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AMIGA GAMES
MAGAZINE!**



OVERDRIVE



ALFRED CHICKEN



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ISSUE 31 £3.95 NOVEMBER 1993

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AMIGA POWER

A MAGAZINE WITH ATTITUDE

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CANNON
FODDER
PLUS!**

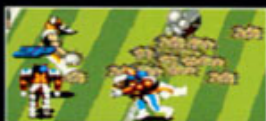
EXCLUSIVE disk from
Sensible Software,
featuring the world's
first Interactive Diary
Of A Game, and more!



**disk
extra**

YOURS WITH ISSUE 31 OF AMIGA POWER

**3 BE MORE THAN A NUMBER
BRUTAL SPORTS
FOOTBALL**



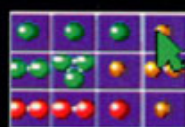
Out-Speedball
Speedball in
this, er, brutal
and sporty
demo from
Millennium.

FATMAN

Lardy platform antics
in this new superhero
epic from Kompart.



**disk
31**



ATOMS

Strange board-
game fun for up to
four players.

**AMIGA
POWER**

Ooh lordy, it's the...

SUPER SPACE INVADERS!

**Blast off with Uridium 2,
Turrican 3, Blastar
and D-Hero:
reviews inside!**

ISSUE 31

THIS IS AMIGA POWER

AMIGA POWER

ISSUE 31 NOVEMBER 1993

MEMORABLE FIGHTING SHE-MONKEY
Linda Barker

RAPID CRAZY REUSABLE POLICE CLOWN
Stuart Campbell

MALADJUSTED STUDENT LLAMA
Dave Green

TOWERING EDIBLE ANT MACHINES
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AMIGA POWER - we don't care what you know,
we're going to torture you anyway.

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10 AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN THE NEWS PAGES

When it comes to the naked truth, there's no-one nakeder or truer than AP's intrepid newshounds Dave Green and Linda Barker.

15 THE COOK, THE THIEF, HIS WIFE AND, ER, THE CHARTS

What's going to be Number One this month? We didn't believe it either.

18 ONE FLEW OVER THE PREVIEW'S NEST

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We wish. These are the letters pages, in case you hadn't worked it out already.

100 ALL QUIET ON THE DIARY OF A GAME FRONT

Yep, it's all going pretty slowly on *Spodland* and *Cannon Fodder*. Again.

102 INVASION OF THE SKELETON SNATCHERS

Win a life-size skeleton or a chest full of silver, thanks to Kompart UK and Yo! Joe!

107 AROUND THE BOTTOM LINE IN 80 DAYS

Although we doubt if any of you read it quite that carefully, to be perfectly honest.

114 THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON

Well, it's The Right Profile featuring Team 17's Martyn Brown, and he's actually from Wakefield. Sorry, Martyn. Sorry, Wakefield.

GAMES OF THE



OVERDRIVE

Overdrive? Overdue, more like. Deadlines, don't you (Snip! - Ed) Page 32



TURRICAN 3

First there was *Turrigan*. And now there is *(Snip! - Ed) Page 36*



THEATRE OF DEATH

Suspect clone of *Cannon Fodder*, more like. *(Snip! - Libel Ed) Page 40*



DISPOSABLE HEROES

"Just remember - no-one is indisposable. Er..." *(Snip! - Ed) Page 42*



DONK

"Will you pay for this game now, sir?" "No, just put it *(Snip! - Ed) Page 46*



OSCAR

Phew. Nearly had to cut our legs off then. *(Snip! (Ho ho) - Ed) Page 48*

THE SECRET GARDEN P60

It's the nation's favourite reader ads page with a quaint Victorian theme, and it's - hang on a minute...



STUART WOULD JUST LIKE TO SAY: 'I'm just looking for one divine hammer.'

SAL WOULD JUST LIKE TO SAY: 'John Wayne must have had very strong arms.'

CAM WOULD JUST LIKE TO SAY: 'I thought I had the key to her heart, it was the key to her shed.'

LISA WOULD JUST LIKE TO SAY: 'Just do it for the money.'

