YOUR AMIGA

The Entertainment Magazine

October 1989 £1·95 DM14·00

TRIANGLE TELEVISION
Past & Present
Amiga Graphic Masters

Games Reviewed: Oil Imperium, Beam, Jack Nicklaus Golf

A look at CRL's Lancaster and Video Software

Contents

Welcome

■ **1992, 1992, 1992,la la la 1992. It's on its way despite** the confusion of loyalties and tendancies towards xenophobia that's making this little blott on the briny really dodgy in foreign eyes and noses. Yes, lets builds some massive linking roads and railways aimed at making us part of Eurpoe and then put the other part of the push me pull you into gear by denying a single European currency, excelling at exceeding pollution rates. How many of us can read Dutch — German is bad enough. Cyrillic? Isn't that something you put on Italian ice cream?

Since I've been working on *Your Amiga* one of the things that has surprised me is the extent of our foreign correspondence. Letters from Spain, Iran, West Germany, Australia, Belgium, USA, Netherlands, Libya. This foreign contingent of letters is added to by quality artwork from abroad.
The winner of this month's Readers' Gallery (and on the cover) is a Dutchman, 4th Prize goes to an Australian. So, although it might seem a bit odd to have a review run in German (Nightdawn) it's not out of place in the opening context of the EEC. So, in future issues we may be having occasional reviews in French, German, Spanish, etc. as well as looking more closely at the graphics, music, games scenes abroad. With games as scrumptivolous as *Targhan* around I mean what option do we have? *Type* back and think of England?
Julian Woodford

AMIGA UPDATE

By ERIC DOYLE

Computer Klassix

At less than a tenner, Klassix games seem to be a pretty good bargain. The current offerings include *Street Fighter* and *Bionic Commando*.

Street Fighter is tried and tested software for the well-hard, streetwise pugilist. This beat-em-up resembles an England soccer fan's dream, the player has to visit strange and beautiful locations, meet the exotic inhabitants and beat the hell out of them for no particular reason.

The other game, the Bionic Commando has to use his bio-mechanical powers to crush enemy resistance as he battles to reach the Your Amiga payslip, sorry, the doomsday weapon. It's going to take skill and aggression to succeed — perhaps I was right the first time!

The price tag reads £9.99 for each game — still sounds like a YA payslip.

Slam in the RAM

Supra Corporation has released expansion boards for the A2000 and A500. On the SupraRAM 2000 there is a choice of 2, 4, 6 or 8Mbytes but the smaller boards can be built up through the range. The A500 board, SupraRAM 500 only carries 0.5Mbytes and is comparable to Commodore's A501 board.

Prices and release dates have yet to be announced for the UK but the US prices range from $499 to $1399 for the A2000 series of boards and the A500 board costs £149.

A500 and A2000 expansion boards. Soon to be released in the UK.

Plato win

Impressions, authors of Raider and Chariots of Wrath, has launched a new label, Plato for its more cerebrally stimulating products. The first titles will be Emperor of the Mines, Superleague Soccer and Automatic Railway Control System.

Details are skeletal at the moment but we understand that Emperor is

a real time wargame trading fleet of up to 100 profiteering warships. Soccer is a football management game for the 'thinking soccer fan', wherever he is. Railway is a simulation of a large railway network which should satisfy the trainspotter in you as you control a large railway network. This should be a real challenge because the professionals at British Rail have been failing to do the same thing for decades.

Roll Out the Barrels

■ **Light guns come and** light guns go but they've never really shot to the top of the popularity poll. Cheetah Marketing aims to change all that by scoring a bullseye with its Defender.

The problem has always been with the accuracy of the gun's aim but Cheetah claims to have spent almost a year developing the

precision, balance and weight of the gun to make it the best design possible.

Guns are no use without targets and in this case that means that means software. With such a high regard for its product, the company was determined to find the best possible software house to emulate the quality of the gun. This, Cheetah decided, was Codemasters who have delivered five games which will form part of the package.

If you're one of the many computer owners who wish they could type, Mindscape may have the answer. Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing! contains a degree of artificial intelligence which analyses the progress of each learner and tailors the course accoringly.

Mavis displays 'guide hands' to show the correct finger positions and also shows on-screen meters which indicate speed and accuracy. After each session, the computer analyses the results and presents an achievement profile which forms the basis for the next session's level.

Working in both Qwerty or Dvorak format, the course is not merely a dull dril and practice exercise but uses riddles, rhymes, jokes and records to liven up the chore of learning. Mavis charges £29.99 for the course.

Wild bill of Fare

Microprose boss, Wild Bill Steeley always lets everyone know that his favourite colour isn't communist red, might is right and that all his employees must play the games they are selling. Meeting him makes you feel that he'd rather be beating several shades of She-ites out of the Lebanon rather than sitting in an office watching the cash roll in. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that the latest game is a mighty beat-em-up containing elements to increase your 'situational awareness'.

The Rat Pack is a team of four commandos commanded to execute missions deep inside enemy territory and the 'awareness' develops through having to make life or death decisions at times of great stress.

The game is the successor to Microprose's extremely successful Airborne Ranger but was programmed in the UK by Imagitec. On eof the principal fetaures of the game is the huge choice of options for setting the

parameters for the game. According to the company, this front-end has literally hundreds of options. So, if it sounds like you cup of TNT, buy it when it appears in November or you won't be able to play it before Christmas.

Sister label Micro Status has two offerings coming up. October should see the release of Survivor and November is the release date for Midwinter. Both games were programmed by Maelstrom Software, the company headed by the much respected Mike Singleton. Maelstrom is a post-holocaust strategy game which incorporates interactive graphics as you try to bring about world unity. Midwinter is a 3D, hang gliding, snow buggying, skiing, cable car-ing battle to overcome the invading forces of the evil General Masterman.

Microprose's former Telecom labels, Firebird and Rainbird, are also alive and kicking with a shoot-em-up and a stitch-em-up. Firebird's Quartz is a multiscrolling extravaganza featuring 'the most lurid graphics this side of Apocalypse Now'. Quite how it fits in with the scenario of flying through the lattice layers of a crystal collecting quarks while blasting away sub-atomic particles, we've yet to see.

Rainbird's Epoch sounds more down to earth and a little like an update of the old rule and govern games with a touch of strategy gaming thrown in.

Silicon Valet

Before we even come to grips with CD technology, the boffins are racing ahead with solid-state storage devices. Nottingham based Micro Control Systems has announced a 5Mbyte Silicon Disk System which claims loading speeds almost ten times faster than hard disk.

For video and graphics applications, the speed advantages are obvious and anyone wishing to know more can contact MCS on its freephone helpline, 0800 626328, during Monday to Friday office hours.

Altered Vision

Only a year after Activision announced that it had acquired the rights to convert the arcade action game Altered Beasts, the game is due for launch in October.

At their private hotel suite during last year's PC Show, the elite of the computer press were invited to play the game which sees the hero metamorphosising up through the mythological animal kingdom while fighting off the henchmen of Nelf, Evil Lord of the Underworld. To gain a reincarnation as a higher creature you have to collect the mystical 'spirit balls' from your opponents. Be warned, to reach the final conflict with Nelf, you'll certainly need a lot of balls and £24.99.

Art's Attack

We've just got over the skilfully titled Promised Lands and now it looks as though Neuromancer will be keeping us occupied throughout September.

Neuromancer is the much awaited adventure game based on the cult book of the same name which Electronic Arts released on most other formats eons ago.

In the pipeline there's also a roleplaying game called Swords at Twilight and the other game we're dying to see, Keef the Thief, which is an adventure game that should steal a few laughs.

Hewson's Onslaught

Andrew Hewson's prolific programming teams appear to have been working overtime to meet the rush for Christmas, known in computer jargon as the PC Show. No less than six games and a compilation are scheduled for release during the

September to November period.

Onslaught is a roleplaying adventure containing four arcade sequences. As a Fanatic your aim is to rid the land of blood-thirsty troops — and what a land it is. The map spreads over 10 kingdoms, each with 256 locations and countless enemies.

A Fanatic is a cross between Rambo and Paul Daniels, a magical warrior with a penchant for collecting enemy flags regardless of the cost — which in this case is expected to be £19.99.

Substitute fairies for Onslaught's flags and goblins and ghouls for troops, and you have a good idea what Stormlord is about.

The scenario for Steel may appear similar to Paradroid but don't be fooled, it's a battle to overcome renegade robots to recapture the spaceship 'Steel' but plays like an action adventure rather than like Paradroid's dodgem style.'

The megadeaths and mayhem continues in Slayer where anything that moves gets blasted until you reach the mother of a ship at the end of each round.

Battle Valley is a bit more chilling. Mercenaries have captured the last two medium range missiles in the world as the terms of an arms treaty nears completion. The mission is to capture the mercenaries' bases in the desert (Libyan, no doubt) and eleiminate the missiles.

Those who've seen the old Deathrace 2000 movie will appreciate 5th Gear. This is more than a mere racing game, the idea is to shoot the other cars out of the race. Special features — and we don't mean furry dice and nodding dogs — can be purchased for the car and it can even be traded in for a new one. Sounds more interesting than, er, what was it called? Ah yes, Fire and Forget — if only we could!

The compilation contains Eliminator, Custodian, Mercenary and Backlash but the price is only £29.99, a mere £10 more than Hewson's standard price.

What you Win

■ **25 Indy Tshirts, 25 Copies of** *The* **Indy's** Last Crusade, to the first successful entries, **AND 5 Indy hats** to the 5 best Amigaish jokes you can come up with.

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GRAND

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Engine: 1.5 Honda V6 Turbo
790 Hp @ 11,500 rpm
Redline: 11,500 rpm
Gearbox: 6 speed
Tires: Goodyear
Weight: 1190 lbs/540 kg

■ **Grand Prix Circuit aims to put you in** the hot seat of a Ferrari, McClaren or Williams racing machine and in the action of a Grand Prix season. You can sign up for either or these top racing teams and then practise, try out single races or head for the whole eight race season.

The first job is to choose your car by studying screens displaying the cars top speed, acceleration and torque factors and then try it out in a few practise sessions. When you're confident about cornering and accelerating without blowing your engine its time to take your place in the Formula 1 championship.

The championship is fought between you and nine other drivers who are as desperate to grab the points as you are. Look out particularly for Travis Daye and Bruno Gourdo as these will be your main contenders for the title. Before each race you must complete a practise lap which not only allows you to test out the track but also the time you take decides your position on the starting grid. This can decide your chances of success in the race as the lower down the grid you are the more cars you have to overtake to win.

During a race the screen display shows your view from the cockpit complete with two wing mirrors so you can keep an eye on cars that are trying to pass you. There is also a mini map of the circuit with a large dot representing you and smaller ones plotting the relative position as well as a window showing your time, lap number and current position in the race.

If you can't manage to win the race you should at least aim for sixth or better as these will give you some championship points and a chance at title.

If you want a Formula 1 driving game but aren't bothered about too much detail, realism or accuracy and just want to have fun then this could be the game for you.
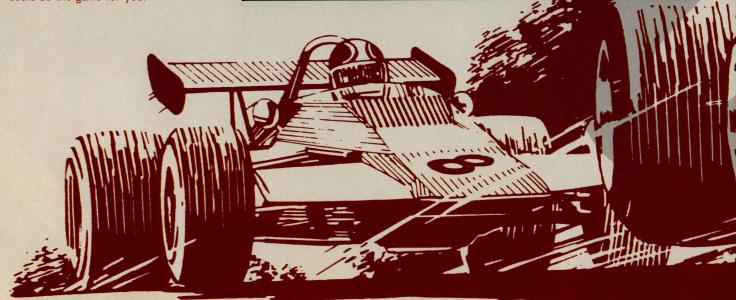
The practise lap gives you a chance to learn the track.

PRIX CIRCUIT
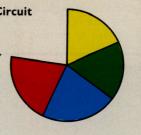
"And they're off. There goes Gourdo and Daye". Meanwhile at the back of the grid...

■ Grand Prix Circuit sees the re-emergence of Accolade in the UK after its rather untidy split from Electronic Arts. Grand Prix Circuit is an action gamer's view of Formula 1 racing and as such shouldn't be judged as a simulation. What it does do is give some meaning to racing around a circuit and has nine other cars to compete against.

