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BEST-SELLING
AMIGA GAMES
MAGAZINE!**

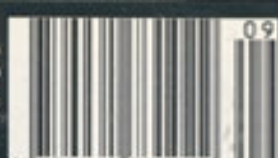
BLOB

CASTLES 2

MORTAL KOMBAT

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ISSUE 29 £3.50 SEPTEMBER 1993

DON'T BUY AN AMIGA GAME UNTIL YOU'VE READ THIS

AMIGA POWER

A MAGAZINE WITH ATTITUDE

16 **GAMES
MASTER**
Page Sampler
FREE INSIDE!

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AMIGA CD32
Twice the fun?**

SAY CHEESE!

**Curl up with Colin in
One Step Beyond**

**YOU'LL NEVER SEE A
BETTER DISK!**



YOURS WITH ISSUE **29** OF AMIGA POWER

BIG SEXY THREE-WAY ROMP

F117A STEALTH FIGHTER

Great exclusive
AMIGA POWER
mission from
MicroProse's
radar-invisible
new flight sim.



BLOB

Nine (count 'em!)
complete levels from
Core's superb puzzler.



SQUIGS

Brilliant complete
public domain
Columns clone.

**AMIGA
POWER**

**ISSUE
29**

THIS IS AMIGA POWER

**AMIGA
POWER**

ISSUE 29 SEPTEMBER 1993

EDITOR

Linda Barker

DEPUTY EDITOR

Stuart Campbell

PRODUCTION EDITOR

Dave Green

JUNIOR EDITORIAL ATTACHE

Mark Winstanley

ART EDITOR

Sally Meddings

ART ASSISTANT

Lisa Kellett

TREACHEROUS TURNOVERS

Jacque Spanton

Tim Tucker

SENIOR SALES EXECUTIVE

Caroline Simpson

SALES EXECUTIVE

Robert Bennet

GROUP PRODUCTION MANAGER

Judith Middleton

PRODUCTION CONTROLLER

Claire Thomas

PRODUCTION CO-ORDINATOR

Tracy O'Donnell

PRODUCTION CONTROL ASSISTANT

Genette McKeown

PAPER CONTROLLER

Fiona Deane

ADMIN ASSISTANT

Suzannah Angelo-Sparling

AD DESIGN

Michelle Trewavas

PUBLISHER

Colin The Publisher

GROUP PUBLISHING DIRECTOR

Greg Ingham

PROMOTIONS ASSISTANT

Tamara Ward

CIRCULATION DIRECTOR

Sue Hartley

MANAGING DIRECTOR

Chris Anderson

CONTRIBUTORS: Jonathan Davies,
Rich Pelley, Dave Golder, Tim Norris

LINO & SCANNING: Simon Chittenden,

Jon Moore, Chris Stocker,

Simon Windsor, Heath Parsons,

Mark Gover

COVERDISK COMPILED BY:

Grants Computing

PHOTOGRAPHY: Ashton James

KYLIE'S GOT A CRUSH ON: Us

EDITORIAL & ADVERTISING

Amiga Power,

Future Publishing Ltd,

30 Monmouth Street,

Bath BA1 2BW

Tel 0225 442244

Fax 0225 446019

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Cary Court, Somerton, Somerset

TA11 6TB Tel 0458 74011

AMIGA POWER IS PRINTED

IN THE UK

A member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations

Registered circulation

ABC

50,222

July - Dec 1992

AMIGA POWER - Because we can.
© Future Publishing 1993

STUART WOULD JUST LIKE TO SAY: 'I've got syphilitic hetero friends in every part of town.'

SALLY WOULD JUST LIKE TO SAY: 'Jellyfish can't ride pogo sticks.'

10 DAVE GREEN'S AMAZING-BUT-TRUE STORIES

We were the first people to bring you news of the Amiga CD console, and now we're the first to give you the full official story and comparative benchtests. We're fab.

14 RIPLEY'S BELIEVE IT OR NOT (AKA THE GALLUP CHARTS)

There are three new games in the top three this month. But which one's the top dog? We think you'll be surprised.

16 SOME GAMES THAT AREN'T QUITE FINISHED JUST YET

Including the world's FIRST and most EXCLUSIVE full previews of *Micro Machines*, *Star Trek* and *Theatre Of Death*, and another SIX pages of GREAT work-in-progress stuff on TOP of that. If it matters, you'll read it HERE first. Well, on page 16.

45 YOUR CHANCE TO WIN, ER, A KARAOKE MACHINE

Sing, sing your life, any fool can think of words that rhyme. (And then sing them.)

46 YOU REALLY OUGHT TO READ THIS PAGE, Y'KNOW

Because it can save you money, AND get you free stuff as well! Subscribe to AMIGA POWER - you know you want to really.

68 APPALLINGLY USELESS GAME PLAYERS' CORNER

Why do you do it? Why do you spend all that money then get someone else to tell you how to play the game? We don't get it, we really don't get it at all. Tch.

84 THE NAME OF A BOOK ABOUT SEXUAL FANTASIES

Yep, that's *The Secret Garden*. And you thought it was all about Victorian families having picnics and stuff. Ha. You sap.

97 SOCIAL INTERACTION AND RANDOM SURREALISM

Otherwise known as the letters pages. But that doesn't sound as glamorous.

104 CALLING A COLUMN 'PD FILE' ISN'T BIG OR HARD

Think about it. It's not funny, really, is it?

107 THE BOTTOM LINE, FEATURING ELTON JOHN

Well, no, let's be honest, there's no Elton John anywhere in this entire feature. But it's still the original and best buyers' guide.

114 RIGHT PROFILE HOUR WITH UNCLE ROGER

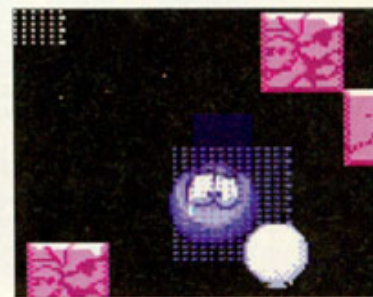
Question and answer time, with the man they're all calling 'the grandfather of the leisure computing industry'. Well, we are.

GAMES OF THE



SOCCER KID

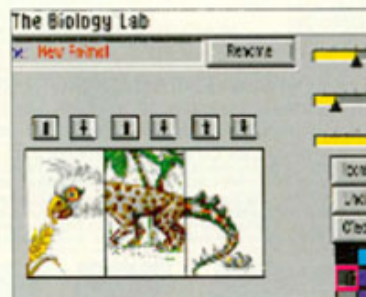
It's... nnnnggh... Soccer! He's... nnnnggh... a kid! It's... nnnnggh...
Page 28



BLOB

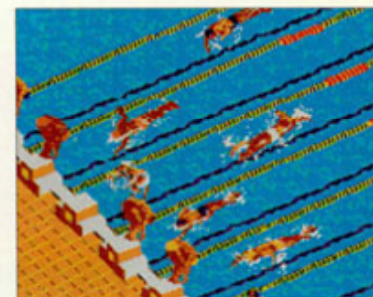
Robert Maxwell, eh? What a fat - (That's enough. - Ed)

Page 32



SIM LIFE

Tired of people telling you to 'Get a life'? Then why not *Sim* one?
Page 38



SUPER SPORTS CHALLENGE

A sports sim without joystick wagging! Whatever next?

Page 40

AMIGA GAMES MASTER

YOUR FAB FREE 16-PAGE SAMPLE ISSUE STARTS ON P51

THE SECRET GARDEN P84

Well, okay, so technically the book was called 'MY Secret Garden', but let's face it, you didn't know that. And most of you are too young to buy it anyway. So it doesn't matter, alright? Er, buy, sell and swap stuff on pages 84 and 85.

MARK WOULD JUST LIKE TO SAY: 'I caught my first tube today. Sir.'

LISA WOULD JUST LIKE TO SAY: 'No, I will, honest.'

OVER 300
CHERRY TREES IN AUSTRALIA!

MONTH

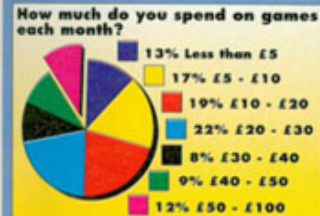


ONE STEP BEYOND
Der der deerrr, der-der-der-der-der-der-der DEEERR der...
Page 34



CASTLES 2
...Stirling Albion - (Oh no you don't. Now get on with it. - Ed)
Page 42

**WHICH ONE'S YOU?
READER SURVEY
RESULTS ON P86**



Loads of facts! Loads of fun!

NEXT MONTH
The October issue of AMIGA POWER goes on sale on the 9th of September. We'll be writing it in July and August. Is it just me, or is it all a bit silly? I mean, it's incredibly confusing for a start, and (Snip! - Ed)

WIN!
A FAB KARAOKE MACHINE!
P45

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SEPTEMBER

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Other mags might bring you levels of 59%-rated budget games on their coverdisks, but not us - it's top-notch stuff all the way when you're with AMIGA POWER. Why, just take a look at the fantastic selection of wild and wonderful things we've brutally crammed onto ours this month...



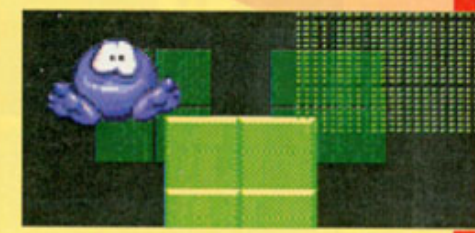
INTRODUCING DISK 29



F117A STEALTH FIGHTER

HYPER EXCITING SPECIAL OFFER!
Not only are we bringing you a fab exclusive demo mission of MicroProse's newest flight sim this month, but also a free gift! Yes, when the full game of F117A is released at the beginning of September, just pop along to any Virgin store and buy it (natch), while presenting your copy of this coverdisk. You'll then get a FREE special limited edition F117A T-shirt in addition to the game! Top, eh?

BLOB
Out-of-nowhere fantastic new arcade platform puzzle game from Core Design - a whole slew of levels for you to enjoy - complete excitement!



SQUIGS
PD puzzling - Columns clone - one or two players - top features - total excitement!



GOT A FAULTY DISK?
● Oh no! Are you sure? Before you go any further, try the procedures described in the panel over the page. If, after all that, you do have disk problems, simply place it in an envelope, along with an SAE and an explanatory letter, and return it NOT TO THE AP OFFICE but to: AMIGA POWER Disk Returns 29, DisCopy Labs, PO Box 21, Daventry NN11 5BU. NOT here to AP. Not our department, guv.

DAVE WOULD JUST LIKE TO SAY: 'Motorola inside - Intel? Outside!'
JACQUEE AND TIM WOULD JUST LIKE TO SAY: 'You're quite right, we're a disgrace. Sorry.'

YOUR DISK AND YOU

READ THIS BIT FIRST OR NO-ONE WILL TAKE ANY NOTICE OF YOU WHEN YOU SAY THAT YOUR DISK DOESN'T WORK.

● *Blob* and *F117A Stealth Fighter* are one meg only. No, seriously. A one meg upgrade costs, what, 30 or 40 quid? Get yours today.

● To load any of the games, all you have to do is switch off your machine, insert the disk, and switch your machine back on again.

● An options menu will appear. Simply follow the instructions to load the game of your choice.

● Just to be on the safe side, though, the on-screen instructions say that you should press the appropriate function key to make your selection.

● You'll have to reset your machine in order to play one of the other demos. When you do so, simply follow the instructions above.

● Remember to keep the disk you are playing your game from in the drive at all times. And remember – switching the machine off for 20 seconds or so before loading a new program will help prevent disks being infected by stray viruses.

● Have a good time.

OH NO! SOMETHING WENT WRONG!

● Are you sure?

● Try all that stuff again, making sure you've disconnected any peripherals the program might not 'like', such as external drives.

● If your disk fails to load, then pop it in a padded envelope, along with a letter explaining the problem and an SAE, to:

AMIGA POWER Disk 29 Returns
DisCopy Labs
PO Box 21
Daventry
NN11 5BU

● We're really hoping that you're reading this bit, because it's quite important: please don't send your disks to us at the AMIGA POWER office. We really don't know how to fix dodgy disks. We've tried, we really have, but not very hard. So send it to DisCopy Labs. Please.

F117A
STEALTH
FIGHTER

This isn't a Stealth plane. For a start, it's a sort of whitish-grey colour. So kill it.

Authors: MicroProse

NECESSARILY SHORT
BACKGROUND

It's a flight sim, you're in a Stealth fighter, you have to blow stuff up.

MORE SPECIFIC
INSTRUCTIONS

In this exclusive-to-AP demo of MicroProse's top new dose of airborne antics, you have to take off from Gutersloh airfield, destroy the bridge at Warsaw (your Primary Target), hopefully also take out the enemy headquarters at Katowice (Secondary Target), and then fly back and

land at the Rhein-Main airfield, all against the clock. These instructions will self-destruct in about 45 years when the magazine biodegrades, probably.

LENGTHY LIST OF CONTROLS

As well as the usual joystick controls for bank left, bank right, climb, dive and fire cannon, you're going to have to get your mitts around this fistful of keys:

- 1 – Flare
- 2 – Chaff
- 3 – IR Jammer
- 4 – ECM
- 5 – Decoy
- 6 – Landing gear up/down
- 7 – Autopilot on/off
- 8 – Bay doors open/close

- 9 – Flaps extend/retract
- 0 – Brakes on/off
- + – Increase throttle
- – Decrease throttle
- Return – Fire weapon
- Space – Change weapon bay
- / – Track camera ahead
- – Track camera rear
- . – Track camera right
- M – Track camera left
- N – Designate new target
- B – Select target
- Z – Zoom tactical/outside views
- X – Unzoom tactical/outside views
- Alt P – Pause
- Alt D – Adjust detail level
- Alt T – Activate training mode
- Alt R – Resupply (training mode only)



BLOB



At the chiroprapist's:
"So Mr Blob, could you cut down on all this jumping?"

Author:
Jonnathan Hilliard

ENTHUSIASTIC BEGINNING,
EMPTY THREAT

We thought this was so great that we moved Heaven and Earth to get you this

for the coverdisk at the last minute, so you'd bloody well better like it or we're all giving up doing AMIGA POWER and going home for ever, alright?

INSULTINGLY CURSORY PLOT

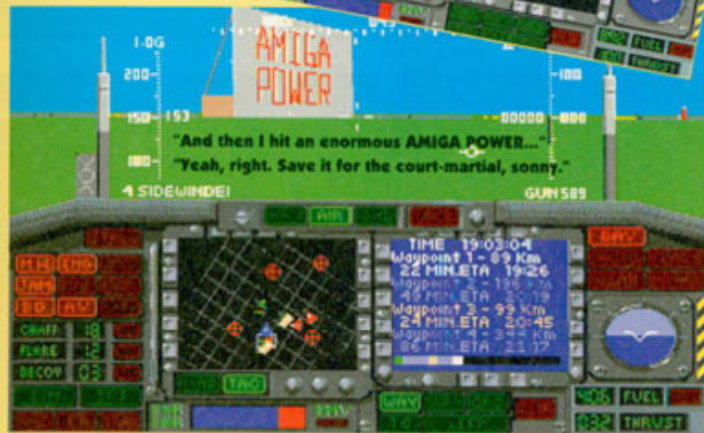
Blob is a blob. With motivation that we don't have room to discuss right now, he



- F1 – Cockpit
- F2 – Change Head-Up-Display mode (Ground/Air/NAV)
- F5 – View weapons
- F7 – View waypoint
- F9 – Instrument Landing System on/off
- F10 – View mission orders
- Shift F1 – Slot view
- Shift F2 – Chaseplane view
- Shift F3 – Side view
- Shift F4 – Missile view
- Shift F5 – Tactical view
- Shift F7 – Multi-view

APOLOGY FOR SUPERFICIAL NATURE OF INSTRUCTIONS

We're really sorry, okay?



Sometimes you just have to close your eyes and hope.

has to bounce around a number of levels of platforms in space, rescuing little blobs or collecting 'stuff', or painting the floor a different colour. Any complaints about this lackadaisical character development should be directed to Core Design Limited, Tradewinds House, 69-71a Ashbourne Road, Derby. Or Blue Peter.

HALF-HEARTED ATTEMPT AT SOME INSTRUCTIONS

Use the joystick to move Blob left, right, up and down, and press fire to make him

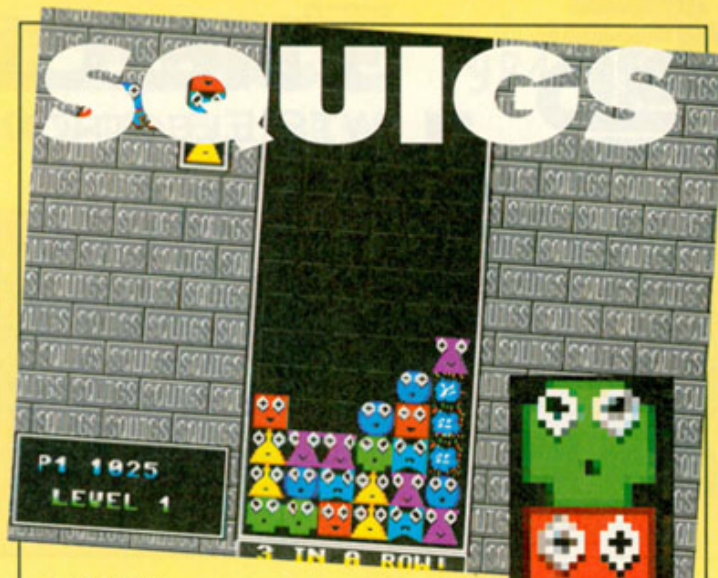
bounce. Various types of tile do various things. (For more useful details on these 'various' functions, please feel free to check out the review on pages 32 and 33. – Helpful Ed)

EXCEPTIONALLY POOR JOKE

This blob walks into a pub and says "Biobalobalobalob." The Barman says "Clear off, you've had enough already."

WE'RE ALL FIRED

(You're all fired. – Ed)



Author:
Jonathan Hibbins

Above and right:
These are the squigs.
Cute, aren't they?

OVERLONG INTRO

Well, there goes the last reason in the world for anyone to ever buy a Mega Drive, eh? *Squigs* is a perfect-in-every-nearly-every-way clone of the celebrated Sega puzzler *Columns*, a *Tetris*-related block-stacker which, embarrassingly, is still one of the outdated console's top boys software-wise. Still, that's not to knock the game itself – it's a bit fab, as you can now see for yourself. There are two basic types of game here, the Normal game and the Rescue version, but both follow the same basic principle. Groups of three 'squigs' drop from the top of the screen and can be manoeuvred left and right with the joystick. If you press the fire button, though, the little squigs will do a quick shuffle and rearrange themselves in a different order. Repeated pressing of the fire button will make the squigs cycle through their three possible positions, enabling you to arrange them into formations which will make horizontal, vertical or diagonal lines of three or more squigs, at which point the squigs concerned will disappear and anything above them will fall down to fill in the gaps (and, if you're lucky, form more lines for big bonus points).

PARAGRAPH ABOUT BLOCK TYPES

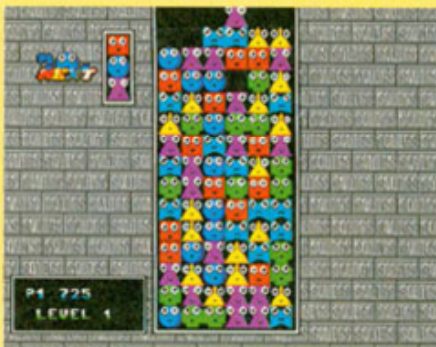
There isn't much else to it, really, but what there is comes in the form of the other blocks which occasionally fall instead of squigs – bombs and TNT blocks blow up a few squigs near them in different ways, steel plates just get in the way and can't be got rid of unless you use a crystal cube, which blows up everything on-screen that's the same as the first thing it touches.

PARAGRAPH ABOUT GAME TYPES

In the Normal game you just keep on making lines for points, but in the Rescue game (which is the same as the 'flash game' in *Columns*), the object is to form a line including the squig who shouts 'Help' at the bottom of the screen. When you do that, you move straight onto the next level, where everything gets a bit harder.

PARAGRAPH ABOUT TWO-PLAYER GAME

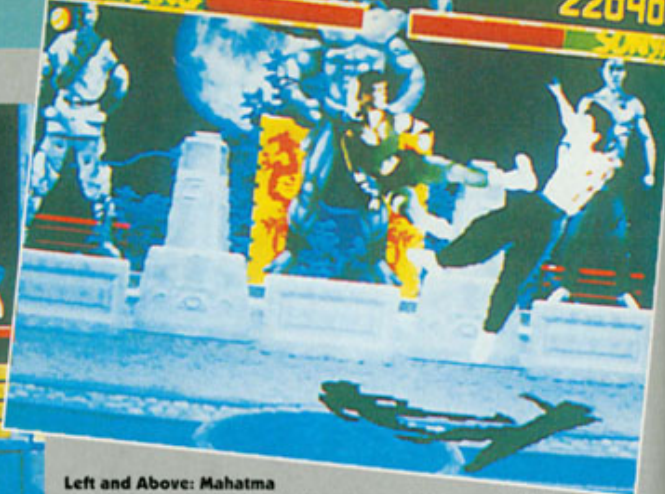
In addition to all this puzzle japery, both games also have a two-player mode, where players control alternate lines of squigs and only get points for the lines that they cause themselves, so you have to balance co-operation with maximum opportunity to grab big scores for yourself – it's devilishly fiendish.



And this is the kind of situation you're trying so hard to avoid. Game over, man, game over.

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

The part of the mag where we use our special moves on various programmers and tell them to 'Finish It!'



Left and Above: Mahatma Gandhi pioneered the ideas of passive resistance and civil disobedience as a non-violent way of forcing political change.

MORTAL KOMBAT

Game: Mortal Kombat (sic)
Publisher: Virgin
Authors: Probe Software
ETA: November

Briefly: *Mortal Kombat* is the arcade game that makes *Street Fighter 2* look like it was thought up by the creator of the 'Love Is...' cartoons, designed by Franciscan Monks and coded by Mahatma Gandhi. It apparently impressed rapper Ice-T so much that he took time out from listing the faults of the Los Angeles Police Department and the benefits of firearm ownership and bought a coin-op machine for his house. History fails to recount whether his wife (and positive feminist role model), Darlene T, shares her hubby's passion, so let's just say that *MK* is a very, very violent beat-'em-up.

The creators speak: Fergus McGovern of Probe Software is extremely busy at the moment, working on the Amiga, Game Boy, Mega Drive, Master System, PC and Game Gear versions of *Mortal Kombat*. It really is enough to make you go 'blimey,' although all the time I was talking to him, he never did. Such is his resilience to the pressures of work.

What everyone wants to know is how good a conversion the Amiga version is going to be. "It's going to be as perfect a copy of the coin-op as the Amiga technology can handle," Fergus told me, and although software companies say this sort of thing all the time, it seems it might be true this time.

"We've had the most help we've ever had in the creation of our versions of the game, and even talked to the original programmers. Basically, Williams gave us the source code from the coin-op, DAT tapes containing all the sampled speech and sound effects and

also the original footage of the fighters. *Mortal Kombat* uses digitised sequences of actual actors, and after they'd been filmed, the resulting footage was stored as high resolution frames on a computer. We've taken all the graphics from this source, but obviously we had to reduce the resolution to suit each system."

So the graphics are going to look virtually identical to the original, but what about the gameplay? "Since we're using the arcade source code, all the scorings, hit zones of the players and artificial intelligence of the computer-controlled characters is exactly the same as the original. The only difference is that the Amiga can only support two buttons on the joystick, where as the original uses six, so we're looking at ways around this. Just using the joystick would be too restrictive, so at the moment we're looking at a control system that uses both the joystick and the keyboard."

Mortal Kombat features so much blood and nastiness that the AMIGA POWER team have banned me from playing more than one game at a time (after that I apparently

start to hyperventilate and get a bit giddy) and it also contains the brutal death blows, which were considered so contrary to Nintendo's family image that they were left out of the SNES version. Surely

Amiga owners won't be deprived of such classic moves as the 'rip your opponent's head off', the 'punch your foe's beating heart out and then show it to them' move and the classic 'freeze the baddie into a solid block of ice and then smash them into a zillion pieces' death blows?

"Nope," Fergus assured me, "they'll all be in there, although there'll be an option to turn off all the blood splatters and dismemberment if your mum complains too much." Hurrah!

Verdict: Fergus promises that the Amiga version's going to be every bit as good as the Mega Drive version, which is a real stunner. There's still the problem of the Amiga fire buttons, but hopefully Probe will go for the keyboard option rather than trying to bunch up all the moves using the context-sensitive system that plagued the Amiga version of *Street Fighter 2*. It seems that companies are already gearing up for Christmas '93 blockbusters, and if it's done properly, this could be massive.

● MARK WINSTANLEY

"There'll be an option to turn off all the blood splatters"



It worked in India, but sadly it hasn't in these coin-op screenshots.



STAR

Things that I never really understood about Star Trek: Why didn't they just teleport bombs onto the other ship instead of all that photon torpedo stuff?



TO BOLDLY GO WHERE NO MAN HAS GONE BEFORE.™

Game: Star Trek
Publisher: Interplay
Authors: Metadigm
ETA: Late '93

Briefly: Long before Councillor Troy first "sensed hostility", there was another Star Trek and another USS Enterprise. The original show broke all sort of new ground in the themes and ideas presented on television, preaching a message of peace and harmony through stories that on the surface seemed to be little more exciting sci-fi romps. The first inter-racial snog on American TV occurred when Captain James T Kirk locked tonsils with lovely Lieutenant Uhura (a character who spent most of her time with a Party Popper stuck in her ear) and the viewing public (bless 'em) loved it.

Anyway, that was all 25 years ago, and to celebrate this fact, they're making a game about it.

The creators speak: Rusty Buchert took time out from hanging with his homeboys in California to fill us in on what's happening in the land of skateboards, beach babes and random gangland drive-by shootings. I started by asking him about the sci-fi roots of the programming team, to see whether they're all baby-boomers raised on a diet of unconvincing sets and poorly choreographed fight scenes, or if they're twentysomethings (like me) who actually prefer The Next Generation but just watch

the original series because it's 'quaint'? "They're a mixture of the two and go under the joint title of Metadigm. We're famous for bringing out one of the first non-Commodore debugging environments for the Amiga, but I guess you already knew that. The original has had a profound impact on my life, and one of the programmers is from the original Star Trek era, but we all watch TNG as well. Allister Brimble's doing the music, but I've no idea what he thinks about the show."

I said that I'd imagine that since Star Trek's one of Paramount's babies, they'll have been keeping a fairly tight reign over events, and even though I got the answers back by fax, I could still hear Rusty groan. "There's very close co-operation between us and Paramount and, everything, stress everything, has to be approved by them. All the art, music, sound effects, text and so on go through them before they get into the game."

The bits I've seen feature the deck of the Enterprise and a 3D fighty bit, which are what all these screen shots are from, but this isn't going to be the central part of the game.

And what about Spock? What exactly was that box he looked into, and why couldn't anyone else have a go?

"Security guards in distinctive red tops get killed"

Mr. Spock
The Republic is arming weapons and raising shields. I suggest we do the same, Captain.



TREK

apparently. "The majority of the game revolves around the ground-side adventures, and there are going to be seven completely different ones, although one takes place across two planets." I got a bit excited at this point because I remembered that whenever there was going to be a bit of aggro on a planet, the main characters always beamed down with a couple of anonymous security guards in distinctive red tops who then got killed. I asked Rusty whether they'd be in the game as well. "Indeed they will be - poor ensign expendables meet various means of unpleasant expirations on all adventures." Hoorah!

Which leaves just one final question then. Rusty, do you have any idea how

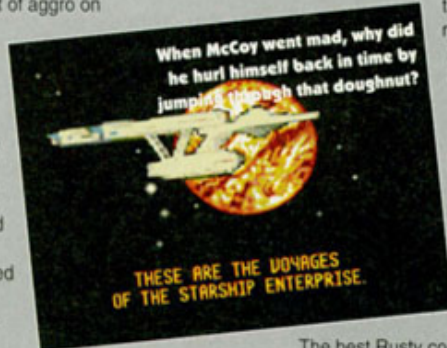
you say "I'd like a single room with an ensuite bathroom please?" in Klingon? He thought about that one a bit.

Verdict so far: With so much interest shown in it by the producers of the show, this one's going to be one of the more

promising licensed titles, and with so many people interested, nay obsessed with the program, it's ever so likely that 'Trekkies' everywhere will be flocking to part cash for this. Oh, and how about the Klingon translation?

The best Rusty could come up with was "Jih parha wa'pa je tach" which means "I want one room and a bar". He couldn't find a word for 'bathroom' and figured most Klingons would rather hit the booze. And he'd know.

