to go

on home formats - there just isn't enough there to warrant spending this

equate to Volfied.

lot of levels of the same game that get a





something down and trapping it in a corner



PLAYABILITY Good fun at first but ultimately



BARBARIANII

PSYGNOSIS = £25.99 = ½ meg = Joystick/keyboard = Out now

file as a triumphant adventurer was a happy one for Hegor.
After the victory over his exil brother Nector, averaging the muster of the stane, he was in line for the thoric.
The nation's edders were a tad con-mored about this possibility – after all, findings a decent instance of brains and young without the other and, well, stepp it was best known for his brain, the warth result and president and well.

elders paid him off with a skip-load of

gold and sent him away to get smashed

For the next flw months.

He sport the time drivining a lot and boring the inhabitants of the nation's assert with tase of how he defeated hearon. But life as an extraordinated hearon but life as an extraordinated hearon but life as an extraordinated hearon street hearon but life as an extraordinated hearon support to the proposation by telling him that hearon had been resurrected, things had to be done. How could hegor slegge about two ordinated in the evening it has story had been discredied? How sugain? How could he get fire 48 kind-pain? How could not fancy him any fire-paint flow could not fancy him and the support of the counter fancy him and the support of the

more?

He knew what he had to do. He had to get kitted out, tooled up and throw in his gauntlet – Necron must be defeated.

defeated.

It is up to you to control Hegor through the six domains of this game. It starts in the forest as Hegor tries to defeat werewolves. Neanderthals and



Any man with this many ribs deserves to be killed

ogres, then progresses through the caves under the village, through the village itself, into the castle, down into the dungeor, then finally into Necron's temple. The problem is that Hegor begins

with no weapons whatsoever, meaning that the first forest involves him bashing as many people as possible with his bare hands so that he can get together enough gold and stuff to make himself slightly harder. The screen involut of the forest is a lif-

the weird and takes some getting used to. Imagine it as a maxe made up of a number of interlinked paths at right angles to each other. The path you are currently on is displayed from the side so that you can clearly see the action as you roll and punch your way to freedom, with the connecting paths going into or coming out of the screen. Initially, as you move on to another path, it is a little disorientating – trying to reestablish which way you are facing and so on – but a compass and a bit of mapping paper will see you right.

The gameplay on this level is very simple. Basically, just avoiding being killed by some very thick adversaries. But as you progress through the levels the game expands into more than just a beat-emup, requiring you to solve puzzles to find secret doors and reveal

For example, in the castle you are required to pull chains, but not to flush out the bad guy. Usually they will be in a group of three which must be pulled in the right order to open the door to the next room. Something else to watch out for are hidden floor panels which will often counteract the effect of the chains you have just pulled, frequently sending you to oblivion.

As you move into the dungeon you realise that the enemies are beginning to get a lot harder. For the first time you will come face to face with the undead. They can be knocked down for a while but they are completely unfillable, the point being that they are already lead. You really have to work fast on those switches with these attractively dressed chaps around.

Hegor, once he has collected them,

84%
can use different items to help him with

PLAVABILITY

Great fun, enjoyable and a real

can use different items to help him with his quest. On top of all the usual axes, potions and weapons there are things like grapping hooks, which can be used to host you out or thirdy situations. Naturally three will be the odd shop around the place, usually in the most bizarre of locations, but only if you've remembered to collect all the gold you can will they be of any use to you.

Graphically the backgrounds are well up to standard, particularly in the latter dungeon and temple levels. The sprites usually disintegrate and bixed in a comic book feel in a most clearly demonstrated by Hegor himself, looking like something straight from the pages of the Beano as he rolls and tumbles his way about.

A typical Psygnosis tune is in evidence, very reminiscent of castiles and dungeons and heros and stuff. The effects, though not brilliant, are just tough enough to make you think that that enemies probably do actually hurt

All told, it adds up to a very playable package continuing in the hallowed tradition of the original Barbarian, and goes a little beyond the traditional beal-'em-up gameplay to provide extra depth. Coupled with the difficulty level it makes it quite a challenge. Pretty damn good.

Baring all before you meet your death

These spidery thingies display a disturbing penchant for flashing your belly at you

> Big red blobs i bouncy bounce

Jool February 1992 GAIVER 25

The rulers of Honshu, where Lucanna lived, were the nice chaps who had put him away, and it was them that

Thanatos or Thanny for short, was after. needless long words and sentences (see intends to use her life force to feed his own and ultimately destroy Honshu. Leander is the palace guard who's been bonking Lucanna on the quiet. They

trysts in the garden but would forgive him if he rescued her Better to have a daughter. Assuming, of course, that Leander could manage it.

Well it sure sounds like a beat-em-up to me, and, gosh, I'd be right. The game ing of four levels, where a single quest involve collecting something from one exit point at the other end with it.

Well it isn't quite as simple as that. The levels aren't linear, they go in all directions and need a lot of exploration

LEANDER

PSYGNOSIS = £25.99 = 1/2 meg = Joystick = Out now



and mapping before they can be conquered with ease on a regular basis. The game is populated by numerous These armour improvements will take you to the next armour strength level. ons to hune soiders that would put the

You begin on oursile armour which only takes one hit point - take a hit and you die Green provides two hit points, with the protection climbing one hit point per level through blue, silver, gold and The money can be used in the shops

that you will occasionally stumble into You could blow it all on a huge weapon but it is worth thinking about building up your armour first - you stand more chance of getting further the stronger

stick as you try for the fifth time to catch sword is crucial though - you won't be

It takes on a medieval atmosphere almost as soon as you enter the first right back in the golden age of virgins

The background colour-slitting and all the foreground stuff occasionally beats variety to do this on a permanent basis.

The sound is by a team led by one Jon Burton (apparently he's quite famous for this kind of things, with a ient effects that, believe me, go some way to bringing out the armoured

agressor in all of us. It is definitely a serious beat-em-up. well implemented, quite gorgeous to look at, and a treat for the ears. Pretty



willies up any self-respecting arachno-

phobe. These can be slain with a few

swines of the sword but they are cun-

ning little devils, and it takes a lot of

care to get away without being hit at

Fortunately though, as you leap and

backgrounds, there will be a load of

chests and trunks littered around. A few



nbine for a big challenge

GGG

99



issuanced by Chimera, one

who like nothing bester than

in kidnap dead brainy scien-

Dad's Wolfchild fruit cordial. And hey

and Saul must fend off the mutant Bird-







Growl at the postman, comb your face and welcome...

CORE DESIGN = £25.99 = ½ meg = Joystick = Out now



Final Conflict.

Of course, what it all boils down to is a scrolling platform game with a libthe consoles alight, so it's likely that we'll see quite a lot of it in the future. proverbial gate, so they

men on the hull. This accomplished, he must fight through a jungle infested with, er, jungly things And with presentation Then, without pausing to adjust his like this, it's not surprising.

ng in public always was embarrassing for Saul

mutants to beat up and you've got a

energy reaches 75 per cent or higher, a

places. When in werewolf made vou're

can fire rather than just punch. The bullets are, as always, upgradable heat seekers. No surprises in that

So. Wolfchild is a visually impressive, reasonably playable console beater. If you need any persuasion

Nuff said. It lacks that extra depth

Gold but it looks sounds smells tastes and feels like a "quality game". Surely





fter almost five years of Surprisingly enough, there were no other and all that stuff you normally expect when something long awaited comes to pass - so I just booted up.

seam from whence came Starglider 2, one of the all-time Amiga classics. It offers a choice of squillions of different aircraft depending on whether you decide to be a "good" guy or a "bad" our, it files smoothly considering how many other planes the computer controls at the same time, and it makes the tea when you get tired of carpet-bombing little villages in South East Asia.

How does it play? Well, it's a bit like every flight game you ever wanted. but couldn't be bothered with because they're all just boring variations on the theme of "how can we make lots of money from cunning flight algorithms?". BOP is a great game, not a great simulation, so members of the Society for the Appreciation of Differential Calculus (S.A.D.) needn't buy it.

The action is set in a fictional land scape of land, sea, and islands, but all the aircraft are real. You can take off from a main airbase in a B-52, or skijump from HMS Invincible in a Harrier, and if you get bored with "good" guy planes, it's easy to swap sides and fly in a Miq-29 or Backfire bomber.

After the manual protection is over (you have to answer a question on the technical details of an aircraft or missile) you jump to the pilot screen. Here you can load and save pilots, or create new ones, then it's time to get down to business.

First you select what sort of mission to fly. There are twelve to choose from, including the unusual options to drop parachutists or supplies, and test fly the X-15 or Mig29. Next comes the all important choice of home base There are five of these for each side

iRkue and Red - but it's hardly a coinci-



When choosing planes, there's plenty of tech specs so you know if it will do the job

team is it?) two of which are aircraft. carriers. Blue carriers are the Nimitz and Invincible. Red carriers are the Kiev. and Minsk but Russian carrier pilots are restricted to a choice of one aircraft, the Forger, as it's the only carrierborne, fixed-wing plane the Russians

If you go for a land-based pilot, your choice is far greater. There's a Tupoley Bear bomber, a Hercules, and you can even fly a 747. The more obscure aircraft include the F-20, the SR-71 Black bird reconnaissance plane, and the

have got.

dence they made the Soviets the Red

Su-25 Froofoot (Russia's equivalent of the A-10 tank buster). There's enough variety of missions and aircraft to give BOP the best long-term interest appeal of any flight game I've ever seen

All aircraft are represented accurately in 3D, and they all fly more or less differently. Realism hasn't been insisted on and where two aircraft are fairly similar you can, for example, find it difficult to believe you're in an F-16 rather than the Mirage in which you flew the last mission.

In more extreme cases, though, the feel of a Hercules is vastly different to

screen, you'll start the game on Pilot level the second of four difficulty levels in the Green Fields scenario. If you're a big fluffy domestic fowl, you can downgrade the opposition by choosing Rookie mode, or if you're more of a

child-eating household pet, there's the Squadron Leader and Wing Commander modes Which have you selected will have determined what side you're on, but once the first mission is over you can fly from any of your side's bases and in any of your side's aircraft types. What you

must always remember, however, is that "your side" and "their side" are going at it hammer and tongs all the Once in the air, you can select the

full screen view and then swap views to any of the aircraft presently in your sector, including enemy aircraft. This gives you an excellent feeling of being in a larger conflict rather than of being one small plane out to save the world. It's also fun to sit comfortably in a 8-1 bomber at 50,000 feet and keep tabs on your fighter escort as they battle it out with Migs thousands of feet below

The other outside views are of your own aircraft. The usual views are implemented, eight angles and a satellite overview, but they add a lot to the atmosphere because every plane has an identical cockpit layout, and only by popping out for a guick look is it possible to spot the differences between planes. I particularly liked the view of









February 1992

ranks, so much going on around you. game on the market. Realism buffs will Intruder or ProFlight, but those of us born with the need to stuff Mavericks down the throats of computer-generated bad guys will lap up this game like

Anton Black







mission types are so different. There are

EJECTING TO SHEETY

my A-10 complete with oodles of The rear view of a Hercules is fun

when on a drop mission. This initially you're actually looking back into the cargo hold. Once the door is opened, however, you can see the parachutist drop out the back of the plane and open his canopy. There's a certain amount of sadistic tension involved when you wait for the chute to fail to open, but it hasn't happened yet in any On the strategy side of things, you can call up an AWACS map of the entire

battle area and zip around to soy on they're all trying to kill each other), and when in flight there's a radar map of your immediate surroundings which

you can zoom in and out of. This is great for figuring out where that pesky Mig-25 just went, and for working out which tanks are friendly.



Stealth fighters are so ugly, they HAD to be made invisible to radar

Fall to avoid that AA-8 Aphid, and you've got a long floating scenic trip ahead

HAVORES

The HakPak cheating continues. You've had them on card, now you've got them on paper. What'll they be on next? Watch this space...



/enus The FlyT

the tibe

TFORM

Prince of Persia

press L You - this doesn't and hold down C to the next level. 5

PERSMpress a While



Hi ho, hi ho, it's off a-cheating we go!

Lotus Turbo Challenge 2

it any of you damn readers send me the level every single cheat mode letter has had the

But for those of you who want the level codes for this rather impressive game, here



Password Twitight Bagley

Other lattle snippets include typing in TURPEN-TINE to get infinite time and DEESIDE for automatic qualification. If you type in DUX you get a mega-tabulous borus garre, Brumm Brummmi



Terminator 2

Don't you just wish that there was a cheat for Terminator 27 Well. your wishes have just come true because we've found one. To activate the cheat, pause the game, press each F from F1 to F10 key once, then press Fire to unpause the game. Now press that lovely Esc key to skip levels. Hasta la Vista, you chear!

BART SPACE MUTANTS

Woh man, Bart here to tell you the utterly bodacious cheat for my mega-game. All you do, dude, is type in COWABUNGA on the title screen to get infinite lives. Check it out and get to bed.