The levels of difficulty ensure that beginners have a chance of success and then continues the challenge for more experienced players as the game begins to punish bad driving with poor times and even a blown engine. As the difficulty level increases the opponents become more aggressive and cut you up at every opportunity. You also have to be sure of your control as driving onto the grass will result in a spin off and not the short cut of lower levels.

Tony Hetherington

GRAND PRIX CIRCUIT

Title: **Grand Prix Circuit**
Supplier: **Accolade,**
The Studio Centre,
71 Ranelagh Gardens,
London SW6 3PA.
Tel:
Price: **£24.95**

Graphics 18
Sound 17
Gameplay 22
Value 20

Preview Time. Future presentations coming soon to an Amiga near you.

Strider / US Gold.

■ **Strider is the ultimate warrior. He** walks, fights, runs, jumps, somersaults, climbs, crawls, walks up vertical walls and kills enemy soldiers. When Strider is sent in to infiltrate the Russian army and return with enemy secrets you just know he is going to be less than subtle.

The mission begins in Moscow's Red Square with a battle with KGB agents and is then continued on the snow capped peaks of Siberia and against the spear and poisoned dart armed natives of the jungle lowlands before the

final confrontation back in Moscow against the Grand Master of the Red army. Who is the Grand Master? Could it be Gorby? Is killing everyone in sight the best way to infiltrate a country? Where on Earth did the jungle natives come from? The answer to these and many other questions will be revealed when Strider is unleashed next month.

Contact number **021 625 3388**
Release date **October**

Promised Lands / Electronic Arts

■ **Promised Lands is a data expansion** disk that will be released soon for EA's popular Populous. The disk will contain five new landscapes and peoples for you to conquer and aims to add new challenges and graphical appeal to the game. The new worlds include, Revolution Francaise complete with castles, cafes and guillotines, Silly land, Black land, Wild West land where cowboys and indians fight around forts and teepees, and finally The Bit Plains which is a weird computer programmers world with computer printout. Then there's the ZX81's and Crays as the settlements and cigarette stubs and pencils as landscape features.

Contact number **0753 49442**
Release date **Soon**

Altered Beast / Activision

■ **When Zeus needs a hero for a rescue** attempt he doesn't put an ad in the local job centre. Instead, he raises from the dead a brave Roman Centurion like you. Then to give you a fighting chance gives you the power of metamorphosis.

The prisoner you have to rescue is none other than the beautiful Athena caught in the clutches of Nelf, the evil lord of the underworld who is guarded by an army of

minions. Slaying these releases the mystical spirit balls tht can be collected and used to transform into a creature each with its own special powers. These include a Golden Wolfman who packs a hefty punch, a were-dragon that snorts fire, a bear with pungent bad breath, and a werewolf who can rip flesh. Once you've played the game you can tell everyone that you used to be a werewolf but you're all right noooooooooooooow!

Contact number **0734 311666**
Release date **October**

Pictionary / Domark

■ **Domark is set to dabble into the** board game market again and hopefully pull out another plum licence to follow on the success of *Trivial Pursuit*. *Pictionary*, the boardgame is sweeping the states and is a game for those

who are quick on the draw as players must sketch objects, people, places and animals as well as abstract thoughts in the hope that their team mates will guess it in time.

Pictionary the computer game includes a fully featured graphics package with which you can draw your clues on screen for friends to guess or just sit back and guess while the computer draws then for you. If you'd like some practise before the games release then try drawing a mongoose, New Zealand, and unanimous.

Contact number **01-278 2222**
Release date **Soon**

Knight Force / Titus

■ **Here's a chance to hack and slay your** way through five time zones in your quest to defeat the evil sorcerer Red Sabbath. The villain in question has seized the patroness of the second valley Princess Tanya. The importance of all this is that the second valley and indeed the rest of Belloth marks the crossroads of time and space and now Red Sabbath may gain

the secret.

The only way out of this particular pickly is for you, the Knight of Thunder, armed with your sword Steel Killer to go and sought him out. This quest will take you through 25 levels including prehistoric, medieval and present day, and into battle against gnomes, dinosours skeletons, ghosts and dragons.

Contact number **0268 541126**
Release date **October**

For all you intrepid 49.6CCers, here's a bike game to bus a cylinder to. Go for that front lawn.

■ **When I was but a lad, (many, many** moons ago — Ed), the only thing that people did with their motor bikes, was race them. This could be round a race track or the Isle of Man, or whatever, but the basic theme was the same. Just occasionally, the television cameras gave us a glimpse of something called scrambling which as far as I could make out seemed to involve racing up and down hills and through large areas of mud; it always seemed to be raining when this sport took place.

This idea of scrambling has now been refined and is currently one of the fastest growing sports in the UK. The idea is simple. Why have hills and mud when you can devise a series of ever more ludicrous obstacles all designed to show man and machine in perfect harmony.

Naturally, these new obstacles allow the rider to make a fool of himself in ever more spectacular ways. So to increase the tension, each rider now goes out individually rather than racing as a crowd.

This then is the setting for *Gremlin's Super Scramble Simulator*. Up to six players can compete over a total of fifteen different courses, although you have to complete a bank of three courses before you are allowed on to the next set.
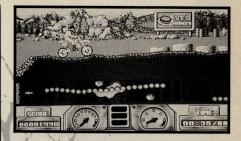
The obstacles include very steep hills, barrels, and cars, streams, ditches, logs, and anything else likely to prove troublesome. Each course has a time limit so you have at least three attempts at each obstacle before being allowed to skip it.

Control of your bike involves choosing from three gears and being able to lift your and back wheel as required. All this on top of being able to steer and accelerate accurately. (NB) Careful throttle and brake control is definitely the key success in this game.

Super Scramble Simulator achieves just the right balance between fun and challenge. Control of your bike is not easy, not least because you have to keep your eye on three different areas of the screen simultaneously: a side on view showing just what obstacles you are facing, a top down view for steering, and your throttle, revs and gear indicators.

Such is the degree of concentration required to keep your bike on course, that you tend to ignore the graphics and sound effects. They combine well together though and add considerably to the atmosphere of the game.

This is definitely a 'just one more go' game. It is easy to see exactly where you went wrong, but not so easy to remedy matters next time round. I dread to think what sort of horrors some of the later courses hold in store but I definitely intend finding out!

SUPER SCRAMBLE SIMULATOR

SUPER SCRAMBLE SIMULATOR

Darrin Williamson
Title: **Super Scramble Simulator**
Supplier: **Gremlin**
Price: 19.95

Graphics: 17
Sound: 15
Gameplay: 23
Value: 22

TAITO

THE NEWZEALAND STORY

THE
NEWZEALAND
STORY

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ST AND AMIGA VERSION BY
CHOICE SOFTWARE

Another wonder of kif down under. Stirring gameplay from Tiki Kiwi your stuffable yellow friend

SCORE :000000

SCORE :002975

NEW ZEALAND STORY

Graphics 21
Sound 20
Gameplay 22
Value 23

■ **Life for the Kiwi's was a bed of roses** in the Auckland Zoo. Joey the Kiwi was relaxing with a large Martini, soaking up the sun. When he noticed it was getting very dark. Removing his sunglasses he looked up, and saw the huge outline of Wally the walrus. 'Hello Joey' he grinned, before snapping him up and putting him in a sack which was filled with other kiwi's.

The game starts with Joey escaping from the sack and watching Wally waddle off with a sackload of his pals. Now you must help Joey free all twenty Kiwi's before they end up on the 'barbi' as tender cutlets. Kiwi's cannot fly, so you will need to steal balloons, ducks and various other flying machines used by Wally's minions. Most of Wally's creatures appear from windows, spewing forth with orders to kill poor Joey, some appear wth hoverpads, Joey can jump up and knock any unweary monster off his hoverpad and use it for himself. There are also small ponds and huge lakes which Joey must swim. Jump in, and Joey dons his wet suit and goggles, but he only has a short supply of oxygen. Lifting his head above water will fill his lungs again. Swimming is made even more difficult because Joey cannot use any weapons, he can only spit water at airborne creatures. Spitting water also replaces oxygen and if the oxygen level hits zero Joey will drown.

New Zealand Story is an advanced platform game, with a lot of extras. To help little Joey on his quest you can find weapons of all sorts scattered over all the levels. These come in the form of laser guns, bombs, dust clouds which blind the nasties, arrows, bibles that shake the earth and kill any nearby minions who which appeaand last nof all temporary invulnerability. (? this line)

The game is split into six islands, each island has four levels. On every fourth level, before you can rescue the caged Kiwi, a guardian must be killed. The first guardian is a huge whale made of ice, who swallows Joey whole. Once inside the whale you must shoot the lining of his stomach whilst avoiding deadly drips as the whale slowly melts. The whale will fall apart and release Joey when you have shot him enough times.

Well, there you have it. *NZ Story* is really a hybrid. A mixture of shoot 'em up and classic platform leaping (and swimming!).

The graphics are ultra cute and colourful. The four way scrolling is perfectly smooth. The soundtrack that plays throughout the game is bouncy and jolly. All these fine aspects make a first class game. Don't be fooled by the 'cutesy' graphics, *NZ Story* is one mean game. Even the hardened shoot 'em up player would like this. A superb conversion, go and buy it right now.

Kirk Rutter

RAMSOFT OF ROCHDALE

(FORMERLY 16-BIT SOFTWARE)

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Exxo's next bloody good game.

■ **Do you remember the weird and wonderful** Captain Blood in which you had to search the galaxy for clones of yourself so you could suck out their blood? Well, Exxo, the team behind that has completed a new game and it's just as strange but also even better to play.

In the game you are Raven and you're a Tuner which means you're a human with special Psi or mental powers. You and your girl firend Sci fi have just beaten up a load of Protozorqs but she has been captured and taken into their temple, the mountain of death. Protozorqs are a bunch of religious fanatics that following their God Zorqs advice take in outsiders of Offa and test them with the five ordeals a challenge you are about to undertake. If you fail to collect all five within an hour you will be fed to Delious and die but just trying may give you the chance to find Sci fi.
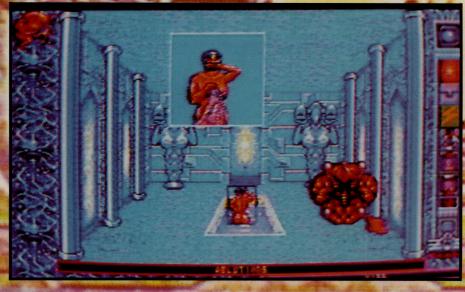
The challenges appear on screen as a series of rooms that encircle the Master protozorqs room. It is here that you must return with five skulls (awarded for completing puzzles) to show you are worthy of becoming Divo, Holder of the egg and Messenger of the new order. Each room contains doors to other rooms and passageways as well as strange objects, statues and monsters. For example, in one you must cross a pit of boiling slime complete with a hideous monster, in another a giant spider waits to chomp but other contain less obvious tasks with objects hidden from view or guarded by secrecy.

The game is controlled entirely by mouse, a selection of icons on the right hand side of the screen and by a selection of cursors that highlight interesting objects or creatures in a room. If you select one of these a huge brain appears in front of you with a number of mind bubbles sticking out of it. If you move the cursor over these then various options will be highlighted that can be selected by clicking the mouse button. These allow you to inspect, talk, take and attack as well as use you PSI powers.

Your PSI powers could make the difference between success and failure but you have to be careful when you use them as the Protozorqs will immediately attack you if you reveal your ture identity. You also have to use your powers sparingly as each time you use one you drain your reserves of PSI power. However, they allow you to see in the dark with Solar Eyes, walk on walls and ceilings with Sticky Fingers, know what people are really thinking with Know Mind, check for invisible objects with Zone Scan, move small objects telekinetically with Psi Shift and finally beat an opponent into pulp by triggering EV which stands for Extreme Voilence.
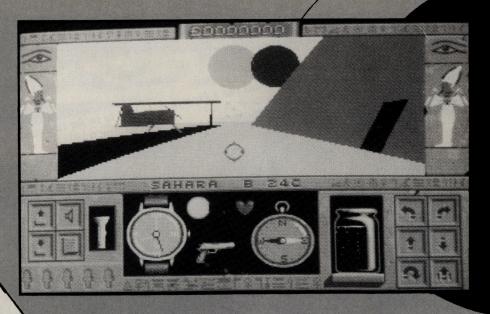
When you start playing Kult things will seem strange and your situation hopeless, but fear not as help is available through the Netwerk which works via the Hitachi-Glass Amplifier that lives in a jar in the Tuner Centre. Unfortunately, the messages given you aren't exactly clear adding to your problems.