● MARK WINSTANLEY



Q. Why do birds suddenly appear every time you are near? A. Cloaking device! (Arf.)



Then of course there's that old favourite: the lack of seat belts. If combat's that rough, then why no air bags? Answer me that.

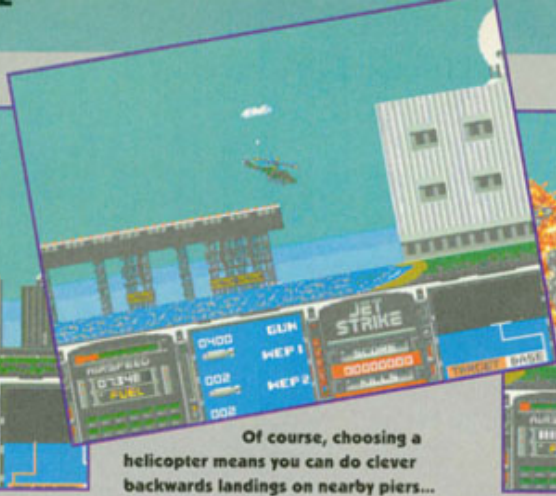
Anyway, happy birthday.

STAR TREK
25TH ANNIVERSARY

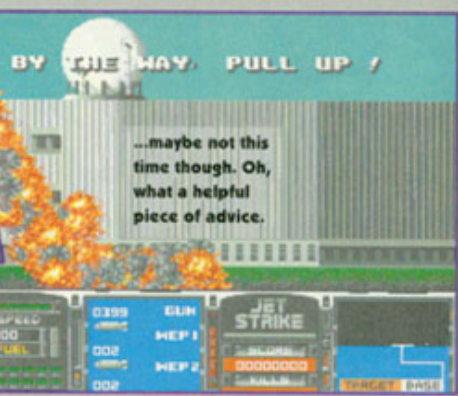




Heads up! A plucky little F16 comes in for a steep landing.



Of course, choosing a helicopter means you can do clever backwards landings on nearby piers...



...maybe not this time though. Oh, what a helpful piece of advice.

The swing-wing planes really do swing. In a 'variable geometry' sort of way.



JET STRIKE

Game: Jet Strike
Publisher: Rasputin Software
Author: Aaron and Adam Fothergill (also known as 'Shadow Software')
ETA: September

Briefly: Remember *Harrier Attack* on the Spectrum? What do you mean, "No"? Well, it was a sort of *Defender-meets-Scramble* sideways-scrolling shoot-'em-up affair with very little flight-sim realism but a massive V/STOL payload of playability. And *Jet Strike* seems to be a bang up-to-date version for the Amiga, with more colours, more planes, and more, oh I dunno, more everything really.

The creator speaks: David Jones, Managing Director at Rasputin, had the following to say for himself. "*Jet Strike* was designed after many hours spent delving into flight sim manuals and then trying to get the planes to fly. *Jet Strike* takes the flight sim idea, moves away from concentrating on simulation, introduces loads of action, and tries to be the first

really fun-to-play flight game. Plus, the main combat section links together 100 missions which give it an (almost) adventure-like feel."

So (if I'm following this correctly so far) - it's a flight sim for people who don't like flight sims. But do you still have to like planes? "Well, Aaron (the author) is a plane fanatic who was brought up in an RAF family. But you couldn't describe the rest of us as 'plane mad'. *Jet Strike* will appeal to anyone who has ever played a flight sim, anyone who enjoys action games, anyone who enjoys a challenge and anyone who likes planes - that should just about cover everyone!"

David's shrewd marketing sense causing him to 'hedge his bets' there, I'll warrant. But on to the 'fascinating facts for stat-heads' part of the preview. I've heard that *Jet Strike* will feature "four main game variants" including 'Training' (10 missions designed so you can familiarise yourself with the planes and their controls), 'Combat' (100 missions where you'll need to summon up all of your skill, cunning and forward-planning), and 'Aerolympics' (two players battle it out in 15 selected missions). And let's not overlook the "40 aircraft", each with "their own flight characteristics closely based on their real-world counterparts". Wow. Are there any other mind-boggling numerals

"Are you all just big 'Boney M' fans?"

THE B-10 IS A PROVEN GROUND ATTACK AIRCRAFT ABLE TO CARRY LARGE BOMB LOADS IN ADDITION TO ITS GATLING GUN.



Left: Choose from up to 40 planes...

Below: ...and then you get to tool them up with some serious firepower.

you'd like to throw in our general direction?

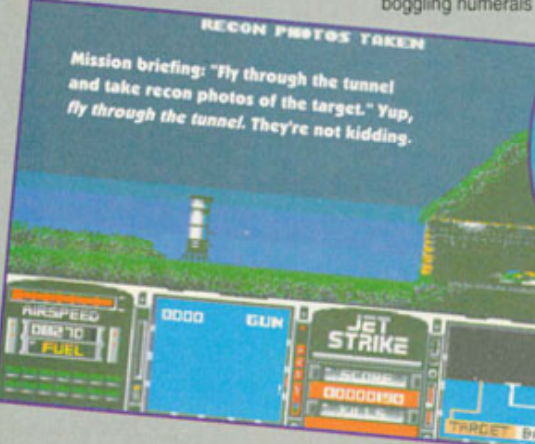
Jet Strike has been designed to be highly adaptable - we could release up to 60 or more mission disks for it. The aircraft parameters have been written in such a way that literally anything can be slotted in, from a pterodactyl to Concorde. If it flies, we can include it."

Last question. I've just looked up Grigor Ivanovich 'Ra Ra' Rasputin (1871-1916) in my 'Dictionary Of Modern History', in the hope that I'd find out for myself why you're called Rasputin Software. But in vain. So, do you identify in some way with this notoriously bearded 'mad monk' who exercised a sinister near-hypnotic influence over the Czar's family in the period leading up to the Russian Revolution? Or are you all just big 'Boney M'

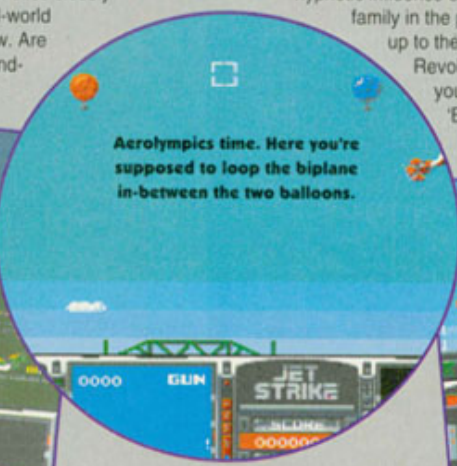
fans? David: "Why are we called Rasputin? Well, why not?"

Verdict so far: We've had an early version of *Jet Strike* in the office for a few weeks now and personally I've spent hours on it. Maybe the controls are a bit tricky at first, and sure, the graphics are hardly the 32-bit future of videogaming. But I reckon that if Rasputin get the difficulty right and come up with enough interesting missions, this'll be a real treat for good old-fashioned playability fans. And you don't have to take my word for it - next month we'll be bringing you an exclusive coverdisk demo so you can try it out for yourself. (Probably. - Ed)

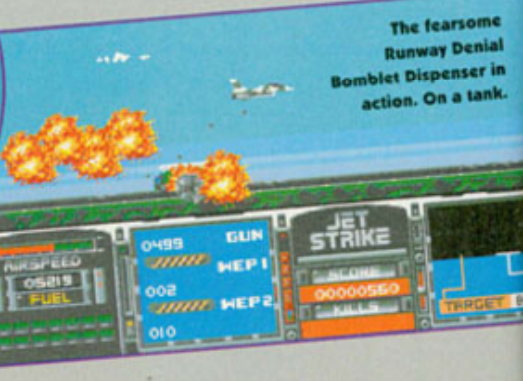
● DAVE GREEN



Mission briefing: "Fly through the tunnel and take recon photos of the target." Yup, fly through the tunnel. They're not kidding.



Aerolympics time. Here you're supposed to loop the biplane in-between the two balloons.



The fearsome Runway Denial Bomblet Dispenser in action. On a tank.



Game: F117A
Stealth Fighter
Publisher: MicroProse
Authors: Neil Duffield,
Paul Houbart, Amanda
Roberts, Eddie Garnier,
James Hawkins
ETA: Late September

The scene is set: Fade up from black. We see four figures in an otherwise empty warehouse. Two of the AP staff (dressed in plain black suits and black ties) gaffa-tape top MicroProse producer James Hawkins to a chair before dousing him in petrol and intimidating him with a straight razor. Another similarly-attired computer journo lies unconscious in the corner, fatally wounded. Their attempts to attend a press conference on MicroProse's latest flight sim (featuring the world's most advanced stealth fighter) have gone seriously wrong, and now they want answers...

MR PINK: Let's go to work.
The creators are tortured:
MR BLONDE: Okay, we've seen the excellent *Gunship 2000* and also an impressive demo of this game (on this month's coverdisk), and we can't help thinking that there are certain similarities. What've you got to say to that, huh?
JAMES: I'll come

clean, just don't hit me again!
We've used some of the 3D techniques from *Gunship 2000*, and although Neil and Paul have done 95% of the programming, we've also had input from Mark Langerak and Mark James from the *Gunship 2000* team. Mark's been working on the HUD (that's Head Up Display, technical term fans) whereas Mark, er, that is, the second one, has been working on the mission generation. Can you untie me now? Please?
MR PINK: What about mission settings? Can we ask him about where you get to blow things up, huh, Mark? Huh?



The F117A's got all the latest stealth technology, but let's look at the future...



Portable clouds will hide entire squadrons of jets.

MR BLONDE: Shut up! We're supposed to use our special code names so no-one knows our identity. So shut up, Tim! (Oops!)
MR PINK: Right then, ignore that last bit, James, and tell us about the missions. Or else...
JAMES: Sob. The missions cover Central Europe, the North Cape, Libya, the Persian Gulf, the Middle East, Desert Storm, Korea, Vietnam and Cuba. There are



Chameleon paint will merge the plane into the scenery, and cotton wool up the exhausts will make it very, very quiet.



hundreds of possible mission combinations of primary and secondary targets making it the largest ever Amiga flight sim! Based on your performance you receive medals and promotions as you play through each scenario! Look, all you

needed to do was phone our PR department to get these details, do you really think all this nastiness is necessary?
MR PINK: Shut up! Shut up! Look - over there! Dave, er, I mean 'Mr Orange', is regaining consciousness...
DAVE, ER, I MEAN, 'MR ORANGE': Ask him about the realism versus playability debate. Uhhh...

MR BLONDE: Yeah, right on, Orange. The F117A, as I understand it, has limited weaponry as it relies on its radar absorption properties (which result in it having the same radar footprint as a .22 air pellet, tech fact fans) to keep it out of trouble. Now what gamers want is big guns, so have you gone for the realistic approach, or beefed the weapons up a bit to make it more interesting?

JAMES: We've certainly added more target-busting firepower and, at the end of the day, feel that gameplay's more important than making it true-to-life, but all the realistic options are also available for the hardcore flight-sim buffs!

Conclusions are reached:

MR BLONDE: Brilliant. Okay guys, report back to the office that it looks like MicroProse are set to do it again with another top-notch flying game.
MR PINK: Okay Mark, er, Mr Blonde, and I'll say that the stealth technology is set to

be an integral part of the game, with success or failure depending on keeping damage to a minimum and therefore radar invisibility at a maximum.

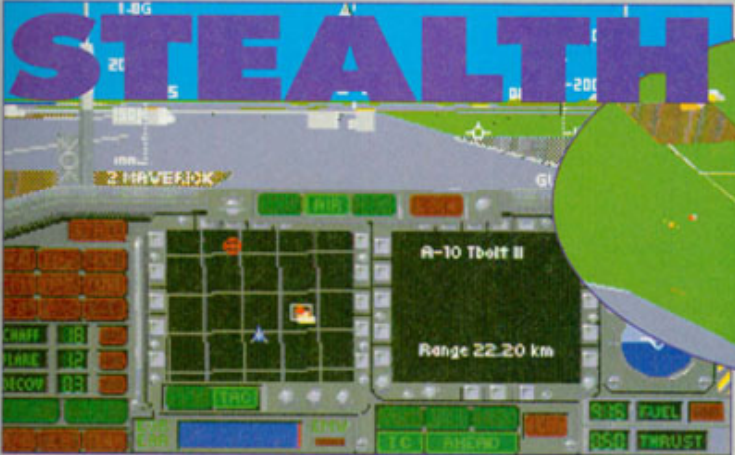
MR PINK runs off and slams the warehouse door shut behind him. **MR BLONDE** turns to James, smiling.
MR BLONDE: Now there's just you and me, and quite frankly I don't care what you tell me, I'm going to torture you anyway.

MR BLONDE waves the razor, a Rolf Harris Stylophone and an electric toothbrush in rapid succession in front of the startled MicroProse production genius. Cue cheery '70s music. Fade to black.

(*Fade back in. MR ED - not the '60s sitcom talking horse but a slightly-built Scottish-looking figure in another identical black suit and shades - stands with a smoking gun in the midst of the bleeding bodies of MESSRS BLONDE, ORANGE and PINK.*)
MR ED: You see? You ARE all fired.)
● **MARK WINSTANLEY**

"Can you untie me now? Please?"

F117A STEALTH FIGHTER



Stealth bullets will creep up slowly on their target and hide behind bushes.

Stealth bombs will blow things up and then hide all the pieces.



Undercarriages will be oiled regularly so they won't squeak.





There's something a bit odd about the 3D here, I feel...

Badoo! It's craters a-go-go as death rains from the skies.



...but enough of these informative captions. Wow, boom, takka-takka etc.

You can tell this isn't a Space 1999 licence 'cos something actually happens in it.

THEATRE OF DEATH

Game: Theatre Of Death
Publisher: Psygnosis
Authors: Dave Anthony
ETA: October

Briefly: I just know they're going to say otherwise, but take it from me, this is Psygnosis' version of Sensible's soon-to-be-released *Cannon Fodder*.

The creators speak: "It isn't *Cannon Fodder!*" said Psygnosis PR person Mark Blewitt, mimicking genuine surprise as if I really wasn't the 32nd person who'd pointed out the more than passing resemblance between their own product and 'that other one' from the Sensible boys. For those of you that haven't seen either of these games, *Theatre Of Fodder*, sorry, *Death*, features a large map viewed from an isometric overhead view. Scattered around this battlefield are groups of your soldiers, enemy soldiers and various bits of military equipment that you can take control of by sticking one of your blokes in. Everything's controlled by the mouse, with the left button marking a destination for a soldier or unit, and the right button firing whatever weapon's selected at the time, and you wander around and kill people. Exactly like *Cannon Fodder*, really.

I spoke to Dave Anthony, creative corner-stone of *Cannon Of Death* – sorry, that should be *Theatre* (Cannon Of Theatre? – Ed), and verbally taunted him with that thorny similarity-related issue. "It's strange that they're both out soon, because I started it last October and only heard about *Cannon Fodder* round about May this year. I got the idea by lumping

together all the games I like playing and taking the most worthy bits of them, so I used the perspective from *Populous*, the freedom of movement from *Elite* and the click-to-control system from *Lemmings*. To move an entire squad you click on the squad leader, whereas clicking on a normal foot soldier will move just him."

In the version I've played you only get to choose between machine guns, grenades and flame-throwers, but Dave assures me this lack of firepower's just a temporary thing. "I'm putting in land-mines and dynamite, and thinking about some mantraps as well.



It's a theatre, it involves death, it must be...

The idea is that these'll just immobilise the soldier, and if you can get an ambulance to them in time, they can be released and patched up."

There are jetpacks, tanks, helicopters and space buggies to transport your boys around quickly, with the tanks doing a nice line in running over the enemy, or your own troops if you're that careless. In times of crisis you can either call in reserves, who are helicoptered in to a preset location, or call in air strikes to bomb the hell out of an area. Nice touch, that.

At the moment all the missions are self-contained, but Dave told me that's set to change. "The game's set across snow, desert, grassy and lunar locations, and in the finished version a few'll be blended together to form bigger maps. You can choose your path across the

different terrains, and then every ten missions or so you can go onto another map, so each game you play will be different."

Verdict so far: Well, I've played versions of both *Theatre Of Death* and *Cannon Fodder*, and there's only one conclusion to be reached – they're pretty much the same game.

Although both sides claim that they've been developed independently, it's funny that two (three – if you include *General Chaos* on the Mega Drive from Electronic Arts) 'control a squad of little soldiers around a warzone' games should be out at the same time. What's caused this sudden rash of games, and is it anything to do with all those terrible body-swap movies that all came out at the same time a few years ago? Which one will be the best one? Only time will answer these, and probably other, questions.

● MARK WINSTANLEY

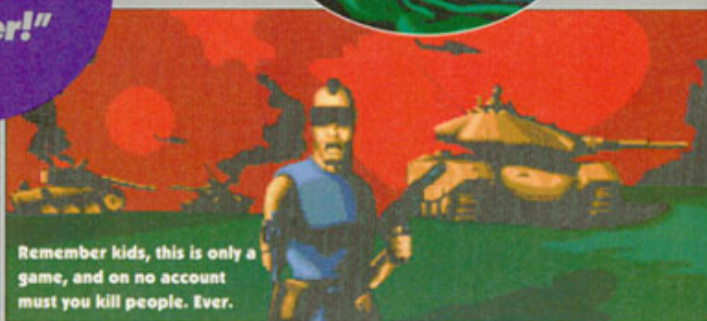
"It isn't Cannon Fodder!"



It's the cavalry, TOD style, with the boys dropping in from a Chinook.



Losing gets you this delightful body bag, which is rubberised. To prevent leaking.





Alvin was puzzled – he lived alone in his little apartment, so how come his central heating bills were always in six figures? Hmm, maybe he should switch over to the off-peak Economy 7 system.

Game: Innocent Until Caught
Publisher: Psygnosis
Authors: Divide By Zero
ETA: Late '93

Briefly: *Innocent Until Caught* is a humorous adventure game.

The creators play Mastermind:

What is your name and occupation?

The creator answers: "Andy Blazdell, Creative Director, Divide By Zero." And what is your specialist subject?

The creator answers: "Our new game, *Innocent Until Caught*."

Correct. You have two minutes on *Innocent Until Caught* starting from... now. You say that the game has something in common with *Monkey Island 2*.

What are the similarities, and how does it improve on the LucasArts classic?

The creator answers: "It's similar in format alone. We've taken the concept of participating in a movie to the limits. Our in-house programming system (called Interspective) outperforms SCUMM, Virtual Theatre and StoryDroid technically, and outclasses them in terms of the quality of the games we can create with it. For example, we have a unique hypertext-style dialogue interface when talking to other characters, and an intelligent map feature which enables swift travel around

locations visited before. Our characters act independently, and walk in eight directions without 'moonwalking' or bumping into each other. We also have a soundtracking system called FilmScore which changes the music to follow the events in the game, but retains the quality of a fixed theme tune."

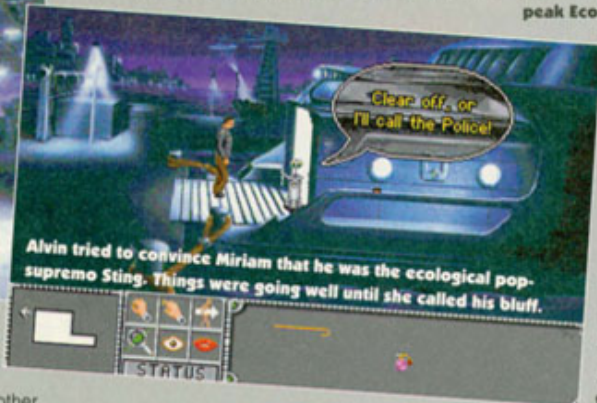
Correct. Why are you called Divide By Zero?

The creator answers: "You might think it's a witty programming in-joke, since it refers to a program bug, but after the sad demise of 'Bus Error Software' and 'Privilege Violation Inc' we didn't want to tempt fate, so the name actually comes from a little-known song by the Pet Shop Boys. But hey, it could have been worse – we could have called ourselves 'West End Girls'..."

Correct. What do you think are the most important aspects of an adventure game, and how does *Innocent Until Caught* implement them?

The creator answers: "It's got to have an easy-to-grasp interface. Players should only be concerned with solving the problems and enjoying themselves, not worrying how to do things. In other games of this genre, players often wonder why they can't do something that seems perfectly obvious. We ensure that everything that the player can reasonably expect to do will get an intuitive response,

"The name comes from a song by the Pet Shop Boys"



Alvin tried to convince Miriam that he was the ecological pop-supremo Sting. Things were going well until she called his bluff.

and everything depicted in the graphics can be interacted with in a logical way. Last but by no means least, there should be a good storyline with fully developed characters that draw the player into the game."

No, the correct answer is Leonardo da Vinci. If you divide something by zero, do you get infinity?

The creator answers: "It depends. If you're doing your Maths GCSE and you divide by zero, you'll get an 'F'. If you're a computer and you divide by zero, you get a crash. If you're going to purchase software and you buy Divide By Zero, you get a brilliant game!"

Correct. Is there a heavy element of humour in the game?

The creator answers: "Yes, it's basically a comedy but based around the serious premise of a futuristic thief under pressure from the taxman to pay a massive bill. Via a series of misadventures the thief is hired by a government agency to steal a doomsday weapon from a power-crazed dictator. You meet



Alvin wasn't getting on with the guy in the next cabin.

nothing... Divided by Zero?"

The creator answers: We did have a

slogan, actually... "Dreamt by you, Designed by us, Divide By Zero", but it sort of got changed (after certain events at the Chicago CES) to "Driven by lust, Drunk by lunchtime, Divide By Zero".

Verdict so far: You got all questions right, apart from the one about Leonardo da Vinci. As for the game, it sounds great, doesn't it?

The reader answers: Pass.
 ● TIM TUCKER



Alvin tried to convince the guard that he didn't want to sneak past him.

INNOCENT UNTIL CAUGHT

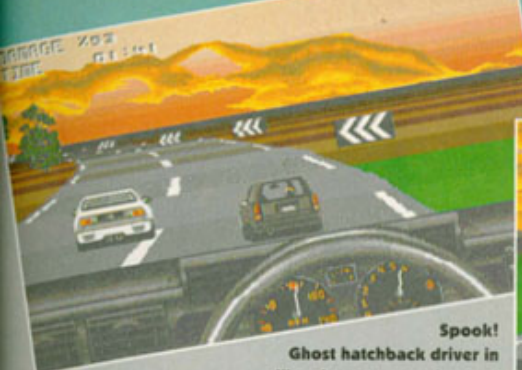


3D Super-Sensurround versions of old movies were always popular. Alvin was stunned by the realism, especially when the Memphis Belle crashed on his girlfriend.



The sun started a slow climb to its zenith, and it was obviously going to be a gloriously hot Sunday. Inside his apartment, Alvin slept on blissfully. It was, after all, still only 7 o'clock.

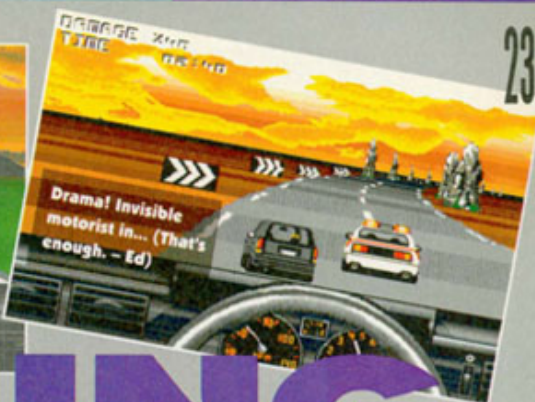




Spook!
Ghost hatchback driver in
illegal sports race shocker!



Shazam!
Driverless car in
hovercraft-science
breakthrough!



Drama! Invisible
motorist in... (That's
enough. - Ed)

Game: Burning Rubber
Publisher: Ocean
Authors: Nathan Whitaker, Andrew Sharratt, Anthony Thornton, Alan Redpath and Tim Haywood
ETA: September

Briefly: It's a seriously fast racing game, your objective being to win an illegal underground race across Europe and America for the prize of an enormous wad of cash! Well, that's what the press release says anyway, although if you took it literally, you'd be led to believe that you've got to race through a series of subterranean checkpoints. And of course you'd be wrong, for the word 'underground' is referring to the legality of all these high-speed antics and not, as you may suspect, the relative position of the racetrack to the surface of the Earth. But anyway...

The creators speak: I chatted to Trevor Scott from Harlequin at the recent press launch of *Burning Rubber*. Now, I could tell you that it was a fantastic night out in London involving playing the game, consuming masses of freebie burgers and racing 500 laps round an indoor racetrack in high-powered go-karts, but it's got nothing to do with the game and would only serve to make you all feel jealous that I not only get to play games for a living, but also get indulged by software companies at exciting events, so I won't mention it.

Harlequin are based up in Tyneside, a mere gobsnit from the world famous Metro shopping centre. "It's a great place to live," Trevor told me, "and the great thing is that once we get good staff, we tend to keep them as there aren't any other software companies in the area." So how did a company in the northeast get together with Ocean to do a racing game? "We submitted a design with screenshots about a

BURNING RUBBER



Plot the fastest course across bonny wee Scotland to get the fastest speed. Oh yes.

WEATHER REPORT:
WIND SPEED: 35MPH
TEMPERATURE: 7°C 44°F
SUNNY INTERVALS AND
ROUGH WINDS.

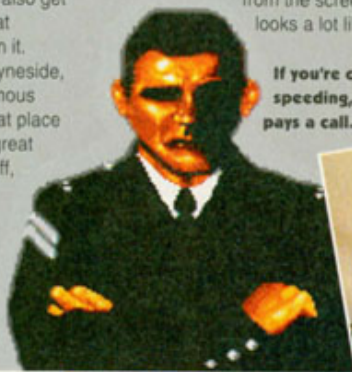


"You can get lost if you take the wrong course"

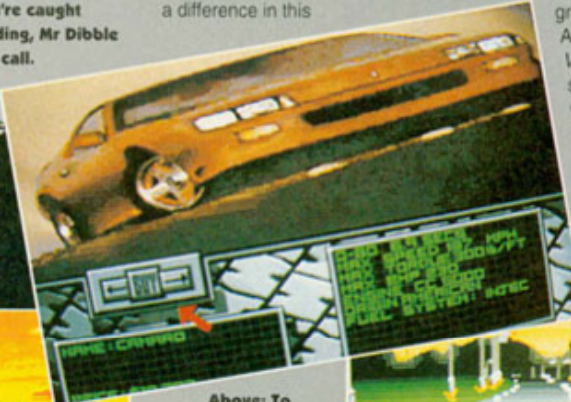
year ago, and Ocean were impressed enough to take us up on the idea. Although they have a certain input into the game, the relationship's really one of producer and publisher."

What made Ocean sit up and take an interest in the game? I mean, from the screenshots it looks a lot like *Crazy*

Cars 3, or any number of racing games. "In our initial brief we set out the ideas that would make this a different game from existing ones. We look upon it as an extremely playable simulation, with money won in races being channelled into not only repairing the car, but also adding nitro boosters, body kits, tyres and engine parts that will improve the car's handling and performance. The factor that makes a difference in this



If you're caught speeding, Mr Dibble pays a call.



Above: To most of us, it's an aspirational thing to own a car this flash.

Verdict: There are already plenty of great racing games of this type for the Amiga (*Crazy Cars 3*, *Super Hang On*, *Vroom* and *Lotus 1* to name but a few) so *Burning Rubber* is going to have its work cut out to make an impression. So is this going to be a fun game to play? Almost certainly. Is it going to set the gaming world alight? That remains to be seen.

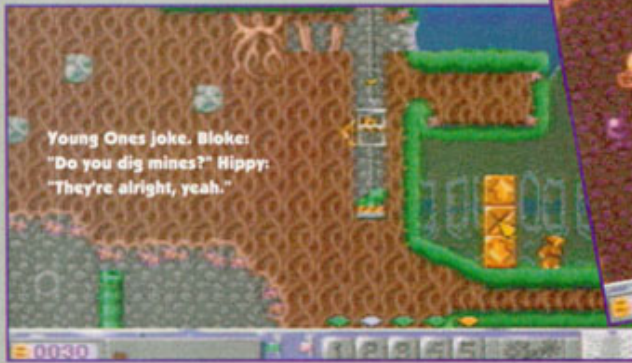
● MARK WINSTANLEY



In a kind of 'out of car' experience, you drive the vehicle that you're behind. Weird.

A severe thrashing prevented me from mentioning clogs.





Young Ones joke. Bloke:
"Do you dig mines?" Hippy:
"They're alright, yeah."



Oh how we recycled
those jokes the next day at school.

We could spend an entire
lunch-time reliving
Monty Python sketches.