RODLAND

Are you having trouble helping Tam and Rit rescue their mom? Well here's some Help. Pause the game, then press Help five times, and as if by magic you'll have gained infinite lives. Hurrahl

ZEALAND STORY

At the request of reader Gillian Hoy, I am going to print a cheat for New Zealand Story. The cheat for the original version of the game - the one that came free with the Batman pack - is (ahem): MOTHERF**KENKIMBA**ARD. Add the letters, U, C, S, T and there you have it, lots of naughty words!

The real cheat is this: press Del and then M, then enter FLUFFYKIWIS to get infinite lives "a+9" should appear at the bottom of the screen accompanied by the sound of the book - if the cheat works. Pressing HELP allows you to skip levels.



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MDIJAJINMM MDIJAJINMP DIJULMOMY IJANIMDPMV JINIMDIQMO JAJHLFIBNI **JHLFUCNE**

222 Advances ten levels

Typing 09/12/57 by pressing Remer means that 5

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ou are setting forth into another place, another time, another world, "said Treguard, The Dungeon Muster," And what makes you think that you four mere mortals will succeed in the Quest when so many others have failed?"

I understood, at that moment, that our mission was going to take all our endurance, all our collective skill, and, most of all a depth of courage, that I wasn't sure we possessed.

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I never normally write letters if I can get out of them gracefully, but on this occasion I do it happily. I was forced by the very expensive pricing in this country to inoic elsewhere for hardware and I eventually ordered some goods from the USA (Adspeed/AdRam540 and a bare Quantum 52Mb hard drive). I also ordered some bits from the UK (Podscat/Techosound/Vidi) plus some

The US orders went very wrong. The Quantum money never got to the suppliers and the retailers of the other two boards have not supplied the goods (money sent 31/8/91 and definitely received in the US). However being a regular reader of your magazine I wrote to three of your advertisers, two big and one small (by comparison).

The only firm to reply was Applied Research Kernel. The owners have been terrific - they wrote giving firm quotes and when I phoned they were more than helpful. They knew their subject throughout and if unsure of something found out for me quickly.

I feel that such good service deserves recognition especially if your overseas readers wish to purchase goods and do not know who to trust. I therefore wish you to publish this letter so as many of your readers as possible get the information I had to find out for myself. As you can see the US has failed me badly, so in future I'll be dealing with ARK.

By the way I own an Amiga 500 expanded with a hard drive, genlock, colour Vidi, colour printer. Technosound, four meas of RAM plus 1 mea chip, colour monitor, Podscat (I can't draw). I am into DTV, programming and so on. Are you interested in anything in the way of articles from the bottom of the

K H Antoine, Brisbane, Australia

I guess that companies in the USA are just the same as anywhere else - some are good and some bad.

Sorry to hark back to my "small is better" crusade but your experience seems to be the proverbial proof of the pudding.

As for being interested in articles from Australia, Stevie (the new editor) tells me he will consider

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cheap and on time. He also said something about needing someone else to reply to readers' letters...

Is it Adios Amiga?

One of your readers asks if other Amiga owners have experienced slow service from Commodore. You bet I

I bought an Amiga 500 in May. It broke down after five weeks, and the national repair centre took six weeks to return it. Two days later it broke down again, and has now been away for another three weeks, with no sign of returning. I have seen the machine for only seven of the 16 weeks since I bought it. My letters to

the centre have not resulted in any meaningful response Needless to say, my initial enthusiasm for the Amiga

has evaporated, and my opinion of Commodore has taken a nosedive. I am on the point of writing off the Amiga as an expensive mistake. And of course I will

hardly be encouraging anyone else to buy an Amiga. So whether or not the warranty service is operated by Commodore or by an agent, it cannot be in their interests to be associated with such poor service.

K Grainger, Dalston, London Crikey, all these complaints about FMG in a single

letters batch! I can't blame you for being a bit disen-

After sales disservice!

First to praise your magazine. It is excellent, easily the most informative, incisive, witty and most of all helpful. I have been reading and enjoying it since issue one (Enough - Ed). My setup is as follows: Amiga 1500, TV with Scart and a Star 24/10 printer.

Next on the shopping list is a hard drive. This is not your problem really but my gripes with Commodore and FMG. I

bought my 1500 in April '91 and sent my registration card to FMG as instructed. In May I moved and had all mail forwarded, but nothing arrived. On the 21 August, 1991 I wrote to FMG asking abut the Customer Care pack and card. A week later I phoned FMG and was given a number for Commodore, who

told me to phone FMG. I told them that I just had and been given this number. After speaking to Marketing, I was told that the Customer Care pack was stopped but that something would be in the post within a week. One week later I phoned the same person at Commodore and was told to wait one more week. Well, not a sausage from Commodore, instead on 9 October I received a letter from FMG telling me what I already knew, that the Customer Care pack was

stopped, but still nothing about the wonderful Customer Care card. I phoned FMG on the 11 October and was told that the Care Card was also stopped "but let me transfer you to Julie". After waiting for an expensive five

minutes my patience ran out and this letter took hold.

My gripe is this - after being promised both a Customer Care card and Customer Care pack by the literature that accompanied my lovely computer, both Commodore and FMG had to be pushed to reveal anything. I still do not

nothing about the extended warranty that I requested.

know if my computer is registered and I have heard Thank you for reading this (if you did) and for the great

M Palmer, Melton, Mowbray

What do you mean "Thank you for reading this (if you did)"! - I read every letter sent to me and I even read some of them twice!

Listen, the Customer Care pack is no great shakes. I got one when I bought my A2000 a year and a half ago. It's basically an AS plastic folder packed with adverts and order forms for other Commodore bits and bobs

The mysterious Customer Care card is a credit card-sized bit of plastic with the date you bought your machine etched onto it. It doesn't work in a cash

machine, but it does get ice off your windscreen. It seems a shame that you got such a runaround for something that isn't really worth the bother. My guess is that your machine was shipped with an

old warranty card, hence the references to Customer Care gumph The important thing is to make sure your machine is registered. I think you can rest assured that it is if you have had correspondence from FMG.

I'm surprised that you haven't had any word back about your extended warranty. If your payment has been banked, I would contact FMG to find out what is going on. If not, send another form in.

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Programming pointers

I would like to learn computer programming in Cobol on my Amiga. It must be possible. The Amiga is capable of anything, or so they say. Can you help me on this matter - what do I need, where can I get the equipment, and how much roughly will it cost?

I've tried asking several companies who do courses in Cobol programming, but all they seem to do is try and sell me an IBM-compatible Amstrad comnuter and course work for hundreds or even thousands of pounds. I would appreciate any advice that you can give me.

A S lobe, Portsmouth

say fairer than that.

I've published letters like this before, asking for help, with no response. Come on guys 'n' gals, is there a PD version of Cobol hiding out there? The first person to locate and send me one will get a prize. There, can't

chanted about the Amiga. But how do you know how good it is if you have only had one for seven

weeks? Take a look through the rest of this issue of Amigo Computing. The Amiga really is a great machinel

The fact that FMG are getting into such a mess fuddle again and again means that Commodore really do have to take some action, in my opinion at

I think the time has come for Commodore to issue some sort of statement. If anyone from FMG or Commodore who reads this page wants to step out and defend the national repair centre please write in. I can feel an ESP Special coming on...

Hard and fast

As one of the rapidly growing number of Amiga hard drive owners. I totally endorse the contents of Stein Erik Giske's letter in the November issue of Amiga Computing.

I feel that it is the responsibility of your magazine to inform notential buyers if a piece of software can be installed on a hard drive, and if it is compatible

with faster processors like the 68030. Contrary to what is commonly stated in the monthly magazines, a large proportion of Amiga games can be installed on a hard drive.

Most adventures and simulations (with the exception of F19 Stealth Fighter) are hard drive compatible, and, in general, it is only arcade type games that still have irritating on-disk protection. Let me say that certain

companies are particularly quilty of using on-disk protection and therefore are treating Amiga users like children - try that in the PC market or in the USA and see how many sales there are!

All the users I know including myself - will not buy software from these companies, as loading from floppies is a real pain if you have an alternative. Also, if software has heavy on-disk protection then the AmigaDos guide-lines are bypassed, and

the software is not compatible with faster processors like the 68030 So please, let us serious users of our favourite machine know in your reviews if software has on or off disk protection, and if it can be installed on a hard drive. Surely you don't have to be informed by the software company if the product is hard drive compatible - as you state in your reply to Mr Giske's

letter - you can easily try for yourself! I Mackenzie, London. What a bizarre suggestion, that most Amiga owners who play arcade and action games might

be children! Games companies put protection on their product to protect their investment, not to inconvenience hard disk owners. Manual protection is an alternative, but with a

little time virtually any manual system can be beaten. Books can be copied, charts redrawn and even code wheels "pirated" The versions of software we get in to review

are typically fully functional, apart from the protection which is still being added. It is for this reason that we can't tell people if

games are hard disk friendly or not. If we used our own experience, every game released in the last three months would be hard disk compatible Daniel and Eddie are sticking by their tried

and tested line: "if games companies tell us, we will tell the readers"

Christmas turkeys

. Our more astute readers may have noticed our, erm rock up last month, which resulted in some letters being printed twice and one, entitled "CDTV Turkey", being started twice but never actually ended or replied to. The person responsible for this fawl deed has been given a

good roasting (don't worry, we plucked him first). Here's Why oh why is the structure of my chromosomes (hal loke)

"CDTV Turkey" in full...

But seriously, can you answer a couple of little questions about the Amiga? Everyone goes on about the Amiga being the only home computer with the ability to multitask. Now I'm not putting it down - I've owned one for three years and wouldn't part with it but is it not a fact that true multitasking can only occur on a machine when there are as many processors as

Progress at any cost?

I read with interest the upgrading of the Amiga to the A500P. But at what cost to us 512k A500

I wrote to Commodore about the price of the ASOO. I paid £411, of which £26 of this was for the games pack which I found is given out free by other shops. Why was I charged for this can you tell me as Commodore did not reply? Can you confirm what I think, that I was ripped off? G Gorke, Port Talbot, Wales

There are very few 512k Amigas around these days. After all, it costs less than a good game to get a 512k expansion complete with bal

The real compatibility problem will arise when software starts to be developed that requires the very latest versions of Kickstart

and intuition.

Commodore will be offering an official upgrade path to owners of all machines.

The recommended retail price of the ASOO Cartoon Classics bundle is £399. This has also been the price for earlier bundles. If you have

There is very little you can do though, as the RRP is only a guideline – retailers can lit-erally charge as much as they think they can get away with.

Play it again, maS

cover to cover and was very impressed. Then I decided to try out the disk, CoverDisk 24. I played the Tune of the Month, and was even more impressed, as Toccata is one of my many

The sample said "I stick my neck out for nobody"

D Boyce, Leicester

Bogey said backwards, for obvious reasons!

Any reader with a curious disposition, a copy of any decent tracker and a very fertile imagin. is welcome to try this expe

You might also like to try reading the entire magazine backwards - you can pick up the sub inal satanic messages much more easily that way!

-

processes? So would it not be true to say that it only gives virtual multitasking through processor sharing? Secondly, why did Commodore spend all that cash a development the CDIV proteon only to decide to also

on developing the CDTV system, only to decide to also release a keyboard for it (soon) turning it into an Amiga, and release a CD-ROM drive for the Amiga turnion it into a CDTV system?

Would the money not have been better spent on

me (a poor student) or just on the development of a CD-ROM drive for the Amiga? Or a hardware ZX81 emulator? Or an easy way to fit an upgrade on an ST? A lot of money to create two very similar things. Is that not quite silly?

Finally, I think capital punishment should be reintroduced for software thieves.

I Small, Edinburgh, Scotland.

The Amiga performs more than one task simultaneously - that is my definition of multitasking. Remember it also has a suite of custom processors to deal with anything from graphics, animation and sound to bus control. Paula, Agnes, Denese and Buster all do their bit to ease the 68000's load.

Commodore don't want people to see the CDTV as a computer. It doesn't have peripherals, it has "accessories" (I kid you not!).

The keyboard has become necessary in order to use things like database programs and reference works. There will still be a distinct line drawn between the CDIV and the Amica.

Commodore consider the Amiga CD-ROM drive, the A690, to be a storage device, whereas the CDTV

Think of it, you will have all the power of the Amiga coupled with the storage capacity of CD-ROM. That combination is much more versatile than the CDTV.

As for being a poor student, I wouldn't have it any other way! Gamer grumbles

As a 63-year-old GCI (Geriatric Computer Illiterate), I subscribe to two computer mags, and usually buy a third. I find that I probably understand about five per cent of what I read in these magazines, and yet they have been written and understood by a large body of

the population.

This has formulated in my mind the theory that there is a parallel existence which interfaces with us lesser mortals about five per cent of the time. Does anybody else subscribe to this theory?

Now for the moans. This is another problem with being a GCI, you get irritated very easily!

One of the magazines to which I subscribe is, of course, Amiga Computing. The reason I decided to subscribe to this mag is because the games content seemed to be minimal.

Now what do you do? You put a great wad of games info in the mag in such a way that it is a pest when you're trying to read the rest of the mag, and you can't get rid of it unless you destroy the magazine. Renewal of subscription is under very serious

consideration.