KULT

Looks like a Protozorq is about to be fed to Delious. Is he worth saving?

In the Scorpian's presence — One of the tougher challenges.

■ **Kult is probably the pick of the games that I've played** this month as it has everything an Amiga gamer could want. It just oozes quality and originality that are sadly lacking in so many other titles. It's graphics, although mainly static, are outstanding and pile on the atmosphere to an already rich but strange scenario.

The problems you have to face in the challenge range from easy to difficult so even in your first game you feel as though you're getting somewhere. To help you further the Master of the Temple gives you a random object at the beginning of the game to help with a specific puzzle and this can be swapped later and supplemented with your power.

Overall, I think it's the PSI powers that separate this game from other joystick adventures and put it on a par with with classics like Dungeon Master.

Tony Hetherington

KULT

Title: **Kult**
Supplier: **Exxo**
(Infogrames),
Mitre House,
Abbey Road,
Enfield, Middlesex,
EX1 2RQ
Tel: 01 364 0123
Price: £24.95

Graphics **25**
Sound **20**
Gameplay **23**
Value **22**

Ankhs and geometric burial architecture, death and extinguished sunlight: Gordon Hamlett, joysticked Egyptologist doesn't believe in curses — at least not for this

■ **As the Egyptian empire** started to crumble, the High Priest discussed the situation with the Pharaoh. It was predicted that future generations might not be devoted worshippers of the Sun- God Ra. To this end, and as a punishment for non believers, a pyramid was built with a curse laid upon it. Should anything block the sun during the hours of daylight, it would be destroyed.
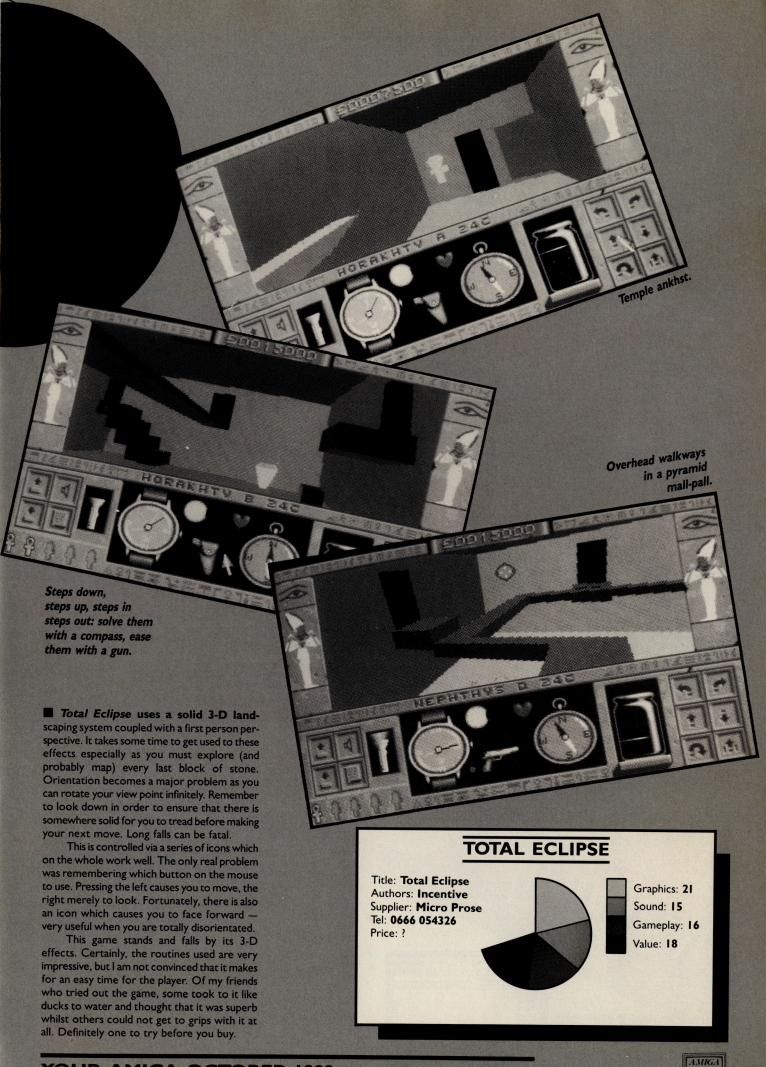
TOTAL ECLIPSE

The time shifts to 1930. You are an explorer motivated by the prospects of great wealth. An archaeologist friend has informed of you the great treasures to be found within the pyramid. He has also told you of the curse. As your biplane lands outside the pyramid, there are but two hours to go before the moon blots out the sun in an eclipse. Naturally, you don't believe all this superstitious nonsense, but if the moon were to explode it would shower the earth with deadly meteorites.

The key to saving the world, and making yourself extremely rich into the bargain is to find your way to the shrine of the Sun-God at the apex of the pyramid, and destroy it within the next two hours. The pyramid is a huge 3-D maze. There are many dead ends, blocked areas, ramps and traps to be overcome. Magic ankhs will allow you to access certain areas if you can find them. Mummies will attack you, and you have only your trusty revolver for defence. On top of that, you will also have to watch your water levels and, your heart rate.

A sudden coronary is not going to help matters, but how long can you afford to rest when you are racing against the clock?

Temple ankhst.

Overhead walkways in a pyramid mall-pall.

Steps down, steps up, steps in steps out: solve them with a compass, ease them with a gun.

■ **Total Eclipse** uses a solid 3-D landscaping system coupled with a first person perspective. It takes some time to get used to these effects especially as you must explore (and probably map) every last block of stone. Orientation becomes a major problem as you can rotate your view point infinitely. Remember to look down in order to ensure that there is somewhere solid for you to tread before making your next move. Long falls can be fatal.

This is controlled via a series of icons which on the whole work well. The only real problem was remembering which button on the mouse to use. Pressing the left causes you to move, the right merely to look. Fortunately, there is also an icon which causes you to face forward — very useful when you are totally disorientated.

This game stands and falls by its 3-D effects. Certainly, the routines used are very impressive, but I am not convinced that it makes for an easy time for the player. Of my friends who tried out the game, some took to it like ducks to water and thought that it was superb whilst others could not get to grips with it at all. Definitely one to try before you buy.

TOTAL ECLIPSE

Title: **Total Eclipse**
Authors: **Incentive**
Supplier: **Micro Prose**
Tel: **0666 054326**
Price: ?

Graphics: 21
Sound: 15
Gameplay: 16
Value: 18

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AMG 4

Wei Man eine Mann-Mashine regulierte

■ As a robotronics engineer, you have just graduated from college. Now, it is time for your first job and you soon find yourself working for I.R.C. in one of their space freighters. Your job is concerned with planetary exploration and you are based in the cybernetic control room where you are in charge of a remote controlled robot.

Obviously, your employers are not going to let you loose on the latest technology straight away. First, you will need to prove your ability on the old 'Q.E.2' model. The practice area is unusual too. As real planets are somewhat on the expensive side, the company leases Nightdawn, a series of platforms designed to simulate a hostile planet surface.

There are ten platforms in all, five for you to practise on and then a further five where you get your hands on the latest technology, the model 'N.D.-1'

In order to progress from one platform to the next, you have to arrive at the exit point. This is guarded by a series of locked doors, one way platforms, transporters and so on. You have to find the keys and switches in order to navigate your way through the maze.

Of course there are other problems too. Like the hidden mines that blow your robot to bits until you discover the whereabouts of the mine detector kit. A weapon might prove handy too in order to gain a certain amount of self defence against the batteries of air bomb launchers. You can also pick up extra energy and, in the later stages of the game, maps and radar detailing the location of the exit on that particular level.
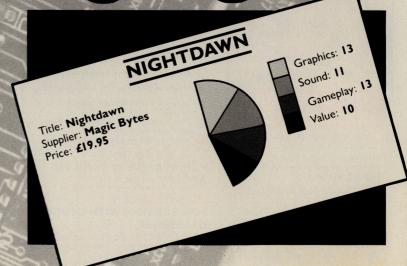
Easily translatable: Americanisms and a winking robot.

Nachtmorgengrau

■ There is very little that is original or noteworthy here. How many games have we seen before that feature mazes of this type? Pick up key 7. Go to sector 7. Pick up key 3. Go to sector 3 etc. Each level is something of a lottery to start with as find your way about and learn where all the various hazards are. Once a level is completed though, it is not likely to present much of a challenge and you should be able to complete it every time.

Although the backdrops are reasonable (multi-scrolling top down view) they are certainly not outstanding and the graphics involving your robot and the enemy etc. are really rather pathetic; small in size and lacking in detail, more suited to the C64 than the Amiga. The best part of the game comes from trying to decipher the instructions which have been translated from the German by someone whose command of English grammar and spelling is somewhat less than perfect. An uninspired effort. **Gordon Hamlett**

NIGHTDAWN

Title: **Nightdawn**
Supplier: **Magic Bytes**
Price: **£19.95**

Graphics: 13
Sound: 11
Gameplay: 13
Value: 10

Go for it !

LIVE: 006

TRANS

A Man Controlled Machine

■ **Als Robotronikingenieur hast Du** promoviert. Nun ist es Zeit für den ersten Job und Du bist bald bei I.R.C in einer ihrer Raumfrachtschiffe angestellt. In deinem Job befasst du dich mit der Planetenforschung und Du bist in der Kybernetik-Befehlszentrale stationiert, wo Du für einen ferngesteuerten Maschinenmenschen verantwortlich bist.

Klar, Deine Arbeitgeber werden Dich nicht gleich auf die neuste Technik loslassen. Zuerst musst Du mit dem alten "Q.E.2"-Modell deine Fahigkeiten beweisen. Auch die Übungszone ist ungewöhnlich. Da echte

Planeten ziemlich teuer sein können, mietet die Gesellschaft eine Reihn von Rampen, "Nightdawn" genannt, die eine feindliche Planetenoberfläche simulieren soll.

Es gibt insgesamt zehn Rampen: fünf, worauf Du üben darfst und dann noch fünf, von denen du die neue Technik betreuen darfst; den "N.D.I."-Modell.
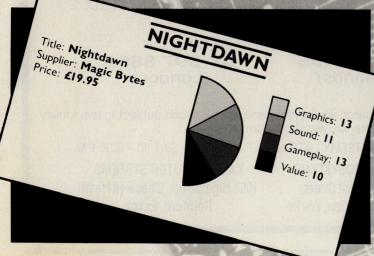
Um won einer Rampe zu der anderen

weiterzugelangen, musst Du an den Ausgang ankommen. Dieser wird durch eine Reihe von gesperrten Turen, Einbahnrampen, Transporschiffen usw. geschützt. Die Schlüssel und Schalter musst Du finden, die est Dir ermöglichen, das Labyrinth zu durchfahren.

Natürlich gibt es auch andere Probleme. Zum Beispiel die verborgenen Minen, die Deinen Maschinenmenschen in die Luft sprengen, ausser Du entdeckst, wo der Minensucher steckt. Eine Waffe Könnte Dir auch gut helfen, wenn Du Dich gegen dis Batterien von Luftbombenwerfer einigermassen verteidigen willst. Du kannst auch zusätzliche Kraft-reserven erhalten. In der Endphase des Spieles ist es auch möglich, Landkarten und Radargerät zu bekommen, die auf einer bestimmten Ebene die örtliche Lage von dem Ausgang ermitteln.

Nachtmorgengrau

NIGHTDAWN

Title: **Nightdawn**
Supplier: **Magic Bytes**
Price: **£19.95**

Graphics: 13
Sound: 11
Gameplay: 13
Value: 10

■ **Hier gibt es sehr wenig Originelles oder** Bemerkenswertes. Wie viele Spiele haben wir schon gesehen, die solche Labyrinthe aufweisen? Taste 7 wählen. Auf Sektor 7 gehen. Taste 3 wählen. Auf Sektor 3 hehen usw. Jede Ebene ist am Anfang eigentlich ein Litteriespial, bis man sich zurechtfindet und die Position der verschiedenen Risiken kennenlernt. Hat man aber eine Ebene überwinden, bringt sie nachher eigentlich keine Herausforderung mehr und man wird sie wahrscheinlich jedes Mal überwinden können.