DIGGERS

Game: Diggers
Publisher: Millennium
Author: Toby Simpson
ETA: September

Briefly: So here it is then, the first Amiga CD32 game that we've seen. Gosh. Once the guys from Millennium had managed to prise us away from stroking and caressing the console (yes, that's right, the Amiga's a console now, you'll have to get used to it), we got down to the business of checking out Millennium's first outing on the medium.

This game's very hard to be brief about. It's an adventure/strategy affair based on a mining theme and it is, quite frankly, huge. Yes, that part of the CD system (ooh, it's so exciting isn't it?) that enables you to store loads of megabytes of 'stuff' is being exploited to the full with *Diggers*. Perhaps I should let Toby Simpson, the man responsible for all this, do the talking, yes?

The creators

speaks: So exactly how big is it then? "Well, to give you some perspective, the graphics alone take up ten megabytes of space (*That's about 12 floppy disks, you know.* - Tim), before you even start to look at the sound, game engine and so on. We've got an interactive book on there too, which gives you access to information at any time during the game and basically gives you a manual on a disk. We're going to have to make some sacrifices on the 1200 version, simply because the number of disks needed would be immense. The



game itself is huge. There are 33 different maps, every one of them massive, covering seven different terrain types. We estimate that you could finish the game and still have only seen about 20% of it."

But we're getting ahead of ourselves. What is this game all about? "It's set on the planet Zarg, on the glorious 412th day of the year. This is traditionally the time when the planet's authorities allow the population to dig for a month for treasure and diamonds, and this year it's your turn. Basically it's about trying to make yourself rich."

"You control a race of diggers. There are four to choose from - the F'Targs, the Habbish, the Grablins and the Quarriors. Each has different qualities, like the F'Targs heal very quickly and the Grablins dig faster. Each level involves you and an

opponent tackling a mining area. You're given a target income to hit, and you can finish a level either by defeating the opponent or by getting the income."

Toby took us through a very involving demonstration with evident glee at the huge world he's created, and became so animated was he that it was impossible to jot down what he was saying. In essence, you use on-screen menus to control your characters, which includes making them walk, jump, stop, pick things up and down, search, go home, teleport and, of course, dig. If you don't give a character an instruction, it soon gets bored and starts wandering off doing its own thing, so you've got to keep an eye on your team. When you've mined

some valuables you can teleport back to the shop to buy various tools to help you with your progress, such as lifts and automatic diggers.

"The great thing is that there's more than one way to play the game. You can play it as a violent struggle against the computer opponent, or as a strategic strip-mining affair. It leaves more open to the player, and there are a lot of random elements too, because the levels are never the same twice. Each time you start a level again the treasure is scattered somewhere else."

Verdict so far: This looks like it's going to be a stormer. I can't really make any useful comparisons, because it's got a feel all of its own, but it looks like it'll appeal to anyone who's enjoyed the *Populous/Lemmings* school of games. We're looking forward to getting our mitts on this *and* the Amiga CD console in the very near future.

● TIM TUCKER

Diggers is a mining game, and on this page there are some pictures of it.

"The number of disks needed would be immense"

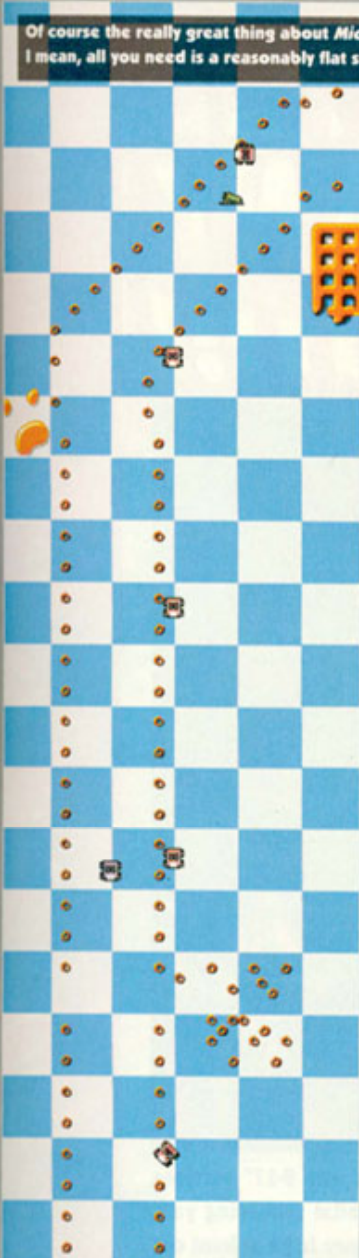


The characters were great, but no-one liked Mike, the boring one.

Now perhaps it's time these captions became a bit relevant. This is the shop screen, and here you sell jewels for dosh.



Of course the really great thing about *Micro Machines* is that you don't really need an Amiga to play it. I mean, all you need is a reasonably flat surface, some toy vehicles and just a little imagination.



Game: Micro Machines
Publisher: Code Masters
Authors: In house
ETA: September

Briefly: Bloody software houses, I bloody hate 'em. You know when this preview copy of *Micro Machines* arrived in our office? I'll tell you – one bloody day before bloody deadline, that's when. You know how much warning we had that it was likely to turn up this month at all? I'll tell you – bloody none, that's how bloody much. Do you know how much of a pain in the bum it is to completely re-arrange a flatplan (the big map-type thing that shows what we're going to have in every issue and what page it's going to be on) to make space for something that comes in at the last minute but is too interesting or important to leave until the next issue? I'll tell you – a bloody lot, that's how bloody much. And do you know how annoying it is not to be able to take these feelings out on *Micro Machines* by means of a vitriolic assault on it designed to scupper its chances of selling a single copy before it gets to see a shop shelf, 'cos of the fact that it's so damn good? I'll tell you – it's bloody annoying, that's how annoying it is.

But anyway, *Micro Machines*, as I'm sure you all know already, is a racing... actually, if you all know already, it would

be a bit stupid of me to go over it all again, wouldn't it? Sorry, scratch that.

The version of *Micro Machines* that we've been looking at for this preview has 18 of the original 32 tracks complete, on six of the nine scenarios, although there's no sound and none of the 11 computer opponents were implemented by name. It's looking, it must be said, pretty fabulous – it's fast, smooth, easy-to-control and it looks great, in that trademark

Micro Machines cutesy-things-in-miniature kind of way. It's also got a particularly good example of that very favourite thing of ours, the two-player game. *Micro Machine's* effort is a fiendish dodging of the old problem of how to deal with the scrolling in a two-player game of this

nature – cleverly, they've made the old difficulty of one player disappearing off the screen when they got too far behind into the central concept of the game. Now, if you manage to get far enough in front of your opponent that he disappears from view, you

score a point – score a certain number of points and you've won that game, without any of that tedious driving-round-the-course-a-certain-number-of-times

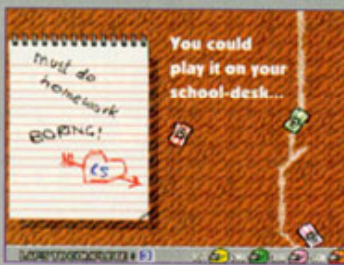
malarkey. *Micro Machines* is a great game in its own right, but with the two-player mode in operation it's *DynaBlaster* time all over again – top entertainment of the first order.

The creators speak: "That wasn't very 'briefly', was it? Now I've hardly got any space to tell you about the game, and I really wanted to say..." (I'm sorry, we haven't got any more space. – Ed)

Verdict so far: Amiga *Micro Machines* is all but indistinguishable from the Mega Drive version, one of the finest top-view racing games the world's ever seen. Need we say more?

● STUART CAMPBELL

"It's looking, it must be said, pretty fabulous"



You could play it on your school-desk...

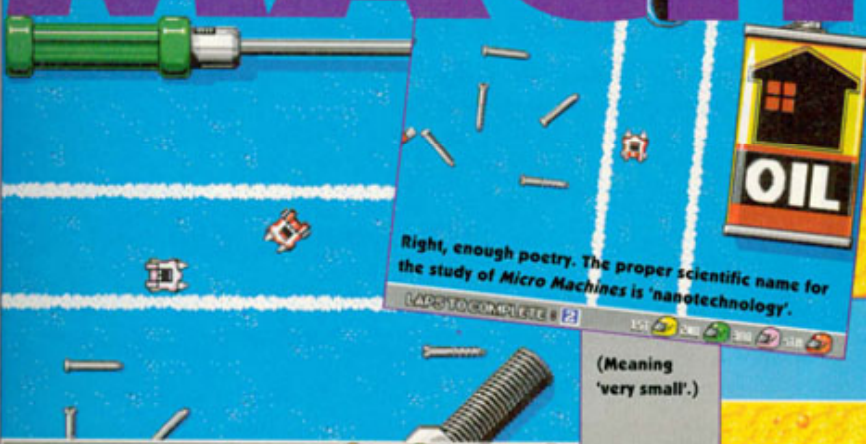


You could play it on your floor...



You could play it in your garden, or you could play indoors.

MICRO MACHINES



Right, enough poetry. The proper scientific name for the study of *Micro Machines* is 'nanotechnology'.

(Meaning 'very small'.)



Imagine, a car tinier than your thumbnail.

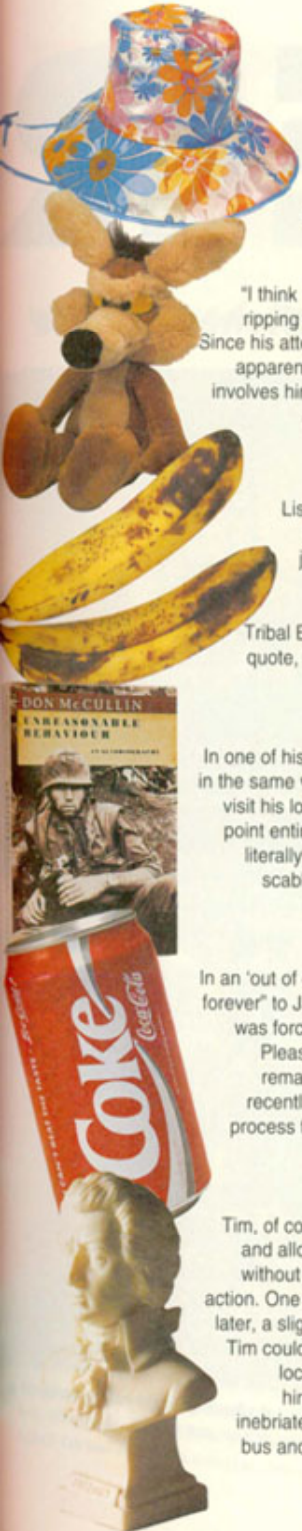
Naturally enough, finding somewhere to park would no longer be a problem.



GAMES

“Rainbows on roses and whiskers on kittens” goes the song, but it’s not only Nazi Austrian nuns who have favourite things. Anyway, you’ve had to wait a whole month to find out what we’ve been up to recently, so let’s get on with it!

JUST WHO DO WE THINK WE ARE?



LINDA BARKER

Plucky Cockney lass Linda's been doing some more recovering this month, helped along by quite literally hundreds of letters from AMIGA POWER Production Editor Dave Green. "The sooner you come back and we can lob that clueless Scottish midget out of a high window, the happier I'll be." "Who's that?" queried the recollectionally-challenged supremo, with a chirpy grin.

STUART CAMPBELL

"I think he means me," growled the belligerent Pictish Dep Ed, ripping his perfectly rebuilt teeth through a wiggly worm chew. Since his attendance at an exclusive preview of Jurassic Park, he's apparently taken on the persona of the fearsome T-Rex, which involves him crashing through our office electric fence every night and getting AP team members to shine torches at him.

LISA KELLETT

Lisa's also seen Jurassic Park, and returned to the office with glowing reviews of it, plus the obligatory armful of jammy doughnuts. "It's great!" she enthused. Part-time film reviewer Lisa's also recently taken in Cliffhanger ("It's great!"), Super Mario Brothers ("It's great!") and Tribal Bushmen Of The Kalahari, which Lisa reckons is, and I quote, "Great!" Anyone see some sort of pattern developing?

MARK WINSTANLEY

In one of his infrequent lucid moments, and conveniently following in the same vein, Mark took time out from polishing his firearms to visit his local 'flea pit'. Inspired by Falling Down, but missing the point entirely, Mark now storms out of work every day and quite literally falls down. "Michael Douglas never got his knees this scabby, and I've not shot anyone yet," he moans. Oh dear.

JACQUIE SPANTON

In an 'out of cinema' experience, we've sadly had to say "Goodbye forever" to Jacquie this month. After a particularly rough night, she was forcibly entered into the Betty Ford Clinic at Her Majesty's Pleasure by order of a magistrate, where she's expected to remain until the 'drying out' process is complete. The clinic recently issued a statement to the effect that they expect this process to take approximately "one hundred and seven years."

TIM TUCKER

Tim, of course, couldn't just stand idly by and allow this to happen to his fiancée without taking some kind of supportive action. One crash course in vodka drinking later, a slightly more-confused-than-usual Tim could be seen staggering towards a local church to seek sanctuary for himself and his love. Sadly, in his inebriated state, he walked in front of a bus and was killed instantly. Bye, Tim.

RICH LONGHURST

Rich thinks he's written a blockbuster and really can't see why no major studio has bought the idea off him. "It's a similar idea to In Bed With Madonna," babbled our long-suffering contributor, "but it's called In Bedsit With Morrissey, and will star the greatest living musician of our time. I could direct it, and I've got this uncle, right, and he's got a chain of video libraries..."

DAVE GREEN

Movies, movies, movies, it seems like we've all been watching them this month, and we were all surprised to find that our extra-terrestrial Prod Ed Dave is a fan of weepies. "I do love a good cry at those sad endings," he admitted. "The Thing, Alien and War Of The Worlds, I love 'em," he sobbed, "but why do the good guys always cop it at the end?" Somehow I think he's got a novel viewpoint on our Earthling culture.

TIM NORRIS

AP's most prominent ex-public schoolboy Tim favours films that show the British Empire at the height of its powers. "Anything involving long runs across moors and headmasters thrashing small boys is good for me," he said. "I especially enjoy scenes of good honest soldier lads spilling their life-blood to futilely defend desolate corners of the Empire." Fortunately no-one was listening.

DAVE GOLDER

Dave tends to forego the silver screen in favour of his home video collection, a microwave meal for one and a litre of Tab Clear. "I've got all 68 tapes of Star Trek - The Next Generation," he confessed. "First I watch them in sequential order, which takes about a month, then I watch them all again, but in reverse order. Finally, I like to mix them all up and play them back any old way." My oh my Dave, how those long evenings must just fly by. Live long and prosper.

SAL MEDDINGS

The only good thing about the unfortunate incarceration of Jacquie is that Sally Meddings returns to AP after a break of almost a year. Sal's not seen any movies recently, but what with her new job and her inordinately cute daughter to look after and the ritual indoctrination ordeal that has made her the mightiest Art Ed ever to lay out a magazine, we kind of let her off. This time.

JONATHAN DAVIES

Jonathan considers even videos to be "too fancy", in a similar way to how the Amish people of Pennsylvania frown upon zip fasteners. "I've got a ViewMaster and a single story disc," crooned the sultry strategy games guru, "and I watch it daily in a darkened room. The 3D really is great, and I find that one story's enough excitement for me." It's such a shame, isn't it?



How does our scoring system work, then?
1. We tell it like it is. We think very carefully about our reviews and make sure you know what we think.
2. Rating systems get confusing so we give a single percentage mark and a few summing-up sentences.
3. We haven't got time for third points.

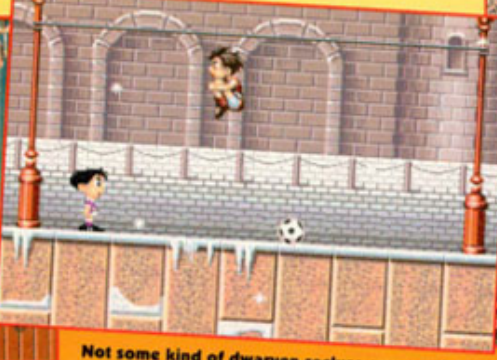




This is Gareth (I think). He's a Welsh rugby player, so he shouldn't give you too much trouble (ho ho).



'Pavarelli' here is the boss of the Italian level, and he's armed with some deadly off-key notes. Alarmingly, he's already turned your shirt purple - watch out, or you could be next! (What? - Ed)



Not some kind of dwarven recluse as you might be thinking, but in fact a petite Russian gymnast boss chick who packs a mean jack-knife somersault.

TIRED OF BEING BOSSSED AROUND

SOCCER KID

There's top-class footie action in this gorgeous platformer, firmly pitched at folks

Game: Soccer Kid
Publisher: Krisalis
Authors: Neil Adamson, Nigel Little, Matt Furniss
Price: £29.99
Release: August 26

Nice to see the hardware being used for once, anyway. After a spate of games not recognising the presence of a second drive, here's a game that recognises up to three extra ones (the game comes on four disks), and extra memory as well, so that if you've got some ludicrously expanded six meg A1200 or something, you can load the whole game into memory in one go and never have to access any of the disks ever again. It's ridiculous that I should even be having to point this out in 1993, but since it's still the exception rather than the rule, it's got to be done. Brownie points aplenty to Krisalis, then.

But on with the show. Space aliens have stolen the World Cup (oh god). hilariously, though, they crashed into an asteroid while making their escape, and the World Cup fell back to Earth, albeit broken into five pieces. Strange gravitational quirks (or something like that, probably), however, caused each piece to land in a different country. (Is it just me or do game plots really depress you? Yeah, thought so, it's just me. Ah well.) Keen footie devotee Soccer Kid takes on the mantle of the Pickles of his generation (unnecessarily elitist gag for veteran football supporters there, but I'm not sorry - 96% of our readers are male, and if you're a boy and you don't like football there's something wrong with you, so nyah boo sucks), and decides to rescue the trophy himself before the USA World Cup '94



Clearly, Soccer Kid isn't suffering any of the old 'tied down with battleship chains' problems often found in this situation.

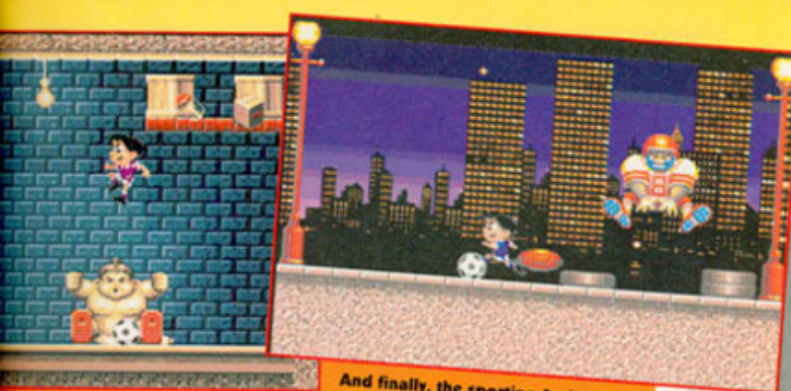


Making his way along the Japanese Bullet Train stage, Soccer Kid gets fatally distracted by some top imported consumer goods. You're too young to drive, Kid, get on with it!



Oblivious to danger, Soccer Kid risks a catastrophic rake/bottom incident in search of few Everton mints. In this game, it's sweets that make prizes, not points.





The Japan boss is, naturally a sumo. Who appears to be about seven years old. How strange.

And finally, the sporting Antichrist – an American footballer. Now he really does want a good kicking.

"Well, Betsy, I didn't think you and me'd be seeing action again so soon. Hi-ho!"



KID

who enjoyed *Arabian Nights*. Or anyone



Skateboarding stopped being even remotely interesting in about 1975, about 20 minutes after it started. So this daft git deserves everything he gets, if you ask us.



No, Soccer Kid, that's a football, not a hard hat. What's the matter with you? Can't you read? Oh no! Mind the oranges, Marlon!

tournament becomes even more of a disaster than it's going to be anyway. Naturally, the inhabitants of the five countries he's going to have to travel through (namely England, Italy, Japan, Russia and America) aren't too chuffed about the violation of their borders, and etc etc.

But Soccer Kid doesn't just beat up the inter-continental bad guys with a baseball bat, or zap 'em with a laser gun, or even jump on their heads. Oh no. Soccer Kid is armed in a different, and perhaps more plausible way – he's got a football. Not only that, but he's got a whole armoury of special footballing-type moves to use in conjunction with said weapon, including headers, overhead kicks and, er, other ones as well.

Now while taking out the baddies with your football in various interesting

who didn't, for that

matter. Or anyone sort of inbetween.

"You have to think about every baddie you clobber"

ways is very novel and cute, it's also a bit on the fiddly side much of the time – you have to stop, line up your shot, get into trick shot mode and then actually do it. This all looks great and stylish and everything, but it can really slow the pace of the game right down on occasion – sometimes when you're zipping along, you'd give anything just to be able to jump on a baddie's head and sort him out there-and-then without a load of hanging around. In fact, this is probably my biggest gripe with the entire game – what's the point in doing a fast-moving game with super-speedy super-slick scrolling, when you hardly ever get to go at full tilt? It annoyed me in *Sonic The Hedgehog* (damn! Sneaked up on me, sorry), and it annoys me here.

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

Actually, now that I come to mention the blue spiky one, I'm suddenly struck by an unexpected familiarity. (Yeah, I know, this is a stupid idea, we're all sick of Amiga games being compared to *Sonic*, especially ones like *Zool* which aren't anything like it at all in any real sense, but I've started so I'll finish.) While *Soccer Kid* doesn't really feel like any other Amiga game, it occurs to me it's more similar to *STH* than you might imagine. They've got very similar pacing, some of the same power-ups (especially the speedy boots, although at least here they make you invulnerable for a while so you get a bit of a chance to use them properly, instead of just running helter-skelter straight into the first baddie in your path), and some deju-vu-tastic bits of scenery (like the jumping fish under the bridges on the Chinese world). The two games are structured distinctly similarly as well, with a small number of worlds (five in this case, compared to *Sonic's* six), each divided up

BUSTIN' MOVES



A thoroughly stylish backheeling effort there...

Swiftly followed up with some nifty balancing. Top stuff, Brian.



Oh look, it's the Goodyear blimp. Er, or something a bit smaller.

Whoops! Darned banana skins all over the place...



"Jesus! This is what I call a Force 10 gale, and no mistake!"

Hmm. Didn't quite get the old knee over the top of that one.



"Frankly, I don't think these captions are very good. I'm bored now."

I hope this hatches soon, it's not comfy.



into three sub-levels with a boss at the end, and bonus sections which you reach by collecting objects in the sub-levels (in *Sonic* it was Chaos Emeralds, here it's bits of the World Cup). But I'm getting off track a bit, and I haven't even started to tell you what a fab game this is yet. Er, could we pretend the review starts here, yeah?

Fans of *Arabian Nights* will feel on familiar ground from the off here, as *Soccer Kid* is written with the same basic game engine. If for some perverse reason you didn't like *Arabian Nights*, don't let that put you off - *Soccer Kid* isn't quite so inertia-ridden control-wise, and there isn't much in the way of puzzle-solving to distract you from the platforming action. Mind you, to be honest, there isn't much platforming action either, technically speaking. This is a platform game in much the same way that (here we go again) *Super Mario World* is a platform game, ie there are platforms in it, but most of the gameplay consists of going in pretty much a straight horizontal line from left to right, dodging obstacles and smacking up any baddies encountered on the way. (This is as opposed to a platform game in the *Harlequin* or *Zool* sense, where finding your way around a maze of platforms is the central theme in itself.) And that's not intended as a criticism, by the way.

So, let's recap: it's the same as that great platform puzzler *Arabian Nights*, but without the puzzles. Or the platforms. And it's really original, but it's a cross between *Sonic* and *Super Mario World*. Oh dear. I'm not getting this across at all well, am I? Let's talk about something else.

One way in which *Soccer Kid* isn't like *Sonic* or *Mario* at all is in its difficulty setting - it's a bitch and a half, and then another bit, and then another entire bitch on top of that (ugh, what an unpleasant mental picture I've just formed. Bits of dog all over the shop. Yeuch).

You have to think about practically every baddie you clobber, and the platform-leaping isn't the easiest you've ever seen either. The first couple of levels aren't too taxing (but they're no pushovers), but by the

"Bits of dog all over the shop. Yeuch."

time you get to the second or third worlds it starts to get really fearsome, and by the end it's just horrifying. Krisalis' main playtester reckons that even when you've got really good at this, it'll take about five-and-a-half hours to play through from start to finish (up!), which means it's just as well there's a password system (a last-minute addition from the Krisalis boys, on the strongest recommendation AMIGA POWER could possibly muster) or no-one in the world except maybe Lloyd Grossman from TV's *Through The Keyhole* would have an snowball's chance in hell of seeing the end sequence. And frankly, even he'd be struggling. Even with passwords you won't polish this one off in a hurry, and in value-conscious days like these (especially with the game selling for a distinctly naughty £30) that's a good thing in my book. (Stuart's Big Book Of Really Good Things, just £49.99 from any unscrupulous bookshop.)

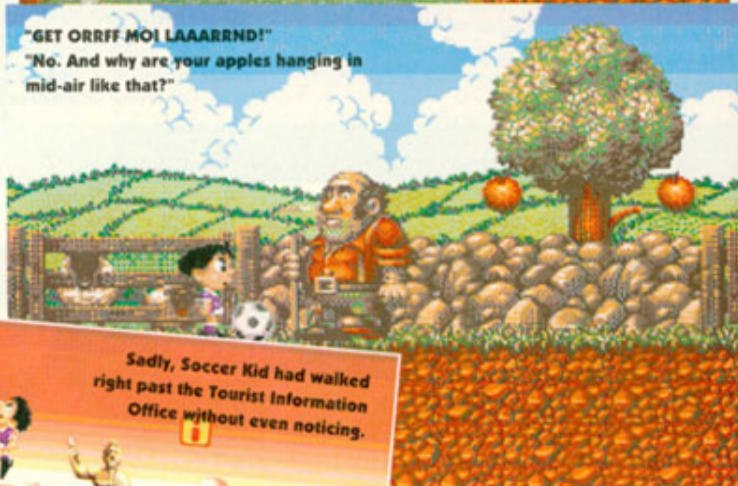
Right, so it's got lots of the good bits from *Sonic* and *Mario* and *Arabian Nights*, it's fast, original, and big and hard and clever. We're finally getting somewhere now. But the REALLY brilliant things about *Soccer Kid* are (Snip! - Ed)

● **STUART CAMPBELL**

The Kid looks a bit like Bub and Bob out of *Rainbow Islands* from this angle, doesn't he? Slightly.



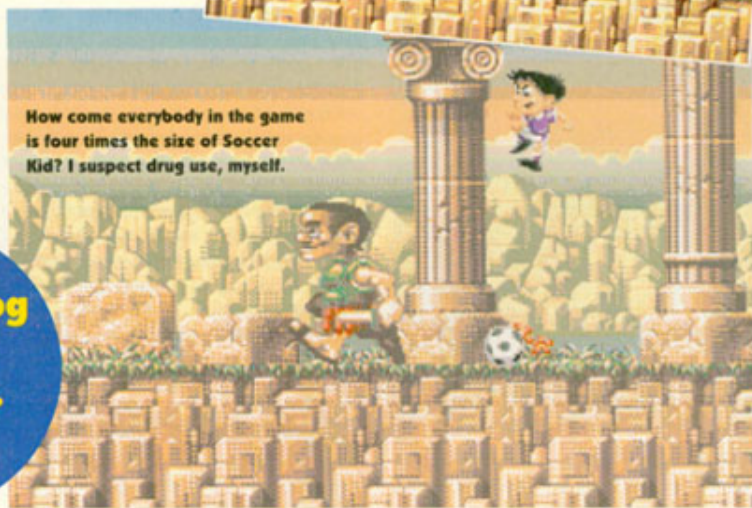
"GET ORRRR MOJ LAAARRND!"
"No. And why are your apples hanging in mid-air like that?"



Sadly, Soccer Kid had walked right past the Tourist Information Office without even noticing.



How come everybody in the game is four times the size of Soccer Kid? I suspect drug use, myself.



UPPERS Hang on, you can't (Snip! - Ed) me, right now I AM the Ed! (I'm the voice of your professional conscience. We were out of space, and you were just wobbling. - Ed) Look, stop that! (See, you've over-run into the 'Uppers' box now. - Ed) Alright, alright, but if I do the 'Uppers' now, can I get a little PS at the end of the review to put all the good stuff in? (Okay, but get on with it. - Ed) Beautiful graphics, a great central character, a few neat ideas and a feel unlike any other platform game I can think of. (Except...well, we've covered that already. - Ed)

DOWNERS Gorgeous though they are, the graphics are a little samey sometimes (although, let's face it, most cities do look pretty much identical these days), and the music's horribly cheesy throughout. And I'll take two percent off for having to kill rats, too.