One last thing, are there any other like-minded GCl's in this area who would like to be together for mutual warmth and comfort?

J Perry, Potton Sandy, Bedfordshire

Good grief! Gamer was designed to make it easier
for people to find (and ignore if they wish) our

Ezra online

Letter boards and conferencing systems. If you have anything to say, get it off your chest online! Amage Computing also has it on on feld methods the which is being carried by 885 systems throughout Lurque, Amy Falod sypops interested in hooking up should collect AMICA, COMP off the backbone. If you are experiencing difficulty, Peaker contact Tony Miller, sysop of our home board — 01 for denote.

Additionally our mailman with the most, Ezra urf, hangs out on the following services:

games coverage. We still have less games coverage than the bulk of Amiga magazines – quality rather than quantity is the operative. We could have removed games coverage completely, but that would deny the existence of the bulk of Amiga owners. Not a wise thing to do in our opin-

Why not have a read of Gamer? Go on - you might like it!

Enchanted melody?

I couldn't help noticing that your October Tune of the Month, Toccata by one E Miller, bears more than a passing resemblance to a tune of the same name by my favourite Amiga musician, Alister Brimble. This can be found on 17 Bit's Supreme Sounds Vol 1 disk dated June 1989.

There are minor differences such as additional percussion sounds and a couple of tiny treaks to the timing in places, but these are easy to do in MED. Alister's overall arrangement and instrumentation is left pretty well as written. Even most of the sounds are the same, even down to the dodgy looping in the opening chords (corry Alistert).

Alister wrote his version in SoundTracker, but again it is quite straightforward to convert a soundtracker tune to MED format.

tracker tune to MED format.
Of course it could just be a huge coincidence, but
if 'm' right, then tut-tut E Miller! Check it out!
R Baxter, Manchester

Yours is one of several letters I have received pointing out the alleged origin of this musical masterpiece.

We included the tune on the disk in good faith.



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with Christmas pow receding into a blur of cheap tinsel and even cheaner sherry the PD companies have been hombarding us with games. For those who loathe to look at games there are some rather interesting utilities and such like, but for those who want to mon up the last of their hard-earned cash on some post festive zapping, then this one's for you...

Neptune Slideshow

AmigaNuts Disk No 1179 After last month's scintillating Mars Slideshow, this month's digitised offering comes from Amiganuts as a two disk set. Yet more digitised pictures of another planet for you to load up and, er, look at.

The quality ranges from crystal clear on some of the close-up shots to fairly indistinct for some shots of the whole planet. The real problem is that Neptune isn't very exciting. With Mars at least you've got all the rumours and mystery of the Planet of War -Neptune just doesn't have much "oomph". This slideshow doesn't even have the informative text overlays of the Mars slideshow

A bit of a pointless exercise, really, Worth a look if you want to see what can be achieved with a digitiser, but not really different enough to make it worth getting.

The Invisible World

Strictly PD Disk No D462 Another digitised slideshow, but one that's a lot more interesting, especially for the more macabre among you, It's made up of three sections, each one highlighting one aspect of the things we cannot see with the naked eye.

The first section shows, in unflinching detail, all the little bugs and beasties who live in, on and around us. Each picture is accompanied by some suitably skin-crawling text to let us know



Down Hill Challenge Strictly PD Disk No G342

such as the way the game is simply over once you've completed the

time you play, and the bonus flags and extra points for leaping over branches add excitement to the battle for a high score. The longer you stay on your skis the more points you earn the faster

Hit an obstacle and you fall flat or your face and lose one of your five

shots of bananas being shot, with the

picture held at the exact point of

impact and the skin of a balloon peel-

ing back in under a millionth of a sec-

ond as it is burst. Amazing stuff. Again,

text accompanies each picture giving

information on what it is and more



exactly what these little beggars do to us. Many a shiver passed through the office at the sight of a bed bug magnified 300 times. Not for the squeamish.

The second section focuses on those clever stop motion films, and includes

Not while I'm

The squires

rating, Mother!

interestingly, how it was achieved. The final section reveals what tiny, everyday objects look like when magnified. A crack in an egg becomes a giant crevasse and a pinch of salt looks like a demolished building. The text continues to describe the awesome sights, and you'll be hard pushed to believe it. sometimes! Surely that horrendous mass of squirming spaghetti can't really

be plague on a tooth? The quality of the black and white pictures is very high, so no detail can be missed. Each section is as interesting and eye opening as the last and is guar-

anteed to have everyone gasping and muttering "Well I never..." Compelling stuff, and definitely worth keeping your eyes open for, if you can stomach the thought of all those little monsters swimming around in your armoits.

The Final Frontier

Strictly PD Disk No U314 Here's a treat for all you Trekkies out there. The Final Frontier is a disk magazine dealing exclusively with Star Trek

trivia and info. Lively Trek debates rage in the letters section. Is Wil Weaton rubbish? Is The Next Generation a pile of old klingons? You can air your views here, and also get gripes about dodgy

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AM/FM is a recently started disk mag for Arniga users who are musically interested. It covers all aspects of using the Amiga for 3-4 selected Arniga only songs, 3-4 Midi in each issue. Created by some 20 professional musicians including Biom Lynne and Teilo Kinguenen

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merchandise and life in general off your

The whole thing is very well presented, featuring several Tobias Richter pictures inspired by the series. It's fairly obvious that this won't appeal to the "normal" people out there, but for all you Trekkies, it'll go down a treat.

Games Compilation 1

Warndrive Disk No 0511

A fairly new PD library are Warpdrive, having only been around since June. In a blatant bid for free publicity, they've sent us a preview of their first games compilation. And just look at the quality of these games...

You get four games on the disk – Bip, Wizzy's Quest, Sys, and (ahem) Skoda Challenge. Bip is a revamped version of some old arcade machine that no-one can remember the name of, Wizzy's Quest is a puzzle game in the vein of Spherical, Sys is really Pengo in disquise, and Skoda Challenge is, er, well is soeaks for itself: really.

Of the four, Bip is by far the most



each take control of a little biplane and zip about the sixies trying to shoot each other down. The catch is that the planes handle in a strange way. Pushing forward on the joystick speeds you up and then right and left rotate the plane. Fire, as if by magic, fires your

machine gun.

The planes have to obey the laws of physics though, and if you try to many

engine cuts out and you tumble to the ground. The first player to crash or get shot fifteen times loses. It's a simple concept, but it's beautifully programmed and once you've got the hang of the controls, you can have hours of fun looping the loop and dive-hours of fun looping the loop and dive-

bombing your mates.

Wizzy's Quest is a German puzzle game, with all the text translated with a wicked sense of humour. All you have to do is guide some ancient wizard bloke out of each level by build-

have to do is guide some ancient wizard bloke out of each kevel by building blocks to climb up and overobstacles. You get 50 levels so there's no risk of it being too seay. The control is a bit sticky, but this doesn't matter too much as fast reactions aren't that important. It's not brilliant, but it's good for a laugh.

siant, but it's good for a laugh.
Sys is another puzzly type of game, based on Pengo, You control a little round bolie who shif-flet round a maze of disks and must destroy the viruses by shunting said disks on top of them. It's been done before, and done better, but as part of a four pack, it's a mildly entertaining way to spend a few minutes. And finally

Nucleus

Amiganuts Disk No N
A cut above the usual PD shoot
musps, as there inn't a trace of
the stereotypical SEUCK vertical
plodding 'thrilis'. Instead we
get a vey slickly presented hosizontal scroller, with highly posh
graphics and a professional
tune. It all looks very smart
indeed.

It plays OK as well. It's a bit slow, and some of the aftens can take a few too many hits to kill, but the polished feel makes it last that fittle bit longer than most PD shooteramas. If 've got one criticism of Nucleus, it's that it becomes much too hard with no warning.

You spend the first level happly blasting the mindless aliens, and then come face to face with a monstrous end-of-level baddie who launches a barrage of heatseeking missiles at you and kills you stone deed

This rather unfair surpris flows affect limit and the surprise of the surprise

A pity really, as this sill design spouls an otherwise acc ient game. So, as Denni Norden wode, so, if you're not those people who can complete all the games in the top forty blindfolded, then Nucleus is probably just the game to bring you down a peg or two. You smug little things.



Amiganuts update!

Amiganuts have asked us to make a few statements on their behalf to the PD buying public. First of all, those Amiga nutters would like to make it known that as of now all their disks are fully compatible with the ASO0 Plus. They're also proud to announce the latest developments in the wacky and wild

world of OctaMED. They are now able to offer a full OctaMED manual, to help you squeeze the best results from Teijo's musical masterpiece.

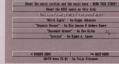
The manual comes all professionally bound up. like the worksheets you got in

The manual comes all professionally bound up, like the worksheet you got in school that always smelled of Bostik. Fortunately, this manual doesn't smell even remotely Bostik-like, but it does contain 90 pages of hints, tips and instructions for everyone's favourite PD program.

It's very well laid out, and looks quite daunting to the unconverted, but if you're conversant with the program then this'll sort out any queries you might have. It's nice to see PD libraries becoming more professional in their marketing, in't it?

Also available from those huggable Amiagnuts is a disk magazine, going by the

Also available from those huggable Arniganuts is a disk magazine, going by the uncanny title of AM/FM. It's described as "a magazine-cum-utilities disk that is aimed strictly for the musical Arniga user". Sounds like your cup of tea? Then get in touch with the "Nuts and get yourself a copy.



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Virus Free PD Disk No 2056

Skoda Challenge. Imagine SuperCars slowed right down to a snail's pace. With dodgy steering. That's Skoda Challenge. And oddly enough, that's Skoda cars as well, so it's startlingly

Even with these deliberate "nrnhlems" it's still fun to play. You can have four players at once, and all you have to do is trundle around and shoot each other, with front-mounted Skoda cannons (2). The slow response actually makes confrontations loads more fun as you wobble around each other trying to get the other car in your sights. Silliness abounds, but it's wonderfully inventive

All in all, a high quality package. Two harnstormers and two OKs for the price of a disk. Can't be bad.

OuizMaster

Amiganuts Disk No 876 And to round off our festive selection. a quiz game to keep you huddled over your Amiga in the cold lanuary evenings. Who knows, you might even lure the family technophobes in for a game!

The quiz takes the form of a race, in which each player must advance their car by answering questions correctly. You can have up to four players and the questions are randomly chosen from four categories. And the whole caboodle was spawned by AMOS It's very well laid out, and feels more

than a little like the computerised Trivial Pursuit, Unfortunately they've opted for a different answering method, where you must type answers in, which means that you can get an

answer wrong for silly reasons. For instance, when asked "What German city is famous for a scent it produces?" do you answer "Cologne" or "Koln"? This "knowing the answer but still

getting it wrong" situation is more frustrating than debating whether or not the player called out the right answer. At least you can sort that out among yourselves. There are over 1,000 questions,

although we found that some did repeat during our first game. The level of difficulty is pitched very high, so it might take a long time to finish a game. As if this was anticipated, there is an option to save the guiz and carry on at another time. Apart from these relatively minor

niggles, it's a worthwhile product. Of course, it's best with four, but you can play alone and learn all the questions so you win every time. Either way, it's a fun little game and

as long as you don't mind being made to look like a complete thickie, you'll come back to it time and time

Virus Free PD.

Who ya gonna call?

If you want to get hold of any of these disks then give the relevant company a shout

Strictly PD. 11 York Place, BRISTOL BS1 SUT

23 Elborough Road, Moredon. SWINDON SN2 2L5 Tel: 0793 512321

AmigaNuts 169 Dale Valley Road, Hollybrook. SOUTHAMPTON SO1 60X

Warpdrive PD. 110 Burton Avenue. **DONCASTER DN4 8BB** Tel: 0302 859715

Virus Free PD Disk No 2057

Having had their fingers burned by their ventures into the, shall we say, "fruitier" aspects of public domain. Virus Free have cleaned up their act and are now dealing in respectable utilities disks and other such decidedly normal wares. And

apparently the dog is a lot better now. This Opti Utils disk contains four virus killer, including Nuke, the Saddam virus killer which could come in handy for any AUI readers out there, plus 18 other

handy and not so handy programs. It decenses a mention as it includes the Text Engine a PD wardnessessor that

got the thumbs up last issue. This alone makes the disk worth getting, with the other stuff making a nice bonus. And what of the other stuff? Well, there's your usual selection of disk format-

ters and renairers. PPShow of course, and a disk copy program that's a good deal faster than the professional X Copy. And, no, it won't copy commercial software, so you can put that wooden leg away right now.

A good selection, with some predictable utilities but with the inspired inclusion of Text Engine. Get it just for that, if needs be.



the Text Fooi

Amiga Coders Club

Yes, the Amiga Coders Club are still going from strength to strength. They've now released a special assembler disk to assist all you would be Bitmag Brothers in your quest for the perfect parallas. The disk based magazine that they produce is fairly small, but it contains a wealth of tips and hints for beginners and they don't storm those who don't know the lings. The feel of the thing is all very "matey", with most of the router contributor evolutionis looks and new tiles of six successions. ors exchanging jokes and zany tales of data proces

on the letters page. If you're a coder, no matter how experienced or inexperienced, the advise you to get in with these guys. You'll probably learn some new st and make loads of friends all over the country in the process. This is the s of community spirit that keeps PD alive. Cliches R Us, or what?