Obgleich die Hintergründe nicht schlecht sind (multiscrolling top down view), sind sie auch sicher nicht hervorragend und die Graphik, die den Maschinenmenschen, den Feind usw. darstellt, ist schlecht: klein und undetailliert, die C64 ware besser geeignet als die Amiga. Das beste an dem Spiel ist die Aufgabe, Befehle zu entziffern, die aus dem Deutschen von jemandem übersetzt geworden sind, dessen englischen Sprachkenntnisse nicht gerade perfekt waren. Ein nicht überzeugender Versuch.
Translation by Rowena Parsons

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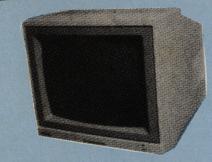

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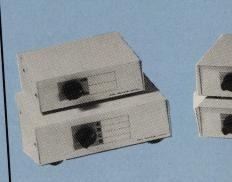NEW STAR LC24/10 COLOUR
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D I A M O N D

Diamond Computers announce the opening of an Amiga-dedicated Games and Simulations arcade in our Southampton office
Phone for details.

Gallery Competition

You've heard of Activision, and you'll remember their games. But, can you

Following on the success of the Your Amiga Gallery, as a month to month competition of entries received from readers, this month has an extra special addative — the overall winner of past winners.

■ **The competition has been adjudicated by the groovy guys** an' gals at Activision, and they have chosen their favourite picture from the ones printed in previous issues.

The winner, shown below, is Alan Curdie's *Faces* — a prize winner from september.

produce Amiga generated graphics based on any of their past or present titles? If you think you can you've got about four weeks to show us what you can do.

■ **Although there is no prerequisite game to work from you** might like to concentrate on YA's November Poster Special *Altered Beast* or *Ghostbusters II*, or *Power Drift*, or *Galaxy Force*. *Nota Bene* the competition closes on **November 1st**

The winner will receive an Amiga Digitiser(Retail Value £89.95), supplied by Datel Electronics, and have their artwork printed in January's *Your Amiga*. Runners up will receive subscriptions to *Your Amiga* and get their artwork printed as well.

So get your brushes blowing, your palettes colour tasty, your DDDs sculpted, your photon IIIs painted...and your entries in the post...clearly named and addressed you know: on your laser printed labels and embossed arabesqued letter headed paper. Then pop it in the Royal Male for the MI Junction 8 factory and *YA*. at: Your Amiga, Argus House, Boundary Way, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP2 7ST.

DATEL ELECTRONICS

STAGE ???. Rinie Hoogendoorn, Lochem, Netherlands.

1st PRIZE

ECHAPPE. Marianne Wolf, Dublin, Ireland.

2nd PRIZE

Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade

■ **The man in his hat is back and this time** he's brought his dad! That's what the trailers said about the third and final adventure for the one and only Indiana Jones.

As the film has two stars, Harrison Ford and Sean Connery as Henry Jones it seems logical that there should be two games. This, the first, is a hard hitting punching and whipping game with an adventure to follow.

As you'd expect the game closely follows the main scenes of the film which begins when Indy was just 12 years old and as a scout explored his first caves, only to witness the theft of the Cross of Coronado. While the robbers backs were turned he snatched the cross and attempted to escape from the gang lead by a man wearing a brown hat.

In the game the caves are represented by a series of platforms and ropes, the gang by hoodlums wielding guns. Unlike, other games of films each of these stages is more than a couple of screens long as to complete this one, and earn your hat and whip, you must not only safely travel through the caves but also survive a chase across a circus train complete with wild animals.

It is now 1938 and Indy's father has sent him what he describes as his Grail diary. This leads him to the catacombs of a Venice church in search of the tomb of a crusade knight. The tomb is dark and skeletons lie scattered on the floor. But beware, in the darkness of the crypt lie deadly rats ready to pounce.

By now, vermin of a different kind, the Nazis, have seized Professor Henry Jones and have him imprisoned inside a castle. The next

Cross of Coronado — Escaping on the back of a Circus train.

Catacombs — You'll need a map to find the tomb of the Grail knight.

Zeppelin — The Germans are closing. You must find the bi-plane.

There have been many games of films before that have tried to capture the action and atmosphere of a film. Some have tried to follow the exact plot while others have concentrated on a single scene and hoped that the film going, game buying public would excuse any differences. This game couldn't lose as the film breaks neatly into sections that easily form game sections.

Lucasfilm Games has also played it safe by using a tried and tested game system, that of a platform combat game, which thanks to the film plot has a number of different backdrops and components. For example, the Cross of Coronado is in a crumbling underground cave and then on top of a moving train, the Zeppelin scene moves slightly to give the feeling of flight and the Grail temple and Venician catacombs are suitably sinister.

If you were being hyper critical you may say that the game could be about any hero but such thoughts will disappear as soon as you pummel your first Nazi with a crack of your whip while the Indiana Jones theme blares in the background and with screen after screen of adventure lying ahead.

Gordon Hamlett

Grail Temple — The mouth of God.

Grail Temple — The word of God.

challenge of the game is for Indy to scale the deadly ramparts of Ichloss Brunwald and rescue his Dad before the Germans can find out the location of the Grail Temple.

On route to the site of the Grail and the end of the Crusade Indy and Henry have hitched a lift on a German Zeppelin. Of course they are discovered and must battle thier way through its metal framework to one of the biplanes that act as lifeboats.

With his Dad safe, the Grail Diary, and the clues from the tomb of the Grail Knight Indy at last knows the locations of the Holy Grail. The Grail temple contains many dangerous and deadly traps that make it the best part of the game. For example, according to the Grail Diary, to reach the Grail you must complete three challenges, the breath of God, the word of God and the path of God which translates into problemsthat must be solved with a joystick. To succeed you will need timing, skill, some knowledge of Latin or remember things from the film. Either way, it'll test your gaming skills.

INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE

Title: **Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade.**
Supplier: **Lucasfilm (US Gold)**
Units 2/3
Holford Way,
Holford,
Birmingham, B6 7AX
Tel: **021 356 3388**
Price: **£19.99**

Graphics 18
Sound 18
Gameplay 20
Value 20

CYBORG. Nigel Holder, Rochdale, Lancashire.

3rd PRIZE

Dunking good fun this one — neat graphics, great game play.

FAST BREAK

■ **I can only ever remember playing** basketball once, at school when I was about fourteen. Early in the game, I received the ball and amazed everybody by dribbling from one end of the court to the other. The reason that this amazed everybody was twofold. One, I am not exactly renowned for my athletic prowess and two, everone else had been brought up on a diet of netball and so consequently didn't actually realise that dribbling was allowed. Flushed with this success, I promptly threw the ball to one of the opposition and never received another pass for the duration of the game.

Basketball has never really caught on in this country, something that Accolade hopes to change with the release of *Fast Break*.

The game features three players on either side, a guard, centre and forward. Who plays in each position is up to you as you have a squad of players to choose from, each with their own strengths and weaknesses. One player might be very fast but prone to lose the ball easily when tackled. Another might be slow but very accurate when it comes to shooting.

Both sides have fifteen different moves in their offensive playbook. Fourteen of these are preset and go under assorted wonderful names, Double Screen Right, Pick N Roll, Reverse Cut and Ally-Oop. The last play you can design yourself. Any four of these plays can be stored in a roster which you can use whenever you are on the offensive.

There is no need to always use these plays though. If you see a great big hole opening up in the opposition's defence there is nothing to stop you running straight up to the basket and scoring your points. By a similar token, there are five defensive plays to choose from as well, all variations as to how you mark the other side.

Whoever has possession of the ball will automatically dribble with it until he gets rid of it or until he is dispossessed. A quick press of the fire button will pass the ball if a team mate is in direct line with you. A longer press means that you will try and shoot. There are interceptions, blocking moves, rebounds and personal fouls but no free throws. As the manual says, free throws are for wimps. Players

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tire during the game so you will have to make judicious use of substitutions.

SLAMMERS 00
C — "SKYSCRAPER" BRAXTON
G — "FLASH" JACKSON
F — DAVE "MUSCLE" MCGOWAN
    (PLAYBOOK)
7-2 275 LBS. HITS THE BOARDS HARD. HANDLER. TO
GOOD INSIDE SHOT. LOUSY BALL
0/0 FG   0 PT   0 PF   0 ST   0 TO

JAMMERS 00
C — "STRETCH" THURMOND
G — CLYDE "THE COLONEL" SANDERS
F — FLOYD "THE BARBER" JOHNSON
    (PLAYBOOK)
6-8 235 LBS. DEADLY OUTSIDE SHOOTER.
TROUBLE HANGING ON TO THE BALL.
0/0 FG   0 PT   0 PF   0 ST   0 T

Player break-downs: inside leg measurement, waist size, mother's birthday.

■ **It took me a long time to get into** this game but a lot of that is due to my own unfamiliarity with the game. If you are in a similar position, then I would strongly recommend that you play with a friend who is actually inept rather than getting stuffed by the computer all the time. A beginner's skill level would not have gone amiss.

That said, the game plays very well with fast smooth action. Certainly, any basketball fan should certainly have a look at *Fast Break* with a view to immediate purchase. Myself, I still find basketball mind-numbingly dull and anyone in a similar position should probably steer clear.

Tony Hetherington

QTR 1 5:01 :18
Jammers   Slammers
00   00

Game sponsorship by Accolade.

FAST BREAK

Title: **Fast Break**
Supplier: **Accolade**

Tel: **01-585-3308**
Price: **£24.95**

Graphics 21
Sound 12
Gameplay 19
Value 16

One game's much like another — or at least that's one way to see it!

■ **For anyone wanting a big name to** sponsor in the world of golf, Jack Nicklaus really is the ideal candidate. A great player, albeit past his prime, extremely personable, and without a hint of scandal attached to his name. Now it is the turn of the computer game manufacturers to cash in on his image.

There have been gold games before and to be perfectly honest *Jack Nicklaus* does not look a great deal different from what has gone before. Indeed, it would not be going too far to suggest that this was a revamped version of *Leaderboard* with just a few cosmetic changes to make you think that you have got hold of something different.

There are three courses to choose from — two that the Golden Bear has designed himself, plus a third which is a concoction of Jack's eighteen favourite holes culled from assorted courses in Britain and the USA. Up to four players can compete and, if you don't want to play on your own, there are a selection of computer opponents to choose from.

JACK
NICKLAUS

Value 17

f to the 1st ole

8th at
PEBBLE BEACH

"My Favorite Shot
in All of Golf"

Click

fred
troke:
stance
l: E

Two forms of scoring are offered; standard strokeplay and something new time called 'skins' — a gambling game rendered pointless here because of the lack of any real incentive. Why not stick to traditional matchplay? There are two levels of play. On expert level, the wind affects the flight of your ball and you must select your own club. This is done for you if you are a beginner although you can override the computer's choice if you want to.

Graphics 18

Sound 7

Hole: 13
Par: 4
Aim S...
...t.
Putt
30 F

■ **Putting is the one area of the game** that annoyed me slightly. Instead of lining up the putt with the golfer directly in front of the hole, the shot is off set by an angle of about thirty degrees. When you are aiming somewhere in the direction of the top right hand corner of the screen just for a 'straight' shot, adjusting for the break of the green becomes very difficult.

There is nothing really wrong with *Jack Nicklaus*, it is perfectly playable and competently programmed, if somewhat slow when it comes to waiting for the hole to be drawn. I just found the whole affair to be rather bland. Certainly, if you already own *Leaderboard*, there is very little new on offer here and I must admit to finding the rival version considerably more addictive.
Tony Hetherington

Hole: 1
Par: 4
410 Yd...
en par

Title: **Jack Nicklaus**
Supplier: **Accolade**

Tel: **01-585 3308**
Price: **£24.95**

Control of each shot is simple in theory, slightly less so in practice. After selecting your club, you decide where you want to aim the ball. Usually, this is straight at the flag but not always — you may wish to hit round a hazard rather than over it, or take into account the wind.

After setting up the shot, actually hitting the ball requires three pressures of the mouse button and a not inconsiderable degree of timing. The first press initiates a sliding energy scale. The second press stops it and thus determines the amount of energy you put into each stroke — not everything is hit with 100% force.

Immediately after the guage is stopped, it starts to fall rapidly. Again you must press the button to stop on the zero power mark. Achieving this will mean tht your shot flies straight. Miss the mark and you will hook or slice depending on whether you were early or late in pressing the button. Of course, you may want to play a shot deliberately this way.