THE BOTTOM LINE
A deeply gorgeous platformer, even better than *Arabian Nights*, but not quite as good as *Yo! Joe!* Right, can I do my last bit now? (No. - Ed) What? But you said... (I lied. - Ed)

88

THE PLOT - A CONDENSED VERSION

Spots World Cup left carelessly lying around on a table and nicks it.

Soccer Kid, upset, planes his bedroom door into unusual shape. To be continued.



Alien bad guy comes to Earth in a spaceship looking for mischief.



THE BOTTOM LINE
A1200 (There's a dedicated enhanced version on the way, but this version runs fine on the big machine, using the two meg RAM for reduced loading. - Ed)

Game: Blob
Publisher: Core Design
Authors: Jonnathan Hilliard (code), Billy Allison (graphics), Martin Iveson (sound)
Price: £25.99
Release: 1st September

A couple of weeks ago I went for a trip to the seaside (Weston-Super-Mare to be precise). Things had been a bit stressful at the office on the last issue and I needed a break, you know how it is. So there I was, strolling down the pier (well, battling my way down the pier in the face of a Force 9 typhoon, actually, but that's not important right now), heading for the arcade for a few games of bingo and a '99', like you do, when my attention was attracted by something written on the beach below. About halfway along the pier, in a huge expanse of virgin sand that there were no people within 200 yards of, in really neat 'handwriting' about three feet high, was the phrase "Here is a place of disaffection - TS Eliot". I was thrown off my stride a bit by this sudden unexpected discovery (which was unfortunate, because the momentary loss of concentration allowed the wind to seize me in its grip and I went staggering into a small child, causing his candy floss and fluffy Hulk Hogan teddy bear to become fused into one sticky entity), but not quite as much as I was by the sudden unexpected arrival out of nowhere this month of probably the most original game I've seen this year.

Reassuringly, *Blob* seems to have

come as almost as much of a surprise to Core as it did to us. It popped through their letterbox up one day in a practically-finished state as a

sample of work from coder Jonnathan (sic) Hilliard, impressing the Core boys and girls so much that they bought it up on the spot. It came to us in an unassuming, "Oh, and by the way we've got this - you might like to have a look at sometime" kind of way, which made it all the more pleasant when it turned out to be so fab.

You're doubtful, aren't you? You're looking at the screenshots and going

Cor! Original 3D amorphous
 - puzzley-action! From Core!

BLOB

**"It's
 ridiculously
 entertaining
 just to bounce
 around"**

The game's covered fairly comprehensively in the review, so here're some of our fave jokes.

IT'S ALL JUST A LOAD OF BLOCKS TO ME, GUV

Inexplicably, *Blob's* world is made up entirely of square-shaped blocks, all of which have different properties and ways of affecting *Blob's* life. Here's just a selection...

These tiles don't actually do anything to *Blob*, but they do offer a timely suggestion as to which would be the best way to go next. Mostly,



Squares with puddles on them absorb *Blob's* bounciness on impact, and hence are impossible to get much height from.



A painted tile, which you've just painted.



Some blocks have incredibly powerful fans mounted on them which *Blob* can hover on.



Cracked tiles are a bit on the perilous side - a couple of good firm bounces and they'll disintegrate beneath you.



The charmingly-named 'Spewer' throws out various types of projectile which can slow down, damage or kill our plucky *Blob*.



Some tiles contain little hives which can be broken to reveal 'spods', or baby *Blobs*. These follow you around and sometimes have to be taken to the exit to activate it.



Message tiles contain cute little scrolls which give you useful hints and tips (like 'Go up, dude!'), or level passwords.



Shooter blocks fire bullets alternately left and right, mindless of the possible danger to life and property.



Switch blocks do a variety of things, but mostly they're concerned with making other blocks materialise out of the ether, usually in a helpful way.

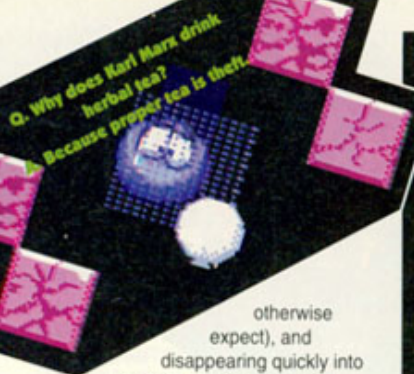


"Doesn't look like much to me. Reckon Stuart's having another one of his 'funny' turns. Yup." But you're wrong. Think about it – how many games actually make you shout at them? How many games get you flinching on the edge of your seat? How many games give you a dizzying sense of terror in the pit of your stomach when you fall down a hole? This one does.

Blob's a bouncy ball, and he lives in one of those strange, alien worlds where the only way to pass the long sunless days is to bounce around on a series of platforms suspended, quite literally, in space. Sometimes he likes to paint the platforms different colours, sometimes he likes to wander across the walkways finding little lost baby Blobs and rescuing them, and sometimes he just bounces around for the sheer hell of it. Mostly, though, what happens is that he slips, ricochets or otherwise falls off the edge of the platforms, and plunges into the bottomless void to his presumed death.

TAKE YOUR BRAIN TO ANOTHER DIMENSION

Y'see, *Blob* is a 3D game. Not your everyday boring old vector-graphics-and-polygons 3D game, but a 3D game where the sense of dimensional depth is the whole point of the thing. To get anywhere you must bounce Blob either up, 'out of' the screen or down 'into' it. Tiles hang in the middle of the darkness, appearing first in outline as you bounce towards them, then solidly as you reach their level (a great way to solve the 'how to judge distances' problem you might



otherwise expect), and disappearing quickly into the void as you leave them behind, creating a scary atmosphere of isolation and uncertainty. A misplaced nudge on the joystick and you're falling, falling down into the inky blackness, becoming smaller and smaller until you disappear from view entirely, somewhere around where I imagine the cathode-ray tube of your TV set used to be. It's really quite frightening.

And that, if you'd also care to check out the 'Load Of Blocks' box elsewhere on these pages for a little more technical detail, is pretty much the extent of it. Much of the beauty of *Blob* lies in its utterly graspable simplicity – unlike some puzzle games you can work it out almost totally without recourse to the instructions, and it's ridiculously entertaining just to bounce around for ages marvelling at the sense of

LEVEL 46 BREAKOUT

Q. What's black and white and red all over?
A. A newspaper in a bowl of raspberry-flavoured instant whip.

teetering-on-the-edge precariousness before you even bother trying to play the game properly. When you get into it, the gameplay isn't really that far removed from *One Step Beyond*, say, (with a few baddies thrown in), but the viewpoint makes it feel like nothing else you've ever played (unless you've got an old Speccy or C64 and a copy of *Bounder*, that is).

It's gripping in a way that I rather wish it hadn't been this week (it arrived in the last week before this month's deadline, and I really shouldn't have spent the best part of three days with it before I wrote the review), and being so unexpected just made it more of a treat. We broke several of the natural laws of time in order to get you some levels for a coverdisk demo, so I hope you appreciate it as much as I did.

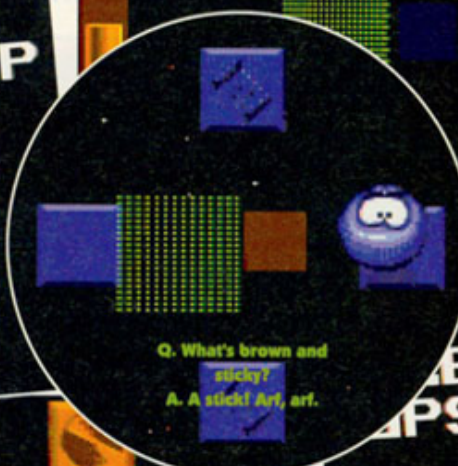
This is wonderful.
● STUART CAMPBELL



Any dead baby jokes go down a treat in the office, but we can't print any. Pity.

LEVEL 06 DOWN FOR UP

You'll love this one.
Q. What's black and white and eats like a horse?
A. A zebra. Moo hoo.



Q. What's brown and sticky?
A. A stick! Arf, arf.

LEVEL 16 POPSY DAISY

Only you can stop us from doing this next month, so send in your complaints to the usual address.

UPPERS Brilliantly original (as far as the Amiga goes, anyway), maddeningly addictive, and eerily vertigo-inducing. *Blob*'s a top character, too – you really feel for him when he gets hurt and does his sad puppy-dog eyes. Even if he does look exactly like Putty.

DOWNERS It would have been good to have some kind of instructions at the start of each level as to what your exact objective is – later on you have to tool around for quite a while before you work out which sort of level it is. And cute though it is, you should be able to cut the death sequence short.

THE BOTTOM LINE

A superb original arcade puzzler with tons of character, and a refreshing change from, well, pretty much anything. Yet another great game that could only ever happen on the Amiga.

88 PERCENT

THE BOTTOM LINE

It's as different to the **A1200** A500/600 version as two things that are exactly the same, but would 256 colours really have made any difference to a game like this anyway? Of course not.



Colin shows his joy at finishing each level by going all curly, before then jumping into a packet of, hey, Quavers(!)

where he starts a jump looking all happy and self-satisfied, then worried when he realises he's going to fall, and even that bit where he goes all curly. Just like in the TV advert.



● **SNAX FACT:** By the end of this year, the setting up of the Economic Community will affect even crisp consumers. Directive 92/15, as ratified in Brussels this June, states that all crisps must conform to the EC Homogeneous Colour Group Packaging Restrictions (Potato Snacks, Fried) which will bring all wayward producers into line. From November 23rd of this year, it will be technically illegal to put cheese and onion crisps in bags of any colour other than green. Similarly, roast chicken flavoured must be packaged in orange, and unless

prawn cocktail are bagged in pink, the producers will be liable to a hefty fine and even long prison sentences. At the time of writing, the company that offends the most are Walkers, who use blue packs for cheese and onion, green for salt and vinegar and red for ready salted. These are in DIRECT VIOLATION of the EC directive, and unless they change their ways soon, could bring about a managerial incarceration bigger than the Guinness scandal of the late '80s.

● **SNAX FACT:** Although they share the same name, Robert Smith has nothing to do with Smiths Crisps. A good way to tell them apart is this: Robert Smith is the overweight singer of The Cure, who's yet to realise that his lipstick and make-up image only used to work because he was thin, and the other makes crisps.



● **SNAX FACT:** In a similar way, Colin Curly has nothing to do with our very own Colin The Publisher, who's actually our, er, publisher. And not curly at all, in any real sense.



● **SNAX FACT:** *One Step Beyond* is a puzzle game, so no nasties to jump on or rings to pick up, just a test of one dog-type animal against a series of platforms and the clock. The idea's to close all the platforms within the time limit,

Product placement has, for a long time now, been a way for film producers to generate extra revenue by showing consumer items in prominent positions throughout their movie. Who could forget the Coke can in *Falling Down*, the Beretta 92F Parabellum in *Lethal Weapon 3* or the Sears and Roebuck hoes used in *Sommersby*? Well, now it's happening in computer games. Apparently,

whereas previously they were made by that great British institution, Smiths Crisps.

● **SNAX FACT:** *One Step Beyond* may be the second game to carry the Colin Curly moniker, but curiously it's the first to actually feature the character. *Pushover* starred a strange little ant bloke, but Colin features heavily throughout *One Step Beyond*. In fact, he's the only character in the game. Just as well that he's well-animated then, with each jump, fall and trampoline done in the same style as the character that implores you to buy, buy, buy. There's the obligatory funny bit where he looks bored when nothing happens for a few seconds, a great bit

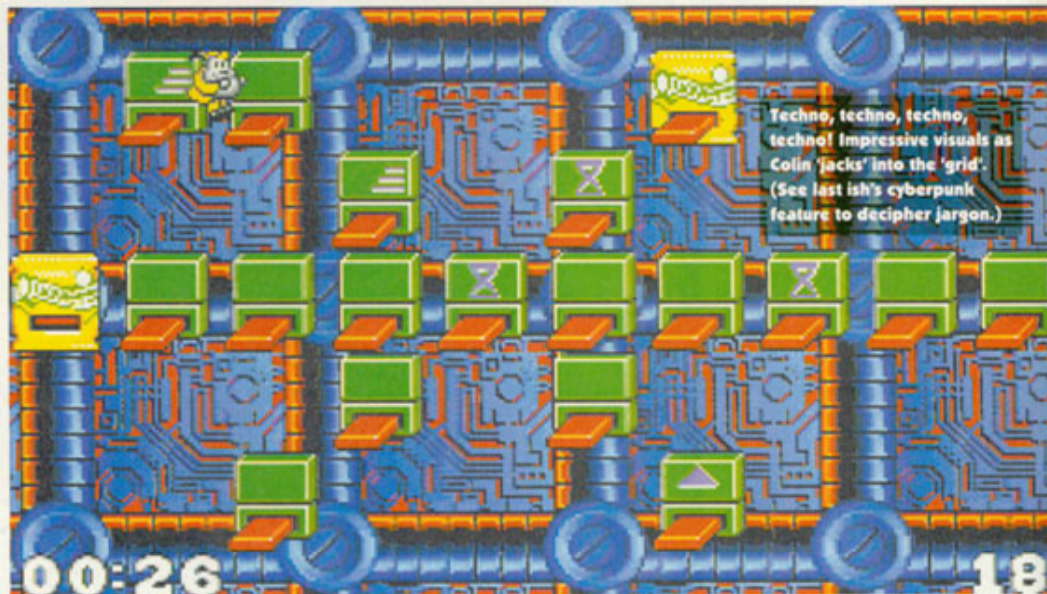
Never in my life have I been a great fan of crisps. Or chocolate, or fizzy drinks for that matter. Given the choice of masses of over-processed, over-priced foods, I tend to turn away in revulsion and opt for a pint of semi-skimmed milk, a banana and a small handful of cashew nuts every time. However, full-time production editor and part-time human Dave Green was quick to point out that snack foods form a sizeable part of many people's diets and are also a multi-million pound industry in their own right, so I thought this would be an appropriate time to take you into the incredible world of poorly-researched – *Snax Facts!*

● **SNAX FACT:** Although Colin Curly (that funny scamp who features in the game *One Step Beyond*) has always worked for Quavers, he'll have recently found a new name on the bottom of his pay cheque, as Quavers are now owned by Walkers.

When it comes to the

crunch, this top new Colin Curly

puzzler will have you literally quavering with excitement.



ONE STEP



For a low-budget *One Step Beyond* simulation, simply trace a path over the pictures on this page using a felt-tip pen.

before then jumping into the bag of Quavers, and every time Colin jumps off a platform, it automatically slides shut. This in itself is a bit tricky, as it's very easy to end up stranded at the other side of the screen, with all the in-between platforms already shut, but there's, as a crap TV comedian used to say, more.

● **SNAX FACT:** The first crisp was invented by a Mrs Theresa Mulcahey on June 15th 1895. The Mulcahey family had emigrated to Boston from County Cork to escape the twin ravages of despotic English rule and the potato famine, but although they were now living in the land of golden opportunity and plenty, the wily Mrs M found it hard to shrug off her thrifty Gaelic ways. After a hearty evening meal of stew, our Irish heroine was shocked to find that one of her sons (a hard-working lad with a heart of gold) had peeled excessive amounts from the potatoes and, rather than throw these valuable peelings away, she fried them up for a dessert. Voilà, instant crisps. One of these original snacks is now stored in a hermetically sealed jar at the Smithsonian Institute, Washington DC, and is said to be insured for a seven-figure sum.

● **SNAX FACT:** You may tuck into a packet of your favourite flavour with relish, but what exactly are you eating? Most crisps have never seen the 'natural flavourings' that they claim to represent, as they've spent the majority of their young lives in a factory. Foods that are 'flavoured' must by law have been

briefly brushed against the actual foodstuff they're supposed to taste like, where as such-and-such 'flavour' foods can be chock full of any bizarre blend of chemicals, industrial slurry and 'taste enhancers'.

● **SNAX FACT:** Many of the platforms in the game have special powers, so when you jump off one kind, for example, all the platforms in the same line will slide shut. Others automatically fire you off in a set direction, while another kind closes after a delay. This is pretty handy, as it means that if you're fast enough, you can hop off it, close a load of other platforms, and then jump back to the magical Quavers packet before it shuts.

● **SNAX FACT:** By correctly labelling the product, novelty snacks such as 'Hedgehog flavour' crisps can be put on the market without the wholesale slaughter of Britain's most flea-ridden and all-round crap road-kill victims.

● **SNAX FACT:** By not having flashy animated backgrounds or scrolly bits, *One Step Beyond* looks deceptively, well, dull

"One Step Beyond looks deceptively dull"

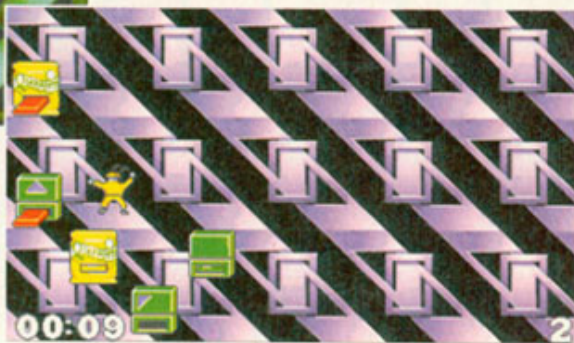


This level's nearly finished, and just requires Colin to go down, right, fired up, left and then you're finished. Got that?

Colin fails to grasp the concept of the game and heads off in the wrong direction.



Below is Level Two, one of those hopelessly simple levels that gets you into the swing of things without being in any way challenging. And I've still messed it up - oops!



really. Not so, dear reader, in fact the only thing that I detested about it was the tiresome soundtrack with the naff 'boop' noises that seeped out of the speakers every time Colin jumped. Turning the sound down and sticking on my Lloyd Cole tape solves that problem, and working my way through numerous levels is a great way to 'constructively fill' many an hour in the office. Who says all licences are crap? Not us, that's for sure.

● **MARK WINSTANLEY**

▲ **UPPERS** It's got great hook appeal, in that 'just one more level' sort of way, which prompts all of those terrible 'hard to put down' and 'a moment to learn, a lifetime to master' clichés. But they're all true, honest. Colin's such a great character as well.

▼ **DOWNERS** My Visa and Mastercard bills, they're both pretty big downers at the moment, and the untimely accidental death of Brandon Lee, that upset me immensely. Oh, and pretty much all the sound in this game's pretty poor too.

THE BOTTOM LINE

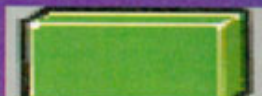
Following in the tradition of offbeat and extremely playable puzzle games like *Gem X* and, erm, some others, *One Step Beyond* requires a combination of both mental skill and arcade agility. Okay, so the sound's pretty terrible and you're probably not going to repeat it once you've done it, but with 100 levels, what's the problem?

87 PERCENT

THE BOTTOM LINE

A1200 Smooth animation when running on the 1200 (just like the original) and the same old intrusive sound effects. Unfortunately.

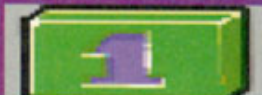
HEY, SHADUP-A YOU BLOCKS



A plain old, ho-hum block that does nothing impressive at all.



The friendly smile shows that this is safe and never closes.



Numbered blocks have to be shut in the specified order.



These have a time delay on them before they shut.



Regardless of what you do to them, these go in and out.



Jump off this one and - wham! An entire line slams shut.



Conversely, this'll open up a line of platforms. Gee, thanks.



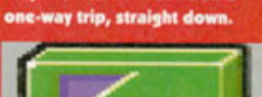
Massively powered, this one'll close all diagonal platforms.



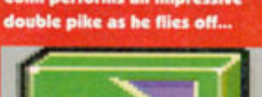
Whether you want to or not, prepare to be fired upwards.



Trapdoor-tastic! You're on a one-way trip, straight down.

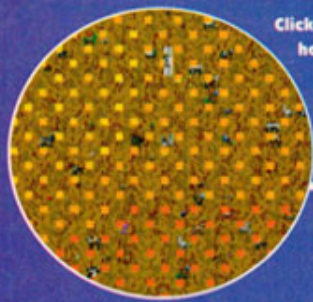


Colin performs an impressive double pike as he flies off...



...a feat which won him silver at the Barcelona Olympics.

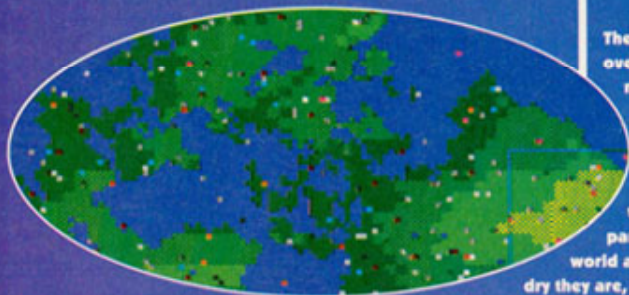
BEYOND



Click on this and all these dots appear, showing how hot it is. Or how cold it is.



Seeing as how the 'Map of the World' window is covering up the 'Close Up' window, here's a picture of the 'Close Up' window.



These icons overlay the map with colours showing things like how wet various parts of the world are. Or how dry they are, say.

As if life wasn't enough of a bitch as it is, this menu contains additional disasters.



Look at this dot. No, closer. Go on - look at it really, really closely. So closely that your nose is pressed right up against the page. Ah! Ah!

This is a white line we've drawn around the picture, kind of like a frame. No, but seriously. This is what you see when you're playing the game - lots of overlapping windows, icons, menus, writing and dots.

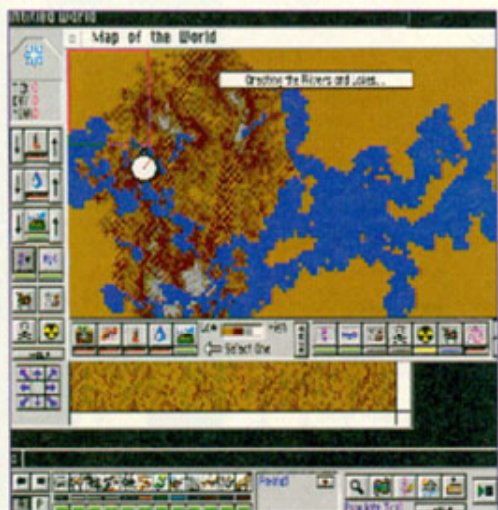
Handily, there's a pop-up help menu that saves me explaining what all these bits do. But - oh no - Jacquie's chopped all the important stuff off.



WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT, THEN?

SIM LIFE

AMIGA POWER SEPTEMBER 1993



And on the sixth day (the game does take an awful long time to get going), *Sim Life* created the Rivers and Lakes.

Get a life? Get a complex computer game, more like.

Game: Sim Life
Publisher: Mindscape
Authors: Maxis
Price: £34.99
Release: Out now

Reviewing *Sim Life* was a miserable experience. I knew it would be from the moment I slotted in the first of four disks, switched on the power and was greeted by - not *Sim Life*, but - an installation program. This then asked me for three blank disks and, as I sat

and watched, spent the next half an hour 'installing' the game onto them.

The next portent of doom was the manual. It's 204 pages long, it includes the phrase "as limitless as your imagination", it insists on beginning each chapter with a quote from somebody ridiculous like Douglas Adams (seemingly selected for no other reason than its containing the word 'life'), and, though it makes a valiant attempt to explain how the game works, it really does face an impossible task.

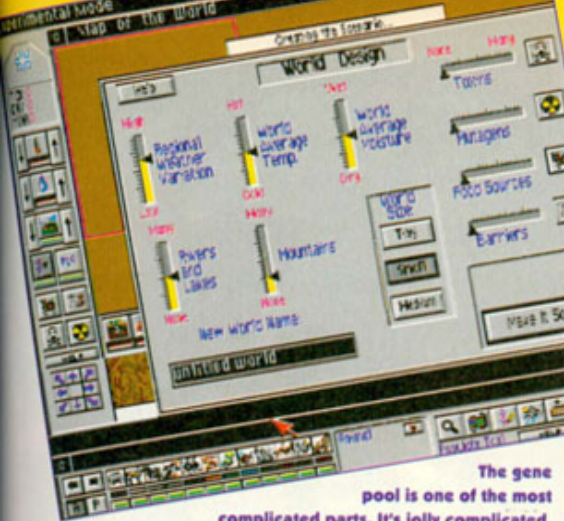
Which means I do, too. Er. Basically what you're doing in *Sim Life* (we'll dispense with this *SimLife* nonsense,

ThankYouVeryMuch) is playing around with evolution, watching species running around eating each other and either developing into new species or dying out. (I think.)

You start off with a lump of terrain, and watch as the program terraforms it and sorts out its climate. (That bit's quite good fun.) And then - wallop - you're confronted by millions and millions of titchy little icons, with no clue as to what each one does, and reams of almost-too-small-to-read writing.

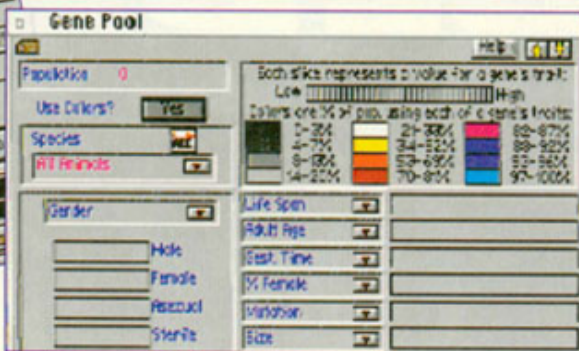
It's back to the manual, from which it's eventually possible to wring the information that you've got to spread plants and animals about the place. You're

"It does compare favourably with Sim Earth"



The gene pool is one of the most complicated parts. It's jolly complicated.

The very, very first thing you've got to do is decide what your world's going to be like. Hot? Or cold? Wet? Or dry? Big? Or tiny?



given a selection of pre-defined species to choose from; or you can design your own, giving them names, characteristics and appearances. If you've given them the right habitat they then run about the place eating, mating, and possibly evolving into new species. You can invoke 'natural' disasters, too, if you want, like plagues, and comets hitting the earth. It could be thought of as the ultimate incarnation of *Life*, that really old computer game where little squares reproduce and die on the screen making pretty patterns.

In execution it all seems to work okay. The icons and things are a nuisance, as I said, but they look smart enough. The rest of the graphics – the terrain and the animals – look terrible, but they get the job done and it's hard to imagine how they could be improved without making things even more complicated still. And everything runs at a fair speed.

WHAT'S THE MEANING OF LIFE?

Well, that's how it works. But what bothers me is what *Sim Life* actually is, and what the player's meant to get out of it. The manual takes a rather modish view, claiming *Sim Life* to be 'an artificial life playshop/toolkit/workshop', or a 'software toy'. But toys don't require 200-page manuals to be read from cover to cover before you even dare to switch them on.

How about thinking of it as an educational tool? The only lesson I can imagine anyone learning from *Sim Life* is that crap animals die out, and ones that manage to adapt to their surroundings do all right. And I knew that already. But AMIGA POWER isn't in the business of reviewing educational software anyway.

A game, then? In that respect it does at least compare favourably with *Sim Earth* (which I reviewed as well, oddly enough; I'm sure I'll get my reward in Heaven). That really was a tedious, aimless, ill-conceived game. In *Sim Life* you do actually get to do a fair amount of low-level tinkering about with individual animals, plants and mountain ranges. But

it's nothing like as much fun as *Sim City*, the game which began (and, as is looking increasingly likely, ended) the 'Sim' phenomenon. The best part of *Sim City*, you'll remember, was building little roads and factories. Setting taxes was just something you had to do every year. *Sim Life* can be seen as 90% setting taxes, with road-

building shunted into the sidelines. I can appreciate what Maxis are trying to create – something you can load up and play with, just to see what happens. But they seem to be going about it all wrong, swamping you with menus, icons, disks, options, instructions, installation programs and squinty writing. It all seems a bit much, especially when you consider that there's not nearly as much to the game as might first appear – it's just eating, mating and evolving.

The result is just plain boring. Not as boring as *Sim Earth*, but still really, really dull, and a chore rather than a pleasure to play. There's absolutely no way I'm reviewing *Sim Universe*.

● JONATHAN DAVIES



UPPERS It seems a bit more together than *Sim Earth*, and looks slightly nicer. As is the Maxis way, it does exactly what it claims to – simulating life right before your eyes. Could be okay if you're incredibly patient.



DOWNERS Do they actually try playing these things? It's too weighty and complicated to be a 'software toy' (or whatever), too obvious to be educational, and too aimless and dull to make much of a game.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Face it – when you saw 'Jonathan Davies' at the bottom of the review you knew exactly what sort of game to expect. *Sim Life* is over-complicated, tedious and can't seem to make its mind up what its trying to be. It's a jack of all trades, and a master of one – being boring.

50 PERCENT

THE BOTTOM LINE

This is the first game we've seen that's come out in an A1200 version first (as reviewed here). An A500/A600 one will be along soon.

ANIMAL MAGIC



The Biology Lab is where you create completely new life-forms, once you've finished poking the gerbits with your biro.