MONTH



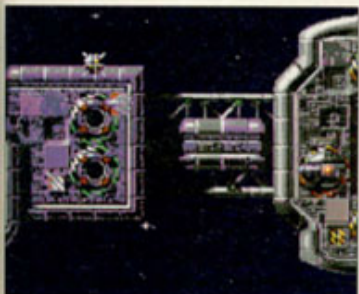
WIZZY, LIZZY
Wizzy, Lizzy, let's get busy!
(Snip! - Ed)

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ALFRED CHICKEN
Is it great? Is it crap? Do you
give a cluck? (Snip! - Ed)

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URIDIUM 2
(Snip! - Ed)

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NEXT MONTH

The December issue of AMIGA POWER will be on sale on the 11th of November. With any luck we should have reviews of *Apocalypse*, *Cannon Fodder* and *Jurassic Park*. But you know what we're like.

DAVE WOULD JUST LIKE TO SAY: 'Work? I've got less important things to do.'

STEVE WOULD JUST LIKE TO SAY: 'There's nothing real about this virtuality.'

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It's been a while since there's been enough interesting stuff out there to justify two coverdisks, but what we've brought you this month was just too special to miss. We defy anyone to play our WORLD EXCLUSIVE Interactive Diary Of A Game and tell us otherwise. That's all.

disk

31

5

INTRODUCING DISK 31



CANNON FODDER



It's the world's first Interactive Diary Of A Game! Yes, now you can follow the development of Sensible's new blockbuster where it really counts - on the screen. Trace a path through history with FOUR versions of the same game. Here. Now.

BRUTAL SPORTS

Speedball 2 has reigned supreme at the top of the future-sports league for a long time now, but things might just be about to change with the release of this new game from Millennium. But just don't take our wishy-washy non-committal word for it - play it for yourself.



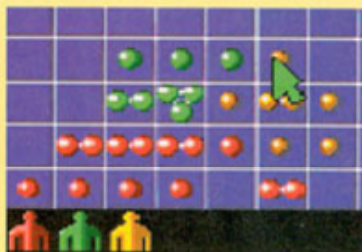
FATMAN



He's the Amiga's lardiest hero since Chuck Rock, and he's coming your way - lock up your chocolate, folks. Hungary's finest programmers collaborate with AP to bring you a complete level of overweight platforming antics.

ATOMS

And finally, of course, when other mags have given up and gone home, we've packed our coverdisk just a little bit tighter with the traditional "doesn't look very good but it's really good fun to play, honest" multi-player PD game. And here's this month's. It's great.



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 31, DisCopy Labs, PO Box 21, Daventry NN11 5BU. Send it to us, and we'll burn your house down.



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.

- To the disappointment of any lamer 512K-machine owners out there, *Cannon Fodder* and *Brutal Sports Football* are one meg only.
- 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 31 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 AP office. We really don't know how to fix dodgy disks. We've tried, we really have, but we're just hopeless at it. So send 'em to DisCopy Labs. Please.

Authors: Sensible Software

"Is it in yet? Is it finished yet?" says Cam every morning as the post arrives. Every single day. Can you imagine how tedious that gets for the rest of us? Still, it's not without good reason, because the game that he's so eagerly awaiting only happens to be *Cannon Fodder*, the long-time-coming wargame from those kooky Sensible boys that could well be THE most exciting game of the year. Yeah, I know, the words 'wargame' and 'exciting' don't tend to appear so close together in these pages, but if you're thinking that, then you've obviously never played *Cannon Fodder*.