Gameplay 19

Jack's Greatest 18
Hole 13   Pro Tee   465
Par 4   Men's Tee   457
**   Ladies' Tee   447**
Clic

Slightly off-beam, it's Asteroids for the Amiga.

If first impressions were anything to go by, I'd never have considered actually buying this game, because despite the slick packaging, the instruction manual is very clumsily written and it's overly wordy style only adds to the confusion.

This itself mirrors this combination, for once past the impressive title screen, I was met by a game that looked as if it were a re-incarnation of several other mediocre titles. Fortunately things improve somewhat after that. The game concept is a simple one; around the screen are numerous energy points some of which are already switched on, with the remaining majority dormant and awaiting activation. To activate the dormant energy points you must first bounce your glider into any one of the active energy pints that shares the same vertical or horizontal axis. This energises your glider, turning it red. From then on it is then simply a matter of bumping into the selected energy point. This joins the two points with a red energy beam which must not be touched by your glider as it kills instantly.

While we're on the subject of instant death, killer balls and 'dead' squares both hasten your demise should you be careless enough to bump into them. The killer balls bounce randomly around the screen, being a nuisance rather than a hazard for much of the time. 'Dead' squares have skulls on them and do not move at all.

Various other elements conspire to make your tasks as difficult as possible. Magnets, which draw you towards them; high friction, which slows your movement; high gravity, which drags you downwards constantly. There's also an array of squares ranging from standard walls, to hunters, which are wall blocks that remorselessly hound you around the screen in an attempt to trap you against a boundary or in a corner.

There is a choice of control methods; the first gives you 'Thrust' like controls and is a faster way of moving about. The second method uses rotational controls rather like those of the classic space game Asteroids.

Neither method is ideal, being a little tricky to master with precision, and is responsible for much of the game's initial difficulty.

Having said that, once mastered, the first method provides an interesting and adequate form of control which doesn't detract too much from the game play.

Beam is by no means a difficult game, and after playing through a number of levels it becomes clear that it's successful completion will be a matter of patience and the ability not to get too irritated as you make yet another stupid mistake.

At first glance you could be forgiven for thinking that *Beam* was an arcade strategy game, but what small amounts of strategy may have been required in the early stages, soon become unnecessary as you understand the very basic logic that's involved.
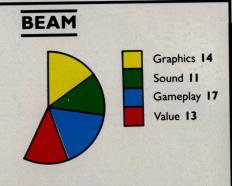
The graphics are clourful but completely uninspiring, with your glider being depicted as a feeble white triangle. The sound FX are barely worthy of the Spectrum, and the theme tune (which can be made to run instead of FX during play,) is competent enough, but becomes irritating after about two minutes!

Each time you start a new game you have to play through all the levels that you have already previously completed, which left me feeling a little bored by the time I actually got to the new levels.

I still can't decide whether I like *Beam* much, or not. I can't help feeling a vague sense of disappointment which I think is caused by the unimaginative design of the different levels. On the other hand, it provided a certain degree of mental stimulation, and was quite entertaining for a good number of hours.

Mat Broomfield

BEAM

Title: **Beam**
Supplier: **Gremlin UK**

Tel: **0742 753 423**
Price: **£19.95**

	Rating
Graphics	14
Sound	11
Gameplay	17
Value	13

Mover
Alcoholic
Hunter
Points
Stopper
Vector
Jump

You are not a good pilot Don't bump the killerballs

Midi Update

Darrin Williamson looks at a revolutionary new MIDI rack unit, and finally gets his paws on an official UK version of one of the most eagerly awaited Amiga music packages this year — Music X

■ **When MIDI set-ups consist of** Keyboard, Sequencer and a couple of synth modules — then some form of quick and painless patching system is a useful addition to the system. If your equipment list goes far beyond that — a simple patchbay just isn't enough — you need something more.

Fortunately with something more in the shape of the MX-8 MIDI Patchbay/Processor.

It comes in a black 1U high rack-mount case with a two line LED display on the front panel along with a power switch, left and right cursor keys, Yes and No keys, a Function key, and a Reset button which sends an All Notes Off message to every output on every channel so that you can deal quickly with any stuck notes you may encounter when sequencing. On the rear panel are your six MIDI INs and your eight MIDI OUTs. But there's much more to it than merely a bunch of MIDI sockets.

To begin with it's a six MIDI IN, eight MIDI OUT patchbay which not only allows you to select from the front panel which MIDI signals go where but also lets you to merge two of the inputs and send them to any or indeed all of the OUTputs. So, for instance, you could send the timing codes from a Drum Machine and the note information into your Amiga sequencer at the same time.

However that is but the tip of the iceberg as you also have not one but two utility buffers within the unit known as Processor A and B. Each of these can manipulate MIDI information independently and send it to any single, pre-defined MIDI channel or across all of them (OMNI mode). Many of these processes I've never seen implemented before and those I have have never been incorporated into one single unit before.

The Edit Screens

First of all you have the filters. From here you can instruct your rig to ignore practically every sort of MIDI data including Note On/Off, Aftertouch, Control Change, Program Change, Pitch Bend, and System Common/Exclusive. This can be useful if, for instance your main (or Master) keyboard transmits Aftertouch information but none of your expanders actually respond to it. Why waste valuable sequencer memory when any surplus MIDI information can be weeded out before it ever hits your computer.

The Compander

Next we have the Compander — a combination of compressor and expander. Audio equivalents of these are often used in studios when dealing with highly dynamic sounds (Guitars, Voice, Basses etc) for either restricting the dynamic range (Compressing) or boosting it (Expanding). Well this does exactly the same thing but with MIDI velocity values rather than audio output. When the Compander is on you can select a ratio which indicates the actual amount of compression or expansion. 1:1 indicates no change, 1:1.25 __ 1:3.00 are expansion settings, 1:0.75 __ 1:0.25 are compression settings. Compression is useful for tightening up Bass or String sounds that tend to sound messy when there's too much variation in dynamics.

Conversely Expansion is used where you want a higher degree of velocity response like with lead lines or Drum patterns.

Keyboard Mapping

Having successfully dealt with the Compander we go on to the mapping utilities. From this page you can split up your main keyboard into four separate zones each with its own assigned MIDI channel. So with a Keyboard and an expander such as the MT-32 or the D-110 you could zone off the lowest octave for a Bass sound on channel two, have Strings from channel three on the next two octaves leaving an octave left for Piano and Orchestral stabs on channels four and five respectively.

Transpose

Next is the Transpose function which simply allows you to shift your keyboard range up or down by 64 semitones (just over five octaves). Useful if you want to give a Grand Piano performance but only have a four or five octave keyboard at your disposal. All you need to do is transpose down 12 semitones (one octave) record into your sequencer then, on the next available track, transpose up two octaves for the top end of the piece and combine the two tracks.

Velocity Cross Switch

The next one, I have to admit I've not come across before. Velocity Cross Switching function allows you to specify a threshold for Key On velocity which, when reached selects an alternate MIDI Channel (pre-specified). This would be useful if you have a sampler that has a degree of multi-timbrality. You could sample an instrument (piano, snare drum) played softly on channel one and the same instrument played hard on channel two and velocity cross switch, the two allowing a multi-sampled performance.

Channel Shift

Channel Shift is another self explanatory function. It basically allows you to move the data from one MIDI channel along either to the next (in offset mode) or to a pre-selected alternative (reassign mode).

Digital Delay

The final page in Edit mode is Digital Delay which, like the Compander is a MIDI equivalent of an audio device. Here you can instruct the processor to send the same note values out as it receives, and with decaying volume. The result — an echo. Very useful if you find your self running out of effect processors.

Additional Features

Outside of the Edit mode we find the Patch Chain function. This allows a program change sent from one unit (say your master keyboard) to another unit (say an expander) having altered the program change number. So you never have the problem of not having patches correspond.

So having tweaked every little parameter you can now store your end result into one of the 50 battery-backed internal memories. Alternatively you could send the whole lot out as a system exclusive data dump to an Amiga generic patch librarian package.

Once a selection of useful set-ups have been created you can toggle between them using program changes stored on your sequencer. This would allow complete system changes within fractions of a second (between a verse and a chorus if you like).

Conclusions

300 might seem like an awful lot of money when other products that do a similar job cost a fraction of that. However, it's the old adage "you get what you pay for" that comes into play here as the MX-8 offers so much more than merely switching MIDI INs to OUTs.

If you feel you wouldn't find the other functions I've described to you of use then go ahead and buy a less expensive unit. If, however, you do need the features now or feel it would be wise to get them for the future then you won't find individual units that do the same for anywhere near the same price as this single unit. Certainly a 'must' for my Studio. How about yours?

Product: **MX-8 MIDI Patchbay/Processor**
Supplier: **Syco.** Price: **£299**

Music X Revisited

■ **Towards the end of last year you may** remember I took an exclusive sneak preview of an Amiga sequencing package called Music X. We certainly do as ever since it was published we've had numerous calls about it, asking when it would be released and where it could be obtained.

Well you can breathe a sigh of relief. It's out now and available from Microlllusions through SDL (Silica Distribution Ltd), the details of which are at the end of the article.

Okay, so what do you actually get for your '230? Well, the package contains a stonking great 480 page manual, the program Disk, example songs disk, and a utilities disk featuring a variety of file conversion routines.

The manual is very impressive indeed. Everything nicely laser set including nice clear screen dumps. Fifteen chapters, a glossary, appendices, and a comprehensive index are provided in a well written, easily digestible form. Chapters for each of the program areas are there as well as Tutorials for beginners and special sections for advanced users, so pretty much everyone's catered for.

One point worth mentioning at this stage is the fact that what you can buy now is the Official UK version. A few copies have been floating around during the last few months from the States which, although they seem to do the job they do have some different keyboard commands. So don't be tempted by anyone offering you a copy without the UK sticker on it because not only will it not work properly but you will also miss out on the UK after sales support that is planned. Anyway, enough waffle; let's take a look at the program.

There are ten separate areas to the program (with provision for others later). I'll look at these individually.

First of all you have the **Sequencer** page which basically contains your transport controls, song arrangements and sequence listings. Once a track has been recorded it is stored in a small RAM disk area known as the Record Buffer. Once in there you can edit it in one of two modes. In **Bar Edit** you have a graphical representation of the notes showing pitch, duration and velocity. Each MIDI channel shows up on the Editor in a different colour which helps enormously when hunting for that elusive bum note.

In **Event Edit** you are given the same information but as numerical data which may well suit programmers better although just because the Bar Editor is graphically oriented doesn't mean to say that it's any less powerful than its numerical counterpart. Both have equal flexibility allowing all the usual cutting and pasting of individual or groups of notes plus a very flexible quantization routine allowing percentages of quantized feel.
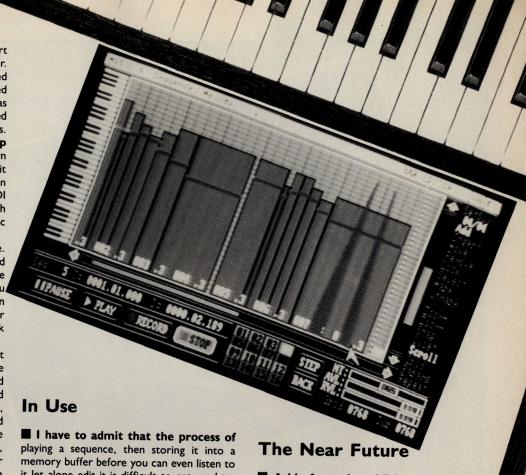
Next you have the **Filters page** - a sort of software based MIDI Patchbay/processor. From here MIDI IN signals can be re-routed filtered (again, in percentages) or indeed blocked altogether. Although very useful, as it stands it really comes into its own when used with a MIDI interface with multiple OUTputs.

From there you can tackle the **Keymap** area which allows you to define your own keyboard maps. By this I mean setting up split points for different MIDI channels or even assigning individual keys to individual MIDI commands such as Tempo change, Patch change, MIDI Start/Stop or sequencer specific commands like Mute or Solo track.

Next we have the Amiga Samples page. *Music X* can handle up to 16 IFF or Sonix sound samples and can play four of them at any one time. This section of the program allows you to view exactly what samples you have in memory and gives you control over their envelope which can be tweaked and saved back on to disk for later use.