Looking for scrollers, vectors and sine waves? Jonathan Maddock casts an evil eve over this month's demos

f you're a bit strapped for cash then you could do a lot worse than buying the Kryntic's demo disk. It contains loads of brilliant demos - for the price of a packet of Cornflakes you get the LSD Despair demo (which needs two drives to work) and the uniquely named Definition of Boombastic by those demo genii The Rebels.

Just by buying this disk you get all the scrollers and light-sourced vectors a demo fan could every need. Great graphics and great music - what more could a demophobe ask for?

Now for those of you who hate all this hardcore dance malarkey, there's a disk from Amiganuts which is tailor-made for all you classical music fans out there. It's top raver George Gershwin with his classic Rhapsody in Blue (you know, the tune off the Galaxy adverts). Being a hard-core dance music fan myself, all I can say is that it's well put together and it sure sounds nice

on the ole' lugholes Now for some real music - hard-core dance music, that is. This disk from 17-Bit software contains two demos, one by The Rebels which is called The Thing (the hard-core dance one) and one by TSB (not the hard-core dance one). The Thing is serious dance stuff and contains starfields galore, while The TSB disk - it stands for The Special Brothers, fact fans - serves as a nice complement and also contains loads of vectors, starfields and other such demo-type things.

What's this? Well, would you believe it - it's a fantabulous Miami Vice remix by HCC. If you like Miami Vice then you'll love this and if you like Don Johnson then you'll be trembling with excitement, because there is a mega digitised picture of the man in question. Nice, very nice

The next offering is poptastic in more ways than one because it's a great megamix of Harry Enfield's Loadsamoney, which was released a while back. A definite "fans only" disk, this one. All I can say is bosh bosh zoom zoom wallop dosh - get the disk and you'll find out what I'm going on about (I think he's finally flipped - Ed). It's available from the boys at Amiganuts, who also do a lot of work for charity. More music?

Yes, I'm afraid it's true, and even those little Lemmings have managed to get on to this disk. It's entitled Lemming Curd and it's got five great tunes on it. All are of excellent quality, and check out the tune entitled Dentistry - it's exceptionally good. Also on the disk is the Gods remix

courtesy of the Bitmap Brothers. The big Austrian is back, and this time he's appearing on 17-Bit's two disk Terminator 2 slideshow. It features loads of pictures of Arnie in action, plus shots from other scenes in the movie. This is definitely for Arnold Schwarzenegger fans only (so that's just about everyone, then). Every time it was shown in the office there were great cries of "Uzi 9-millimetre"

and other such Arnie quotes. For a slideshow the quality of the pictures is very good indeed.

Other recommended disks include 17-Bit's Powerdemos featuring offerings from The Silents and Phenomena, which are both well worth adding to your collection. Also from 17-Bit is yet another Rebel demo this one's entitled

Outland and is probably their best yet Divina's Techno Fright

Same time, same channel.

has excellent graphics and thunderous music, which combine to make it a truly great example. Also worth a mention is Exile's Fontdisk which contains loads of great fonts all wonderfully drawn (including the very dodgy pornofont). The digitised picture of the Exile team at the beginning shows that these

guys aren't even out of their nappies yet! And their mothers think they're such nice lads. Well that's all for this month - see you next time for more music, demos and animations













Animated animal antics the first of our featured animations is from talented stalwart Eric Schwartz. This beauty is a

Tex Avery ish and contains lots of slapstick ur. As usual it is very slick indeed and I can't sult with it anywhere. It also contains a very, physical ending. From Potteries PD, it's a defi-

ruggs in Space? even, one mo that started a revolution are back

ng a fish (surprise surprise) this demo is as good as, if not better than, Puggs in Space has retained all the humour and great graphics of its predecessor – Jester Bro utional have come up with a cracker.

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Daisy, daisy.

When I bought my standard A590 as it first came onto the market, one of its good points was its ability to accept drives, daisy-chain fashion, through the rear expansion port. Since I have now come close to filling my 20Mb. I would like to make use of this port. but can't find anyone to tell me how.

Can Liust connect another have hard drive straight. to it, or do I need another interface of some kind? I

THE PERSON NAMED IN COLUMN

recently saw a r hard drive in an electronics shop for the DM equivalent of €100. I know it's a risk, but for that price, as

take the chance. The drive has no docs and no box, just an edge connector.

so how do I go about sussing out the connection? Is there a standard format for these things? L/Cpl Robins, 75 Sqn. 3 ADTR, BOAR

The procedure by which you connect an external SCSI to your A590 is relatively simple as long as the external device is of the proper kind

First, make sure it is a standard SCSI device, and that it has either the full SCSI 50-pin connector, or the smaller DB25 connector. If there is a 50-pin connector, don't worry, as you should be able to find a 50-to-25 cable quite easily. The next

Printer out of puff? Computer cracking up? We're here to help!

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requirement is that the drive has its own power supply. If the unit you've been looking at has a built-in PSU great, but if it doesn't, it should at least have a power socket to which you can connect an external PSU.

As there is no documentation with your drive. you'll have to guess at the power requirements. A good estimate would be either +5V/2.0A or +12V/1.5A (both DC). You might have to experi-

ment with your A590's dip switches. Switch 2, in particular, concerns the way your interface addresses Logical Unit Numbers, and may have to be set to ON. If you can suss this lot out, and the SCSI device is terminated with a resistor, connection will be a matter of plugging the 25-pin cable into the back of the A590.

A better way of upgrading the A590 might be to back down the hard drive to floppies, then purchase a 40Mb or 80Mb drive unit to replace the existing 20Mb unit and double or quadruple your storage space.

Saddam again

Firstly, thank you for another great CoverDisk, However, I have a slight problem with Virus Checker In using November's CoverDisk, I have found three

viruses. These are Saddam, Byte Bandit, and the Australian Parasite Virus, While I think the virus killer has disabled Byte Bandit, both Saddam and the Parasite Virus appear still to be in memory.

The Saddam virus is proving particularly difficult to kill, as Virus Checker claims that the computer and disks are both infected. I have followed your instructions and still cannot kill the virus, and I'm getting desperate. Can you help?

Christopher Riley, Littlemore Unfortunately, I don't have a great deal of information on the Australian Parasite virus, save that

it is a boot block virus which infects your memory. Any detailed info' from a reader with knowledge of APV would be appreciated. As long as you have cleared the virus from the

suspect boot block, and turned your machine off for 30 seconds, the virus should be no more. Write-protect all your disks until you're sure it's not still active on one

As for Saddam, you'll have discovered the annoving habit he has of seeming always to be in use once he has been activated. In the inactive form, Saddam is as deletable as any file, but once

Plus problem? I've had an AS00 for three years, and am no

Reading through other magazines as well

as your own, there has been a lot of talk , about fitting extra chips to a motherboard making the trapdoor useless for further expansion. This isn't true! I fitted a half meg card to my A500

Plus and what do you think I got? 1 5Mh of chin RAM! Correct me if I'm wrong, but the Super Agnus (8375) can handle up to 2Mb of chip RAM just like an A3000. I want to buy a 2Mb expansion board for the Plus so I can use the full 2Mb of chip RAM as well as 1Mb of fast RAM. The question is, how? There are a lot of 1.5Mb expansion cards

around, usually requiring a connection to the Gary chip. Are these only for the 1.3 operating system? On a final note, Datel's Action Replay II cartridge doesn't seem to work on my A500 Plus. Joe Wood, Wigan

Tsk! The comments you refer to were in reply to letters on the subject of soldering RAM chips directly onto a rev 6.2 motherboard from a 1.3 A500. Commodore's own engineers faint at the mere mention of such radical measures, and are adamant that the conversion would mean the end of your trapdoor for the purposes of RAM

As for the A500 Plus, there are, to my knowl-

edge, no 2Mb boards on the horizon, but Commodore and a number of third party manufacturers are already developing 1Mb boards. One or two of these may be available by the time you read this reply I'm not sure yet if any of the boards will allow

the user to specify which kind of memory the board adds, but let's hope this is the case. Many programs are designed to work with fast RAM, and as there is none on the A500 Plus, we can only pray that an expansion board which offers fast RAM is released soon

All 1.5Mb boards which connect to the Gary chip will be incompatible with the A500 Plus unless redesigned by the manufacturers.

the virus is activated he is impossible to remove save by formatting the infected disk.

Proceed by copying all essential files from the infected disk to a new disk, check them with FixSaddam to make sure they haven't been corrupted, then copy a fresh disk-validator to the disk Format the infected a disk, and you should have seen the last of the Red Adair fan club.

Putting the boot in

Is it possible to boot from RRD; on a 1.2 Kirkstart machine? I have 1Mb RAM and an extra drive. Christian von Krogh, Trondheim, Norway

No. You'll have to buy the 1.3 Enhancer Software pack and Kickstart ROM to auto-boot from RRD:. Sorryl

Multisync without flicker

Lown an ASOO with 1Mb RAM, an external drive, a colour printer, and Midi keyboard linked via a Midi interface. The weak link in my system, however, is my reliance on a TV set for display purposes, which doesn't do justice to the visual output, be it graphics, MusicX, or Wordworth.

Having read the article on multisync monitors in your November issue, I thought "Great! I must get a multisync", because I'll be upgrading to the A1500 when Workbench 2.0 is shipped, and then I can get an A2320 card for it. However, when I visited a recent trade show and

asked some people for advice, the differences in opinion were rather extreme. Some tried to sell me a multisync on the spot, others told me I would be wasting my money, another said the monitor wouldn't work without a flicker fixer.

I should like to buy a multisync and use it on an un-flicker-fixed A500 in normal mode for the present Would this work? Next when Kickstart 2.0 is

available. I would part-exchange my A500 for an 41500 and add an A2320 flicker-fixer card to enable the use of all graphics modes.

Please tell me if I'm taking a sensible upgrade route, or if I should stick with my present system and buy a Philips CM8833 or Commodore 1084S. Philip Hawkins, Newbury

The upgrade path you're contemplating would be a sensible, gradual expansion of your system except for the fact that it won't work. Whoever tried to sell you a multisync without a flickerfixer was trying to make a fast buck and was doing you no favours. Unless you buy a multisync which can sync

down to 15.5kHz, the frequency at which the Amiga's standard video signal is output, you wouldn't be able to use the monitor at all. and even if you did buy one, you'd still have the

annoying flicker that comes with interlace mode. For your purposes, possibly the best upgrade path is to wait until official ECS and Kickstart 2.04 kits are available. You should then upgrade your Amiga and use the new Productivity mode, which gives 640 v 480 non-interlaced in conjunction with a 15.5kHz-capable multisync. Monitors of this type are, unfortunately, rather expensive. but probably less so than buying both a flickerfixer and one of the cheaper multisyncs.

Dumping Kindwords! I use Kindwords Home Office and wish

to buy a letter quality printer capable of graphics presentation. Ideally, I would like to buy the Canon BI-10e bubbleiet. but I'm unsure whether there is a suitable driver for it.

Can you please advise me if I can run this printer for the Amiga and, if so, which printer driver is correct?

Peter Barton, Adlington

You have two choices. Either buy the Canon and look for the shareware printer driver - you should find it in a PD library which supports the Fred Fish range - or you could dump Kindwords in favour of Wordworth.

Not only is Wordworth a vastly better wordprocessor than Kindwords, it is also on offer to Kindwords owners at a knock down price. If you send your original disks to Digita, they will sell you a copy of Wordworth for £89.99 instead of the usual £129.99.

Wordworth 1.1 now has direct support for a variety of printers with their built-in fonts. There's a special printer driver for the BI-10e. and Wordworth enables the easy use of any of the printer's fonts. Digita can be reached on 0395 270273

Hidden menu revealed

I recently purchased a new A500 Plus, and having a 5.25in floppy from my previous Amiga, I didn't like the idea of opening the machine to install a new boot switch, so breaking my warranty. I looked for an external project and couldn't find one, and for a while I was stuck.

Then I found out that the new Amiga has a hidden screen! To access this, reboot and at the same time hold down both mouse buttons. The hidden menu will appear after a while with options for DF1. DF2 and so on. It's possible from this screen to choose which floppy to boot from!

Hope this is of some use to the rest of your A500 Plus-owning readers.

A Bage, Middlesborough

We already knew about the Boot Menu available from boot up, as almost the first thing we tried on the Plus was to hold down the mouse buttons to see if there was a hidden boot option for 1.3 emulation.

Thanks for writing in, though, as we forgot to mention this facility in the A500 Plus review. So many improvements and so little space to write about them

In fact, there are a couple of things you don't mention. The Boot Menu's advanced options page provides information on device types, their boot priority, the device handlers they use, and

You can choose to disable any device, which will save users of 1Mb machines having to disconnect extra drives when playing large games, and can even decide to disable the startup sequence.