I just wanted to let you know that if you delete a Species, you will lose all the genetic information, statistics, and icons associated with the Species, along with any population of that Species.

First you've got to wipe out an existing species. *Sim Life* takes great pains to explain the consequences of this action to you. If only the real world was this conscientious.

Then, decide the various 'attributes' of your species, photo-fit style, and draw a set of icons to represent it. And some other things.

Then you've got to think of a name – perhaps the most important thing of all, as your species will be lumbered with it for ever. So bear in mind the gerenuk.

SUPER SPORTS CHALLENGE

Why do sports games go and put 'challenge' in their titles? It's tempting fate.

Publisher: Super Sports Challenge
Publisher: Daze
Authors: Phillippe Derambure, Francois Garrouste
Price: £25.99
Release: Late August

Go on. Admit it. As soon as you turned to this page, read the name of the game and glanced at the grabs you thought, "Uh oh, waggle-frenzy". I know I did when I was given it to review. Sports sims and waggling are inextricably linked in the minds of a generation. Like buying a second-hand Mini and having to push start it on rainy wintry mornings. Like watching a US sitcom and cringing at the moralistic bit. Like going to the cinema and finding yourself reciting, "Next door's budgie... The Dog And Duck dahn the 'igh street..." along with THAT ad. Sports sims and waggling are two things that we've come to accept go together.

But get this - there is no waggling in *Super Sports Challenge*. I would say it again to make it blatantly clear but the beauty of the

written word is that you can read it as many times as you like. So go

on, then. Read the first sentence in this paragraph as many times as you like until you're fully convinced that you have come to terms with the concept. Believe me, there's not even the slightest hint of a twitch or mere suggestion of a rhythmical swaying of the joystick from side-to-side.

Yep, *Super Sports Challenge* has come up with a new system. The question is, does it work? I mean, waggling has been constantly derided over the past decade (and has been the subject of more smutty innuendos than you'd find in a BBC2 repeat season of the entire *Carry On* series) but the reason it has lasted is because the physicality of it somehow suits the subject - sport.

The system used in *Super Sports Challenge*'s 10 events uses an energy bar which goes down as the athletes do their thang. By pulling the joystick either left or right (depending on which way they're running, swimming or jumping) you can make them gradually build up speed. And pressing the Fire button gives them a short,



You can relive those exciting moments in replays that are only marginally slower than the actual races (or does it just seem that way?)

concentrated burst of energy. The object is to work out when and how to use each of these techniques to make your athlete perform at the peak of his abilities. For example, in the long jump, the best combination is to start with a slow build-up of speed, then put on a burst just before the jump, but leave enough energy for the jump itself.

So is *Super Sports Challenge* going to cause a revolution in sports sims? Somehow, I doubt it. The



The control system in the game works better for the field events like the pole vault than with the races.





Hang on – sepiia sporting pics. They've been nicking our ideas. But the original is still the best – the cover to AP26.

FOUL JUMPS, EARLY STARTS AND FALLING AT THE FIRST HURDLE



The 100m sprint, which is a rather sedate event in this game.



The long jump – or is it the triple jump. It's difficult to tell.



It's all a matter of getting the breathing right in the swimming.



The high jump is all a matter of not sniggering at the perspectives.



The over-the-shoulder technique for the shot-put doesn't work.



In a break with tradition you don't press fire to jump the hurdles.

control system works reasonably enough, but it's static and a bit too calculated. Once you've learnt the best way to get your man to do his stuff, it's fairly easy to repeat the formula. Sure, there are loads of other game formats you could level that criticism at, but in, say, an platformer at least there's loads going on to keep you busy. Here there are basically only 10 different things to perfect, so it robs the game of a lot of its excitement.

To be fair, the system does work better with some events than with others.

The Javelin event, for example, is one of the best of its type I've played in terms of control. But with most of the events, especially the races, the control system works against them, with the result that they're about as exciting as a live Radio 4 broadcast from the House of Lords.

FOR THE HIGH JUMP

Even worse – rant coming up here – how did the programmers think they could get away with the Triple Jump? It's exactly the

same as the Long Jump – your athlete does his skip and jump bits automatically if you hit the Fire button at the correct time to make him do the hop. Very lazy gameplay that makes for a totally redundant event.

The control system might have had more chance to make an impact if the presentation of the game had been a bit more thrilling. Instead, we get pretty standard fare for a sports sim. The 10 events have all been used hundreds of times before (just for example, say, why do we never get to try our luck at the discus, the speed-walk or the steeplechase?) and the competition mode, which allows up to four people to take part, is the usual format. It's a shame, though, that the shirt colours of the players' athletes are dictated by the player number and not by the team you choose to play as.

The graphics are variable. The swimming events look impressive, and some of the athletes are well animated, but the majority of the graphics are at best uninspired while perspectives in the High Jump make it look like a Picasso had a substantial hand in the design. The score tables are also vile – I reckon they're supposed to look like they're set in marble, but they look more like that really cheap

"There is no wagging in Super Sports Challenge"

lino you get in DHSS waiting rooms instead.

It's also incredibly slow. In competition mode you're swapping disks like a DJ who's only got one working turntable and the game seems to access the disk every time an athlete transfers his weight onto a different foot – ultra yawnsome.

SSC isn't so much bad as dreary.

There are one or two bits that work fairly well, but despite the new control system, it ends up more like being forced to watch your little brother take part in the school county finals in midwinter than a top class international sporting occasion.

● DAVE GOLDER



Don't miss this unique offer – eight events for the price of ten. Well, you try telling the triple jump and the long jump apart, not to mention the two swimming games.

GO TAKE A RUNNING JUMP



1. Start your run up by pressing Fire. Then pull your joystick to the right until the energy bar is about a third of the way depleted. This gets your runner all the way up to speed, then let go.



2. Wham your joystick to the right again when you see the edge of the sand to get your athlete to top speed. Make sure that you still have some energy left for the actual jump.



3. And now it's just a matter of pressing Fire to jump. Don't press too late or it'll be a foul jump and your athlete'll have a tantrum. Touchy touchy, as A-ha once said. (What were they on about, eh?)

UPPERS The Javelin event is one of the best computer throwing events I've played, and the isometric angle on the races is a new twist that works well enough.

DOWNERS Drab graphics, a control system that works against making the events exciting and a predictable choice of events.

THE BOTTOM LINE

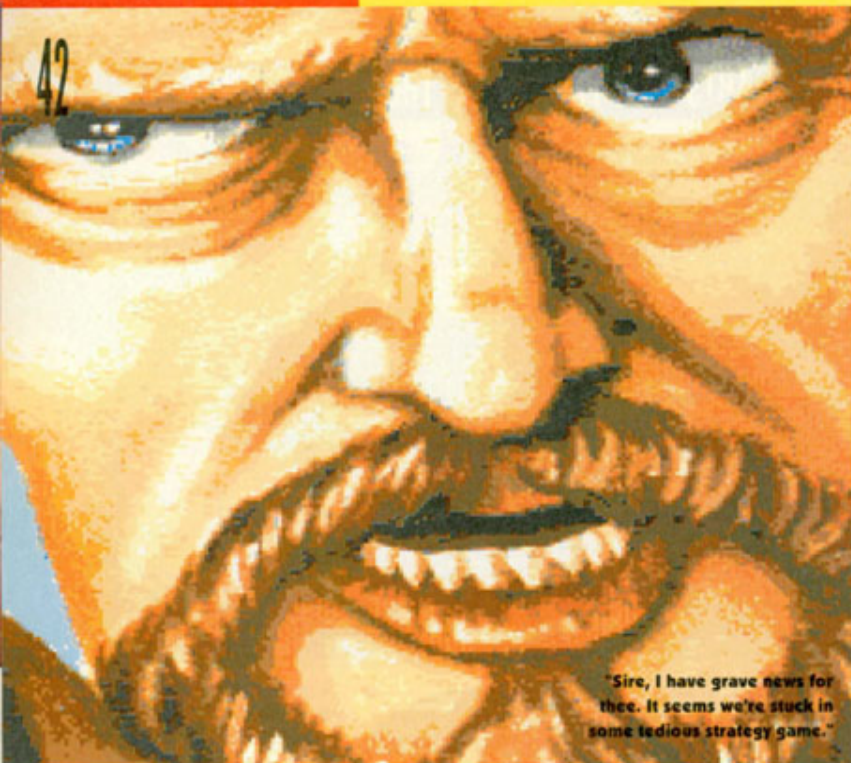
I became very weary of this game very quickly. The control system works well with some events but is ludicrously inadequate for others. And I'm sorry, but the Triple Jump was just pointless and a waste of an event. Less than the sum of its parts and they don't add up to much anyway.

39 PERCENT

THE BOTTOM LINE

There'll be an A1200-compatible version along soon (we think), but it'll need quite a few 'enhancements' if you ask me.





At last! A highly-detailed simulation of



The Hundred Years War and medieval power politics. In full.

The Hundred Years War

With the king dead, nothing would stop Mark from playing this.



The news spread as quickly as a plague.

King Charles of Bretagne was dead.

Dead without an heir.

CASTLES 2

Game: Castles 2 – Siege and Conquest

Publisher: Interplay

Authors: In house

Price: £34.99

Release: Out now

History doesn't record what the popular tunes were in 14th Century Europe, or the favourite styles of decorative codpieces, or whether princesses, fair maidens and all that lot preferred sling-back or high-heeled shoes. Why doesn't history note down these facts that seem all too essential in modern lifestyle magazines? Well, the main reason is that people in the 14th Century had much grittier and down-to-earth problems to worry and write about – specifically, a war. A big war. A hoofing great war. It's hard to believe, but as well as having no sanitary water, medical services or Yo! MTV Raps, those unfortunate medieval lice-laden folk also had to contend with a scrap that dragged on for over a hundred years. Talk about being born under a bad sign.

Castles 2 attempts to recreate this tumultuous period of history by making you the ruler of a small European province. The game's based in the fictitious kingdom of Bretagne, which is apparently where the original *Castles* was set, and looking at the map it appears to be the lower half of France. But anyway, this geographical speculation hardly

matters, as the idea's for you to become King of Bretagne by means fair and foul. How you go about it is up to you – you can trade with neighbours and be peaceable, or simply walk over their countries callously beheading livestock as you go. The manual states that during the period of The Hundred Years War, (that's 1337 to

1453, history junkies) the blood of English and French soldiers saturated the soil and the peasants were forcefully removed from their homes or killed, so from this you've got a good idea how to go about gaining that all-important crown.

But it's not all war, war, war, as there's all those annoying domestic chores

to deal with as well, such as feeding your minions, putting the rubbish out on bin days, guarding your lands, washing the car every Sunday, trying not to get excommunicated by the Pope, and so on. With all that lot to do, it's no wonder so many people keeled over and died in their late 20s – they must've been knackered!

LIVING – IN A BOX

You can tell how many men you've got by checking these little boxes here.

These little, er, boxes show the extent of your conquests by even smaller blue boxes.

The resources of your realm are laid out in these, er, little boxes here.

Interestingly, elongated wooden boxes contain small coloured lines.



Clicking these boxes sets various tasks going. See above for details.

Options, messages and film clips come up in this LARGE box. Like, wow.





The game features movie inserts in glorious not-really-cinematic-quality crap-o vision. This one's men marching into battle. Apparently.



Allegedly, this one's the Pope, and if you hold the magazine at arm's length, tilt it away from you and squint a bit, you could almost believe that it's true.



A bunch of monochrome pixels just randomly thrown around, or soldiers massing in front of a castle? You decide.



It took an amazing three hours to get this sequence of pictures, so read 'em and weep. Your dukedom's small...



Strap down lest the excitement kill you, and prepare to view the battle scenes.

If this all sounds a bit confusing, it's simply because there's a number of things going on at the same time, but it's all handled in a fairly logical manner. First, you need to have enough building blocks for your empire, which in this case are food (for eating, obviously), timber and iron for construction, and gold. This is vitally important as you've got to pay your troops, bribe or grovel to the Church and simper at rival leaders. It's also handy because you can use it to buy any of the other three that you may have run out of, which happens because each region is rich in only one of the four commodities. So, to maintain a steady flow of goods, you either have to trade with your neighbouring states, or invade them. Hmm, which one shall I go for?

Having decided you want to take over another region, you can either scout it to find out what it produces, send in spies to find out how strong it is or just amass an army to stomp it into the ground. Each option takes up valuable man-hours, and the main problem posed by the game is how you can manage your limited resources most effectively. Since once you've set a task going (such as building a castle or trading) you tie up the units until it's finished, you've got to work out if

you're going to be attacked before you start policing your realm or recruiting soldiers.

Although this allows you to do all manner of tasks simultaneously, all this productivity manifests itself as little bars gradually filling up with colour, which is neither interesting nor particularly evocative of

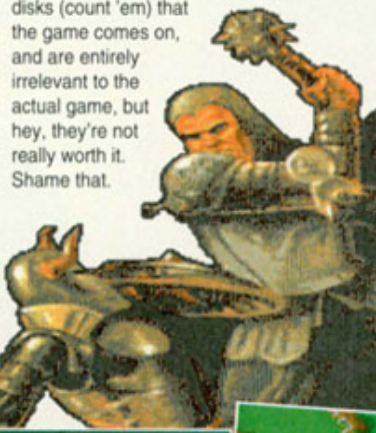
feuding medieval warlords. You can tell that the programmers thought this as well, as they also included a few other options to spruce up the overall look of the game.

MIDDLE-AGED SPREAD

The first of these is the combat sequences, and the only nice thing to say about them is that you don't have to look at them if you don't want to. I reviewed a wargame called *Cohort 2* back in issue 26, and although I was far from impressed by it, the battles in *Castles 2* make it look like CD32 technology. They really are dire.

The next slightly gimmicky thing that's thrust your way is the 'design a castle' section, where you can build round or square towers and thick or thin walls around a central keep. The size of the castle determines its ability to quell unrest in that region, and the existence of the castle makes the combat sequences slightly interesting in that at least there's something to look at and also you have to buy siege weapons to knock them down.

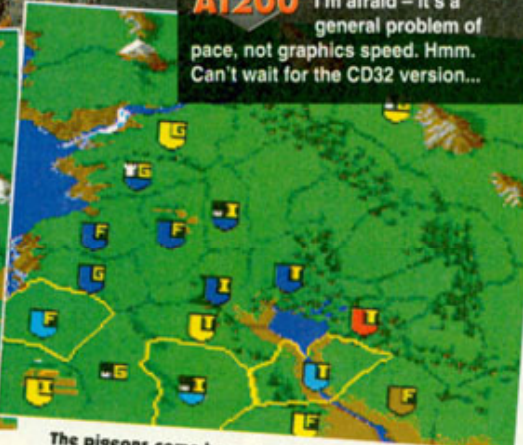
Finally, there's the entirely gimmicky video sequences from various movies which crop up at moments of high drama. They take up a lion's share of the nine disks (count 'em) that the game comes on, and are entirely irrelevant to the actual game, but hey, they're not really worth it. Shame that.



"Neither interesting, nor particularly evocative"



...but due to aggressive posturing and kicking in your neighbours, it grows. Slowly. Extremely slowly. Very.



The pigeons come home to roost when all the guys you've been nasty to gang up against you. Oh boo hoo.

So there you have it, a game that consists for the most part of watching little coloured bars. At random points little 'Answer A,B or C'-type questions appear to test your judgement, so if you behead an emissary from a rival or turn down the Church's plea for money then you'll more than likely be labelled a bit of a bad 'un and everyone will invade, but if you're firm but fair then the Pope will love you - which is handy as he's the only person with enough power to declare you king.

It's all just so dull though, with lacklustre combat failing totally to lift the game out of the 10-year-old mould that it was cast in. Last month we saw games such as the hugely fabulous *Dune 2* and the almost criminally awesome *Syndicate* which both took the ideas of conquest, world management and combat, and turned them into two of the best Amiga games ever. And *Castles 2*? Well, it's the same price as either of the above, and it really doesn't even reach the starting line, let alone the finishing post. Tch.

● MARK WINSTANLEY

UPPERS Probably the only game that takes the turbulent times of The Hundred Years War as its theme, apart from its predecessor *Castles*.

DOWNERS Laughable combat sequences kind of set the tone for the rest of the game, with sluggish controls and moments of very little happening blending seamlessly with other moments of even less happening.

THE BOTTOM LINE

I really can't see any room in the market for this product at all, apart from diehard 14th Century wargame fans. Whoever they are. Trying to take over the world **MUST** be fun, otherwise so many nutters wouldn't keep trying, so there's no excuse to come up with such a dull game of it. If you want conquest and combat, buy *Dune 2* or *Syndicate*.

44 PEECINI

THE BOTTOM LINE

A1200 Not really any better, I'm afraid - it's a general problem of pace, not graphics speed. Hmm. Can't wait for the CD32 version...



COMPLETE control

Roll up! Roll up! ...as Rich Pelley unbuttons his cuff and sticks his arm into the lucky dip that is the AMIGA POWER Complete Control postbag. What will he pull out today? Level codes? Power-up cheats? A solution to *Flashback*? Hey - let's find out!

They're mislaid! They're Scandinavians! They're The Mislaid Scandinavians! No, hang on, that's not right.

THE LOST VIKINGS

(Interplay)

Stuart McMillan of Lanarkshire, Scotland, happily informs us that he is always ready to share a few top games-playing tips with his very favourite mag. But, as he points out, the following level-skipping codes for Interplay's Nordic three-way platform-romp probably aren't the sort of thing that the readers' section of 'Razzle' is looking for, so (good on him) he elected to send them in to us here at AMIGA POWER instead. Good call, Stu!

Level 2 - GRBT	Level 11 - VLCN	Level 20 - WKYY	Level 29 - HOPP
Level 3 - TLPT	Level 12 - OCKS	Level 21 - CMBO	Level 30 - TRDR
Level 4 - GRND	Level 13 - PHRO	Level 22 - BBLL	Level 31 - FNTM
Level 5 - LLM0	Level 14 - C1R0	Level 23 - TTTS	Level 32 - WRLR
Level 6 - FL0T	Level 15 - SPKS	Level 24 - JLLY	Level 33 - TRPD
Level 7 - TRSS	Level 16 - JMNN	Level 25 - PLNG	Level 34 - TFFF
Level 8 - PRHS	Level 17 - SMRT	Level 26 - BTRY	Level 35 - FRGT
Level 9 - CVRN	Level 18 - V8TR	Level 27 - JNKR	Level 36 - 4RN4
Level 10 - BBL5	Level 19 - NFL8	Level 28 - CBLT	Level 37 - MSTR

HUMANS - THE JURASSIC LEVELS

(Mirage)

What can we possibly say about these codes for *Humans - The Jurassic Levels* apart from the fact that there are thirty of them, they were sent in by William Burchell of Lincoln and, er, here they are?

Level 1 - WHEELS ON FIRE	Level 16 - KATE
Level 2 - ROLLING DOWN	Level 17 - SNESSY
Level 3 - THE ROAD	Level 18 - OLDHAM8BORO1
Level 4 - SKIVE OFF	Level 19 - FROG AND TOAD
Level 5 - DAY TRIP	Level 20 - DANSPAM
Level 6 - GIRAFFES	Level 21 - SAVERRANCER
Level 7 - MAKE UP	Level 22 - 19ACOPY
Level 8 - FLYING AVENGER	Level 23 - M LOVE BONE
Level 9 - WIBBLE	Level 24 - ASYLUM
Level 10 - BILL AND BEN	Level 25 - WINOPUSKA
Level 11 - SPITFIRE	Level 26 - ALICEINCHAINS
Level 12 - DESERT ANGEL	Level 27 - ABSOLUTELY
Level 13 - NOONEKNOWSUS	Level 28 - FABULOUS
Level 14 - APRIL 1993	Level 29 - ED AND PATS
Level 15 - ALMONDBURY	Level 20 - SWEETIES

CREATURES

(Thalamus)

I can put forward no ideas of my own as to why this is, but as far as this month's small tips go, things seem to be rather level-code- or RPG-orientated. Just as well then that it was also this month that Martyn Haigh of Bucks chose to send in this small offering for Thalamus' cutie, giving me at least one opportunity to break the routine. Pause the game and type **A FINE KETTLE OF FISH**. The Function keys are now active to ship you through the levels.

'Creatures', huh. Would it have killed them to be a bit more specific?



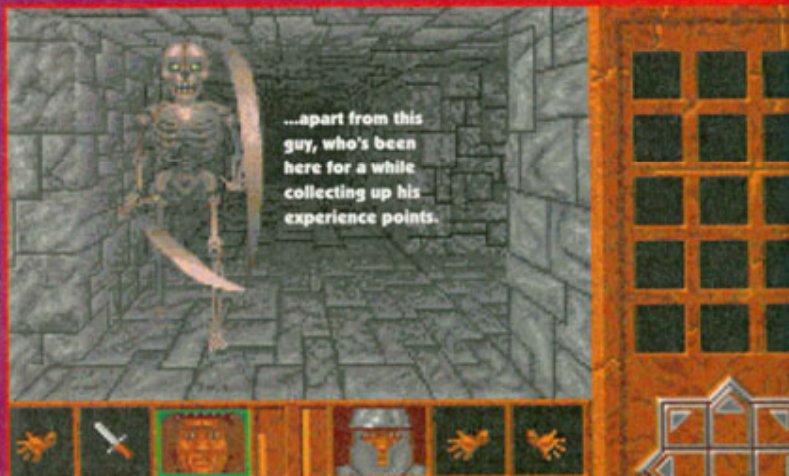
ABANDONED PLACES 2

(ICE)

Anthony Caniano, of Mass Park, has unearthed this cheat to significantly increase your characters' experience. Attack and kill any single monster (or group of monsters). When it (or they) begin to visibly fade away, cast any 'hold monster' spell that you have such as 'Dream' or 'Hold Everything'. The creature will cease dimming and just sit there. Now you can attack with your fighters or cast attack spells (including 'Fire Area') to rake in the experience points with no worry of the monster going anywhere until the spell wears off. This can be verified by watching the experience line in the character sheet grow while you're attacking the faded creature. If you are quick enough you can re-freeze the monster, otherwise just go and find another one to repeat your trick on.

Well, this 'place' certainly looks like it's abandoned...

...apart from this guy, who's been here for a while collecting up his experience points.



BILL'S TOMATO GAME

(Psygnosis)

With all the excitement that was going on in issue 27 over the exceptionally high quality of artwork and second-to-none, quick-witted, intelligent reviews and features, the chances are very few of you noticed that we only gave you complete codes for the first five levels of *Bill's Tomato Game*. Well, apart from William Burchell of Lincoln, of course, who provided these:



Level 6 – TETTOL, GOUCKAT, VOUPET, CLOAVUN, PASSUN, MOOVAL, FLIONNOG, CLANUN, PLUMIN, FLEASSAN.

Level 7 – NYMIT, PLIOFOL, DREDDIN, PLIPAR, GEGIT, FLAIVIT, FLAGGOG, DRINNOL, POIGOL, GLUTTAT.

Level 8 – FLUVON, FLUGGAR, NOUPPEL, VEAKER, SLEDDON, SLOIPOL, TOOLLEL, MYPER, BUMET, GLEEGGAN.

Level 9 – DRAIBBEN, GLIAKIN, SIAMOL, NEKOL, CLIGAT, VUSSEN, PIBBEL, SLEAKUN, NUPPON, WOGGEL.

Level 10 – GAILLIT, CLOUGEL, FLICKOG, PLOTTIN, MUSSET, ZOALLON, GOAMON, SOADDET, GLIOFAR, VEEFER.

POPULUS 2 - THE CHALLENGE GAMES

(Bullfrog)

"Hello Jolly Children of the Universe. Here are my tips for *Populous 2 - The Challenge Games*. What have you go to say to that, then? Jonathan Tasker, East Barnet." Er, how about 'thanks', John?



- Level 0 – VERDANT
- Level 2 – WALLS
- Level 3 – FIRE
- Level 4 – BASALT
- Level 5 – PAPAL
- Level 6 – HEAT
- Level 7 – OBVIOUS
- Level 8 – BULLFROG
- Level 9 – SURROUND
- Level 10 – RANGER
- Level 11 – MAGNET
- Level 12 – SURFIN'
- Level 13 – DIAGS
- Level 14 – BANDITS
- Level 15 – WINDS
- Level 16 – WAVE
- Level 17 – WALL
- Level 18 – FUSE
- Level 19 – MIGRATE
- Level 20 – HURDLE
- Level 21 – SIEGE

- Level 22 – SFICE
- Level 23 – CONU
- Level 24 – MUSHY
- Level 25 – GAUNTLET
- Level 26 – UWORLD
- Level 27 – SPLITTER
- Level 28 – CELTIC
- Level 29 – ELECTRIC
- Level 30 – ILLUSION
- Level 31 – ESCAPE
- Level 32 – SABOTEUR
- Level 33 – RITES
- Level 34 – GUARDS
- Level 35 – EXTINCT
- Level 36 – PATHWAY
- Level 37 – RUNNER
- Level 38 – TWIN
- Level 39 – ORCHARD
- Level 40 – ROCKY
- Level 41 – FRYING.

DON'T FORGET

My Granny reads AMIGA POWER (because I'm in it), but she would think it was rude if I asked you to send in your cheats, tips and codes and then you didn't. So you'd better send something to: AMIGA POWER, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon BA1 2BW. We're particularly on the look-out for mini-play guides (to NEW games only) to include on these two pages. There is the added incentive of large prizes for these if you comply.

FLASHBACK

(Delphine)

Last month things seemed to get rather cut off in the middle of Section 2 (password: BURN) – the only other thing you may need to know is that the third terminal along is the correct one to insert the card into. Other than that – let's get on to Section 3!

Section 3 (password: EGGS)

Watch out for security bees on the third and fourth and first and second screens to the left and right respectively, and take the lift up. Activating the switch to the right, step over and back onto the floor switch, then duck and grab upwards between blasts. Jump the trapdoors over the landmines for three screens to the left and prepare to take out a guard. Draw your gun before rolling a level up, step onto the switch and duck. You will cling onto a platform if you run over the drop on the next screen. Lower yourself down, roll under the second falling mine and running-jump your way onto the next screen. Roll through the second and third landmines and recharge. Let the guards come to you at the bottom right of Level 3, utilise the forcefield on Level 2 and shoot the guard on Level 1!

Section 4 (password: GURT)

Use of the forcefield is now essential, so be warned. Slay the policeman, tumble left, shoot the robot, and run past the second before drawing and firing. Face and stand to the left of the lift and take a ducking shot at the policeman before rolling left at the bottom and killing him. Watch out for more policemen, a robot and the pit on the next three screens and hail the taxi. Ignore the robot, take a running jump from the top platform, shoot the glass and jump through. Descend, head right, climb the blue light, shatter the door and collect the key.

Now, proceed right to the keylock. Recharge to the right, pull the switch to the left and take the lift down by said keylock. Scale the blue light and wait for the lift. Climb, pull the switches along the two corridors and get the key. Unlock the keylock and ascend. Roll over the first trapdoor to reach the units. Climb down the gap, pull the switch, get the key, take the lift up, use the key and re-save in case you now go and mess up the next bit.



Section 5 (password: CHIP)

One guard drops a key if you shoot him. Go up a screen and time your way past the disintegrators. Pick up the telecontroller, receptor and key from above and recharge down the gap. Pass both the disintegrators and the gap to the right by throwing the receptor and using the controller. Take a running grab onto the first platform to avoid the appearing disintegrator and climb down. Here lies your first slime alien. The best way to take these out is to roll away from them and wait for them to nearly catch up or drop on top of you before rolling back the way you came, turning and firing. Save in case you mess up teleporting past the disintegrators (you're safe to the immediate left of the door), and zap to the next section.

Section 6 (password: TREE)

Go right, up, slaughter two aliens, pull the switch and recharge if required. Drop the receptor on the lift, tumble down the gap and run to the mid-bottom of the screen before shooting the three aliens. (If you're in trouble, teleport away.) Use the stone to open the door to the left, ignore the mouse, head left, pull the switch, blast the door open and, er, pull the other one (the other switch, that is). Kill the resulting alien and carefully take out the alien to the left, teleporting away to recharge if need be. Pick up the diary, call the lift, go down, right, and teleport down the apparent abyss. Make your way through the other screens for the key, head right of the abyss and unlock the keylock.

Section 7 (password: BOLD)

Go up, zap the aliens, pocket the mice, then climb up and take a running jump to avoid the falling mines. Place the receptor next to the lift, ascend and activate the switch. Lure the alien out of his pit and back towards the energy generator to get more killing room. Pull the switch and teleport back. Pick up and use the key the alien drops, take the lift, climb the rest of the way and time your way past the disintegrators. Stand to the left of lift 2 to avoid the landmines, and teleport down the shaft. Keep shooting the eye, ducking beneath its fire, and teleport down.