Having sorted out the internal sounds let us not forget your external hardware with the **Librarian Page**. From there you can save and load you favourite patches from your keyboard or rack-unit to *Music X*, store them on disk, and send them back again when you next need them. Four Libraries are included on the examples disk — Roland D-50, Casio CZ-1000, Yamaha DX-100 and DX-7 plus full Editors for the D-50, DX-100 and the TX-81Z. Strange how most of the sample sequences are geared up to run on an MT-32 and yet there's no sign of an editor for this unit on the disk. Mind you UK dealer Advanced Recording Concepts are already working on some third party editors for the Korg M-1, The Roland D-110 and the Ensoniq VFX.

In Use
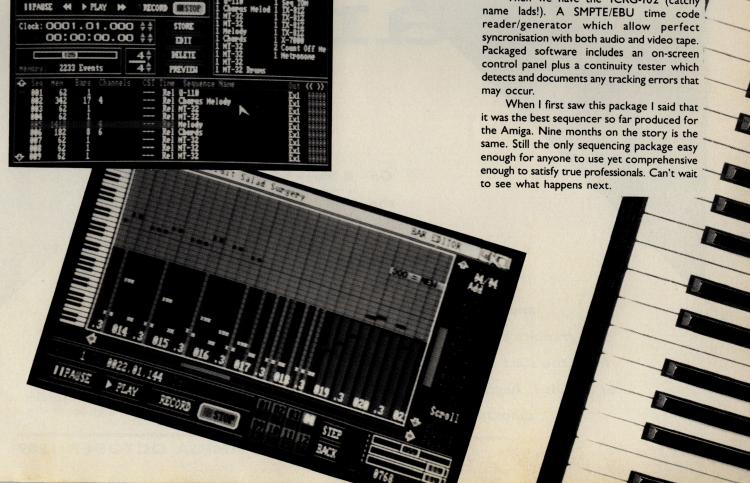
■ **I have to admit that the process of** playing a sequence, then storing it into a memory buffer before you can even listen to it let alone edit it is difficult to get used to. However, every sequencer has it's own personality to get to know and *Music X's* takes less than an evening to get used to.

Rather a shame there wasn't a drum edit page or any form of scorewriting facilities but then they have to leave a few bits and pieces for the extra module makers to sell.

The Near Future

■ **Aside from the additional software** editors I mentioned earlier the next two products from *Microlllusions* will be hardware based.

Firstly there will be MIDI X — a two IN, six assignable OUT MIDI Interface. Both Inputs are switchable and all six OUTputs can be switched in or out or designated as a THRU port. Hopefully we should see that within the next month.

Then we have the TCRG-102 (catchy name lads!). A SMPTE/EBU time code reader/generator which allow perfect syncronisation with both audio and video tape. Packaged software includes an on-screen control panel plus a continuity tester which detects and documents any tracking errors that may occur.

When I first saw this package I said that it was the best sequencer so far produced for the Amiga. Nine months on the story is the same. Still the only sequencing package easy enough for anyone to use yet comprehensive enough to satisfy true professionals. Can't wait to see what happens next.

Triangle T

On the loop of video production, promos, and specialized Amiga graphics they've been there from the start — Since the days of DPaint I, Aegis Animator, and dinosaur egg painting.

■ **Triangle Television are** a small, but large, T.V. and Video company in the Edwardian Wilds of South West London. Formed about three years ago they now have 3 employees to match their 3 founding Directors — Dave Weaver, Peter Barrett, and John Chalk.

Although much of their early work was in the T.V. production arena of ex-freelance camera operator John, and T.V. director Peter, they began to drift towards the generation of on-screen graphics once it became obvious that there was a tremendous untapped scope for development there. Dave, through his experience with his Video Action Services, helped provide the company with a retail focus for their emerging work in the area of domestic and professional duplication. This was back in the Amiga dawn days when all that most people knew about the Amiga was that it began with an A and ended in an a, and meant 'Girlfriend' in Spanish.

Television

Telecom Soft, MicroProse, and Commodore are a few of those fame names that Triangle have produced promo work for. Some are last minute affairs that 'should have been done last week'. Others are more extensive shop store display developments, like Electronic Arts' *Skyfox* game which Triangle did partly on the Amiga. At the moment they have just finished doing a last minute rush job for MicroProse's Press Launch/Lunch down in the Isle of Dogs for their Green Peace Game *Rainbow Warrior* (due out on the Amiga in October). So, if you got ST and C64 press Lunch invites you'll know what it looked like.

In the early, hazy, crazy days Commodore's numbero one-o Chris Cade saw the quality of their work, the ability to put promotional affairs, in an unusual and interesting way, onto video. As early protagonists they were a natural choice for Commodore's promos. And as demand has increased they have become almost the only people capable of giving the know how to companies, individuals, and groups who want to use the Amiga's capabilities.

They still have the production side today but the knowledge which they have about the Amiga has made them the first people to turn to when a specific project is required. This retail side has seen over 1500 customers since the formation of Triangle. No matter how much they like doing their own productions (see John Chalk's pickies) when Saatchi and Saatchi, MOD, and B.P. turn up on the door step you've got to say 'I hear you knocking' One of their projects, which we'll be looking at in a future issue is the installation of a system of semi-automised Amigas at The Imperial War Museum.

This retail system construction is now backed up with full client support for anything between 2 hours and 4 days courses custom designed to fit the individual customer's need. Let's be hypothetical. Let's say an Aussie sheep farmer, like my great uncle, has seen what the Amiga can do in one of his days off in Sydney and has decided that the way he wants to advertise his sheep products to the world is through a gyrating sheep falling from the sky onto different capital cities. He approaches Triangle to help him do it on the Amiga. The men and women at Triangle will listen to him, plop him in front of an Amiga for x-amount of time until he is satisfied that he has got what he wanted. This will probably involve work on different software packages until the effect that he wants is achieved. After that a bit of work on the edit suite and drinks all round. Should the aussie find any glitches in the system when he gets back home to his sheep ranch the size of Kent then he's only a phone call, or a fax, away.

Apart from the customizing they've been up to some interesting T.V. projects like that of the new T.V.S. Production, *Street Wise*. In one of the episodes some children break into the DVLC head offices in Swansea to try and find the number plate and owner of a certain car involved in a hit and run. The Amgia featured sequence involves a logging on shot, with the computer going haywire, numbers shooting, colours going hecticly.

Again and again Triangle turn up at the heart of British Amiga-Videoing, providing a necessary centre to a growing industry.

Their early production escapades brought them into contact with the genetive Amiga. Even on the first software and hardware their ability to communicate graphics signals were efficient, and their ideas Britishly Seminal. they became expert at putting computer graphics onto video, and at developing their own systems. Success is transparent in titling sequences like that of *The Software Show* where 'passing' allowed them to lay different images on top of each other and on to tape through a genlock.

Most of their first work was promotional work for different software/games companies, which they still do in a big way. Electronic Arts,

LANCAST

*An excellent sortie on its way:
the newest game from CRL.*
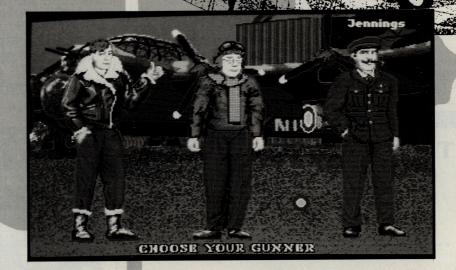
■ **The year is 1943. The war in Europe** is something of a stalemate. Everybody knew that the Allies were preparing for an invasion but it would be quite a while before it could happen. Meanwhile, the German armies had ground to a halt in the East in a twin struggle against the Soviet soldiers and winters.
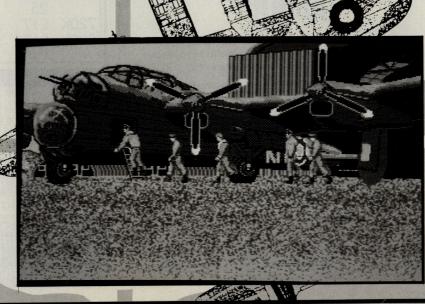
To pass the time, Bomber Command was maintaining a nightly offensive against German targets. Gone was the gentlemanly act of only attacking military targets with precision raids. Instead, there is the saturation bombing of cities with the dual aim of either destroying something useful or creating terror in the civilian population.

The mainstay of the R.A.F.'s bomber force was the Lancaster, and it is in one of these aircraft that you play the part of a tail gunner. Your objective is to give the pilot sufficient protection so that he can reach the target, drop his bombs, and return home safely.

There are three different gunners to choose from (or pilots) which equate to different skill levels. There is a snag though. The easier it is for you to shoot down the enemy, the more missions you have to fly. Thus the raw recruit has to complete a full tour of thirty trips over enemy territory. There is also an option list allowing you to tailor the game to your own requirements what enemy forces you have to meet, what help the program gives you, and so on. Similarly, you can opt for night, day or dawn missions, all offering slightly different problems. There are several tutorial modes to help you: an instructor will comment on everything that you do be it good or bad, and you also turn on an aim indicator, and auto targetter.

Once you are airborne, you must navigate towards your intended target. There are heavily defended areas that are best avoided. These are not marked on your map so you must learn them by experience. So much for intelligence briefings!

CHOOSE YOUR GUNNER

When you are attacked, the view switches to that of the tail gunner and it is simply a case of blasting everything out of the sky that is around you with the exception of any other friendly aircraft. There are single and twin engined fighter aircraft, barrage balloons, flak (German antiaircraft fire) and searchlights to be avoided. Hitting targets increases your score as well as increasing the lifespan of your aircraft. Any score you record is done so for posterity should you make it safely back to base. Let too many bullets get through and your plane will tumble out of the sky in a ball of fire. Only if you are quick will you be able to parachute to the relative safety of a prisoner of war camp! Another unpleasant way of failing to complete your mission is to run out of fuel, although this is only likely on the longer, more difficult trips.

Once you get near the target, the viewpoint switches to bomb aiming mode in a top- down view of your objective. You must try to drop your bombs as accurately as possible as you strive for maximum damage and score. Your sights can be zoomed in and out as you strive for greater precision. Once all the bombs have gone, you turn for home. Make it back in one piece and there's only another twenty nine missions to go ...

Lancaster features solid 3D graphics as the enemy aircraft swoop towards you. There is also plenty of digitsed speech to add to the atmosphere as your pilot demands to know 'What the Hell is happening back there'. Will you survive long enough to be able to tell him?

Gordon Hamlett

2 couples from a mid-sized manufacturing town in Lancashire: A WWII RAF soap with square chinned men and doe eyed women.

Want to see your name written in hundred foot letters of stone? Interfont may well be the next best thing

■ **Amiga users do it in 3D?** Certainly, next to games and video production, playing around with 3D shapes and animation has become one of the big attractions of the machine. Several products have already firmly established themselves in this popular arena, including *Sculpt3D Videoscape 3D* and *Aegis Draw Plus*.

A fair sign of the established nature of this software is the release of a program like this. *Interfont* is an addon product, which gives users

Interf

of other 3D programs the ability to design and convert threedimensional fonts to the program of their choice.

Strictly speaking the fonts that interfont deals with are not truly 3D, as one might expect. Instead, they are of the sort usually referred to in CAD circles as 2.5 D. Less technical people might refer to this as 'Ben Hur' lettering.

Be that as it may, *Interfont* tries hard. The program comes in two main parts. A standalone font designer allows you to create 3D fonts from scratch, or with the help of existing Amiga non3D fonts, while a series of conversion programs enable you to convert strings of text from the native *Interfont* format to anyone of *Sculpt3D*, *Videoscape* or *Aegis Draw Plus*. Images can be exported from the last into *Professional Page*.

Interfont Designer, the font creation program, is an 'object oriented' font designer. Usual Amiga fonts, such as *Topaz* and *Ruby*, are 'bitmap' fonts where every pixel in the characters is specified on and off. Graphic objects, on the other hand, are specified by their outlines alone. So each will consist of one or a number of polygons stuck together. With a polygon, all you have to do is specify the positions of the 'corners' which this is what Designer lets you do.

Polygons can be drawn by the usual drawing process of rubberbanding clicking to specify the corners. To make it easier, however, *Interfont* allows you to load regular Amiga fonts. You can then trace around the outline of these, and a special 'snap' mode forces the lines to conform with the outline of the character.