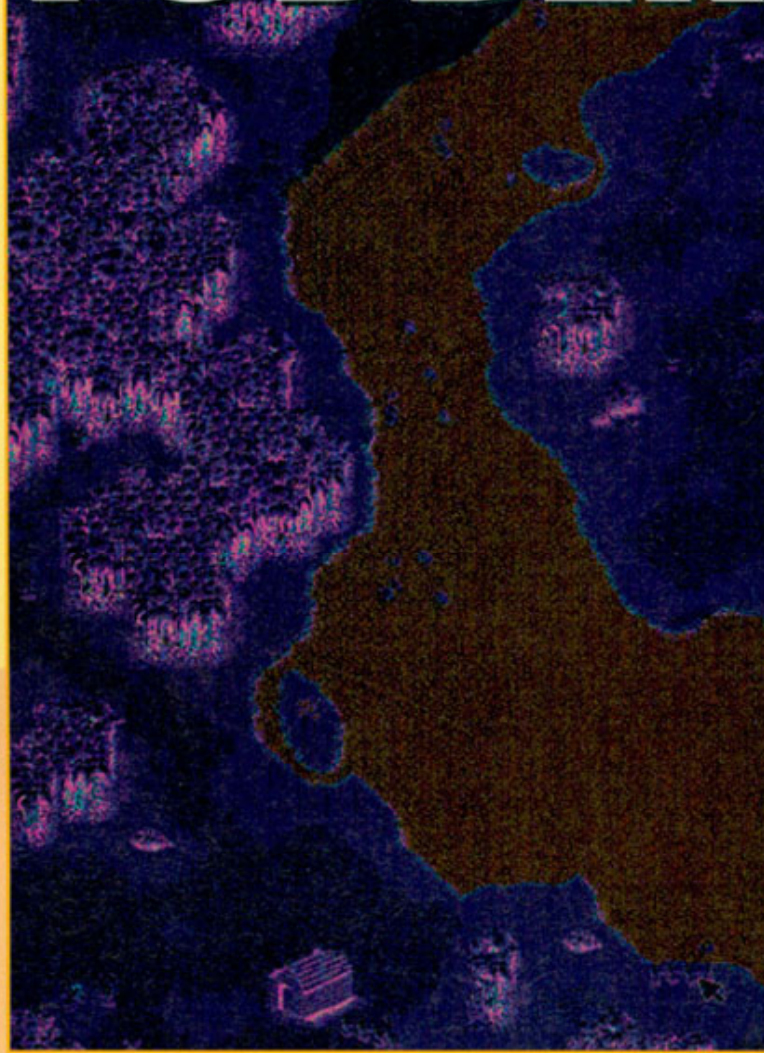
HOW TO... (PLAY CANNON FODDER, THAT IS)

Okay, slap in the top disk out of the two (count 'em!) that are on the cover, and you'll be presented with all manner of wonderful options. Since we're assuming that you're almost drooling with anticipation at the prospect of playing this awesomely fantabulous game, we'll leave the quiz and interactive Diary Of A Game till later, so click on Stage Three to get into the thick of battle.

You'll see four little blokes who are your team, and almost immediately, a lone soldier will head towards them from the bottom left of the screen. Move your mouse (did I say that you used the mouse instead of the joystick? Oh, well, you do) over to him and press the right mouse button to unleash leaden fury towards ('Shoot' – Ed) him. Fun, isn't it?

Once he's toast, point the mouse to the little red box on the island to the right and click on the left mouse button. This sends your merry men over to a box of four grenades, which show up in the display on the top left hand corner. To throw a grenade, hold down the right button and then hit the left, but make sure that it's not too close to your squad, as it's extremely easy to waste your own men. If you head left until you cross the big river (killing anything that moves along the way,

CANNON FODDER



BRUTAL SPORTS FOOTBALL



Don't be fooled, this time it really IS war. Wahey!

heavily armoured guys on a pitch with some rather sturdy bus shelter things at either end that may or may not be goals, but that's merely an entertaining backdrop designed by the boys at Millennium so that shopkeepers will stock the game. They know what the consumers want, and it's blood. Lots of it.

To encourage carnage rather than sporting and healthy competition, this demo finishes once you've scored a goal, so to get your money's worth, you're much better off concentrating on kicking in the