Venture far right along familiar ground and drop the receptor, go all the way back left, take the lift down, go through the door, stand in the middle of the screen and shoot the aliens (they only take one shot). The hanging creature needs to be shot from alternate sides, while taking care of the groups of aliens, starting with the left. (Roll away after each shot.) After rolling through the disintegrators you will be told what to do with the Nuclear Device. Pull the switch, teleport and take the lift up, up and away... And now try it on the 'hard' setting.



Last month saw little Sinbad Junior safely through the first few levels, so this month's offerings will only be of any use to you if you've spent the last month doing one of two things: battling valiantly through the game on your own, or carefully working through the previous issue's play-through. Anyway, grab your joystick and aqualung, and head for [dramatic pause] The Deep!

The down-side of this level is that you can't attack anything underwater (well, you try swinging a sword in a swimming pool - hard, isn't it?) so you've got to avoid everything.

1 Look out especially for the Skull which looks a lot like the bonus skulls, but doesn't spin round. The good side of this level is that there are so many bonus points around that if you were to stuff them all in one of those carriers that they give you in supermarkets, the handles would snap even before they'd had time to dig painfully into your hands. There's also a pipe system that'll whoosh you all over the place, and if it wasn't for us giving you all this helpful advice, you'd end up horribly lost.

2 Just jump into the first pipe and then swim up and around to the left, where you'll find a chest with diving boots in them. These are heavy enough to stop you bobbing up to the surface, and also pretty essential later on in the level.

3 To the right of the chest are a further two pipes, so leap down the bottom one to get to all manner of smashing bonus things.

ARABIAN

Still in the dark about how to finish this Krisalis cutie? Mark

4 Just to balance out the game in a Yin-and-Yang sort of way, you'll find yourself heading face-first into a ball and chain if you take the top pipe. This is not a Good Thing, but if you avoid it and go through the pipe on the right, you'll find yourself in an area with six pipes in it. If you're not careful, you'll be shot from one pipe to the next and eventually go whizzing off in the wrong direction. What you need to do is re-enter the pipe you came out of and this time you'll be set back onto the right path. If you can stop yourself in the middle of the pipe area, pick up the bonuses and the extra life.

5 Avoid the ball and chain, leave the chest hidden in the hole as it's a trap, dodge the swimming enemies and skulls and then negotiate the spikes. This is where you're either glad you've got the diving boots or wishing that you'd picked them up after all.

The next section winds through the rock. Head for the pipes to get the correct route but don't worry, if you get it wrong you still end up getting some bonus points!

You get to the last room before the Water Guardian, and here you get a chance to renew your health by using

up any potions you may have. There's also a secret room up near the spikes.

6 The Guardian uses bubbles to force you into the spiky roof, so you've got to dodge them, and also avoid falling into the water, as for some reason this suddenly becomes fatal. Every time the Guardian starts to shake, he's about to attack, so get out of the way, boyo.

7 The mine-cart race is all about speed, and even though you can collect jewels, remember that the most important thing is to finish the race. You can do this in the other cart, or even without any cart at all, and if you manage to finish without a wheel on your cart, you'll score a huge bonus when you get to the Customs Desk.

The best way to get a good time through this level is to cut corners. Instead of bouncing off the bumpers, slow down before you get to them and drop straight down the ramp. Also, if you slow down too much going uphill, hop the cart upwards rather than going back for a longer run-up.

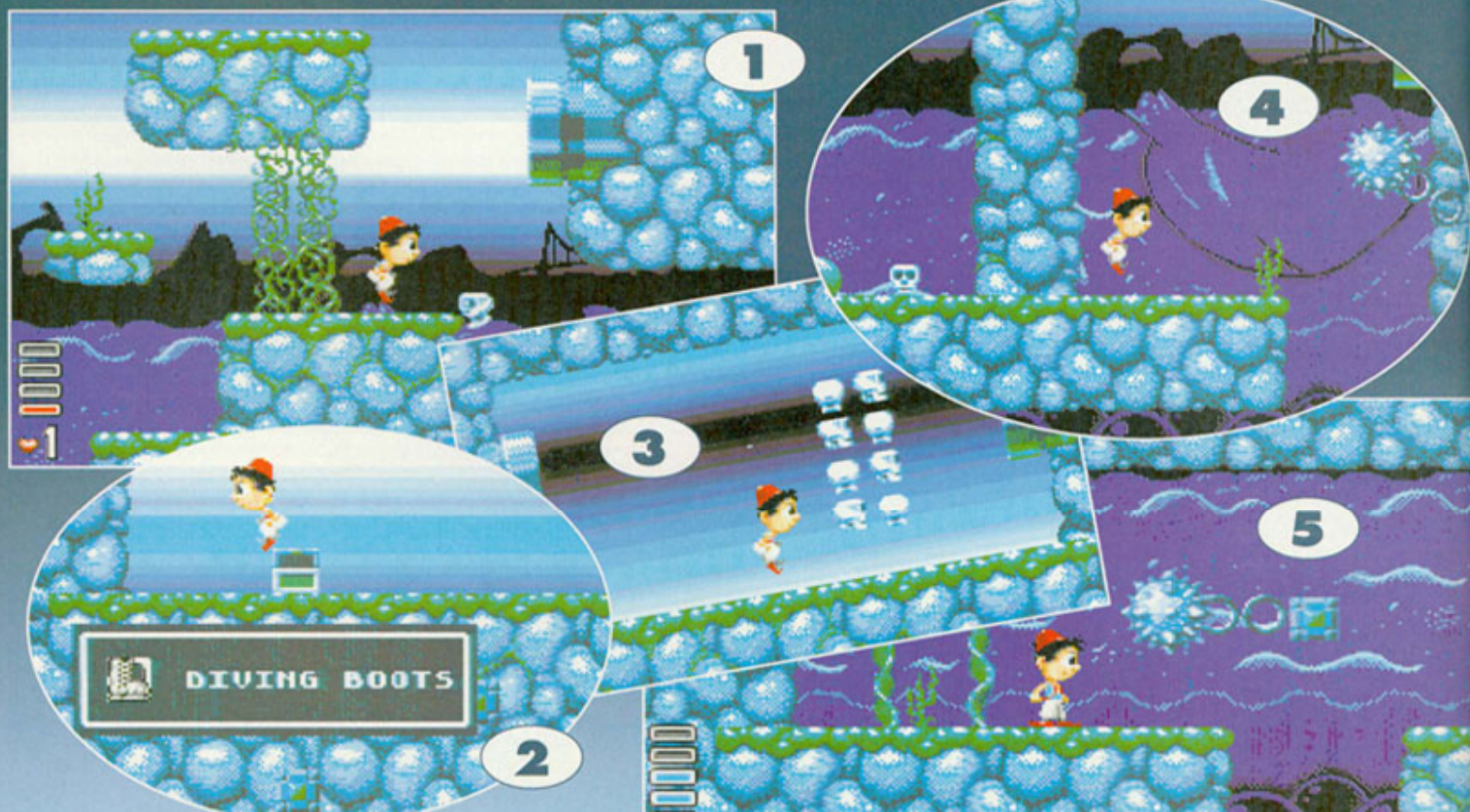
8 Late in the race, just before the second wall of ice, there's a short

cut. When you get to the two arrows, hop from platform to platform making sure you avoid the magnet (otherwise you lose the wheels) and you'll miss a big chunk of the level. Should you miss this route, get over to the bottom right of the map and jump out of the cart and onto the arrow, which will fire you upwards. Finally, if you can find the super speed key, you'll have no problems winning the race.

9 Downwards and onwards to the Diamond Mines, which only has a few secret rooms, but has lots of short-cut-like sort of bits. The large hole after the conveyor belts isn't one of these, however - it's merely a fairly obvious lure to tempt you onto the hideously long and nasty spikes beyond.

10 To get up the long tunnel, you've got to hack at some of the ice blocks to carve a way to the top. This route's a bit longer than simply going along the tunnel on the right, but also a tad more profitable in the the jewel stakes.

11 Although the buzz-saws look intimidating, they follow a set path. This means that if you watch



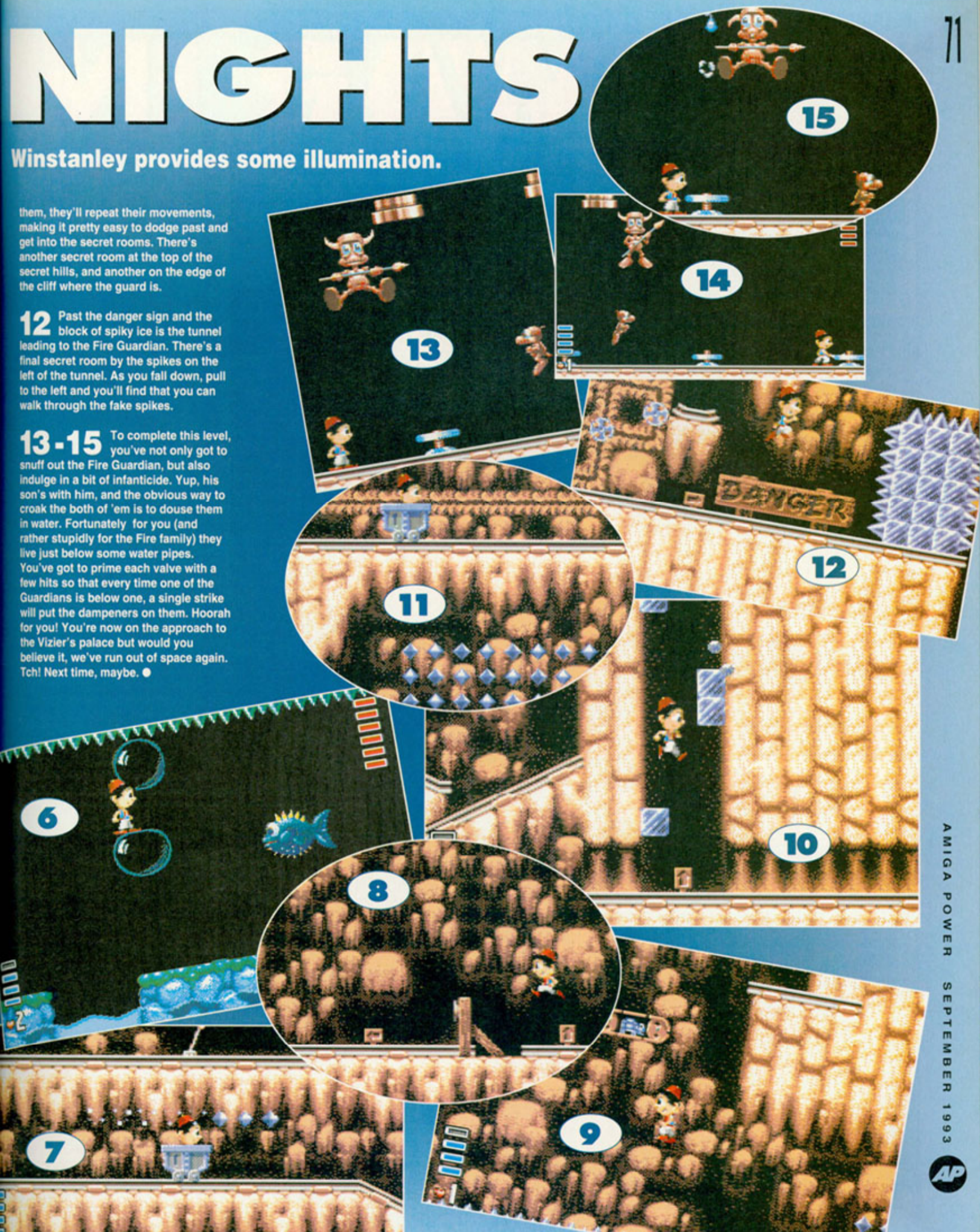
NIGHTS

Winstanley provides some illumination.

them, they'll repeat their movements, making it pretty easy to dodge past and get into the secret rooms. There's another secret room at the top of the secret hills, and another on the edge of the cliff where the guard is.

12 Past the danger sign and the block of spiky ice is the tunnel leading to the Fire Guardian. There's a final secret room at the top of the secret hills, and another on the edge of the cliff where the guard is.

13-15 To complete this level, you've not only got to snuff out the Fire Guardian, but also indulge in a bit of infanticide. Yup, his son's with him, and the obvious way to croak the both of 'em is to douse them in water. Fortunately for you (and rather stupidly for the Fire family) they live just below some water pipes. You've got to prime each valve with a few hits so that every time one of the Guardians is below one, a single strike will put the dampeners on them. Hoorah for you! You're now on the approach to the Vizier's palace but would you believe it, we've run out of space again. Tch! Next time, maybe. ●

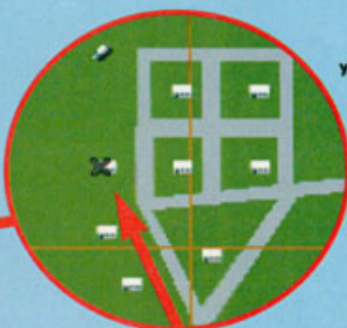
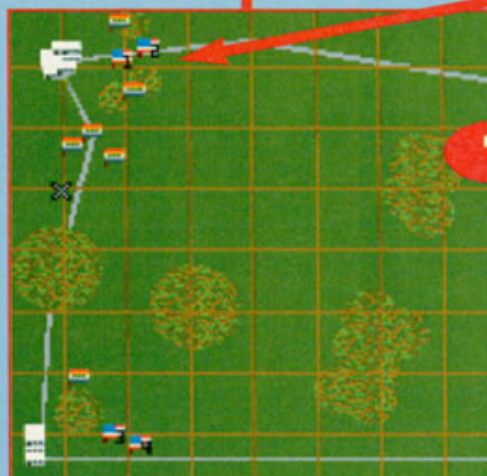


WAR IN

Whether it's busting tanks or protecting archeological



Failaka Island – about the size of the Isle Of Man, but with guns.



You've not been invited to this warehouse party, but they'll be sorry...



Boom! The roof falls on crowds of silly hat-wearing Iraqi ravers.



Due to numerous punitive poll tax demands being ignored by the Republican Guard, it's up to Task Force Bailiff to serve an eviction notice.



These helicopters are millions of dollars of high-tech turbines, navigational equipment and weapons or, to use the technical term, toast.

In many ways, the tanks used in *War In The Gulf* are radically different from those that you come across in everyday usage. Unlike fishtanks, they're not filled with water, and their floors are more likely to be littered with armour-piercing shells than multi-coloured gravel. Hot water tanks, the centrepieces of most central heating systems, may be made of metal, but I'd shout a hearty 'chinnny-reckon' to anyone who claims that theirs could stop an high-explosive squash-head round. But anyway...

You want help in busting the cream of Saddam's armoured division, right? Okay, having 16 fully-crewed-up fighting vehicles would do the job perfectly, but since they'd take up valuable kerb-side parking space, a copy of *War In The Gulf* will have to suffice. When you're playing, remember that the M1 tanks have superior armour, and so should be used for any close-quarters rough stuff, and that the TOW missiles on the M113s have better range and stopping power, so should be kept back for fire support. If you position units so that they're just on the tree line, then you'll be able to fire on the enemy while remaining camouflaged. That's the theory anyway.

Battle for Failaka Island

1 Although you're supposed to first work out where the convoy's going and where it's come from, you can make life easier by looking on this map and then wading in and killing everything that moves. It's best to split two units off down the main road towards Az Zor, and send the other two across country to Saad Wa Saeed.

As you're moving up, you'll see a convoy heading out of Az Zor at speeds that I'd imagine are blatantly flaunting Kuwaiti traffic laws. The important part of the northern unit's mission is to destroy the warehouse that they came out of, which is to the northwest of the village. Once you've done that, deploy your forces to the south of the village to block any enemy units that dare to try and return to Az Zor.

When your other unit reaches Saad Wa Saeed, hide in the tree line or you'll end up catching far too much fire. You should be able see which warehouse the convoy turns into, but if you don't, it's not a problem! We can now exclusively reveal that it's the second warehouse from the south that's the important one, so get shooting. Assuming you've acted correctly on our almost invaluable info, then power-ups awarded, you've won the first battle.

2 You've next got to drive out all the forces from the archeological site at Ikaros, halt the counter-attack and then locate some Gaskin missiles, and all before breakfast. The problem is that you're not allowed to even chip any of the ancient buildings at Ikaros (that means no 'collateral damage', technical term fans) – if you destroy even a single building, then you've lost the battle. If you sneak up through the trees and fire on the occupying forces using TOW missiles, it's possible to rout them without even getting shot at.

To prevent the forces retaking the town, it's a bad idea to occupy it, as it's bound to get wasted in the crossfire. Instead, you should ring your forces round the edges of the forests and ambush them as they speed across the plains towards the town. While you're waiting for this counter-attack, use one of your M1 units to search for the missile site and destroy it. Once you've done that and held off the enemy for about 30 minutes, you're a bona-fide gosh-darned war hero.

3 In the next bang-shoot you've got to protect a group of support vehicles, which arrive in Failaka village about 15 minutes after the game starts. To let them through you've got to clear the northern road of the enemy and, as a final task, you've got to wipe out the helicopters in the northern airfield.



THE GULF

remains, Mark Winstanley has the tips that'll triumph.

To clear the road, send three units to concealed positions next to the three road blocks and then launch simultaneous attacks on all of them. Next, move two units south to defend the convoy – one unit east of the village and one to the northwest should provide enough cover.

This leaves you two units free to attack the airfield, although you can get away with using only one unit if you really want. If you do this, you can leave the fourth unit in the middle of the map to act as a reserve unit for either the convoy defence or the airfield attack. Place the attacking forces in forest cover near the air strip and blast all the choppers as quickly as you can, as you'll also have another counter-attack to contend with. Once you've reduced these forces to pools of molten metal, then it's Miller Time™ – you've taken Failaka Island!

Battle for Bubiyan Island

4 This one's a cinch – all you've got to do is get over the bridge and blow away anyone who gets in your way. Next you've got to wait for attacks from the south and make sure that you don't come under fire by hiding behind twigs or something. Leave two units in cover defending the bridge, and send the other two in to attack the police post. Use the forest as cover so that you'll end up at close range to the west, and then work out your very own version of Mr Ice T's controversial track, Cop Killer. Once you've held the bridge for 30 minutes or so, you've won. Congrats.

5 After this pushover, there's a strong chance that you're going to get your sorry ass completely trashed on this one, so listen good. There's an allied convoy that has to run to and fro along the road, and you've got to protect it from attacks coming from the west. If you try and escort the convoy, you'll end up accidentally shooting at yourself most of the time, so the simplest way is to form a static barrier on the eastern edge of the minefield. This way, the convoys are safely behind you, so anything that comes into view can be considered a legitimate target. If you keep an eye on the convoy's position, it's possible to predict where the next attack will come from, and although this battle's got the potential for getting horribly messy, if you stay cool then it's possible to do it without losing a single vehicle.

6 Your first problem in this one is to stop the advancing column of armour coming down the road from the east, so send a unit straight away to make their day as unpleasant as possible. While this is going on, you need to scout around and destroy two tanks that are hiding inside buildings. These are placed at random, but if you cruise around the battlefield, you'll notice that each wood has a building to the south of it. To avoid collateral damage of valuable Kuwaiti real estate, switch to infra-red and the tanks will show up even through the buildings. Boom!

If you keep to the edges of the battlefield as much as possible, you'll keep the number of clashes to a minimum, and if you take time out to blow up radar towers, satellite dishes and comm towers, your fiscal remuneration (Eh? I mean you'll get 'loads a money') from the Kuwaiti officials will be most impressive. You've also got to make sure that you can reach the rendezvous point in time, which is just east of the most southerly forest. If you manage this, then you've once more proved that might is right, and that if the meek ever inherited the Earth, then hard men with guns would take it away from them again. Straight away. And on that cheery note, I'll leave you to blast your way across the Middle East all on your own. Bye. ●



4

Remember, people – burning vehicles is only a Good Thing if they're not yours. Unfortunately, this isn't the case here. 3 out of 10, Could Do Better.



5



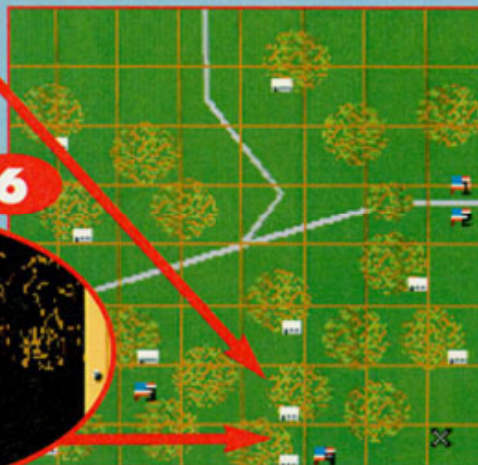
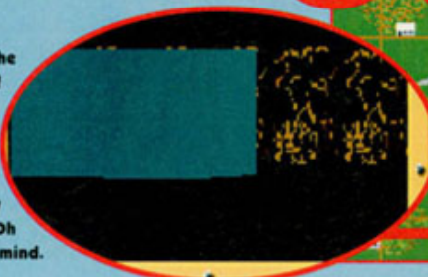
Hiding behind smoke and popping the baddies using IR sights gives you an improved chance of survival in the open, as they can't see you. Ha ha.



We seek them here, we seek them there. There's a tank in here. We think. Possibly.

6

But with the wonder of infra-red imaging equipment, we find that I'm completely mistaken. Oh dear. Never mind.



Game: Football Tactician 2
Publisher: Talking Birds
Authors: In house
Price: £22.95
Release: Out now

Here's a story – there was once a footballer.



He played in Dundee, and loved every game



until he found the pitch covered in, er, weeds.



Fortunately, visiting side Leeds were, umm,



...keen gardeners! The End. (You're Fired. – Ed)



FOOTBALL TACTICIAN 2

Well, for a start, it's clearly the sequel to *Football Tactician*.

We've had this one advertised in the mag for a few months now, and quite literally some letters from insane football management game devotees practically begging us to tell them how it compares to their beloved *Championship Manager*, *Premier Manager*, *Graham Taylor's Beating The USA Challenge* (pfft!) and all the rest. Well, I slacked a bit on last month's issue, so as penance I decided it was time I got back to my roots and reviewed it. Not that I've got anything against football management games – the original *Football Manager* was one of my all-time favourites, it's just that every one of the eight million I've seen since then seemed to add nothing worthwhile to the original formula, and a significant percentage of them actually made things worse. For me, the aforementioned *Championship Manager* was the biggest offender of the lot – while undeniably comprehensive and 'authentic', it was so unbearably slow to play and completely devoid of any of the excitement, tension and thrills that must surely come from a real football management job, that I just totally failed to see the point of it.

"The game comes with its own regular news-sheet"

Anyway, *Football Tactician 2* seems to be getting itself a bit of a good name on the sheepskin-jacket-and-flat-cap circuit, with its fancy new-fangled weekly updates and versions for every nationality under the proverbial sun. Personally, and predictably parochially, I chose the Scottish League version, beside myself with happiness at the concept of taking on the mantle of Stenhousemuir, Queen Of The South or Hamilton Academicals and once again visiting the haunting-

Gasp as the entire season flies by without you making a single change to the team, and puke with excitement at the replays.

grounds of my youth in such far-flung and exotic places as Airdrie, Dumfries, Motherwell and Falkirk (sigh). The more glamorous-minded among you might prefer to go for the new Italian model, boasting all the delights of the legendarily competitive (ah ha ha ha – right, Milan/Brescia fans?) Serie A and B.

Anyway, on with the game. *FT 2* boasts all the usual features you'd expect from the genre and loads more besides, right down to drugs-testing in the Italian version – in fact, there are so many of them that the game comes with its own regular news-sheet detailing amendments, updates and improvements. Sadly, what it doesn't come with is a very useful instruction manual – I spent a fruitless 30 minutes searching for the way to alter a basic staple of the manager's job (my team's

Swoon at the tension of top-league footy ...

formation), before sadly concluding that it simply wasn't possible to do so.

Another oddity is that you only seem to be able to study the shot-by-shot development of a match in retrospect, which kind of spoils the tension a bit. Now it may well be that I'm just not operating the menus properly, but if that is the case, it's just another symptom of the game's pretty unfriendly user interface – this isn't a game built with the casual or novice player in mind.

Still, I wouldn't like to give the impression that it's all bad – *Football Tactician 2* works just fine most of the time, and it's nice not to have to always play Hereford or something. What threw



me, though, was that there seemed to be very little I could actually do to influence matters – while there are probably unseen depths that'd take weeks to find, I got the impression I'd seen it all after about a quarter of a season. Maybe I just missed the little stick-man highlights of *Football Manager*, but after the nationalistic thrill had worn off, this made me feel like going and watching a nice game of cricket, and that's just about the worst crime of all.

● **STUART CAMPBELL**



UPPERS Faster-playing than many of the games I've seen in the genre, and Talking Birds do seem to have an admirably non-partisan view of the footballing world.

DOWNERS I could be wrong, but there only seemed to be about four things to do for most of the time, and there was nothing in the way of visual, sonic or other reward for your continued slogging through the menus.

THE BOTTOM LINE Well, it's no worse than most of the other footie management games, but beyond some different teams it didn't seem to offer anything better either. Not exciting at all (but maybe it's not meant to be). **61** PERFECT

THE BOTTOM LINE Yup, it works just as fine on the A1200 as it does on the A500 – but still no exciting match highlights or anything like that, though.



Jeer as poorly drawn players shove each other in an unconvincing manner.

Yup, it's got it all, even the overpriced Wagon Wheels and cans of Tizer, and even the roar of the crowd. No, really, straight up mate.



The world's a smaller place when it's in a bubble.

THE PATRICIAN



You could do some impressive things with 14th Century Lego, but it didn't have those dinky little spacemen.

You don't have to be German to enjoy this

Game: The Patrician
Publisher: Daze
Authors: Ascon Software
Price: £29.99
Release: Out now

The Hanseatic League was a merchants' co-operative covering northern Europe, Scandinavia and the Slavonic nations during the 13th and 14th Centuries, providing a monopoly for German traders on the transport of goods between east and west. As well as making its members very rich, it provided the framework for a new style of European politics, ending the dominance of the Church and the monarchy, shifting the emphasis to democracy and equality, and indirectly triggering the Renaissance and a new revolutionary era.

In return for their subscriptions, members of the League could take advantage of complex trade agreements between many nations. They received protection for their ships, often through the organising of convoys to

counter the threat from piracy. And, in addition, they had the opportunity to take political office, offering both power and prestige.

I know all this, not through choice, but because *The Patrician's* 120-page manual carries a hair-raisingly detailed history of the Hanseatic League by way of background information. You see, YOU ARE a budding member of the League, trying to make a splash in the cut-throat world of medieval trading. (No, really - you are.) By controlling a fleet of merchant ships, sailing them

from port to port, loading and unloading their cargoes, keeping them 'shipshape', and fighting off pirates, you've got to amass as

"To put it kindly, it's a specialised taste"

Thinking of a good name for your ship is one of the trickier bits.



Mr. Doves
What name do you give to the sloop in Steffin?



Guaranteed to impress: a personalised postcard.



at long last - a refreshing bath

In the 14th Century, real men didn't drink beer or wine. They drank bathwater.

meat	336	88	58
fish	252	88	63
ale	78	88	84
honey	14	88	228
cloth	35	88	229
crockery	21	88	
wood	336	88	
	21	88	

trade sim. Do you?

much dosh as possible. And by manipulating popular opinion, getting in with the right company, marrying into money, and helping out your home town when it's in trouble, you've got to try to rise to the heady office of Mayor, and then, ultimately, Alderman of the League.

By now you've probably reached one of two conclusions: either: (a) I really am the least engaging reviewer you've ever had the displeasure of reading, and I'm jolly lucky you're still here, or (b) *The Patrician* is, to put it kindly, a 'specialised taste'.

In the case of the former I'd plead extenuating circumstances, but of the latter there can be no argument. *The Patrician* is a game aimed exclusively at those with an interest, or a potential interest, in 14th Century European politics. Anyone else can go boil their heads as far as it's concerned.

The graphics might be quite attractive, and those pictures do feature some quite intricate animation - little people dancing about, smoke coming out of chimneys, that kind of thing. But they're pictures of the annoying 'click on the little man standing next to the ship to give you a damage report' variety, and quickly become a tiresome way of navigating around the game, particularly when you consider that it's 14th Century history you're ostensibly interested in, not pretty graphics.

You could view it as a straightforward strategy trading game, with the added 'bonus' of a detailed historical background - a bit like *Elite* without the flying-around bits (or that infuriating



As you'll see, Patricians need a good head for figures.

Your desk, whence all financial transactions take place.

rolling-through-90-degrees-just-to-turn-a-tiny-bit-to-one-side business). But the actual guts of the game

seem a little thin if you look beneath the surface, and the rewards don't really justify all the mucking about with numbers and things. I remember having much more fun with a game called *Pirates* by Microprose. Just like *The Patrician*, it had you sailing around the high seas trading goods, fighting off pirates and getting married. But, while it lacked authentic detail, you actually got to see your ships sailing about, and it all seemed much more exciting.