Mystery of error 2/2 revealed

I've just started delving into WorkBench after using my Amiga for games over the last year or so. My main problem, apart from terminal confusion, is with icons. I've been copying and moving and renaming them, but there are a few errors I keep running up against. The first is error 205, which I've now sussed out as being the one that appears when you try to click on an

icon which has no file attached. Error 212, however, is causing me a lot of grief. I've used Iconmaster from your excellent WorkStation disk to create some fantastic icons, and used them

for just about everything. My WorkBench screen now looks superb, but it keeps causing errors. What can I do? Jason Samson, Glastonbury

Your problem is as simple as its solution. Error 212 occurs when an icon thinks it's one type of file and the file itself has another idea. In other words, you may have created a smashing icon for your utilities directory, but if you save it from Iconmaster with-

out changing its icon type, it'll think it's a tool. To change the icons, load them into Iconmaster and select the correct setting from the Icon Type menu. Remember - a tool is an executable program file, and a project is usually a

data file Projects will be text files, AmigaDOS scripts, or DPaint images, and they must be given the correct default tool type or they won't work when you click them. Try the Tune of the Month or file icons from the CoverDisk for examples of default



tool types.



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Reflections on reality









Paul Austin looks at Videon, the latest method of immortalising still life on the Amiga

igitising is big business on the Amiga, as a will tell you. The question is: Can we mere mortals create the same results at home as the advertisers manage in the studio? The answer is usually no. Most systems only really shine when married to high-

end video equipment complete with suitable lighting. Videon, like some of its competitors, suffers badly in less than perfect conditions, and as a result it's worth looking at what's on offer besides pure digitising skill.

It's here where Videon scores well, with a whole range of image manipulation and effects that many of its competitors can't match, Unlike many recent releases. Videon is a slow scan-

ning digitiser and requires a static subject in all modes. Because of this it's essential that you have a video that can produce a high quality static image, or alternatively a camcorder which can feed a live signal of a static subject.

The manual recommends that if you're using a VCR it must have a minimum of three heads. Particular favourites are Hi-band 8mm, S-VHS or VHS machines with four heads. Again, high-end machines are recommended if you're employing a camera. Once again 5-

VHS is on the list, but topping the chart are CCD cambrief glance at the glossy folds of any mag eras, primarily due to their quality output and ability to get by with less lighting

If you're lucky enough to own a machine with sepa

rate RGB output it's perfect, as you can then take advantage of Videon's optional triple scan mode which has been included for those who want to employ mono cameras with external filters. RGB input gives by far the best results, producing

sharper and clearer images. As you've probably guessed the digitiser's default mode is full colour, so there's no need to use external filters of any sort. Simply plug in any colour signal and the hardware does the compilation work in a single scan - no swapping bits of coloured plastic and no multiple exposures.

Assuming you have a suitable source, the next guestion is what can be done with it and what form can your captives take. Well, to start with, there's a full

selection of screen modes which expand right up to the Amiga's legal internal limit of 768 x 568 in full hi-res Digitising takes place in full 24-bit with its selection

Stylising your digital delights

is the fourth effect, and as the name sug-

ming frames.

'erhaps the most pleasant part of the effects
cess is the ability to try an effect before it
omes a permanent feature of the image. Only
en the snapshot is applied does the actual

of 16.7 million possible colours, which can be enhanced even further by a dithering routine which claims an apparent onscreen resolution of 2,000,000 perceivable colours within any image.

within any image. These grandiose claims will no doubt leave you a little confused. As you're probably aware, the only way to see 24-bit images is to invest in a 24-bit display board. Because of this Videon doesn't actually display in 24bit, but it does convert the raw 24-bit data into the format of your choice.

into the format of your choice.
Besides the obvious advantage of starting with a 24-bit source, the system has the added borus of being able to save raw 24-bit data which can then be imported into a board at a later date.

board at a later date. A unique display format allows 29,791 colours to be displayed in Ham mode. Other formats include Enhanced Extra Half Bright plus Enhanced Dynamic hires which will display 4,096 colours in hi-res without any interruption to multitasking.

Three scanning options allow you to sacrifice speed for greater definition. This is particularly useful if you're working with dodgy source material.

One of the most pleasing aspects of the Videon system is its design. Unlike some digitisers, the hardware is contained solely within a single, sturdy, steel-encased unit.

On the back of the box are three video-ins in the form of a single composite plus a pair of Luma and Chroma inputs for SMS equipment, all three employing standard 8F connections. Below these furk another three prost all linking directs to the Amiga via a selection of pre-supplied cables connection to port the relevant digitated information between the variety distributions of the property of the

Because Videon takes the RGB signal direct from the Amiga and feeds it to the monitor, it's possible to view the incoming video and Amiga output on the same monitor by simply flicking a switch on the front of the

On the opposite side of the casing lies the afore-mentioned display switch, plus a second selector that defines either S-VHS or composite input.

Alongside are three knobs which allow you to adjust contrast, colour and brightness prior to importation. Lastly comes the tracking knob which can go a long way towards eradicating interlace flicker, noise within the signal and still frame distortion.

Eradicating flicker

Because of the system's 24-bit tastes there's a small price to be paid in the memory department. In fact, three megabytes is what you should be looking towards if you want to get the best from the system

want to get the best from the system
Although Videon will work with a one megabyte setup, severe restrictions will be imposed, as the incoming signal will have to be digitised line by line. As a result, the process will take up to three times longer and

the option to save out raw 24-bit is lost.
Videon's most impressive features revolve around
mapping images onto a selection of built-in shapes. The
available shapes vary from cubes, cylinders, pyramids
and comes to frustum pyramids and firstum cones. Each
can be sized and rotated in all three dimensions.

As a result, a cone could have its entire area mapped, or perhaps just a single surface as shown in the screenshot of the woman sloping off into the distance.

Controlling the sizing and orientation of the chosen shape is simplicity itself. All that's required is to select the particular rotation or sizing effect and then apply the



neo of Videon's alternative screen modes – Extra Half right and a mono Ham example

alteration with a rodent and icon arrow combination. All changes appear in real time so you can sit back and watch as your object tumbles in three dimensional

The actually mapping process has two basic formats. Images can either be stretched over the entire shape, giving the effect of wrapping the image in a sheet, or mapped on to each facet of the object. As a result an image can be mapped on to any or all of the object's

surfaces.

Unfortunately, it's not possible to map different images onto individual facets, but I suppose that's asking a little much for a system retailing for under £200.

ing a little much for a system retaining for under £200.

Like the effects, screen mapping operations take place within a custom screen, as opposed to the effects section which only partly obscures the image. Mapping, however, occupies the entire screen during the sizing

Once defined, the screen clears and is replaced with the gradual rendering of the newly mapped image. As with all of Videon's functions, this can be a rather slow process – especially if you're working with an unaccelerated machine.

Considering the cost, Videon is a relatively impressive product, but there are a few a points which do their best to scrape the icing from the cake.

to scrape the icing from the cake. Firstly, there's its reliance on high quality equipment. If you're working with budget kit, don't expect results anything like the quality shown in some of the commercial examples with this article.

Secondly, if you're in a rush, Videon might not be ideal, as some of the more complex digitising processes do take some time. Also, if you're running an accelerator you may have to remove it, as I did.

Videon offers several features which the competition can't compete with, but if you're on a budget it's probably not the best choice – which I admit sounds a price title strange considering its bargain basement

Videon is available from: Power Computing Price £199 incl VAT.

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Luckily, there are two distinct choices in both areas, one each from the commercial and public domain sectors, so users should be able to piece together a decent emergency rescue system to suit their budgets.

Two commercial packages stand head and shoulders above the opposition in the data safety market, and both are produced by the same American company. The first is Quarterback Tools, an allencompassing hard and floopy drive repair package, and the second is Q84, the hard drive backup system from the camo etable

OB Tools, from Central Coast Software, has a number of options for the care of sick hard drives, but the two operations likely to be most useful when disaster strikes are Restore lost/deleted files, and Volume Repair

Restore lost/deleted files makes a scan of the entire hard drive, which can take some time, though the user can specify the file to be restored if only one has been lost. When the scan is complete, and a list of artive and deleted files/drawers has been drawn up, Q8 will display a full directory listing with the deleted files highlighted.

Lengthy operation

The user then decides which files to save, and can choose to restore them to the same volume or to another device, such as a different hard drive partition or a floony drive. The operation can be a lengthy one, but QB seldom misses its mark, and has spared my own blushes on

OB Tools' Volume Repair menu is the heart of the program. It has options to

find unreadable blocks - for (Western Screen example, those areas of the drive which have been physically damaged) - then mark them as "out of service", to find but not repair bad files, and finally to find and repair

By using the find but don't repair option, it is possible to attain a clear picture of exactly which files are causing the problem before repairing the drive with the third option. When this is used, QB Tools really shows its class.

Any number of horrendous accidents can befall your hard drive, from a simply validation problem, where two or more

Software saviours files are trying to occupy the same part of a drive, to totally scrambled files. OB Tools has the intelligence to analyse had files and inform the user of the precise nature

When the worst happens, do you have the software to save your precious data? Stevie Kennedy looks at the options

of the problem. When this happens, the problem is categorised as minor, serious, or very serious. Very serious problems usually result in the deletion of the affected file, but the more minor problems can usually be sorted out. QB will recalculate checksums, and will even have a go at

making sense of damaged file headers. Where there is a very serious problem. such as the file header having been lost altogether, QB will offer only to delete the file but this is quite rare

OB Tools' close relative, the QB4 backup utility, is as powerful as any backup utility I've seen. Using this utility, I recently backed up a S2Mb quantum onto 33 floopies, which runs out at over 1.5Mb per disk.

Initially, the program takes the simple sten of asking which partition you'd like backed up and to which floppy drive. It then constructs a catalogue of the hard drive - a good time to go off for a coffee and offers the user a variety of backup

You can choose from a directory listing of all files on the disk, exclude those you don't need to back up, and decide on whether to include or exclude files with altered archive flags. The latter is an important option, because if a file has been changed since it was last backed up, you'll want to save it. If not, there's no point in including it. By checking the archive flacs. OB4 can save a lot of bother.

I've used OB4 regularly for some time now, and have never been let down. As long as decent quality floppies are used for

backups. OB4 should be the answer to your data security problems

FixDisk works in a similar manner to OR Took in that it carries out a scan of the drive you wish to repair. However, it has a "directory" mode, which is faster than the complete cylinder by cylinder check and is

use the two in tandem.

FixDisk isn't as user-friendly at

ontions shouldn't put you off. You can

scan for deleted files or a specified file,

just as with QB Tools, delete files, recover

Apart from this,

and FixDisk's ten-

dency sometimes

to be a lot slower

than Q8 Tools, the

program is proba-

bly one of the

most valuable and useful pieces of

shareware a hard

first sight, but its buttons and scan

deleted files, or rename them.

ideal for validation problems because it checks primarily for bitmap

integrity and the more obvious When the problem is of a trick-

QB4's deceptively simple interface hides a powerful utility

ier nature, FixDisk will carry out a deeper scan, and can then pick up on the sort of faults OB Tools will sometimes miss. To be fair to QB Tools there are occasions when it is the only resort after FixDisk has failed to sort things out, so I always

the inb well

drive owner will ever purchase.

There are loads of shareware and PD hard drive backup programs around, many of which are available initially only in demo form. One, however, which has stood the test of time, and which can't be beaten on its bare bones approach, is KwikBackup. Though not as fast or effecient as Q84, it is easy to use and just as

> Quarterback Tools and Quarterback 4 are both products of Central Coast Software, distributed in the UK by Silica Systems (081-309 1111). Prices: QB4 £54.95, QB Tools £69.95.

FixDisk appeared on the March 1991 Amiga Computing CoverDisk and, with KwickBackup, should be available from all good PD libraries. Please be sure to pay the shareware donations if you use these pro-

times of need

grams.

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Answer: Sampling

Everybody does it, half the music world hates it and the other half couldn't survive without it. From George "I'd never use sampling" Michael to the absolute kings of sampling EMF, its use in the music business today is widespread.

Both of the above artists got in tremendous trouble over sampling -George for sampling James Brown's Funky Drummer and EMF for sampling Mark Chapman (the guy who killed John Lennon) reciting the lyrics to Watching the Wheels (a Lennon song).

EMF were told off because not only was their sample deemed to be in bad taste, but the John Lennon estate owns the copyright to Watching the Wheels. George Michael, on the other hand, was told to pay loads of money and give away a share of royalties to the offended. EMF also suffered the same fate and had to remove the sample from further pressings of the record, as well as sending a "sorry we didn't

mean to do it" note to Yoko Ono. So, this is the exciting world of sampling, where you can release hit records and get into loads and loads of trouble.

There are numerous models on the market and the newest to join the family is CVP's 8-bit Digital Sound Studio. Inside the box there's a 3.5in white disk, a competent 175-page manual explaining everything you ever needed to know about sampling - but where's the sampler? It can't be in that tiny box. surely! It is, though - a midget thing that looks particularly attractive with lights and knobs plastered all over

To set it up, you simply plug it into the parallel port and connect a standard shielded audio cable between it and any mono or stereo sound source -I found that a CD player gave the best quality samples.