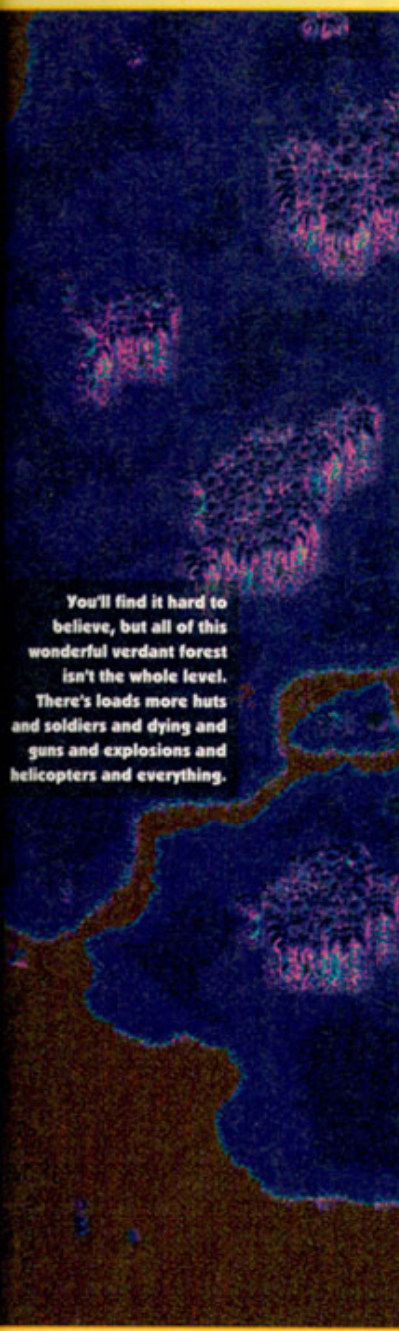
Authors: Teque

It's brutal, it's a sport and it's got a ball which you kick with your foot, so there's absolutely no faulting the choice of name for this game. There again, they could

have called it 'Savage Blood-Letting Sword Playball', 'Gruesome Maimball' or something, because being horrid is what this game's all about.

Okay, so there's a ball in there somewhere and you've got a load of





of course), there's another box just inland from the beach, but look out for the tripwire that's nearby. Just left of the box is a hut – troops will keep coming out of it until you blow it up, but look out for the door, which has a nasty habit of flying off and taking out one of your guys.

With all this firepower, your squad will be absolutely Joseph Rock Hard, so explore at your leisure. There are four rocket launchers in a barrel somewhere, which work like grenades but have a massive range. To switch between grenades and rockets, simply click on the relevant icon. If you want to split up the team, highlight two names in the list and then click on the unit badge. The unit that you're not controlling will defend themselves while you wander around, and you can toggle between different units by simply clicking on the unit badge.

BUT THAT'S NOT ALL...

Not only do you get four different versions of the game, not only do they present totally different challenges ranging from massed full frontal attacks to a marauding helicopter, not only do you get to see the progress of the game from a single soldier and blocky graphics to an arena chock-a-block with lethal explosive devices but – There's a quiz as well.

It's true – as explained more fully in the Diary Of A Game feature, Sensible are giving away a load of props that appeared in their soon-to-be-released pop video, most notably a glut of plastic replica firearms, ideal for restaging famous battles, posing in hard photographs, robbing building societies etc (*Don't try this at home, kids.* – Ed). Clicking on the members of Sensible and the four pictures in the corner will reveal 10 questions, and all you have to do is write your answers on the back of a postcard and send them to 'Ooh! Guns, Guns, Guns!' at the usual address. Blimey, and some mags manage to only get two games on two coverdisks. Not us, mateys.

You'll find it hard to believe, but all of this wonderful verdant forest isn't the whole level. There's loads more huts and soldiers and dying and guns and explosions and helicopters and everything.

other team. Controls are context-sensitive, so if you press fire when you're near the ball (or any other object) you pick it up, where as if you're near an opposing player, you'll give them a swift punch in the throat.

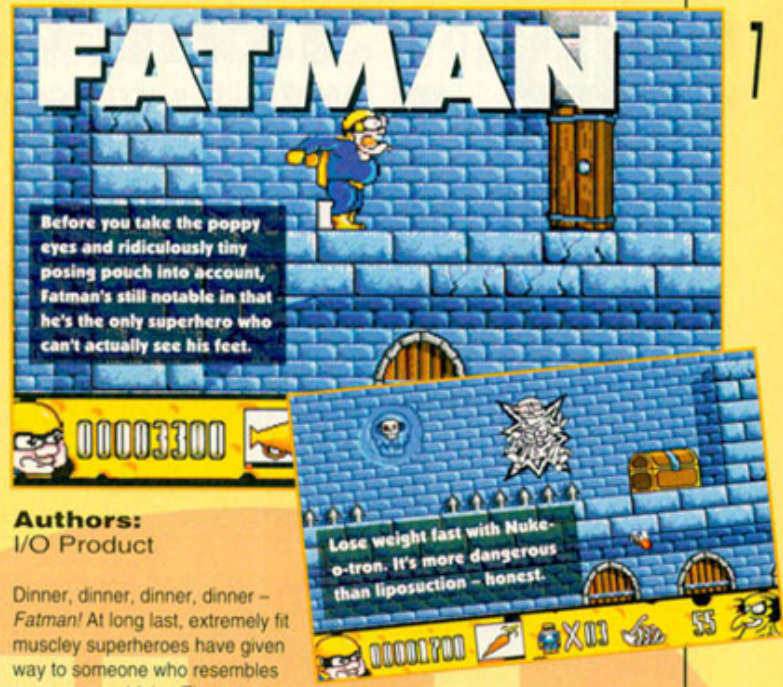
Ideally, you should pick up the sword that's lying around, run up to the hare (to give you