No, this is a game for the two, maybe three, AMIGA POWER readers with a fondness for medieval European politics. They'll love it. I didn't.

● JONATHAN DAVIES

UPPERS Nice graphics. Some good 14th Century tunes. A heart-stopping regard for historical accuracy. And it's really big.

DOWNERS If you're not interested in the background, playing it is likely to prove tedious. And anyway, I'd question whether there's actually that much gameplay underneath the graphics (and tunes). And I really do get annoyed by pictures that you've got to click on obscure bits of to get to other areas of the game.

THE BOTTOM LINE
It's feasible (though the odds against it are colossal) that this could be your thing. It's polished and nice to look at - atmospheric, almost. But there's nothing much to actually do beyond marvelling at the conviction of those responsible for it.

54

THE BOTTOM LINE
Wahey! It's a whole lot better, thanks to an extra four-player multi-scrolling shoot-'em-up bonus level. I'm joking of course.



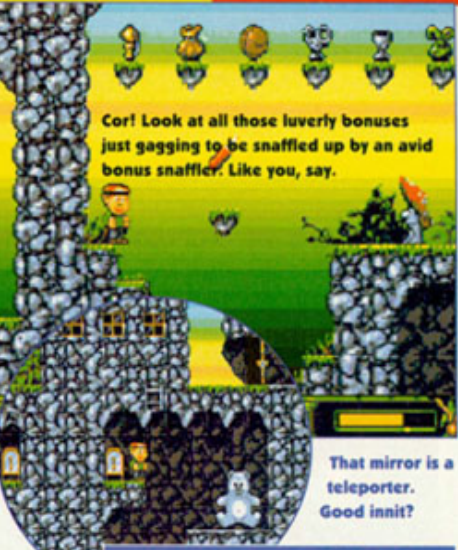
Just a taster of some of the interesting egg-oriented antics you can expect in Nicky 2. One of the geezer's neatest tricks is to find a large ovoid object in a field...



...and then catch a ride on the goose that comes out.



Cor! Look at all those louverly bonuses just gagging to be snaffled up by an avid bonus snaffler. Like you, say.



That mirror is a teleporter. Good innit?

Game: Nicky 2
Publisher: Microids/Daze Marketing
Price: £25.99
Authors: Fabrice Decroix, Pierra Fallard, Alain Lambin, Claude Abront, Loic Yvard
Release: Out now

You've got to ask yourself a question: "Do I want garlic mayonnaise on my quarter-pounder or do I want ketchup?" No, hang on, that's not it. Here's a better one: "Do I want to chew off my fingers or do I want to play another nondescript platform game?" Yes, that's more like it. Sorry about the slow typing, it's just that I've gnawed off most of the digits of my left hand and the thumb of my right. As you can well imagine, this makes it rather difficult to operate a keyboard, not least because the keys keep getting stuck together with blood and bits of skin.

All a bit ironic really because I ended up playing this dismal platformer anyway. You have to, you see - it's in the contract. "You must play this terminally dull platform game for at least 10 hours and then tell the Amiga-loving world what you think. In return, we will give you a small sum of money." I knew I should have read the small print. It's always the same, if you want something good (the small amount of

money) you have to go through something bad to get it (playing the tiresome game). It's a bit like eating a pork pie and having to wade through all that noxious jelly to get to the good meaty bits in the middle. Let's get this straight. If Nicky 2 were a pork pie, and believe me, it might as well be, it would be all slimy stuff and no meat. Well, perhaps I'm being slightly too harsh there. There might be a pert, lightly browned crust. But essentially it would be slime.

So, what's wrong with it? Firstly, it's yet another platform game. Okay, that's not a bad thing in itself, but if you've played gems like Zool and Putty, there is absolutely nothing here to excite or interest you. It's just another bloody platform game. For the reader who's been asleep at the back of the class for the last decade, this means that you have to run and jump around a lot, collecting objects, killing enemies, solving puzzles and revealing secret passages. It's

been done a million times before, and it's been done a million times better. Secondly, it suffers from a distinct lack of originality and inspiration. Nicky can fly on his goose, but didn't we catch James

Pond piloting an aeroplane? Some evil fiend has stolen his toys and he has to find them - doesn't that remind you of a game about a certain shades-wearing kid? Ladders grow



The door to dreams was closed.

out of the ground to give you access to higher platforms, just like the plants in the Jungle Zone of Magic Pockets. Enemies leave bonuses behind when you kill them, just like in Zool.

You can go inside the houses to collect bonuses, a feature which even the execrable Dalek Attack used.

If you looked on the bright side, you might conceivably begin to suggest that if it draws on so many elements from so many different games, then it must be pretty damn good. If you did start to suggest that, I'd slap you round the face and drone on for hours about the game's horrific lack of pace, the tiny sprites, the dull backgrounds, the appallingly cute enemies, the horrific graphical bugs, the annoyingly precise jumps...

● RICHARD LONGHURST

"It's just another bloody platform game"

UPPERS It's got graphics, sound effects and scrolling, just like you'd expect from a platform game.

DOWNERS Unoriginal, slow and boring gameplay. Doesn't look or sound particularly good. None of those surprising moments when you stop and say "Hey! That's cool!"

THE BOTTOM LINE
Nothing new on offer, and when you consider that we also said that about its prequel, Nicky Boom, it's a bit of a disgrace. Totally unexciting from start to finish. **34**

THE BOTTOM LINE
A1200 It's exactly the same - just as boring, just as dull. We tried (oh how we tried) to find an improvement, but there weren't any. C'est la vie.

The world's been waiting for a new,

NICKY 2



No hooo, it's the old exploding ladder gag. Oh my aching sides.

Woooo, electricity comes from other planets, just like Nicky's nifty invincibility shield-type thing.

exciting, and original platformer. Sadly, this ain't it.



Spread before you are screens from many of Nicky 2's eight exciting levels. Hardly thrill-a-minute stuff, but they're the best the game could deliver.

Left: The door to dreams was still closed. Why don't you find yourself a key?





The bombing section, in which a plane is about to bomb a bridge. It's not too difficult to see the target now, is it?

On the left here is the para section, complete with comedy arrow. It's dull and pointless, also.



Is this the final morning of the war? Or is it FA Cup Final day? Or... (That's enough. - Ed)

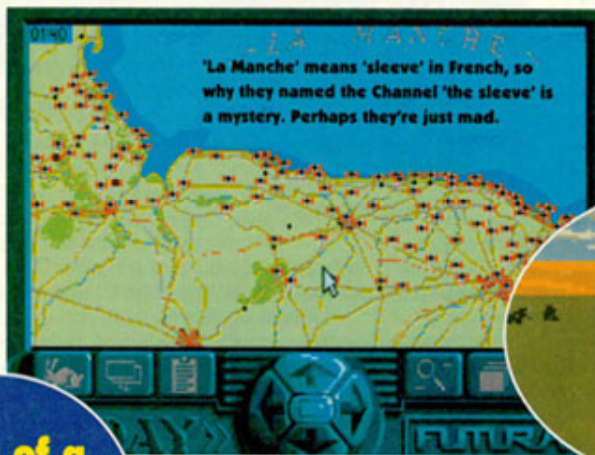
D-DAY

A wargame that's even less entertaining than the real thing?

Game: D-Day
Publisher: US Gold
Authors: Pascal Jarry, Didier Arnaud, Laurent Malavasi, Nicolas Massonnat, Christophe Perrotin, Isabelle Maury, Philippe Tesson, Michel Winogradoff, Laurant Weill, Herve Jouani
Price: £29.99
Release: Out now

I hate war. Not so much because of the needless waste of innocent life and the tortuous hell that is endured in the name of an outmoded concept of nationalism that leads only to the immense psychological torment and inconsolable grief of a mourning populace, struck by the ultimate futility of it all amidst the senseless annihilation of the planet's inhabitants and resources, encroaching on our sceptred isles like a dark angel sowing the seeds of apocalyptic death and destruction over the once-fertile but now fallow land which bore our forefathers in their determined but ultimately tragic pilgrimage to the present day.

No, more because I used to dread double PE on a Wednesday afternoon, and I understand that the training in the army



'La Manche' means 'sleeve' in French, so why they named the Channel 'the sleeve' is a mystery. Perhaps they're just mad.

Before his mum re-married, Thomas was merely Thomas the Tank. And here he is.

"Less of a wargame, more of a bore game"

is similar, only infinitely worse. I've seen an Officer And A Gentleman. It's all about having to polish your boots every day, with any sign of weakness punished by absurd tortures, such as running around on the beach carrying a heavy log and constantly being sprayed with water by a Sergeant-Major who's really good at Kung Fu. By this point, going into battle seems like it would be a positive relief.

Wargames, on the other hand, are a lot of fun. Or can be. I'm afraid that in the case of *D-Day* it's less of a wargame,

more of a bore game (clever wording, I know. Cheers). It's a semi-authentic version of the actual occurrences during the real D-Day and consists of simulations of infantry, paratrooper, bomber and tank divisions.

You can take part in individual missions with each of the divisions, which is essential to start with, because each simulation has a completely different game engine and requires getting used to. Once you're fully conversant with them, you can then take on Operation Overlord, which was the code-name chosen for the actual D-Day landings. This involves the computer throwing various scenarios at you, which you can choose to either cope with yourself using the appropriate

simulation, or leave for the Amiga to sort out. As battles are won and lost your map of France is constantly updated to show the tide of the conflict.

Oh dear, I haven't got much space left, so I'll be brief. I don't like this game much. The bombing missions are second-rate flight sims, with a hopelessly inaccurate aiming capability. The paratrooper section is a laughable attempt to get your paratroopers in the correct position on the ground while they float down. The tank and infantry sections are by far the best, but even they tend to lack excitement. It's also riddled with little irritations, like the unforgivable lack of support for a second disk drive (which, as it comes on four disks, is a bit of a problem). Also, if you fail a mission you're not given an option to play it again, but get taken back to the main menu, from which you have to go through the whole rigmarole of wading through menus, swapping disks etc all over again. Sloppy. No, I'm sorry, this does nothing for me.

● TIM TUCKER

UPPERS The tank and infantry sections are manageable and quite fun.

DOWNERS The bomber and paratrooper sections are nob. Even the good bits are dull (if you see what I mean), and unbelievably there's no support for a second disk drive (hiss).

THE BOTTOM LINE

Not the greatest wargame on the Amiga by a long stretch. You'd have to be completely obsessed with wargames to go for it at all. Er, Mark?

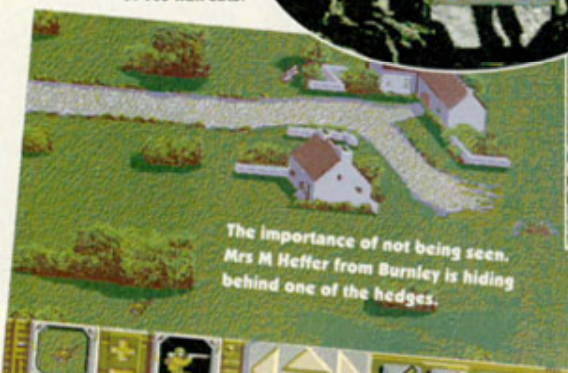
54

THE BOTTOM LINE

A1200 Well, the polygon graphics bits seemed a bit faster, but they still weren't quite speedy enough to make the simulations any good.



Germans or Allies? It's so hard to tell with these 1940s haircuts.



The importance of not being seen. Mrs M Heffer from Burnley is hiding behind one of the hedges.



It's an old Monty Python sketch you see. Oh, never mind. This is the view from inside the gun turret of the tank.





"Would you mind talking to my face and not my chest, sir?"

Ah, now this is where I should have learnt that 'kill mace-wielding maniac' spell.

LISTEN EAT SLEEP
NAME: ARAMIA BORMINA KYRIAN UNKNOWN

Typical. The only bridge for miles is guarded by a mace-wielding maniac.

LEARN SOME NEW SPELLS?

Gadzooks! My 'Enhance A1200 version' spell seems to have had very little effect!

Game: Ishar – Enhanced A1200 version
Publisher: Daze
Authors: Michael Pernot and Pascal Einsweiler
Price: £29.99
Release: Out now

ISHAR

ENHANCED 1200 VERSION

Bleep-bleep bleep-bleep bleep. [Pause.] Ring ring... Ring ring... Ring ring... Click... "Hello, AMIGA POWER."
"Hi Stuart, it's Dave."
"Dave! I thought you'd left the country. Where's that review?"
"Ah well... I'm having a bit of problem with it."
"Don't tell me. You dropped the disks in the canal? Or did the hamster die again this week? No, no, don't tell me. You accidentally, completely by mistake, ate your Amiga. DAVE, I WANT THAT REVIEW IN YESTERDAY!"
"Er, no, it's nothing like that. It's more a question of, er, angling the review."
"Angling? I thought you said that you hadn't dropped it in the canal."
"Very poor."
"Yeah, well. So come on. Spill the beans."
"Well, basically, *Ishar's* already been reviewed back in issue 15."
"Yeah, but this is the super-new



"The same old sub-Tolkien adventuring nonsense"

singing-and-dancing A1200 version."
"Not that you'd notice. The graphics have been spruced up, it runs a bit quicker and, er, that's about it. It's still the same old sub-Tolkien adventuring nonsense it always was. Orcs, goblins, sages, a plot you could summarise on a particularly small

The first girly who wants to join my team – the voting goes predictably.

postage stamp with a especially blunt red crayon, the lot. I can't think of anything new to say about it."

"Hmm-mmm. Sounds to me like you're just trying to wriggle out of doing the review."

"Hardly. I've already done all the hard work – playing the darned thing. It's a tricky blighter to started off on, you know. It takes ages just collecting together your band of five adventurers. And when you have got a reasonable team and send them off on some sort of mission, all they do is argue or get killed by Orcs."

"Oh come on. You're being a bit hard on it, surely."

"Yeah, okay, it's got its moments. The 3D views are dead lush, and the way your 'merry' band of adventurers interact is great; did you know that you can get characters who end up trying to kill each other? There's even this sex-crazed woman who works her way through the entire male cast."

"Phwoar, eh lads?"
"Yeah, that aspect of the game is a decent enough twist. And the controls

system is easy to get the hang of, the combat sections are mercifully straightforward, and the training and spell-learning bits are a lot less complicated than most RPGs. But..."

"I knew this was coming."
"But there's just too much wandering about aimlessly for what seems like hours on end, and the plot is virtually non-existent – some evil geezer's taken over the land and you've got to reach his castle, Ishar, and stop him. Hardly groundbreaking stuff, is it? And it makes the game as a whole pretty formless and flabby."

"Which reminds me, how is the diet going? Ahem. You weren't impressed, then."

"Oh, it's not bad, I suppose, but nothing special. And the 1200 version is no real improvement. I mean, all I can really think to say in the review is that it's for

A1200-owning adventure fans who haven't got anything better to play this month. Except they have – *Ishar 2*."
"Sure, great. But we pay you to write more than that."
"Hmm. I'll think of something..."

● DAVE GOLDR

THOSE DIFFERENCES IN FULL



The graphics to the original were impressive enough. The 1200 version (left), though, does have ever-so-slightly richer colours (if you look closely).

UPPERS **A1200**
Luvely graphics, a dead simple control system and a team of adventurers who interact with each other realistically.

DOWNERS It's aimless and plodding for much of the time. The plot just isn't strong enough to engage your interest. And some of the monsters and other assorted nasties could have been animated a bit more enthusiastically.

THE BOTTOM LINE
It's an RPG with a novel twist and a friendly, logical control system, but it's let down by a generally dull plot that doesn't draw you in. And there's no major changes to the original.

79



BUDGET

You open this door with the key of some money. Beyond it lies another dimension, a realm of things and ideas, partly – but mainly of cheap games. You've just crossed over into... The Budget Place. ('Zone', surely? – Ed)

FACE OFF

Publisher: Krisalis
Price: £9.99
Release: Out now

Ice Hockey fans aren't very well served on the Amiga. Hopefully, we'll be able to persuade Electronic Arts to convert their fabulous *NHLPA Hockey*, which is so popular on the Mega Drive, but until then your best bet is *Face Off*.

Unfortunately *Face Off* isn't perfect by any means. It offers you arcade action and a management section, both separately and in conjunction, but neither genre is adequately explored. The



Puck was also a character in 'A Midsummer Nights Dream' who had a donkey's head.

management section enables you to train your players and develop certain skills, such as shooting, skating and weights.

You can arrange your players in the team, and choose very rudimentary tactics, from Defensive, Midfield, Offensive and Dirty (which puts the emphasis on kicking the crap out of the opposition). You can even determine what kind of entertainment they enjoy before the game, but none of it feels very effective. I suspect that the management section was put in to add a little something to the arcade section, because on its own it's

supremely dull. The arcade section, on the other hand, isn't bad. In fact it's quite enjoyable, and in two-player mode it's a good crack. What it lacks is any depth, in that there are no opportunities to develop different types

of shot or styles of play. It's simply skate around the, er, pitch and try to score. And scoring is difficult at first – be prepared to play for quite a while before you actually manage to put one away. Not a disaster by any means, but still a fair way off the ideal Ice Hockey game.

● TIM TUCKER

THE BOTTOM LINE

A slightly above-average game, and certainly the best Ice Hockey game on the Amiga, but give it some thought before you part with your tenner. The management section is a complete waste of time.

62
PERCENT

THE ADDAMS FAMILY



Losing points for poor taste is the inclusion of John Merrick on the left.

Publisher: The Hit Squad
Price: £9.99
Release: Out now

Originally reviewed at the end of the Matt Bielby Golden Age of AMIGA POWER (issue 14), *The Addams Family* was one of Ocean's biggest-ever successes in the pages of AP with a whopping score of 88 percent. It's a platform game that's the closest the Amiga's so far come to emulating the staggeringly successful *Mario* series (did you know that the seven *Mario Brothers* games on the three Nintendo

formats have now sold a combined total of over 100 million – that's 100 MILLION – copies? S'true. At around £40 a throw. Think about it.), but it wasn't the huge chart smash that you might have expected, which is possibly why it's getting such a relatively swift budget re-release. Or possibly not. Who knows? What we do know for sure, though, is that this is a real beauty of a game – it's slick, professional, pretty and superbly designed, in that the rewards for skilful play increase as the difficulty level rises, making for some

fiendish addictive qualities.

On first impressions, you might be a little disappointed when you see *The Addams Family* for the first time – the lovely parallax backdrops that made the SNES version such a visual treat have been left out (seemingly for speed reasons, which is a bit baffling as well as a pity – after all, the SNES is hardly the world's fastest machine, and there isn't any clever hardware trickery involved in parallax scrolling), and there are other omissions too, like the weapons that Gomez can collect in the SNES version to make his life just a little easier. For 'tis the faithful butler that you play in the game, as he attempts to rescue the imprisoned members of the Family from their prisons inside the vast Addams mansion.

Strange but true – 'Gomez' is the brand name of Spain's best selling toothpaste.

But play the game for just a few minutes and you'll forget about little niggles like these. *Addams* is incredibly easy to get into (fire to jump – hurrah!) but horribly difficult to make all that much progress in without really devoting yourself to it – none of that *Sonic 2*-style finish-the-game-without-ever-really-paying-attention malarkey here. You do get some help, in the shape of liberally-dotted bonuses and extra lives, and a password system that comes along at just the right times – not so often that things get tediously bitty and easy, but not so infrequently that you feel you've got no chance of making it to the next checkpoint. Restart points are plentiful, there're hidden rooms and different routes all over the place, and you can tackle the various sections of the mansion in any order you like, so there's never any need to be completely stuck either, all of which helps immeasurably in drawing you into the game until you're completely absorbed.

So many games have tried to capture the feel of *Mario*, but this, for me, is the only one which has ever managed it to any degree (and that's a Good Thing, in case you were wondering). That's it, really.

● STUART CAMPBELL

THE BOTTOM LINE

Absolutely smashing platformer, done the way they all should be. There's still room for improvement (let's hope Ocean get round to doing *Pugsley's Scavenger Hunt*, the SNES sequel, on the Amiga), but this'll do just fine for now.

90
PERCENT

Can I do that Snooker gag about there being a hare on the table? Thought not.

MANCHESTER UNITED EUROPE

Publisher: Krisalis/Buzz
Price: £9.99
Release: Out now

What's gone wrong? *Man Utd Europe* has always been one of my favourite footy games, with only *Sensible Soccer* holding a higher place in my affections. On having this come in for review, I gleefully snapped it up for myself, looking forward to an afternoon spent happily in front of my monitor for 'research' purposes. I cracked open a bag of crisps, put my feet up on the desk and the disk in the drive and sat back for some fun.

And it's rubbish. I don't understand how or why, but *Man Utd Europe* just isn't any fun any more. It hasn't lost anything in the trip to budget-land (well, except for some club crests which aren't featured any more for copyright reasons), but I didn't



Stuart now dislikes this - it's official.

enjoy playing it again in the slightest. Maybe it's all the footy games I've seen since it came out (although very few of them have really been up to much), maybe it's the lacklustre (to say the least) sound, maybe it's the way that it seems particularly susceptible to that old 'leave the controls alone all day and your computer opponents still can't score' bugbear, maybe it's the lack of action replays (I do hate that in a football game), maybe the un-instinctive controls, or maybe it's the extremely erratic collision detection which saps your will to play, but whatever the reason, I just couldn't be bothered with this any more. It wasn't just me in a bad mood, either - I left it over the weekend and came back for another try, but it was just the same. I even got a few other people who'd never played it before to try it out, and they all came up with the same conclusion.

Sorry if this isn't a very convincing review, but I don't really know myself why I don't like *Man Utd Europe* any more. I just know that I don't.

● STUART CAMPBELL

THE BOTTOM LINE

Okay, 'rubbish' is a bit strong, this is still one of the better Amiga footy games. But then that's not saying much, is it? It's pretty, but vacant.

57 PERCENT

M1 TANK PLATOON

Publisher: Kixx
Price: £9.99
Release: Out now

Simulation. What a wonderful word that is, to be sure. It conjures images of assorted trainee-types, their brows knitted (or is it knotted? no, I'm sure it's knitted) and sweat beading on their upper lips as they struggle to land a virtual plane or take out a squadron of virtual enemy tanks. It makes you think of state-of-the-art computer graphics and huge hydraulic rams that pummel your simulated cockpit as you encounter turbulence or enemy fire. Well, stop thinking of those things because that's just not how it is on home computers.

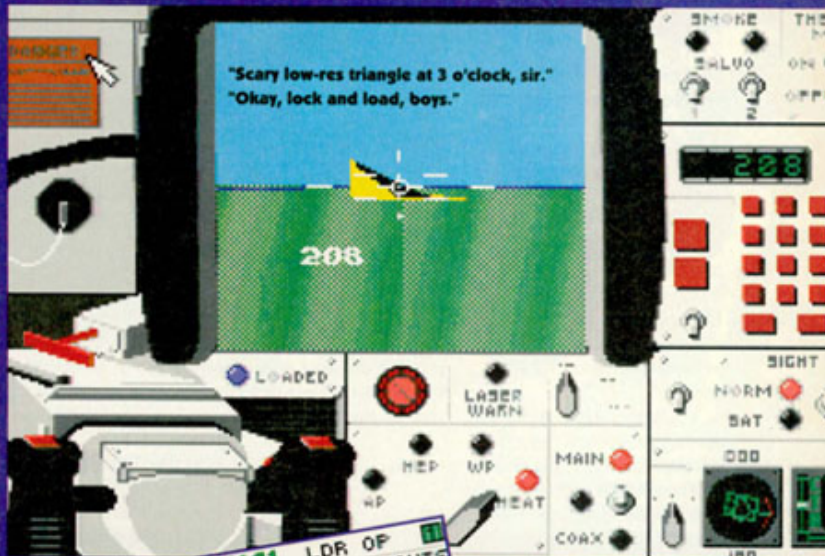
What you get for your money in most computer sims is what you'd do if you were a shuttle pilot/World War 1 flying ace/tank commander, not what you'd see and feel.

What you see is a landscape of coloured polygons and what you feel is entirely up to you.

M1 Tank Platoon is 'the definitive simulation of armoured land combat', it says here. But I thought that was *Team Yankee*. Or was it *Pacific Islands*? Or *Campaign*? Anyway, *M1* was originally released in 1989 so perhaps it might have been the definitive whatnot then.

It's very obviously the inspiration for *Team Yankee*. You command a squadron, sorry 'platoon', of four M1A1 Abrams battle tanks. You can move them around a strategic map, wargame-style - or you can take control of individual machines and drive them about a polygon landscape, simulation-style.

In sim-mode you can be the driver, the commander ('buttoned', or 'unbuttoned' - ie with the lid up or



down) or the gunner, and in each of the seats you have an impressive array of realistic-seeming controls. The whole thing is suitably difficult to control (Uncle Sam wouldn't pay people to drive his tanks if any fool off the street could do it) and quite fun if you're prepared to suspend your disbelief and pretend the blobs you see really are buildings and stuff. And, of course, it's all horribly complicated.

It's a tank! It's a tank! No keyboard overlays, no triangles! Fire! Hhngggggg!



The problem with most sims is that they come with a manual so fat you can prop open the office door with it and gameplay so thin you could, er, use it for something which required a very thin thing. Even when there is a game to be played, you get so lost in the controlling of your tank/lighter plane/oil tanker that it gets quickly forgotten. *M1* is no exception.

Moving your four tanks about the place is no easy task and it didn't take long before I got bored of trying to complete the mission to which I had been assigned and started just driving around shooting at buildings for fun. Then I started shooting the other tanks in the squadron (sorry, 'platoon' - curse these Americans and their different terminology). Then I watched *Married With Children*. Then I watched MTV for a bit. Then I thought "Hey, I've got a really great tank sim here, I think I'll play for a bit." Then I started on my mission again. Then I got bored and... The whole cycle started again. And the next day. And the next.

Graphically, it's competent. Technically, I have to assume it's moderately accurate. As a piece of entertainment, though, it's not. Entertaining, that is.

● TIM NORRIS

THE BOTTOM LINE

This really is one for tank buffs only. *Team Yankee* and its sequels are much more fun. 'Nuff said.

58 PERCENT

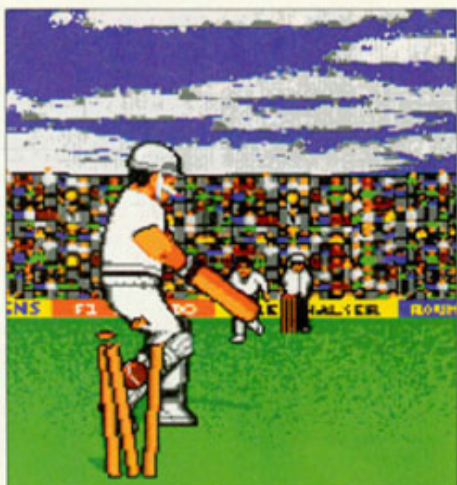


WORLD CRICKET

Publisher: Zeppelin
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

Looking at the packaging of *World Cricket*, it's amusing to see the phrase "Animated Match Highlights", with a picture of a crowd with umbrellas up and an obviously rained off match just below it. I suppose in England that's not such an uncommon sight when looking at supposed match highlights on the TV.

Cricket is definitely one of those games which doesn't translate too well to the small screen (the one attached to your Amiga, that is). *Graham Gooch's Cricket* is about the only cricket game I've seen that's any good, which, I suppose, is quite understandable – I mean, how do you put a batsman under joystick control, or a bowler or fielders? *World Cricket* gets past this problem by offering you a management simulation rather than an arcade game.



If they'd chopped up the bails instead of burning them after England first lost a match to Australia, would they now be playing for the Sawdust instead of the Ashes?

That would be fine if you ever felt like you were having any control over the game, but unfortunately this is not the case. You get offered all the options, such as assigning the bowling duties, determining fielding positions and drawing up the batting order, but it doesn't seem to make much difference. Throughout the match you're given an updated score board, which is hardly entertaining

viewing, but admittedly there are some good, if limited, animations. I dunno, there just doesn't seem to be enough fun on offer here to make it worth even the modest budget asking price. You'll soon be bored.

● **TIM TUCKER**

THE BOTTOM LINE

A competent game that never really gets going. Most of the options you'd require are in there, but it never fully involves you in the action. For a proper game of cricket, look to the full-price *Graham Gooch Cricket* instead.

55 PERCENT

GUNBOAT

Publisher: Hit Squad
Price: £12.99
Release: Out now

How to tell when you've bought a simulation instead of a proper game:

1. You have to read the manual before you can do anything at all.
2. The manual turns out to be mainly for the PC, offering you loads of bits about DOS and C> prompts to ignore.