The best way to use almost any kind of sampling software is to boot it up and tinker around with it. Remember you can't do any damage to the hardware or software - although it is a good idea to read how to install the hardware and software first, or else you might find your toaster attached to the back of your Amiga and a crumpet in

your disk drive. The sampler is split up into three parts - the sampler itself, the editor and

the highly useful tracker. Although there do seem to be a lot of functions and a hell of a lot of buttons and icons to

confuse you, it is actually quite easy to use. The sampler part is



zama-tastic stereo samples. The monitor controls allow you to select from several different forms of screen display while monitoring and previewing a

The first three options allow you to choose a continuous waveform display like that produced on an oscilloscope The buttons allow you to select from three different scales of oscilloscopic readout. The other button activates the sonic spectral analysis display and shows you in real time the different frequencies from lowest to highest of the sound you are about to sample.

The rest of the buttons allow you to set the length of the sample to be recorded, the sampling rate, period and note. Trial and error is probably the best method for determining the appropriate settings for the sample

Once you've got all your settings right, it's time to actually record the sample. You first click on the record button to enter the recording mode, then click the left mouse button to begin sampling, clicking it again to stop recording. As soon as a recording has been

completed, a requester will appear asking for a name for your sample. Christen it something and that's it sampling completed. As you can see, recording is easy and really anyone can do it. Get granny on it right away she'll love to sample a bit of Pavarotti! The editor is divided into several sec-

tions - the display window, the slider controls, the editor function console and sample playback. These are the main functions, but there are others dotted around the screen as well The display window is the principal

workspace of DSS. The information presented in this window will depend on the mode that is currently active. The sample list display screen is the

main screen, containing 31 slots for the storage of samples. The samples appear by name in the numbered slots that comprise the list. A small index to the left of each sample name indicates whether the sample is in stereo, is currently loaded into chip memory and whether it is less than 128k in length. This index plays a major role in the tracker mode of DSS.

All manipulations that have to do with increasing and decreasing values are performed using the slider controls on the left edge of the editor screen.











Ionathan Maddock looks at GVP's tempting 8-Bit **Digital Studio** Sound sampler



and Horse 2OG scrimA The editor function console is full of gadgets and buttons arrayed down the

right-hand column and across the bottom of the display window. The buttons allow you to edit or modify your sound samples. The basic functions are Cut, Conv and Paste There is also a Draw mode which lets you use the mouse to manually modify the waveform

Other functions include a low-pass filter which toggles the Amiga's internal filter on and off, Loop, which activates two loop markers allowing you to repeat or loop a specific section of the onscreen sample, and Magnify, which zooms in on the sample to make edit-

Sample Playback, believe it or not, lets you play back samples. You can choose whether or not you want the sample played through the left, right or both channels. There are numerous

ing program. For those of you who are less musically minded, a sequencer allows you to compose music without using classical notation. Looking rather like MFD, the tracker is very easy to use

The idea is that you sample an instrument - for example a drum beat and then place it into the tracker. By using either the computer's keyboard or

ing that tiny bit easier on the eyes other options, and it would take me forever to explain them all

DSS's tracker is a four track sequenc-

and is ideal for the beginner



the various notes of

the sample and,

hopefully, compose

whether the it is in stereo. In DSS, a maximum of four sounds can be played simultaneously - one from each of the Amiga's four audio channels. These four channels are represented as parallel vertical columns called tracks. A song is a sequence of consecutive and simultaneous notes which is what any normal person calls

the chin RAM, the blue marker indicates

whether the sample is less than 128k in

rize and the white marker indicates

Each individual note or sound occurrence is called an event. Events are grouped into blocks of 64 per track. These blocks can be arranged into a pattern or sequence - a song. The tracker also has lots of extra buttons and gadgets to mess around with. This versatility make DSS a joy to use - even after five minutes of use you feel like a "proper" musician.

The tracker is compatible with NoiseTracker and SoundFx. Fancy making a demo of your top tunes? Well with DSS it's no problemo

because you can write songs which are auto-executable. You can load the song using Workbench or CLI - now you can impress your chums with your mega-mixing!

Overall, the general look and feel of DSS is excellent. It's got so many features and gadgets that you can quite easily find yourself engrossed in it from the moment you load it up

of recorded samples is particularly excellent if the Pet Shop Boys had an Amiga they'd die for this sampler! Costing an incredible £59.95 including VAT and delivery, this is an excellent package which won't break

your bank balance. Generally I'm very impressed with

this little goody. The only grudge I have against it is that the connecting leads are not supplied, so the absolute beginner would have purchase them separately. This is a much more classy product

Garbage In, Garbage Out

For successful sampling, you must make sure you have a suit-

than Stereo Master, reviewed last month - it's a "must buy" as far as I'm concerned. With a tracker built in to the package, it makes an ideal buy for anyone just dipping in to the Amiga music market.

Whether you are a seasoned musician or an absolute beginner, this package is definitely one to spend your Christmas money on. Remember, don't cry and write in to us when you get nicked for sampling - blame GVP for making it all so tempting.

Digital Sound Studio is a product by GVP and is available from Silica Systems (081,309 1111). Price: £59.95 incl VAT and delivery









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1991, the big bang...

s little as 12 months ago the Amiga was still suffering from the ugly sister syndrome as far as serious DTV was concerned. As a result only a handful of professionals were using the Amiga for commercial video work. Now what's all changed.

Over the months our machine has cast off the chains of mediocrity and become an essential piece of hardware in both amateur and professional stu-

If you need proof, look no further than the Original Craphics Company, winners of this year's IV animation awards. They clinched the tile thanks to their stunning animation sequences which appear weekly on the children's TV series Motor Mouth.

From now on, their award-winning creations will be coming straight from the heart of the Harlequin frame buffer, which as I'm sure you're aware is still the premier graphics board on the machine.

Although the Harlequin's position is safe for the moment, it could soon be challenged by a whole bunch of new boards which will soon be bidding for the top spot.

Progressive Peripherals are soon to release their highly acclaimed Rembrandt card in the UK. Likewise, GZ will enter the race at any moment with their VD2020. Both of the above are 32-bit cards as, of course, is the Harlequin.

To combat the ever-growing number of contenders, ACS have just announced the Harlequin-, which boasts a whole range of extra goodies including four extra screen modes, colour cycling, full screen overlay and increased baffering from two to six. Unfortunately there's still no option for frame grabbing.

The multimedia explosion

Second only to the impact of the 24-bit boards is the sudden proliferation of multimedia packages. At the forefront of these is the long awaited ShowMakey, which could be the answer to a DTV fair's dreams – especially if you're lucky enough to own a mountain of laserdiscs and various other high-end devices.

Another must for videophiles interested in a bit of multimedia is the inimitable Scala, which even in its present form has revolutionised Amiga presentation. Like Harlequin, Scala has recently gained a few opponents, primarily Presentation Master, which

Read on as Paul Austin looks back at the year when the Amiga came of age and forward to the potential of '92



we reviewed in its Gamma form last month, but which should arrive in its final form any day. Aside from a software invasion, the world of multimedia is also having its fair share of hardware, primarily in the form of multi-function 24-bit boards such act he DC.

Genlocking, frame grabbing, picture in picture, Caliguri, Scala and a paint package all in one bundle. Not bad for a board retailing at under £1,800. But be warned, the attendent software isn't quite as big a bargain as it first appears, because a rather heavy-handed software surgeon has been at work on the nether regions of both Caligari and Scala.

Editing made easy

Apart from patiently waiting for inspiration, perhaps the most painful part of any video-based creation is the editing. Once again a misture of hardware and software has come to the rescue in the form of dedicated rock and roll editing systems such as VideoPilot, KBP's Timecode Editing System and the Editman system from Syntonios.

Thanks to these systems, the bad old days of stopwatches and Stanley knives are long gone. All you need now is a cheque book and a couple of



heaper alternatives

Although the high-end has blossomed, it's not only the power users who have benefited from the explosion. The once extortionate price of decent genlocks have also tumbled thanks to some cut-throat competition between the major suppliers.

Now even those of use in the cheap and cheerful league have access to near-broadcast quality equipment—and all for the pathy figure of around £100. Once equipped with the hardware, all that's required is a copy of Dpaint for some essential artwork and perhaps a cheap titler. Some prime examples are Alternative Image's Big Alternative Scroller and

force Triler, which HB Marketing will happily supply. Both retail at under £50.

If you're willing to wait, it could be worth holding on for version two of the Alternative Image scrolles which should be available at any moment and promises to have greatly enhanced effects plus smoother

ward to the potential of '92



creations at their best it's easy to carry on in bilisful ignorance.

Those friendly folks at Third Coast Technologies can supply you with their CP-10 encoder for £1499 or syntroms systems can ofter a whole range of encoders and other display enhances which will cure aimorat any videographic ailment. For details of the Editman systems, telephone 0339 29899.

compatible VCRs and you're away. Both the KRP and VideoPilot systems are frame accurate and employ their own designer timecodes which are written to the tape and read via the hardware/software combination in order to make the appropriate edits.

The Editman system is something of a mystery as far as edit control is concerned as it doesn't use a timecode, but still manages an impressive accuracy of 4/- one frame.

All three systems employ remote control in one form or another. They function via programmable remote controls, apart from the KRP system, which only works with S-VHS hardware and requires some internal installation within the VCRs themselves. A point worth considering if you're still within your warranty.

I hope to cover both the KRP and Editman systems soon, so watch this space if you're in the market for easy editing.

well, that's about it for this month. If there are any aspects of DTP you'd like to see covered in this column, dron

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Get to grips with sound programming as Margaret Stanger continues her mini-series

Il sound occurs in the form of oscillations in the air, or sound waves. On the Amiga the digital equivalent of a waveform is stored in memory as a series of digitised values or samples. This digitised data can be converted back to analogue form and sent to the amplifier

The custom chip structure has four AudChannel structures. When they are written with parameters, the sound in the corresponding channel can be controlled. The sound change takes place when the corresponding bit in the DMA controller is enabled.

The ac vol structure member determines the volume, from a minimum of 0 (silence) to a maximum of 64 (loud). The structure member *ac_ptr points to the start of the sound samples, and ac len points to their length in words. Last month's Programming altered these two values to vary the timbre of the note. This month we concentrate on ac_per, the sample period, and its effect on the pitch of the sound.

The frequency of the sound, or number of oscillations per second, determines whether the pitch sounds high or low. With each octave the frequency doubles - if middle C has a frequency of approximately 261.7Hz, the C above has a frequency of approximately 523.3Hz.

For the mathematicians among you, the frequency of each half tone is greater than the previous one by a factor of the twelfth root of two. A value of 440Hz for A was taken as the start for these calculations, so the values for most of the other notes contain rounding errors. The samIn Photon 69, minute of the property of the sound and produce to the crossest scene samples. I'll now demonstrate how our yit high pilch of the sound and produce a low musical note The Markine Code page of Almanoc has been amalgamated with the Code Clinic page unde the new till the Programming.' Some Course code and some assembler may be shown in the tool. The support disk will contain full programs with both C and Assembler source code, fully documented or before.

pling rate, or number of samples read per second, determines how often a sample is sent to the digital/analogue converter. The frequency of the sound corresponds to the sampling rate divided by the number of samples per cycle.

The DMA controller needs to know the number of bus cycles between the output of two samples - this is known as the sample period. It can be calculated by dividing the inverse of the sample rate by the period of the bus cycle in seconds. The sample period for the notes from middle C to top C have been calculated (but not by me). and here they are from the Assembler source

perval: period values c-c' dc.w 428,484,381,360,339,320,302 dc.w 285,289,254,240,226,214

Mathematicians who like equations - and hard work - could calculate the values using the equations from page 175 in the Amiga System Programmers' Guide.

Hitting the high notes To select a tone from another octave, and get the

optimal sound, the same period values are used. The sample values are selected from a list obtained for that particular octave. The octave above would need half

as many sound samples, the one below would need twice as many. Sound sample files obtained by using a digitiser on a real sound. or from PD disks which contain sound samples, usually contain data for

three or four octaves. I have obtained higher octave data for the sine wave samples by only including one sample in two for the higher octave, and one sample in four for the highest octave. The sample length parameter (ac len) also needs altering when the octave is

When the end of the

data is reached, one sound cycle has been performed, and an interrupt will occur. The Amiga will continue with more sound cycles until the channel is disabled. In this program, each sound

is turned off at the end of one second. The Amiga may be in the middle of a sound cycle when this happens, and the sound will not turn off smoothly. The sound starts and ends smoothly only when the sound is at the beginning or end of a sound cycle, and the current sample is zero.

The system software can detect the generated interrupt, and can be used to turn the sound channel off when the sound cycle is finished, or when the correct number of sound cycles has

been completed. The system can inform us when this has happened, and when there is no more sound gueueing up for the channel. This leaves the program free to concentrate on other things, and I will demonstrate this tech-

The program

nique in the next Programming.