I don't fancy being the groundsman on this pitch.

extra speed) and then go and inflict as much damage on the opposition as is inhumanly possible. As the cuts and puncture wounds add up, the players get weaker and weaker until eventually you can rip their heads off and run around the pitch with them. Match Of The Day was never this entertaining.

Anyway, the best thing to do is to kill the goalkeeper, as he isn't replaced. That way, you can bash the hell out of everyone and not really bother about how many goals are scored against you, because you can always make them up at the other end. And the great thing is that no one actually gets hurt while you release all this violent energy, not in any real sense anyway.



Authors:
I/O Product

Dinner, dinner, dinner – *Fatman!* At long last, extremely fit muscley superheroes have given way to someone who resembles your average bloke. The caped consumer's here, fresh from the finest programming minds of Hungary. He's tough, he's hard, he's a wobbly mass of lard! (*Oh no.* – Ed)

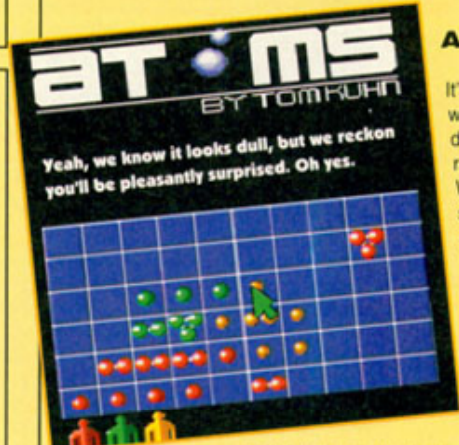
For all the usual reasons, Fatman's got to run around the level collecting things, and in this case it's gold cups. There's all also manner of freaky ectoplasmic nastiness to deal with, and our obese protagonist's got more than one trick up his cellulite-packed sleeves.



By holding the joystick down and pressing fire, you can toggle through Fatman's attacks, which involve throwing carrots, dropping mushrooms and belching. He runs out of these after a while, but thankfully he's still packing several pounds of paunch laden power stored up in his gut, so belly on!

It's also worth running into walls because he squashes amusingly. This also works in real life too. Come to think of it, it's quite funny if you think about it, isn't it? He's Fatman, but he comes from Hungary. He'd better have another burger then, hadn't he? Ho ho.

ATOMS



Author: Tom Kuhn

It's strange that atomic reactions were once feared as the doombriener for the human race, and now that the Berlin Wall's come down, no-one's scared and there's even a game about them. First of all you need a friend, preferably three, so run along now.

Ready then? Okay, take turns to click on the playing area to deposit an atom. The number of atoms each square can hold depends on how many squares are

horizontally and vertically adjacent to it, so a corner can hold two, whereas a centre square can hold four. Well, when I say can hold four, I mean that when it gets up to four, it reaches critical mass and explodes. When this happens, the contents of the square are thrown out in all directions, and any atoms in these squares are turned into the same colour as the exploding one. As the screen gets filled up, these explosions tend to set off other atoms, and the whole screen goes ballistic, but once the sub-atomic dust's settled, there will be only one, who's the winner. Have a go, it's groovy.





THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

We came across time for you, readers - to show how the machines plan to take full control of your lives.



Game: Terminator 2 - The Arcade Game
Publisher: Virgin
Authors: John Meegan, Terry Ford, Allister Brimble, Terry Haynes
ETA: Early 1994

Briefly: Cam was fed up. It seemed like Stuart was making him write all of the previews section, and it wasn't fair. Now he'd got to write about the Amiga conversion of the popular T2 arcade game (the one with the two big guns and all the digitised pictures) when he'd much rather skive off and go to the cinema. It was then that he remembered Dave's experimental time displacement module, and slowly a plan started to form. Rummaging through the stack of recent job applications, he reached for the phone...