Characters can be drawn in more than one colour, provided you use a new polygon for each. There is also a special colour to cover that terrible problem of putting the hole in the mint. Hole colour(a sort of off pink) will carve a section out of the existing shape, which saves you having to fold shapes around to create holes.

New points can be added anywhere on a polygon, and existing points can be selected and deleted. The most advanced facility, however, is the Spline command. Splining is a mathematical procedure which provides the 'best fit' curve for any given set of points. This is particularly useful, since if you're creating 3D fonts, you won't want to be confined to the pixelated chunkiness of the usual Amiga fonts.

The end product of all this is an object font called an 'Interfont'. So what can you do with this? The font at this stage is ready for conversion to the package of your choice. Interfont provides three different modules which can be loaded by clicking on their icons, whereupon they sit in memory waiting for a conversion to be specified. The next step is to invoke a module known as *Interchange* with which you can select the Interfonts to be used in the conversion. If you select a font, followed by an output format, this is then prepared for conversion.

Finally, when all is ready, we get to the bottom line, whereuopn you are prompted to create a message of up to five lines, which is then rendered into an output file in the requisite format. Regular typestyles, such as bold and italic, can be incorporated into this, along with 3D 'styles' dull, shiny, mirror finish and so on.

At last, these can be read, with a few provisos, by *Sculpt*, or *Videoscape*. A few conversion problems crop up for example *Videoscape* supports only 11 colours while *Sculpt 3D* can render the full 4096, but the program smooths these out as best they can.

■ **Interfont fulfills a useful, if rather** specialised role. It'll be welcomed by video titlers, and amateurs who want to add a bit of pazzazz to their screens. Having said that, it's a little cumbersome to use, primarily in the conversion process. With its concurrently running modules this could have been made to look like a single monolithic program with little extra trouble. Of course, most 3D design programs are themselves clumsy, so *Interfont* may only be continuing the tradition. *Interfont Designer* is a neat little program, though, and easy to use, if a bit limited. The documentation is extensive, although I found it a bit obscure and confusing in places.

All in all, a useful tool for graphic and video artists, particularly since it doesn't have a lot of competition.
Finn Fahey

Title: **Interfont**
Supplier: **Syndesis**
20 West Street
Wilmington
Massachusetts 01887
Tel: **(508) 6575585**

font

Banked colour: Powerdrome out on the Amiga.

POWER

■ **Powerdrome literally takes racing** into a new dimension and gives you the chance to challenge for the coveted Cyberneufe trophy. It doesn't sound too difficult as you only have four other opponents and the entire season is a mere six races. However, the circuits are in 3D and have different climatic and gravitational conditions that have to be compensated before you can stand a chance, and your opponents are the meanest racers in the business.

Your racing car is a Typhoon class racer that can be adjusted and tuned to suit the next track. Perhaps, the most important adjustment is the selection of engine filter that must be set to either ammonia, sulphur, oxygen, methane or particle to ensure your engine performs well and doesn't seize up or explode after the first lap. You can also choose economy. Standard or premium fuel, add different speed brakes and five different styles of aerofoil that will alter the speed in which you turn in and out of corners.

Once you're happy with your racer it's time for some practise. This is essential if you don't want to spend the actual races jammed up against the wall as the others go flying past. Luckily, Electronic Arts have built in some functions to help the beginner. The most useful of these is a centering field that has nine different settings and forces the racer into the centre of the track and away from the walls and floors. At the highest level the ship will almost fly itself around the circuit but at a drastically cut speed. As your control improves you can reduce the strength of this field, travel faster and stand a better chance of earning some championship points.

Even the experts have the odd collision so its worth calling into the Robopits for repairs and refuelling and can change whole sections of your ship with the press of a single key. But, be ready as every second counts.

With the centering field full on the ship almost flies automatically.

Th

DROME

In the Robopits — ever second counts as an engine is replaced.

■**Nigel Mansell never had these sort of** problems. He never had to worry about engine filters and three dimensional tracks that can send your head spinning faster than your aerofoils. Without doubt this is the toughest racing game you can buy.

It's just as well EA added the Centering Field to this the Amiga version otherwise no-one would spend the time to learn how to control the racer as it hurtles around the twisting and turning track. Which is a shame because it is a very good game. Obviously, with the field on maximum you've got not chance of winning the trophy but at least you can learn the layout of the track for when you turn it down, or even off, and race for real.

The Robopits are a nice touch but you lack control over the time taken for repairs. All you can do is ensure you press the right button quickly and then wait as the part is removed and then replaced.

One drawback that I found is that each race is contested over at least 20 laps and up to 50. This is a lot for all but the experts but at least there's a save game option so you can rest between races.

Tony Hetherington

...ning screen where you can adjust engine filters, aerofoils, fuel types, brakes and roll pitch bias.

POWERDROME

Title: **Powerdrome**
Supplier: **Electronic Arts**
Langley Business Centre,
11-49 Station Road,
Langley, Berks
SL3 8YN
Tel: **0753 49442**
Price: **£24.99**

Graphics **19**
Sound **18**
Gameplay **22**
Value **20**

The Arcade adventure comes of age as Kevin Crosby journeys through the four kingdoms of Targhan

Targhan

■ **It would seem that all the best Amiga** programmers don't come from the States or even the UK but from across the channel in France. We have already seen some excellent games from the likes of *Infogrammes*. Now, a relative newcomer to the fray *Silmarlis* has hit these shores with a little help from Surrey-based supplier *Gainstar* — and what a debut!

The scene is set in a mythical land where over 40 types of goblins, demons, and warriors of all shapes and sizes (and sexes) generally do their utmost to make your existance as awkward as possible. It never fails to surprise me how intrepid heroes always live in such unfriendly neighbourhoods. Presumably such heroes don't get paid too much so have to live in the run-down areas of the kingdom.

The actual object of the game is, unfortunately, unclear as I only received a French copy of the manual, and my last French lesson was over ten years ago! (You young whippersnapper you! — Ed) Still it would be safe to assume that you must toddle round all the 120 or so loca-tions in the game and eventually vanquish the final baddy who has no doubt stolen a very valuable Treasure, Magical Scroll, Key or Princess that you need to maintain order in your kingdom.

Your world is made up of five different domains; the Forest, the underground caverns, the tree houses, the prehistoric deserts and the Castle. Each has its own brand of nasty creatures who like nothing better than hacking chunks out of you, thus bringing your power level down.

The only way you can survive these attacks is to lock yourself in combat with these beasts and find little white bottles of life-giving potion which can be found in the caverns and the tree top houses.

As with all good adventures there a whole myriad of objects to pick up and use, some of which help, some of which harm. However it's not always apparent exactly what each object is from what is displayed on the screen. What would have been helpful is a brief description of

The natives go wild down the Loire Valley.

the object as you pick it up or perhaps an inventory option. Your weaponary consists of a sword and a collection of Glaves (like in the film *Krull*) that are scattered about the place for you to pick up and throw at your adversaries.

Mind you not all encounters on your quest are hostile. There is the occasional ally who will help, such as the golden fairy who lights your way through the tunnel network, or the wizard who appears in the desert.
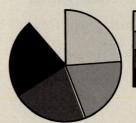
The game area is pretty big, particularly for an arcade adventure, although it does take half a dozen or so loads from disk at various stages. But you can save your game position from screens that have the statue of power in them (so far I've found two).

So what sets this game out from the rest? The superb graphics, the attention to detail and the variety of scenery make this a thoroughly challenging and enjoyable game. Keep 'em comin'.

TARGHAN

Title: **Thargan**
Supplier: **Gainstar**
Unit 1
7 Wellington Road
Sandhurst
Surrey GU17 8AW
TEL: **0252 877431**

Graphics:	**24**
Sound:	**20**
Gameplay:	**22**
Value:	**23**

CASTLE WARRIOR

No, not another chess game, or a tap dance routine for Roy, just a sling full of Saxon crenallations.

■ **It is now 50 years since the strong and** mighty warrior lord Edelwulf the Great vanquished his warring neighbours to create a land known as Pacifica (the land of Peace). Edelwulf finally died some years later to be replaced by his eldest son and heir Edelred the God who matched his father's strength and might with efficient government and skillful diplomacy. Everyone in Pacifica was happy with their new King and loyal to him. Everyone, except Zandor.

Zandor is an evil wizard who has been banished to a bleak castle on the furthest borders of the kingdom where he can do least harm. This is a plan that obviously hasn't worked as he has managed to infiltrate the castle and poison the king's food. The good news is that there is an antidote. The bad news is that it is held by Zandor himself and you Edred the Brave (Edelred's son) must go and get it before your father dies.
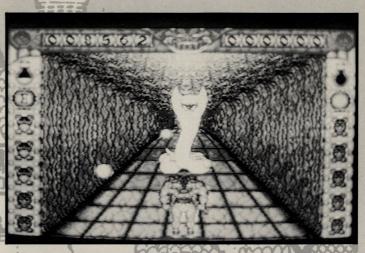
All that means that you have only one day to infiltrate the six stages of Zandor's evil castle. Your quest begins as you enter a sub-terranean corridor, that will lead to the castle, populated by some hideous creatures. At first you must battle a swarm of giant bats while avoiding huge green claws that reach from the walls to grab you. Then this clears and the passage is dominated by a golden snake that spits fireballs at you. Since you're only armed with a joystick controled sword you must attempt the impossible and deflect a fireball back at the monster. If you manage that you then have to repeat the stunt this time against a not so jolly green giant. Success here will mean the end of level one.

Despite your victories so far you aren't even in the castle yet and there's a massive dragon to slay in level two before you can reach the subterranean river of level three.
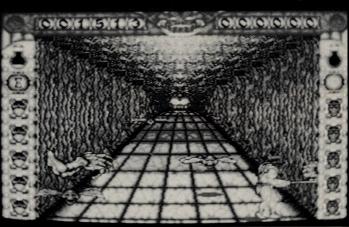
Level four matches you against a part-icularly nasty monster known as a 'Jibba' that must be slain by dodging his attacks while you score enough hits with your sword to slay him. Finally, in level five you duel with Zandor, you with your sword, him using evil spells. Should you slay him, you'll grab the antidote and if you're in time you'll enjoy the triumphant return that is level six.

The game is, of course, accompanied by stirring music which isn't really surprising when you remember that Delphine is part of a record company.

A golden snake blocks your way. To kill it you have to use your sword to deflect back its fireballs.

The action freezes as you swing your sword at the bats and claws.

■ **Castle Warrior is a multi level game** that looks at first like a beat-em-up, but actually plays more like games like *Dragon's Lair* where a set sequence of moves must be learned to progress through its levels. Although the game has good graphics, apparently, the programmers have managed to get more colours on the screen than are seen in most games, and the music is good and stirring although the action is rather stilted at times and everything actually freezes when you swing your sword and doesn't start again until you next press the button.

Perhaps this shows different software tastes or a lack of understanding of the UK market. Hopefully, Delphine will learn from its UK partner and produce games that not only look and sound good but play well as well.

CASTLE WARRIOR

Title: **Castle Warrior**
Supplier: **Delphine Software (Palace S/W)**
The Old Forge Business Centre,
7 Caledonian Rd,
London NW1 9DX
Tel: **01-278 0751**
Price: **£24.99**

Graphics **22**
Sound **21**
Gameplay **14**
Value **18**

Grit your teeth, don your flying suit and head out into yet another scrolling shoot-em-up.

Silkwo

The Jeep has a ground level view of the action and can't simply fly over gun emplacements.

Battling with a general in a giant helicopter. Watch out for the high speed missiles.

■ **Nuclear arms had been outlawed** after the fourth nuclear war caused a serious wobble in the Earth's orbit. Scientists are convinced that another war would send the Earth tumbling into oblivion. Unfortunately, the generals, starved of their nukes, are somewhat disgruntled, even though they have an incredible number of tanks, planes, helicopters, mines, and field guns. It has now reached a crisis point as the generals of the One Continent Alliance have turned their weaponry on the politicians and a coup looks imminent.

Earth's final hope is in the research carried out by a small group of weapon scientists into advanced helicopter and land vehicle projects. If pilots could be found for the prototype vehicles they may have a chance to defeat the generals and their forces.

There are two attack vehicles available to our squad, and the game can be played either by one player controlling a helicopter or armoured jeep, or by two players working together. Either ship can be controlled by keyboard or joystick and has its own style of attack.