The two programs, sound2.a and sound2.c are almost identical - one (soundc2.c) is compiled from C source code, and the other (sound2.a) is assembled from assembler source code

Each program opens the DOS library and allocates chip memory for the sound data. The sound data is copied into chip memory. The sound channel 0 DMA is disabled each time adjustments are made and the parameters for AudChannel[0] are altered

A sound is created based on the sine wave data, with a pitch of middle C. Similar sounds are made with the same samples, and each sound is pitched one semitone higher than the last one. A higher octave is produced using the same series of period values, but using the waveform_oct2 samples. These samples are constructed from the original by using only alternate samples.

Samples for a third octave are created by only using one in four of the original samples. The program releases the memory, closes the library, and exits gracefully.









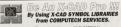












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e longest running story of the past year has to be the demise of the long-suffering sequencing package MusicX. Claims and counter-claims bounced across the Atlantic either proclaiming the continuing health of the Amiga's musical monarch or swearing that the king was dead and the truth was being withheld from the

In reality, the latter is more accurate. The Amiga's musical messiah has indeed bitten the big one. Even though Micro Illusions are keeping tight-lipped about its untimely end, it is official that the development team has been disbanded.

As any developer will tell you, once the support team are in the hin the software can't he far behind. The real shame about the MusicX story is that if supported by either modules or upgrades the package could still be ruling the roost, not by being the best, but simply via the huge user base it captured in the early days.

Pretenders to the throne

As MusicX drew its final breath, the software valtures wasted no time in grasping their chance. At the forefront of the feeding frenzy were Zone Distribution. They wasted no time and went straight for the throat with their latest version 1.3.

Not content to pick the bones of MusicX.



maq, pluq...pluq...

The last year has been an interesting one for the Amiga. Paul Austin looks back at some of the highs and lows and glimpses at what awaits in '92

they're offering across the board reductions on all of the Amiga's sequencing packages, defunct or otherwise. If you're willing to trade in an old yersions of KCS, MusicX, Sequencer1. Bars and Pines. Pro 24 or in fact any serious package, Zone will give reductions that in certain cases reach triple fig-

The new age

While we wipe a tear in loving memory of programs of the past, let's console ourselves with what's coming in the new year. The most notable forthcoming event has to be the imminent UK release of the new SunRise Industries sound card

Like Bars and Pipes Pro, the two Sunrise cards have been on the press release circuit for some time, but at last they've arrived in Europe. As a result you can rest assured that AC will bring you the definitive review as soon as the postman deliv-

The hardware comes in either 12- or 16-bit format. The 12-bit version is aimed squarely at DTV, while its bigger brother takes on the big boys in the CD quality studio market.

As you can imagine, even 16 megabytes of a fully configured A3000 doesn't go too far when you're dealing with hardware that can operate at rates of up to 100kHz. As a result, all the information is written direct to hard disk and read back as the sample plays. Now we in the Amiga world can benefit from

Cheap and cheerful

the sound quality that both the ST and Apple Mac have enjoyed for some time. Both boards come with their very own control software and, of course are compatible with SMPTE timecode.

The only worning point is whether the boards will work with a stereo signal. Initial reports suggest that the 12-bit board is mono only. If this also applies to the 16-bit version, its studio potential may well be seriously impaired

A spokesmen from Sunrise assured me that both boards will be winging their way across the Atlantic within two weeks, so I should be able to give the answer to this question, and no doubt countless others, in the next issue of AC. Watch this space...





The year started promisingly, thanks primarily to Gajits Music Software's release of Sequencer1. Although considerably underpowered in comparison to the likes of KCS and Bars and Pipes Pro, it did, and still does, fill a niche in the market.

For those Amiga musos who want to get their creations onto disk without the fiddling and complexity of the power programs, it's ideal. Unfortunately, the initial promise of upgrades and further enhancements has not yet been honoured, even though version two of the software was promised before the

In defence of Gadjits, they have released other products such as the latest version of The Hit Kit com position software which allows you to take the Lego approach to song construction, by building entire songs from a variety of component parts.

The original version was bundled with Sequencer1 but, no doubt due to its popularity, version two is now sold as a product in its own right, retailing at around £30. Their second, and latest, release is a series of high quality box set samples which give you access to

the sounds of high price synths which can then be used in any Soundtracker clone. As MusicX suffered its lingering death, Bars and Pipes Pro had the opposite problem. Although widely available in the States, its European releases has been rumoured and argued over for the last six months. At last it has finally arrived thanks to Zone Distribution, a company which is slowly beginning to dominate the Amiga music scene. For more details on B&P Pro catch the excellent review elsewhere in the

Well, that's about it for this month. Next month's column will feature the SunRise selection, plus all the news from the world of Amiga music.









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Reading between the lines

ast month I looked at the Fido mail points, which is the most efficient way of handling large amounts of messages. This month, because several of you asked about it. I'm investigating offline mail readers

OLRs allow you to use a BBS as normal for file up/downloading, but mail is received as a compressed packet to be digested offline. The next time you log on, you can upload your replies in one shot, without having to wander through all

The main reason for using an OLR is time saying. Cutting your online time not only saves you money, but it allows more users to access the BBS. Additionally, composing messages offline is considerably less stressful than hammering away as the phone bill tots up. Offline messages tend to be neat and, for the most part, intelligible. In short. OLRs are a good idea.

This being real life, there is a snag. Not every bulletin board supports OLRs - most do these days. The main problem is that there are quite a few different file formats for mail packages. depending on the bulletin board. There are at least four different mail formats, and of course they are all incompatible.

The board I use, Alba Maximus (041-880) 7863, v22bis, 24 hours), supports several offline reader file formats. Most importantly, it will read and write the OWK Quick Mail format, which is supported by a couple of Amiga OLRs, Amiga-Reader and MessageView.

Setting up an OLR is easy - it's meant to be. in order to encourage users to install them. After dearchiving the program to get it into a runnable state, you may have to create a few directories and make a couple of Assigns, as noted in the documentation.

You'll also have to dig out a selection of dearchiving tools, for some boards offer very few methods of archiving your mail. The most disastrous option is a board which only offers

An offline mail reader can save you money and improve your image! Stewart C Russell is our man with the impeccably-constructed messages

large and doesn't accept command line parameters. More enlightened boards - such as Alba Maximus - will offer Lharc or LHA archives, both of which can be handled by the excellent LZ 1.92 program from Jonathan Forbes. Steer clear of ARI - although it gives better compression than LHA. there is only a decompress routine for it at time of writing

Now log on to your board in the usual way. and select the offline reader option from the main menu. The first session will take a while, since you have to tell the BBS the settings you intend to use. These include download protocol. archive method, and of course the mail areas you want to look at.

After that, the mail program will wander off collecting your messages, and then will proceed to archive them. Here you hope that the machine at the other end is quite fast, since file compression can be slow. Alba Maximus runs on a fairly nippy PC, so even LHA compression is done in

Auto Z-Modem download (as featured in NComm and IR-Comm) is very useful here, as most mailers can be set to send the mail packet. then automatically logoff. Maybe it's just me, but I never feel happy leaving an auto-logoff session to its own devices, for I'm sure the download will fail, or somehow be re-routed via Chiquavante.

The difficult bit's done. Just point your OLR at the mail archive, and let it orind at it until something sensible appears. Have a browse, reply to a few with your favourite editor, create some messages - take your time, enjoy modern automatic mail reading at its best. Once you're done, let the

program create and archive the mail reply packet, ready for your next call. The best place to look for OLRs is an Amiga-specific board. mainly because they tend to be better clued up on the Amiga's needs than PC based systems.

I tried both Amiga-Reader and MessageView both were adequate, but Reader is small and difficult, while MV is huge (over 200KI) and is limited to two message areas in its evaluation release. Other readers for different systems include Bundle OLR and AmigaXRS, both very capable programs for their respective systems.

Ask other users of your local board if they use an OLR - failing that, the sysop should know of one. If that doesn't turn one up, have a dig on Amiga Information (details later) or one of the other large boards, Failing that, you could always ask in the AMIGA UK echo, where someone will definitely know where to look.

Rip off!

To close, I thought I'd just mention something that made me mad. Not so long ago, an advertisement went round some of the UK Fido. echoes for a BBS which has (and I quote) "...100 MEGS OF FILES FOR "YOU" ... FULL MESSAGING FACILITIES FOR *YOU**

That's not unusual. What was strange and worrying was the phone number, which was phrased something like this: 08 3936 XXXX. Odd number that - bet you're wondering where that one is. Rearrange it, and you get 0839 36XXXX; that's right, a 36p/48p per minute "nice little earner" line.

What really flames me off is that the sysop was trying to make out that the board was especially big, with wonderful messaging services. An 100 meg file area is virtually de riqueur these days, and most boards support private Matrix mail at minimal cost

If you don't believe me, look up Nick Lello's Amiga Information (0444-441308, HST 24 hours). Nick imports and exports files via the ADS network, a global distribution system for Amiga BBS sysops. Offline reading is supported (via Bundle2) and all the usual mail facilities are

Nick and the rest of the sysop breed are the true salt of the earth, giving time and money for an exceptionally generous hobby. Don't let the money-grabbers corrupt the BBS spirit!















Stewart C Russell can be contacted on CIX as





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Ghost rider



Some of the code we will be looking at will be familiar to you, but there are subtle differences between the program we looked at in the last issue and this one

First we open our screens and reserve our bank to store the maze data. Then we load in the sprites and icons-



Note that most of the code is now in separate procedures. This is to keep matters a little clearer when explaining things. As you write your own programs you will find it much more efficient to break them down into smaller, more manageable parts. This means that all of our variables must be declared as Global - if we do not do this, our procedures will not recognise them!

The next step is to generate the maze and execute the main loop.

MAKE_MAIE B1 = Repeat B1 = Wait 2

Right, because we have changed things a little, the program now checks the joystick and moves our Pacman by calling two procedures.

CHECK_STICK BY - DE PACKAN

Because our ghost is moving quite quickly we need to weight the odds in our favour a little. To do this we will use a variable counter called PASS. Every time the loop is executed we increment this variable, and when it reaches three we move the ghost. So for every three moves we could make, the ghost will make one:

If PASS+3 at = 00_GMOST at = End If at = Add PASS,1,1 to 3

Finally, we will check to see if the ghost has hit the Pacman by comparing their co-ordinates. BX & BY are the ghost's position, X & Y are the

Pacman's position in the maze:

Until(BX=X and BT=Y)

The next procedure is the one which makes the ghost so hard to beat. Remember how a couple of issues ago we looked at baddie intelligence? This program uses exactly the same method and follows these rules:

SHOST LEFT TO PACKAGE IS LEFT OF GHOST THEM MOVE ELSE MOVE GHOST DOWN

Peter Hickman shows how to introduce meanies into your AMOS games

Of course, if a wall is in the way the Pacman cannot move. You can easily overcome this by introducing more complex rules. Remember - baddie intelligence is always governed by a set of rules, simple or complex:



The following procedures check to see if a wall is in the way before moving the ghost. Any value found in the maze bank other than eight is classified as a wall. In more complex versions of the game you could check for power pellets, bonus fruits, and so on:



CHECK_STICK looks at the value stored in JOY(1). This contains a bitmap of the joystick position. If the value found is one it means that you are pushing the joystick up, two means down, four is left and eight is right. Just for reference, if the value of 16 is found then you have pressed Fire on the joy-





This procedure does exactly the same as the routine we looked at last month. Rasically it looks at the four directions surrounding the Pacman to discover if a wall is in the way. It stores this information in the global variables LIP DOWN LEFT



The next procedure does, guess what? Yes it erases the dot!



Finally comes the procedure to generate the maze, which we looked at in depth a couple of issues ago.



Well, that's it for now. Why don't you try to add a scoring system, or some more ghosts? Next time we'll look at the program from scratch to see what we can translate into AMAL. the excellent sub-language which zooms along...

















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More on style

ast month we dealt with the Tag Name and Paragraph sections of Professional Page's Define New Style Tag requester – this month we'll deal with the rest of it.

We can skip over the the gadgets for colour, font and size because they are self-explanatory. The three line spacing buttons, however, need explanation.

If you choose fixed line spacing, then the observed with the control of the contr

Relative line spacing is the best way to ensure that the space between lines of text is a large enough to make text of that point size readable. It defaults to 120 per cent, so if your text is in 10pt the space between baselines is set to 12pt, and if your text is 15pt the space between baselines is set to 18pt. In general, the larger the point size, the more space is required between lines for good readability, so relative line spacing automates this design decision.

automates this design decision. Leading is the amount of white space between the bottom of one line and the top of the line below it. In theory, a distance of zero points of leading – a technique known as "setting solid" – means that the descenders of the line above will touch the ascenders of the line below.

In practice, typefaces are generally designed with a small amount of white space below descenders so you can set your text solid and get away with it – many newspapers do this because it gives the page a "busy" look.

As suggested by the default relative line spacing figure, a leading distance of 20 per cent more than the point size of the text is generally the best distance for good readability – 15pt text with 1pt of leading will look cramped and sometimes cause readers to begin to read the same line twice, while 10pt text with 5pt of leading will

modify the style tag...

The headlin

The caption is a style tag.