The creators speak: Young Ricky Morton from Tipton could hardly believe it. He'd just been phoned up by one of the mightiest beings ever to produce a computer games magazine, and been offered 50 quid to write a single page preview. His hands

trembled as he phoned Terry Haynes, the producer of the Amiga version of T2 at the offices of top software developers, Probe. First he asked how similar the Amiga version would be to the arcade game.

"As with *Mortal Kombat*, Probe's other current arcade conversion, the source code came direct from the arcade original. This produced the Mega Drive version, which is the version we're actually converting. We're having to alter some of the graphics to fit the restrictions of the Amiga, but it'll be as close to the original as the machine can manage."

Scribbling frantically, Ricky asked the team about the specifics of the game. "It's a simultaneous two-player shoot-'em-up, viewed from a first-person perspective. The seven-level action follows the film quite closely, and you play the old John Connor in the first four levels, and Arnie's character, the T100, in the later ones.

We're not bothering with any light guns, so the on-screen targeting's going to be done

using any combination of either two joysticks or mice."

Before Ricky sent off the fax and got his cash, he asked who the team would most like to destroy if they controlled an unstoppable cyborg assassin. They replied in unison. "Anyone in the Gillette adverts, kill the lot of 'em - they're just too smug. And all the guys in that Bacardi ad. But not Auntie Beryl - she's a babe."

Verdict so far: Cam got back to the office just in time to see Ricky's fax arrive. Brilliant! Quickly, he set the time module for a few hours in the past, where he saw himself reaching for the phone. "Don't do it!" he yelled. "We already know that T2 promises to be as flashy and fun as the Mega Drive version, and, hey, the graphics look great. Put down the phone, go to the pictures and forget about the kid. We win, he loses, and life is sweet." Cam (future) laughed heartlessly as Cam (past) gratefully left the office, and then he zapped back to his own time. And young Ricky was none the wiser.

● CAM WINSTANLEY

"The source code came direct from the arcade original"



ZOO 2



The new Zool makes 'light work' of this electrically-charged level. (Clever wording, I know. Cheers.) He still looks like an ant to me.



Come on and feel the power! With the current coursing up your legs, will you be able to stop your feet from dancing the night away?



Run away, little ant-thing! That blue blob looks a tad miffed - decidedly unfriendly.



Look at the teeth on that blob guy. They look like they could inflict a nasty nip, duck!

"A worrying trend towards characters that cross-dress"



How far can an ant-type creature go? Very far indeed if he's this big, or is that just an incredibly small-scale model of the Sphinx?



It's a tongue twister - choose your colour and lick away. By the time you reach the top you'll be so dizzy that you'll fall in a spin.

Game: Zool 2
Publisher: Gremlin
Authors: Andy Findlay and Ed Campbell
ETA: November

Briefly: First there was Zool, and now there is two. Of it.
The creators speak: Ever since the wee green alien-type monster hit the Amiga screens, there's been a raging controversy about whether he was an ant or not, so much so that Gremlin actually launched a 'Zool is not an ant' campaign a few months back. We all thought that the advert used to read 'Ninja ant from the Nth dimension' but it turns out that word 'ant' was just some sort of mass hallucination or widespread paranoia. I thanked Zool 2's producer Peter Cook for pointing this out to me and challenged him to tell me everything about the new product without any prompts from me at all, thus entirely freeing me of my role as an investigative journalist. Nice one.

"We're sticking pretty close to the original Zool gameplay, but we're taking this chance to tweak some of the bits we didn't really like. For instance, Zool can now climb up walls, whereas before he could only stick to them, and he now does a great backflip off walls. There's also a move where he can shin round from one side of a pole to the other, and we're just adding a bonus power shot, which'll be available as a power-up."