3. You have to skip through loads of screens with pictures of men in military uniforms looking at each other before you reach anything you can control.
4. When you do finally get to the bit that you can play, it seems to consist of a big instrument panel, while above it great green and blue polygons lumber towards you unfeasibly slowly.
5. You get enough time between bits of 'action' to not only go and make a cup of tea, but also to catch up on the news, read a short novel, and practice your juggling skills.

I know, I'm being unfair on the genre, and yes there are many great sims out there, but even enthusiasts will find these points familiar. *Gunboat* suffers every one of them, but a few things in its favour make it more than just another flight sim. For a start, it's not a flight sim. It's a boat sim, in which you take control of a PBR



In the 'Nam, gunboats formed the Brown Water Navy. It really was that scary.

PROJECT-X

Publisher: Team 17
Price: £12.99
Release: Out now

When we first saw this game (back in issue 13, where it scored 78 percent), we wept tears of sorrow. It had looked from demos and previews as if it was going to be the best Amiga shoot-'em-up ever, but the final version was bugged, poorly designed, and so ridiculously, stupidly, unfairly hard that playing it was simply one of the most annoying and frustrating experiences that I've had since – well, you don't want to know about that. Never before had a game been so unfriendly, so downright nasty-minded, and so unsatisfying. Several days of play failed to see any of us make any progress beyond the

second level, and more importantly, failed to see any of us harbouring any desire to. It looked lovely, it sounded superb, and it was utterly hateful. Oh dear.

So now it's 1993. Ever mindful of criticism, the Team 17, er, team have had another go at it. The control's been tightened up, the power-up system's a tad more generous, some of the more appallingly frightening attack waves have been taken out altogether, and Rookie Mode now lets you get all the way to level four (although you'll still have to be something a bit better than

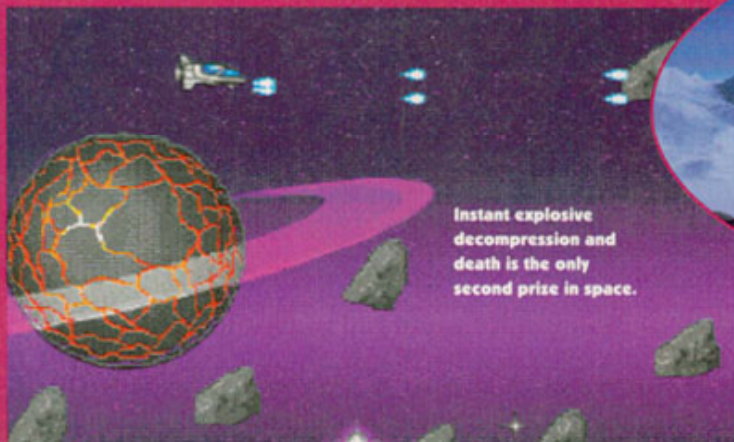


If you crash on this snowy level, your character has to eat his co-pilot over six months before you get a replay.

a rookie to get anything like that far). Has it worked? Is the all-new, all-dancing, all-playable *Project-X* the best Amiga shoot-'em-up of all time?

Well, no. But it IS a darn sight closer. There are still (and let's get the negative stuff out of the way first) some irritating flaws in this game. The biggest one for me personally is the system whereby collecting big and powerful power-ups causes your ship's handling to become sluggish and inertia-ridden. Now it's all very well to say that plasma cannons are heavy and this is all very realistic, but as we've said before, if you want realism, buy a flight sim.

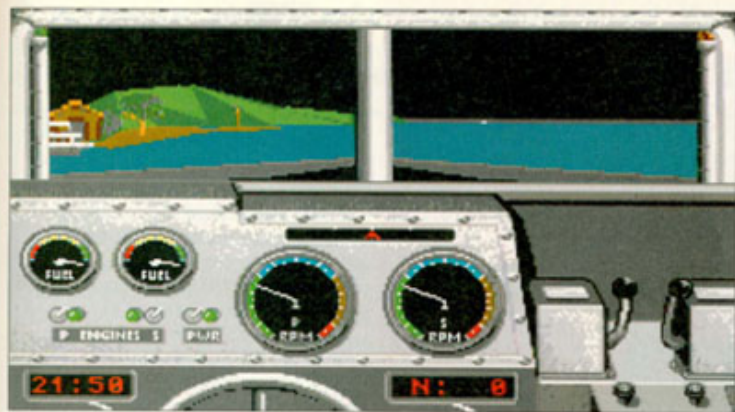
The power-ups themselves don't seem to be very well-balanced, either – there seems to be very little benefit in collecting the really hard weapons, even when the power-up system does



Instant explosive decompression and death is the only second prize in space.

Failure on this level will force you to undergo an intensive course of Bonsai tree horticulture and aesthetics.





"The tank's under attack, Sir!" "You'd best leave now, sonny, you're in the wrong caption."

(Patrol Boat, River – looks like Mark was right last month about Americans and their backwards language antics, eh?). These were originally developed for use in the Vietnam war (if you've seen Apocalypse Now you'll recognise them), but are still around now.

If anything, it's a bit like *B17* in a boat actually, because not only do you pilot the boat, you also take control of the Stern, Midship and Bow Gunners' Stations.

As an alternative to yet another flight sim it does its job well. I did find it frustrating trying to work out what's going on at times, and there is a limited amount

you can actually accomplish in a boat (no loop-the-loops to attempt, for instance), but overall I'd say a pretty fair bargain for thirteen quid, despite my initial cynicism.

● **TIM TUCKER**

THE BOTTOM LINE

A flight sim, but in a boat. A boat sim, then, and a fairly good one at that. Usual simulation gripes apply ('slowness' mostly), but a satisfying game nonetheless.

73 PERCENT



Who remembers the Liberator? It was the Blake's Seven ship and looked like it flew backwards.

allow you to build them up. It's still possible to accidentally select power-ups, too – the game caters for two-fire-button joysticks, so there should have been an option to disable the 'select-by-wiggling-the-stick' feature. And finally, it always really bugged me that you don't get to see the groovy bonus game until after level two. What's the point? Only having it after the rest of the levels looks silly, quite apart from anything else.

So, after that litany of hair-splitting, let's be a bit more magnanimous and reward effort and good intentions. This version IS a lot better than the original, and I managed to have a pretty groovy time with it this time around (even including getting beyond level two, in Arcade Mode at that).

It's right up there with *Apidya* and *R-Type 2* in the ranks of the top

blasters, and it's one of the best tests of skill all you complacent zapsters out there could ask for. The sound's atmospheric and stirring, and generally it's fairly lovely. It's just that it's still *nearly* brilliant, and just a few more tweaks could have made it unbeatable. Still, *Project-X 2* should be a stunner...

● **STUART CAMPBELL**

THE BOTTOM LINE

A significant improvement on the first version, and it manages to sacrifice its previous off-putting evilness without turning into a complete pushover, but *Project-X* still isn't realising its full potential. At budget price, though, it's well worth buying for all that.

86 PERCENT

THE ANIMATION CLASSICS PACK

91



Isn't that a fat opera singer with a wooden leg? Thought so.

Publisher:
Ready Soft
Price: £44.99
Release: Out now

A compilation made up of three games – *Space Ace*, *Dragon's Lair 2: Time*

Warp and *Wrath Of The Demon*. What do they have in common? They all feature 'Animation'. Er, well so does almost every single game we've ever played, but only these games make a major selling point out of it. It's not just any old animation, it's proper animation, like in the films and that. Well, two of them are.

Taking them left to right from the illustrations on the cover (well, it's just as valid as any other order), let's start with *Space Ace*. What's undeniable in these Don Bluth arcade conversions is



Dental caries still affect most children under ten.

the quality of the graphics, although I have to say that in this case they are slightly below the usual standard. Still fairly lush to look at though, but unfortunately the game's also incredibly dull and frustrating to play. You watch an animated sequence and are required to move the joystick at some point in the proceedings. If you move it in the correct direction at the correct time you'll move on to the next animated section and you'll have to make another guess as to where and how to move the joystick. You should finish the entire game in a matter of hours, and after that you'll have no desire to see it again.

Next up, *Dragon's Lair 2*. Exactly the same gameplay as *Space Ace*,

It looks great, but the game really does drag on. Arf.

although the graphics are marginally better. The scenes seem less continuous

though, with large skips in the narrative requiring you to fill in the gaps between. Just to take the first example, a scene where Dirk (the hero) is attacked in his own home by his Mother-in-Law, quickly jumps to the next scene, a drawbridge over a moat outside a castle with said Mother-in-law giving chase. What happened in between? How did they get there? Why is his Mother-in-Law attacking him anyway?

Wrath Of The Demon is the odd game out here really. Its animation and graphics are bog-standard and nothing to do with Don Bluth, although there are some fairly nice parallax scrolling effects. In the gameplay department it's more interesting than its companions, requiring you to ride along, pick up things, hit things and get into fights, but it's still hardly rivetting. There are two different types of gameplay, the action scenes and the fighting scenes, which makes for

some variety, but frankly the game is dated and dull.

● **TIM TUCKER**

THE BOTTOM LINE

We've never liked these games, and they certainly haven't improved with age. The only thing in this box's favour is that, whereas originally you would have paid over a hundred quid for this lot, you're now only handing out forty-five. So if you've been dying to give them a shot, now's your chance. But something tells me you won't be going back for more, though.

29 PERCENT



During the 17th Century colonial expansion by Europeans into the Caribbean, functional Spanish architecture prevailed...



PIRATES

Publisher: Kixx
Price: £9.99
Release: Out now

Hahar, Jim lad. Take this black spot to Blind Pugh, hahar. Shiver me timbers hahar, hahar. Hahar, hahar.

Good, well, that's got that out of the way. Not surprisingly, this is a game about pirates. If only I'd started the review like that instead of launching into a dodgy Robert Newton impression. None of the land-lubbers round here even

Being fat beer-guzzling pigs was pretty popular too.

remember that version of Treasure Island anyway - they all think Long John Silver was played by Chuck Heston. Bunch of ignorant kids. Tch. I don't know what the world's coming to...

I'm sorry, where was I? Ah yes, *Pirates*. It's a jolly old game (from 1986, in fact, when half this lot were still at school - Lisa had only just joined secondary school, for heaven's sake) and, unfortunately, it shows. You play the part of a lusty young pirate



captain just setting off on his hearty adventures. With your swash tightly buckled, you set off to explore the Caribbean and seek your fortune.

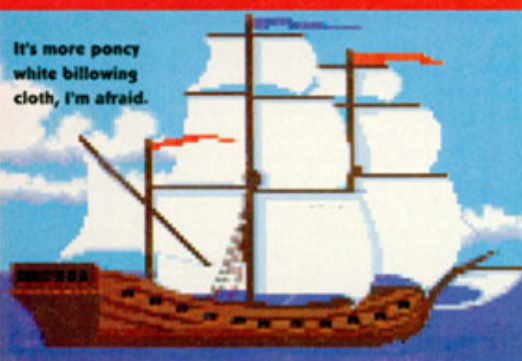
What we have here is a good old-fashioned raiding and trading game with some good old-fashioned graphics thrown in. You sail

from port to port, buying sugar here, selling cannon there, and generally having a pretty nautical time of it. The controls are easy to get to grips with and, being a MicroProse game, there's a fairly decent attempt at realism in the sailing sequences at least. You get an idea of which way the

wind's blowing from the clouds that scud fluffily by, and you'd jolly well better learn how to tack or you shan't get anywhere.

My first thought as I played was that it was a bit like *Elite*

It's more poncy white billowing cloth, I'm afraid.



This man combines white cloth, being fat, and fighting quite nicely, I think.

in concept, with 17th Century piratic skulduggery substituted for all that space opera stuff. You sail, you trade, you raid, you fight, you dance.

Dance? Why yes - at least that's what it looks like. As you sail around the beautiful islands of the Caribbean you oft times happen upon other ships. If you feel lucky, you might decide to close for battle. After a bizarre 8-bit-esque naval combat sequence where you blast away at the

other ship with your cannon, you might choose to board her. Once you do, you're locked in a deadly rhumba with your prey's unlucky captain. The manual tried to tell me it was sword-fighting, but I know better. I've seen *Come Dancing* often enough to spot precision modern ballroom dancing when I see it.



...as did the European trends of wearing poncy white shirts and sword-fighting.

The bottom line, as we tend to say round these parts, is that as a whole it hangs together pretty well. There's some depth to the gameplay and a sense of historical atmosphere (but don't ask me if it's accurate, the 17th Century is a mystery to me). The only fly in the otherwise splendid ointment is that the individual sequences (sailing, trading, fighting, etc) all look a bit dated. The sword-fight sequence is supposed to be an arcade action beat-'em-up bit, but it's just a keep-moving-to-the-left-and-pressing-fire-occasionally bit.

Still, there's plenty in there to keep a strategy/trading/adventure fan going as long as they're not too desperate for fast-moving action. I was engrossed for many a long hour, and that's always a good sign.

● **TIM NORRIS**

THE BOTTOM LINE

Tactics, strategy, trading, atmosphere and a little bit of humour always help to make a good game and this one's got 'em all. Unfortunately, it was written in 1986 and it shows. But despite that, it's still worth a crack.

68

HARD NOVA

Publisher: Hit Squad
Price: £9.99
Release: Out now

If a game takes more than an acceptable amount of time to get to grips with, it always makes me suspicious. Obviously, no matter how complex a game, given the time we can all get into it eventually - just as, given the time, we could all read Marcel Proust's *Recherche Du Temps Perdu*. It's the inclination that's important, and if a game doesn't offer a reasonably easy-to-get-to-grips-with control system



Hard Nova? Tricky to control, more like.

and thus takes ages to even see a little action, then it's just plain irritating.

I'm afraid these are my feelings towards *Hard Nova*. Nothing's ever obvious, you have to constantly refer to the manual, which isn't very well written, and you're always cross referencing different sections and so on. It's a massive space strategy/trading/role-playing game, which undoubtedly has a lot to offer anyone who's willing to go the distance. You control a bunch of four mercenaries who survive by doing dirty work around various galaxies, as well as trading goods between different planets and so on.

The two main aspects of the gameplay are the parts where you're walking around and exploring on a planet, which is an overhead-view affair, and the space travel, which is a sort of isometric-in-space viewpoint. Neither are particularly effective I'm afraid, although I did find the RPG elements fairly involving. In space there are so many parameters to look at, weapons systems to take care of, fuel levels to watch, navigation procedures to negotiate, false signatures to offer (there's no point explaining I'm afraid) that it all gets too much. Often it's good to have so many options, as long as they're entertainingly presented, and hopefully in some way instinctive to pick up, or at least easy to remember. *Hard Nova* doesn't have any of these advantages.

● **TIM TUCKER**

THE BOTTOM LINE

There's certainly a lot in here for anyone who's willing to give it a go, but you'll have to fight through a frustrating learning procedure. I found the lack of atmosphere stifling and the overall unfriendliness of the control system immensely irritating. Sorry.

44

POINTS OF VIEW

Here at AMIGA POWER we don't try and tell people what to think. But of course that's up to you to decide.



SOCCER KID

Five-star football fun - fab! *****

STUART CAMPBELL



BLOB

A nice surprise *****

MARK WINSTANLEY

Soccer Nights, more like *****

Blob's my uncle *****

DAVE GREEN

Arabian Kid, more like *****

Digital Amiga vertigo - a bit scary for me *****

TIM TUCKER

I'm leaving, you know *****

I'm going to miss you all terribly *****

JONATHAN DAVIES

I hate football (You girl. - Ed) ***

It's a bit blobby, isn't it? *****

JOHN MAJOR

(Censored. - Ed) **

Blob? (Censored. - Ed), more like **



ONE STEP BEYOND

It'll drive you nutty, boys *****

We play it all day at 'Our House' *****

Haven't played it

But hey, I'll still pop back now and then... *****

One Step Beyond what, exactly? ***

Haven't (Censored. - Ed) it



SIM LIFE

If life's this dull, why bother? *

I'd rather play Sim Cement *

More fun than the real thing, anyway ***

...for tea and stuff. Hurray! **

Hinn-nnng! **

Useless load of (Censored. - Ed) *



SUPER SPORTS

Rubbish Sports, more like **

Haven't played it

More fun than the real... (That's enough. - Ed) ****

(That's what you think, matey. Clear off. - Ed) ***

(Jonathan? - Ed)

Bloody (Censored. - Ed) **



CASTLES 2

Look, it's not our fault, alright? **

Coded by 13th Century Druids, I think **

Haven't played it

(Tim hasn't played this: we fired him. - Ed)

(Hello? Jonathan? - Ed)

(Censored. - Ed) (Censored. - Ed) *

*NOT THE PK, BUT OUR LOCAL PLUMBER WHO ALSO SWEARS A LOT!

ON SALE THIS MONTH

NEXT MONTH

A NICE SURPRISE

TWO OUT OF FOUR! Last month, in this very box, I claimed that we'd get *Blob*, *Sim Life*, *International Golf*, and *Hired Guns* in for this ish. AND I WAS 50% CORRECT! Flushed with success, I'm now going to predict, ooh, *Oscar*, *Overdrive*, *Micro Machines* (maybe) and some sort of golf thing for next time. Don't touch that dial!

DIARY OF A GAME...

SPODLAND by The Hidden

Craig Howard continues the saga of the world's first spit-based Amiga game. Drool on!



The Hidden pose by their brand new 'motor'. Craig's on the right.

1993 JUNE

Today I realised that there was still one major factor missing from the Spodland design: the actual control method used to move the Spods around the screen! So, in the very little spare time that I had left I decided that I had better sort this out. One of the problems we've had

with Spodland is that the original design sheet (as supplied by the winner of our 'Design-A-Game' compo back in January. - Ed) was a bit low on facts, such as the range of moves available to the Spods. What this basically translates into is more hard work for me. Humph!

Monday 7

1993 JUNE

I've made up my mind to allow the Spods to always have the option to jump or spit in any direction, and following this, the option to jump to their left or right if the appropriate pedestal is empty. I hope that this will allow a subtle strategy to develop, making each player want to kill

the opponents next to them so as to give them more freedom of movement and a bigger advantage in the game. (Hmm, not really all that 'subtle', is it? - Ed) Wow, I bet you'd never have guessed how complicated this game-designing lark really is.

Tuesday 8

1993 JUNE

After a long, hard week's work there's nothing better than a good old-fashioned party. And, as luck would have it, there was a double 21st birthday bash lined up in Norwich for my chums Geoff and

Dan. It was quite a quiet occasion, with only one person collapsing - but it wasn't me 'cos I'm hard. (Remember, kids: falling unconscious at double 21st birthday parties in Norwich isn't big or clever. - Ed)

Friday 11

1993 JUNE

At last I managed to convince Will (our chief programmer) to actually do some coding for Spodland. The boy has got a one-track mind at the moment, and seems to think about nothing but Donk,

Donk and more Donk. (That's The Hidden's super mid-price platformer with a duck in it, hopefully out soon. - Ed) But today the 'cold shower' routine worked, and I managed to 'persuade' Will to code the routine for the four-player mode. It's going to be great.

Tuesday 15

1993 JUNE

Will presented me with a working four-player routine. Unfortunately, in order to test it thoroughly, he had to implement it in our current fave office game, Monster Mash - which is basically a Smash-TV-style

shoot-'em-up. I say 'unfortunately' because just a two-player version of Monster Mash is addictive enough, but a four-player one is (in my humble opinion) just sex on silicon.

Thursday 17

1993 JUNE

After a rather sordid stint on Monster Mash, I decided to try and sort out some other stuff for Spodland. The main problem I've still got to solve is to do with the Spods themselves. I really want to use claymation-style techniques but I don't know when I'll be able to get some good model makers to sculpt the darn things out of Plasticine.

So, just in case, I've asked Paul (our 3D man) to make some 3D models of the Spods and see how they turn out. Also I've just seen a new version of Donk, which is now looking fantastic. Unfortunately, due to the recent collapse of DMI (who were going to distribute it), we don't know when it'll be released. Boo.

Monday 21

1993 JUNE

I've asked Carl (our rather brillo music maestro) to come up with some music for Spodland that will capture the feel of the game. There is no doubt that he will be able to do this, as anyone who has heard the music to Donk will tell you. Absolutely fantastic tunes indeed.

Wednesday 23

1993 JUNE

I had a go at sorting out a screen mock-up for the bash-a-crocodile sub-game which we'd originally designed ages ago. So, until next month, this is a slightly stressed but still very beautiful Craig saying Bye!!! (Cheers Craig. - Ed)

Monday 28



Hooray! A proper picture of the Spods in full spitting action!



And this... is Monster Mash. Nope, it doesn't look much like Smash TV to us, either.



AND ANOTHER GAME

CANNON FODDER by Sensible Software

Most games wouldn't be the same without a good selection of vehicles and weapons. Don't worry - Cannon Fodder has got plenty of both.



I'm your charming host - Jools Sensible.

Hil And welcome back to the time-deviating, swashbuckling and hard-rhyming pages of Jools' Cannon Fodder diary. Okay, last month I promised to tell you about the vehicles

and so that's what I'm about to do, but as well as the vehicles I'm gonna disclose the inventory of the whole armoury available in the game, so if you suffer from a nervous disposition, if you're a Morrissey look-a-like or simply a Take That fan - RUN FOR COVER! I think what I'll do is put both the vehicles and the weapons into the same category, call it some pretentious name like 'The explosive forces of Cannon Fodder' and list everything in order of destructive power. And, as if by magic, here is that very list:

First of all we have the plain and straightforward *bullet-firing guns*. The power of the gun depends on the rank of the man firing it: the higher this is, the higher the rate of rounds, bullet speed, distance covered and accuracy. Your men get promoted to higher ranks after every mission successfully completed so if you can manage to keep them alive for long enough, you will be rewarded with some seriously devastating firepower.

Next on the list are *grenades*, good for lobbing over background obstacles at enemies in well-dug-in positions and, more importantly, ideal for blowing up buildings containing the evil opposition.

Bazookas are used to reach the parts that grenades can't. Their pin-point accuracy gives them an effectiveness cherished by sadists and trainee dictators.

There will be a couple of other ground-based weapons: *mounted guns* and *rocket launchers*. But as they are not fully implemented yet I can't really tell you any more about them.

So then, straight onto the first vehicle - the *jeep*. Imagine the first time you discover a jeep while playing the game - you're casually walking around, blowing the hell out of everything in sight, and there it is, just parked there, all gleaming and new and free for the taking. To jump in, just click on it with the left mouse button, then watch your men walk up to it and climb aboard. Now you can do what you want with it: if you

fancy yourself as a Nigel Mansell you can go for some high speed seat-of-the-pants racing around. If you consider yourself more of an 'Evil Kniveel', then try out some stunts like jumping a 20-foot chasm. For the Sunday drivers among you, posing down at the beach is even a possibility! But what I really like to do is smash through fences and try to flatten as many of those little enemy blighters as possible. Each to their own, I suppose.



Just one grenade makes pretty short work of these enemy barrack huts.

What's more fun than wreaking havoc with a speedy jeep? Well, how about causing total mayhem in a jeep with a rather large gun attached to it?

Of course neither of the previous two mechanisms have the sheer sexual prowess or frontmanship qualities of a practically indestructible tank, which just happens to be the next 'little' item in the Cannon Fodder mega-weapon list.

Bored of all this ground-floor action? Well then, it's time to go up in the world, because Fodder's also got *helicopters*. Four different types of helicopters, to be precise. The first is pretty simple, and is just for transporting your men around and spotting the enemy with. The other three have weapons - *bombs*, *rockets* and *homing missiles*, respectively.

I've recently finished the bits of code to make the homing missiles work and I'm very pleased with it to say the least. I'll try to explain. When the helicopter pilot (you, for example) has clicked on a target, the missile drops from the underside, and then slowly speeds up and turns towards its victim. However, if there are any obstacles in its path (and this is the clever bit) it automatically goes up in order to fly over them. Then, when there is a clear path,

it decides to lose height again and gets on with the attack. These weapons can be used against anything - from background terrain, fences, buildings etc, to any of the enemy's armoury, including just a single man.

That leads me to the one most important thing left to tell you about in this section - THE ENEMY ALSO HAVE ALL OF THESE WEAPONS and are more than likely to be better than you at using them, but I'll have to finish coding the game and you'll have to buy it to find out how. Anyway it's that time again to bury my head back into the sands of Cannon Fodder and get on with what I get paid for, so bye bye for now. ●



More explosions while, down at the bottom, a jeep arrives on the scene.

Variety is either the spice of life or the rubbish that both BBC and ITV fill up their prime-time Saturday night schedules with. So do the varied specimens in this month's PD round-up enrich your life or turn your brain to mush? Heeeeeeeeeere's Dave Golder...

TIME-RIFT

NBS
Licenceware

It's strange how spaceships and time capsules are always powered by crystals. What's wrong with petrol? Or nuclear fission? Or manure? Then again, I don't think I'd want to play a game where you go around collecting cow-pats.

Time-Rift is an arcade adventure-type thing set in four different time zones. In each zone you have to collect, you've guessed it, four crystals so that you can power up your time machine and get on to the next zone.

It's a very impressive game. Each zone is massive with loads of geographically-defiant platforms, buildings and tunnels. You have a choice of weapons and a handy mapping facility. There are a whole range of power-ups littered about the place which you'll need because there are plenty of nasties about too.

With a sprite who's a first-year student in the *Prince Of*



He might look like Bon Jon Bovi, but don't let that put you off the game.

Persia school of animation and some lush backdrops, this is an excellent game that deserves checking out.

VERDICT: I liked it, a lot. So will you, probably.
RATING: ★★★★★

and the controls are muddy. Apart from that I quite enjoyed it.

VERDICT: Hmm, when the basic concept is as corny as this, you need to back it up with some glitz. *Fruit Panic* doesn't and ends up an okay, but ultimately dull game. (But the rest of us like it anyway. - Ed)

RATING: ★★★

SMURF HUNT

PD Soft



The dream of a generation comes true.

Okay, it's a *Shoot-'Em-Up Construction Kit* game, and gameplay-wise pretty much what you'd expect. But it gets a mention purely because of its theme - blasting Smurfs. Yup, it's no less than they deserve. They inflicted mental agony and left deep psychological scars on a whole generation. A few goes on *Smurf Hunt*, though (with its gratuitously bloody scenes of Smurfs getting it) and you'll be cured, a sane, balanced human being again.

VERDICT: Hah!
RATING: ★★★

PARADOX

PD Soft

This month's puzzler, for people who are that way inclined, is, like all the best puzzlers, based on a very simple



Here's one you can work out for yourself. Just follow the rules below and have fun.

premise. You are presented with a screen full of multi-coloured balls - there will be two of each colour. Your mission is to push like-coloured balls next to each other so that they vanish in a puff of smoke; exterminate all the balls within the time limit and you're whisked off to the next level.

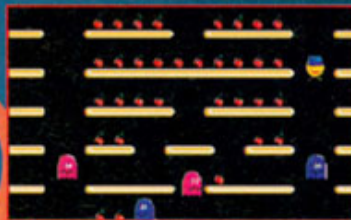
I found it infuriatingly addictive. It's one of those games where you romp through four or five levels then come to a complete halt on a screen you just can't work out.

VERDICT: A sound basic idea, well presented. Okay it's not *Lemmings*, but as puzzlers go, it's funky enough.
RATING: ★★★

FRUIT PANIC

PD Soft

More cute platform stuff, but unfortunately not as good as *Captain K*, in any department. The idea this time is to collect all the fruit and avoid the nasties. The 'gimmick' is that at the bottom of each level are two trampolines, and these are the only way you can make your, er, thing go up the screen. Oh, and he can also place



It's about fruit and supposed to be cute.

bombs to paralyse the nasties. The graphics are pretty uninspired, the levels are pretty samey

CAPTAIN K

NBS Licenceware

Cute platform games, don't you just love 'em? Once upon a time all you could find in the public domain were *Tetris* clones and products from the *Shoot-'Em-Up Construction Kit* production line. These days you can't move for fruit 'n' flowers all over the place.

Get the picture? Cute-a-rama *Captain K* is full of flowers and so-called nasties who look about as dangerous as Michael Jackson. On the cartoon cuteness scale the graphics rate somewhere between *My Little Pony* and *Gummi Bears*, which is another way of saying if you can stand this cutesy stuff then they're actually pretty good.

The game is a simple case of guiding your jet-packed space cadet around some not-at-all-inspired-by-*Parasol-Stars*-type levels collecting or destroying everything on them. A nice touch is that you're

But what does the K stand for? Kelloggs? Ken? Kilroy-Smith?

armed with a bouncing missile which you have to master the art of lobbing.

There are tons of levels which keep throwing up new challenges to stop the game getting tedious, and they almost work. If you're into this sort of thing, *Captain K* delivers the goods, if not any surprises.

VERDICT: Great graphics, decent sounds, okay gameplay, limited lastability, but then, who's taking notes? (You are. - Ed)
RATING: ★★★