The helicopter can swoop down on land based targets, fire an air to air, and air to ground missile. The Jeep rumbles along the ground and can leap short distances but seems to be more vulnerable to attack. It also has only one gun which can be adjusted to fire along the ground or up at airborne targets. But it's still a suicide mission for the driver.

The game consists of a number of levels packed full of enemy helicopters, tanks, gun emplacements, and missile sites which are commanded by a general installed in a giant command ship that appears at the end of each level. This takes several hits to destroy and fires some nasty weapons, including high speed missiles, at you.

The strangest enemy ship you'll have to face is the Gooseneck helicopters that flies onto the screen as indestructible components intended assemble into a nearly indestructible ship. Its only weak spot is its neck which is mostly shielded by the head. However if you can hit it enough times in this area than it will erupt in flame and leave in its wake a weapon system that can improve your ships firepower
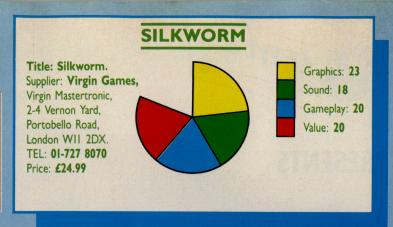

This mean machine hides in the corner and fires in six different directions at once.

The helicopter and Jeep together in the red wastelands of level 3.

orm

The helicopter takes on a Gooseneck chopper.

and your chances in the game. These weapons double your shots and also increase the frequency of fire that can wipe out an entire squadron of enemy choppers before you even know they're there. Unfortunately, if you lose one of your four lives you also lose these advance weapons. One frequent cause of this is an unpleasant mobile gun that hugs the left hand side of the screen and therefore stays out of your range and fires six simultaneous shots in separate directions every few seconds. The only chance of surviving this onslaught is to either outrun the gun or find one of the smart bomb like domes that lie on the ground. Similar domes also provide your ship with a temporary shield that can be very useful as the screen can get awfully crowded.

Silkworm is not only the conversion of a popular arcade game it also marks the re-appearance of the *Virgin Games* label. Although the sideways scrolling gameplay complete with the chance to add extra weapons sounds familiar it is more than just another *Nemesis* clone. The inclusion of both a helicopter and Jeep like craft that can be controlled together adds tremendously to the action although there is no way of controlling both on your own. Solo gamers can operate both craft in turn which will demand completely different tactics and skills.
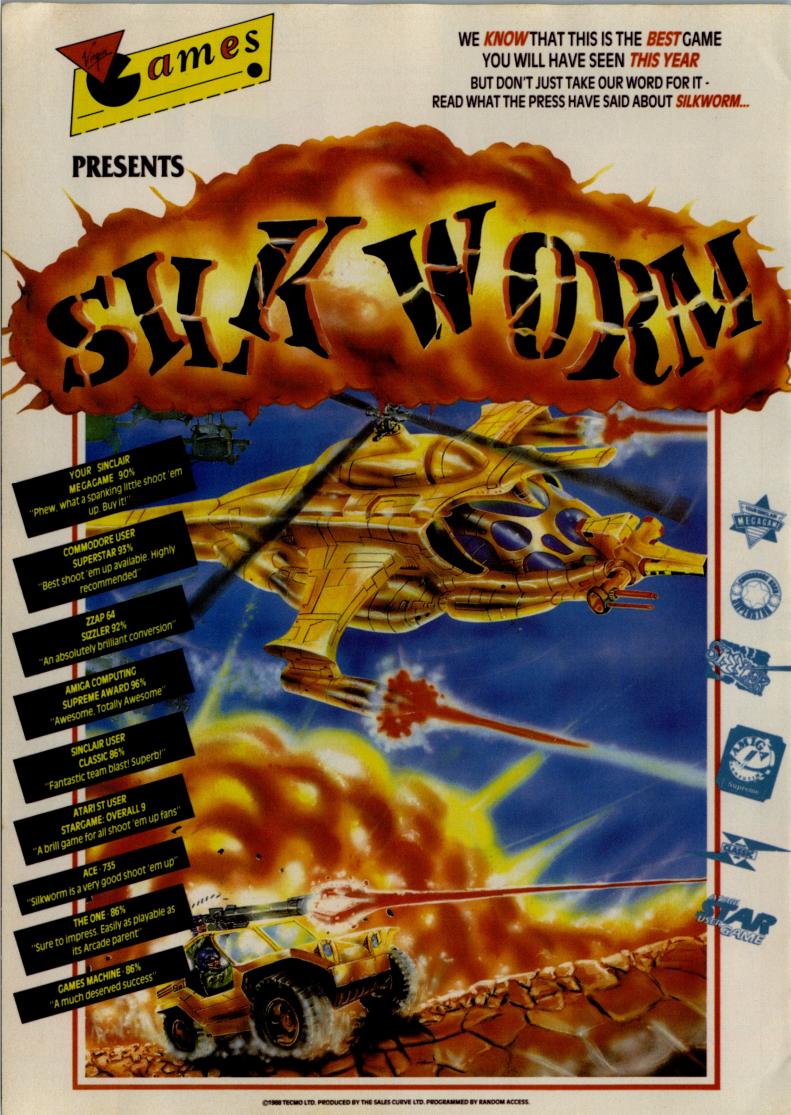
This is very much a game for those players with autofire joysticks as it's action all the way fighting through an almost constant barrage. The graphics and sound effects (mostly explosions) add tremendously to the games atmosphere which drives you back for more and more.

I thoroughly enjoyed this game, particularly when flying the helicopter and found the action fast and furious. But it didn't become mindless as a keen eye for strategy is needed to survive some of the more powerful weapon systems or traps.

The helicopter battles against all odds and here must deal with a gun emplacement, four normal helicopters, one Gooseneck and one that fires in six directions.

Virgin Games

PRESENTS

WE *KNOW* THAT THIS IS THE *BEST* GAME YOU WILL HAVE SEEN *THIS YEAR* BUT DON'T JUST TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT - READ WHAT THE PRESS HAVE SAID ABOUT *SILKWORM*...

SILK WORM

YOUR SINCLAIR
MEGAGAME 90%
"Phew, what a spanking little shoot 'em up. Buy it!"

COMMODORE USER
SUPERSTAR 93%
"Best shoot 'em up available. Highly recommended"

ZZAP 64
SIZZLER 92%
"An absolutely brilliant conversion"

AMIGA COMPUTING
SUPREME AWARD 96%
"Awesome, Totally Awesome"

SINCLAIR USER
CLASSIC 86%
"Fantastic team blast! Superb!"

ATARI ST USER
STARGAME: OVERALL 9
"A brill game for all shoot 'em up fans"

ACE · 735
"Silkworm is a very good shoot 'em up"

THE ONE · 86%
"Sure to impress. Easily as playable as its Arcade parent"

GAMES MACHINE · 86%
"A much deserved success"

Another tidy, slick, shoot-em-up that's ready and willing
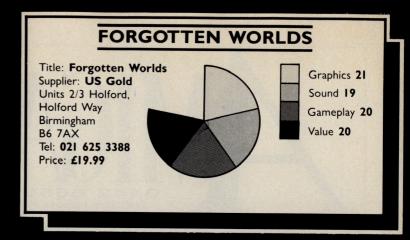
■ **Emperor Bios, the God of Des**truction, has begotten eight evil gods who were destroying all known civilisation. Destroyed cities were turned into dust ruins that became known as the Forgotten Worlds. However, the combined spirit of the people's anger created two super warriors that must now fight back against the evil demons and rescue the world. Now either you on your own or together with a friend can battle against the awesome Emperor Bios and his demi god minions.

There are four levels to be conquered each guarded by a demi god with the final one leading to Bios's throne room. Each one is set in a different Forgotten World beginning with the city-scape which is followed by the murky Dust World. The heavily armoured world of the Hi-tech fortress stands ready to greet any heroes that make it this far. After this comes the astral world of the God Bios. Before you reach these end of level guardians you'll have to battle their minions throwing fire bolts or worse at you. Some even appear on the screen carrying what look like portable nuclear missiles. This is definitely not a game for the weak hearted.

Luckily, help is available in the shape of blue bubbles that appear when certain creatures are destroyed. If you can collect these before they burst then they'll top up your funds that can be used in shops that appear near the end of each level to buy bigger and better weapons. These include homing missiles, bombs, v-cannons, multi-directional lasers, boosters to increase weapon power and armour to repel a number of enemy shots. The drawback is that you only have 30 seconds in which to buy the equipment you want before you're thrown back into the action.

■ **Forgotten Worlds is a very slick** shoot-em-up which is at its best when two players are blasting critters simultaneously. The controls are a little difficult to master since you either move around the screen or rotate and fire your weapon. This can often mean that you're blasting away in completely the wrong direction or as things get really tough.

Although, there's nothing too original about this game it is well implemented and has added a slight twist to the old improve-your-weapons-by-shooting-aliens formula as now you must collect the bubbles or coins and have just 30 seconds to cash them in a shop that appears at the end of a level. If you make the wrong choice or can't make your mind up in time you're stuck until you reach the next shop.

Stock up with extra weapons in the end of level 'Weapon Boutique'.

I'm tough, cool and ready to waste some aliens.

FORGOTTEN WORLDS

I'LL FINISH YOU

YOUR AMIGA

0442 66551
extension number 368

DEALER GUIDE

OIL IMPERIUM

Tricky dicky gets nice an slicky,

tacky specky, and finger dirty

■ **If you, perchance, happened to find a** spade one day, and you decided to dig a hole in your back garden, you might have been lucky enough (?) to find the remains of a previous owner's pet. Or alternatively, an old Coca-Cola can.

If you dig deep enough though, you may very well strike gold. Not the shiny stuff that Kylie and Jason's pockets are lined with, but black gold. The type of gold that escapes from large tankers and kills thousands, nay, millions of sea creatures. You will have struck OIL.

Now what do you do with it? You can't drink it! You can't bathe in it (well, actually you can, but its hardly hygenic!). All you can do is build a large multi-national empire out of it and make loads of lolly, if you don't end up in the bankruptcy court, of course.

Oil Imperium, from Rainbow Arts, revolves around the said liquid and the trials and tribulations it carries. The game allows yourself and up to three friends to battle it out in the oil business and, through wheeling and dealing (and the occasional dodgy criminal activity), become the head honcho of the world's oil — which is almost as good as being Deputy Editor of *Your Amiga*, eh Jools?

This is all done in a monopoly style of game, although there is no board as more strategical play is in demand. Every month, as the director of one of the four corporations, you have options to do certain tasks, with different tasks taking different number of days (mind you, it takes a whole day to examine the front cover of The Financial Times. I'll have to buy The Sun in Future). Scattered around your office are varying objects, with each having its own task.

There is a drawer where all the dodgy decisions come from, a suitcase to use when one of your oilfields is on fire (and of course for that annual holiday to sunny Clacton), a telephone, a copy of The Financial Times (as already quoted, a map of the world, and an Amiga where you make all of your important company decisions (like who's going to make the coffee, etc).

The Amiga screen is presented much the same as a real one, and different icons on it have seperate properties. Using these you can buy, sell, drill, and do countless other ancillary tasks connected to the oil business.

The game also has three 'arcade' sections, although I use this term loosely as they are generally over in a very short while. These come into practice when you wish to drill your own well, put out your own fire, or lay your own oil pipelines. They are not hard to complete and once mastered become possibly the easiest part of the game.

The graphics and presentation throughout is of the highest quality, generally only seen on the television to illustrate a news feature, etc. Sound is of a minimum, but this does not generally matter in a large strategy game. The computer opponents are a pig to beat, so it will take a fair amount of goes to get the most from the game (and there are other options for play to make the game harder). Add all the plus points together and you come up with a very large number.

Strategical games either fail for being too complex, or not being complex enough. *Oil Imperium* succeeds for the fact that it strikes a good balance between these two, whilst being a very free-flowing fun game at the same time. Now where did I put that Coke can, it must be worth a fortune by now?

Richard Henderson

OIL IMPERIUM

Title: **Oil Imperium**
Supplier: **Rainbow Arts**
Price: **£24.95**

Graphics **25**
Sound **10**
Gameplay **21**
Value **22**

GUESS WHO'S COMING
TO SAVE THE WORLD AGAIN?

ACTIVISION