Ben Pointer continues his tour of Professional Page tags



you will almost always want switched on. Notice how the A tucks itself neatly under the V

be too spaced out causing readers to pause at the end of every line while their eyes and brains travel to the beginning of the next. So the three line spacing buttons are just three

So the three line spacing buttons are just three different ways of doing the same thing. Choose whichever one you feel most comfortable with, and stick to it.

In the middle of the requester is the Justify

in the mindle of the requester is the justify button. This has two settings — or of ill. It's impossible to have no particulation, so don't fall into the mistale of thinking that this is what "off include the particulation of the less will be copied from the test had directly preceded the text that is being tagged — no change in justification, in other words. If this contious you, simply with justification on and click the style of your choice — that war no accidents can happen.

Over to the right of the requester is a column of eight buttons separated into two groups of

four. The top two buttons, Tracking and Baseline Shift, are simple on/off toggles and have associated string gad-

gets into which you enter the amounts of each.

Tracking is specified in hundredths of an em (one em is simply the

If you set up all the text elements of your documer as separate style tags, global changes can be made quickly and easily at width of a lower case "m" in that font) and you can enter a negative number if you like – useful with large point sizes. Baseline Shift is entered in points – a positive number moves the baseline up. a negative number moves it down.

As with the Justify button, if Tracking and Baseline Shift are turned off then the settings are copied from those of the text directly preceding the tagged text.

The next two buttons, Kerning and

Hyphenation, have three settings – a black square in the button means it is turned on, a cross through the square means it is turned off, an empty white square means no change (that is, copy the settings from the text preceding the tagged text).

Kerning is the feature whereby certain pairs of characters fit snugly together. For instance, in the character pair VA the left-hand upright of the A fits itself neatly into the space created by the right-hand upright of the V.

On the whole kerning is deeply desirable and you should always have this switched on unless you have increased the tracking of some text, in which case trying to kern pairs of characters is pointless. On the other hand, hyphenation in ot desirable – from a readability point of view, at least

The last four buttons are text format toggies - on, off and no change. I advise you to set them to exactly what you want, on or off in other words, otherwise you might find a bold or italic style being carried forward from the preceding

Well, that just about wraps up Professional Page style tags. Spend some hours experimenting with all the features – from a design and time point of view, using them is really worthwhile.















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ore CDTV add-ons are now available. Commodore are producing a black remote trackball (£69.95) with keypad and a cordless infra red mouse (£49.95). These should be available from all CDTV dealers by the time

Announced but not yet available are the new AVM (Advanced Video Mode) card and the hard The AVM card is a CDTV version of the DCTV

(not to be confused) add-on for the Amiga which gives 24-bit television quality graphics on the CDTV. The price has not been finalised, but is expected to be under £50.

The hard disk options include the 20 to 100Mb internal drives I reported on last month, and a standard SCSI interface card for external drives. These are only available to developers at the moment - I have one and it works very well but Commodore say they will probably be selling them to the public eventually.

The CDTV will soon have more support in the authoring system department. Authoring systems if you don't already know, are multimedia packages that allow people with little or no programming knowledge to put together applications for CDTV. This means faster, easier and eventually cheaper CDTV titles for everyone

Digital Vision, publishers of InfoChannel and the excellent Scala package have announced Scala for CDTV. This will allow people to produce simple CDTV applications very quickly, and if it is as easy to use as the original Scala, everyone should be able to use it.

Mandarin Software are producing a version of AMOS for CDTV programmers. While AMOS is a

Jolyon Ralph rounds up the latest CDTV offerings, and reviews possibly the first over 18's disk

programming language rather than an authoring system, it is so easy to use that many CDTV developers (including myself) are using it. With full support for CDTV features like 16-bit digital sound it will be excellent.

Clem Chambers at On-Line Entertainment would also like to sell you an authoring system. His Desk Top Video system has already been used to produce most of his CDTV titles (including Women in Motion - reviewed below). A price of nearly £2,000 may put some of you off, though.

Snoopy

Snoopy - The Case of the Missing Blanket is out now from The Edge Interactive Media. This is a CDTV conversion of an original Amiga game. It is aimed at children from four years up, although I must admit I found it quite fun.

The object of the game is to move Snoopy around and find various objects that will help him complete his task, which in this case is finding Linus' blanket, which has been lost. It is the usual sort of run around and collect things type of game, although I use the term "run" loosely, as Snoopy moves tediously slowly.

I found it annoying, but my eight-year-old brother who was testing the game with me didn't mind it too much. The puzzles are not too difficult (although my brother did get so frustrated that he threw the remote control across the room), but it is still fun. Overall we liked Snoopy. It's not brilliant, but it's quite fun.

Women in Motion

Next off the pile is the suspiciously named Women in Motion by On-Line Entertainment, If you'll think doubly so when you hear that it was banned in Japan. So before you all write in to complain. I'll explain a bit more. At the end of the 19th century, Eadweard

Muybridge, an expert in photography, was asked by two rich horse enthusiasts to settle a bet on whether a galloping horse always had at left the ground completely. With a string of cameras arranged along a race track he proved that same time. With this he invented moving photography and the cinema.

During his later work he spent time photographing nude women in motion (hmmm...). like Walt Disney, and is a standard text for art Now, with all his work on CDTV, his pictures

can be viewed frame-by-frame, or as an animation. The files are all stored as IFF pictures and anims which can be loaded into Deluxe Paint III or similar programs – assuming you can transfer the files from your CDTV to

your Amiga.

brilliant - you have to move a screen with the remote control keys, It's usable, but it could have been a lot better. and it seems to spend a large

It's interesting to see titles like this on the market. No doubt some people will buy the disk for the women rather than the motion, but art students in particular will find this very useful.



















By Michael Hodges Clement Chambers adrian Turner

START

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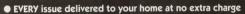
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The WORKST/ATION It's no secret that the Amiga is the most powerful home computer of them all. What

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inbuilt power of your Amiga. Many months of research and testing have resulted in a simple-to-use, single disk replacement for Commodore's Workbench which we're

calling The WorkStation This indispensable collection of utilities. including some outstanding shareware never

before assembled together on one disk, is now available for just £3.50.

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DEALER/TRADE ENQUIRIES WELCOME (Advert created with PPage2 and Real 3D) ACCESS

The producers of Police Academy pro-

Drop your joystick, switch off your monitor, slip into something more comfortable and relax with some extra entertainment, courtesy of Amiga Computing's very own critic Antony Purvis

> because a film isn't remotely original does not mean it isn't any good, though. Ski School is the traditional

ble and uses every dirty trick in the book. One group is good, incredibly hip and stylish, and by the end of the film comes out best. Ski School is not the most original

film that you'll rent this month, but it has to be said that, unlike Ski Patrol, Ski School is very funny and is definitely worth watching. Lots of humour of the "Parker Lewis Can't Lose" variety, and some stunning photography and stunt action. Original it is not, but enjoyable



It is the future (again)... America is in a

ing. That force is the Rollerboys, a gang of violent thugs who blaze through the city on skates known as Rollerblades. Ruled by the inspiring Gary Lee (Christopher Collett), they are the force of the future, running protection and drug rackets, with the goal of "buying back America".

Two orphaned survivors of this society are Griffin (Corey Haim) and his younger brother Miltie. When he discovers that Miltie has been recruited and is selling and using the super-drug "Mist", he agrees to infiltrate the neoapproached by the police

With just one notable exception, I've always been very impressed with Corev Haim's movies, and Prayer of the Rollerboys is no exception. It, like the others too numerous to mention, is a top-notch wedge of entertainment for the youthful masses.

I can confidently recommend this

film as one of this month's better rental releases - a good 90 minutes of entertainment. I doubt that there'll be many films released in January to beat this and Ski School 9% NIN.IAS

Z

3

MCEG Virgin Vision (Out January 22) Someone tells you they're releasing a new video.

"Excellent," you tell the company, "kindly forward one review copy of said video cassette in order that it may be reviewed by myself and the results published for the masses to consume." (Uh oh, Mr Logic alert! - Ed) The people on the phone consider your request, and the reply comes forth: "I'm sorry, there are no review copies of this title available "

Only two conclusions can be drawn from Virgin's failure to send anyone a copy of this video to review. Number one is that the video contains vital coded information as to the whereabouts of the Spanish Armada

Number two is that possibly the video is so earth-shatteringly bad that they're going to let the punters rent the how naff it is, instead of letting a reviewer put them off renting it in the first place. 9% Ninjas might be a very good film.

But as no-one will let me see it, I can't tell you if it is It could be very naff indeed, and you

might be advised to think twice before

that some films succeed more because of publicity inertia than anything else SKI SCHOOL First Independent (Out Now) It's true to say that there are only so

MERMAINS

MCEG Virgin Vision (Out January 8)

Meet Mrs Flax (Cher), an eccentric sin-

gle parent who has a nasty habit of

moving house every time a romantic affair doesn't work out, Say hello to

Charlotte, Mrs Flax's eldest daughter

who wants to become a nun (despite the family being (ewish) and also to the

nine-year-old Kate, the youngest of the

Consider the calendar rather help-

(Bob

fully left in shot.

year 1963. Meet Lou

Hoskins), the owner

soming love affair

and Mrs Flav

a film is fairly easy going

office smash that it was.

Very little happens, taking 105 minutes

to do so, and it isn't long before you

start to wonder exactly what there is

about this film that made it the box

While I gave Mermaids my full atten-

tion, it didn't seem to return the com-

pliment. As a film it's not intrinsically

taining. For my part, I could see the

smallest glimmer of something in

Mermaids, but as a whole this is a film

that comes perillously close to not being

worth renting, reinforcing my beliefs

Landsky

many ideas under the sun. Therefore, when you get an idea that works, you roll with it. Unless you're a Hollywood film producer, in which case you flog the idea to death. Take Police Academy - six films with roughly the same plot.



turned out to be no more than one of the least unfunny Police Academy films

Enter Ski School, a remarkably similar

story of rival gangs at some form of educational establishment. One group is bad, nasty, evil and despica-

and worth renting it most definitely is.

First Independent (Out January 15)

lapse. Betrayed by the greed of their parents, the children of America fill the homeless camps to capacity. In this 21st century Max Headroom-type scenario, a powerful new force is emerg-

Sky's silver screen selection The pick of Sky's Movie

channels in lanuary

very much.)
Madonna keeps up to her usual movie appearance
standard in the intensely naff Bloodhounds of Broadway,
a flim you are advised not to watch unless you enjoy bad
films. A rather better film, namely The Fabulous Bakes

Boys gets some more screenings in January, Luke out (the final policy) for takes Hans in The Wildrich on 3th Monies for his particular to the final policy of the second o

WHOOPS!

LAST month we experi-

In particular an article called "Our survey said' was unreadable in

We have now ironed out these production glitches and apologise for any inconvenience caused to our readers.



MEWS EXCLUSIVE

nuter magazine Amiga Computing have confirmed exclusively to Rock Lobster that a new editor has been appointed. Stevie Kennedy has taken over from

Eddie McKendrick with immediate effect. This shock move is thought to be the end result of a long running dispute between McKendrick and Amiga

Computing's letters editor Ezra Surf. A jubilant Surf commented: "Eddie never really understood me, I have known Stevie for over three years and I'm sure he will do a good job.

Kennedy, 26 was previously technical editor of the magazine and is thought to have a good understanding of the Amiga.

Other changes at Amiga Computing include the appointment of a new games

Paul Austin to Associate

firmed hit with Gamer readers, takes over from Julian Boardman who is leaving the magazine to "pursue other interests" at

ST Action magazine. Newly appointed editor-in-chief Eddie McKendrick commented: "I don't know what all the fuss is about - anybody would think that Ezra Surf runs the magazines."

As we go to press it is unclear what changes Kennedy's new broom will sweep into Amiga Computing although it is thought unlikely that the popular "Ezra Surf" Postbox" column is under any immediate threat. More details as we get them.



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Amiga digitiser has had the one of the most exciting peripheral

in the flesh" as it were, at the CES show last September it looked to be the answer to a frustrated Digi View. pictures appearing on screen fort time I have had Vidi than I eve

under

ices cheap usually means with Rombo. Why? cos Vidi-Amige

is concerned, Vidi produces some of the best results I've seen on a

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video camera, home VCR or in fact any still video source. The traditional method of holding three colour filters in front of your video camera is certainly a thing of the past. Because Vidi splits the RGB colours electronically there are no focussing or slower competitors. Lighting is also less of an issue as light is not being shut out by lens filters. Put all this together with an already proven Vidi-Amiga/VidiChrome combination and achieve what is probably the most consistant and accurate high quality 4096 colour images ever seen on the Amiga.

The colour solution is fully compatible with all Amiga's from a standard A500 to the ultimate A3000. No additional RAM is required to get up and running.

You will see from independant review comments that we are undoubtedly their first choice and that was before the complete solution was launched. If you have just purchased your Amiga and are not sure what to buy next, then just read



Features ...

- Grab mono images from any video Capture colour images from any still
- video source Digitise up to 16 mono frames on a 1meg Amiga
- · Animate 16 shade images at different
- Create windows in both mono & colour. Cut & Paste areas from one frame to
- Hardware and software brightness & · Choice of capture resolutions standard
- Add text or draw within art package



Limited