And there's a girl! Playing through the demo levels, I couldn't help but notice that on one of them, Zool seemed to have longer hair, a daintier step and an all-round more sylph-like figure. A babe Zool, or a worrying trend towards

computer characters that cross-dress? I quizzed Peter on the matter.
 "As well as playing Zool, you can also play Zoos, who's a girl Ninja, but there won't be a simultaneous two-player option. Zoos looks different, and has got different powers. Zool can jump up through floors, but Zoos can jump down through them, so each level will play differently

depending on the character. She's got a whip which she uses to knock out her enemies, and also a few different moves, which we're working on right now. There's also Zool's dog, which has a head at each end and reacts differently depending on whether the stupid head or the clever head is facing forwards. Zoon, as he's called, will appear in a bonus level, which we're not really sure about yet, but it may be a sort of breakout game. Another new character is Mental Block, who's the chief baddie's henchman and is a large morphing block, so he changes form at the end of each of the six levels.
 "We've got the programming team which worked on *Harlequin*, which

everyone seemed to be very pleased about, and they're developing many of the themes and elements of the original Zool and his world. The Chupa Chops lollies are still there, as it gives the sweet makers plenty of advertising and means that Zool will be displayed at all the retail outlets."
Verdict so far: Gremlin reckon that worldwide sales of Zool are set to top one million, so it's got plenty of fans. Zool 2 doesn't look like it's going to be vastly different, but that never did sales of *Sonic 2* any harm. He may not be an ant, but this game's certainly going to be an important Christmas release. Arf. (That's the last straw. Get out. This inst-ant. - Ed)
 ● CAM WINSTANLEY



Ah, the Sphinx - a much-maligned lady and now she's got to put up with uppity little ant-beings using her noble brow as a dance floor. Poor thing!





As you can see, it'll be quite different to *Mortal Kombat*.



Re-enact the age-old battle between fat and thin.



Or just do a funny dance to celebrate being alive.

"We've included more humour than other fighting games"

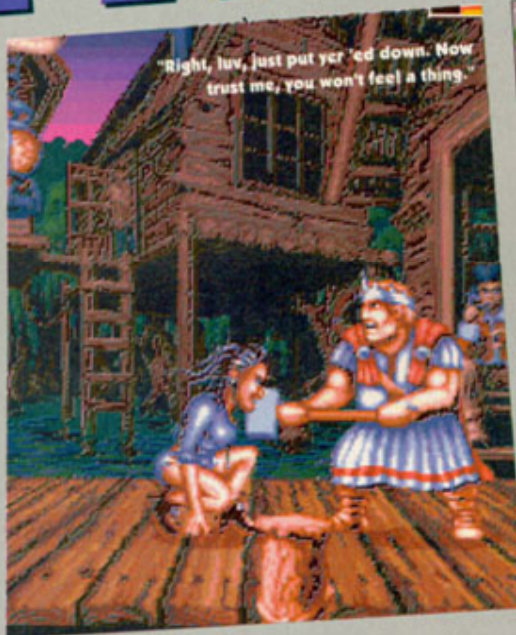
ELF MANIA

Game: Elfmania
Publisher: Renegade
Authors: Terramarque
ETA: Nov/Dec

Briefly: A *Street Fighter 2*-esque beat-'em-up, in a cute and fluffy sort of way.
The creators speak: What do they feed programmers on in Finland? A few months ago the Bloodhouse boys treated us to *Stardust*, a game that turned out to be the most popular coverdisk demo we've had in ages, and now Terramarque have arrived from their Helsinki offices to show off their almost-too-gorgeous-to-be-believed beat-'em-up. Fresh from demonstrating the game for three days at the ECTS, Ilari Kuitinen launched into a frighteningly slick presentation.

"The first thing you notice is the level of detail in the graphics. There's foreground and background animation, multiple layers of parallax scrolling and, on the dock level, the platform the players fight on rolls with the sea." See for yourself on the screenshots - the detail's incredible, but you have to see the parallax in motion to see just how lush it is. The ground parallax too, which is something that was missed out of the Amiga version of *Street Fighter 2* because they said it couldn't be done on a standard Amiga. Wrong.

"We've gone for a much softer, less violent approach, and included more humour than other fighting games, so



when characters are punched, they look dazed and stagger around accompanied by tweety bird noises. Life points are shown by coins, and lives by treasure chests, so when a chest is empty, you've lost a life. Each game is continuous, though, so you play without interruption until one player's used up all his coins. As well as being the player's life force, the coins also play a part in the game as they can be used as weapons if you punch them at an opposing player.

"There are only four characters and four locations at the moment, but we're working on a Wood Elf and an Ice Elf and their home levels. As well as normal hand-to-hand fighting, the Fakir has a sword and the Fat King has a huge battle hammer, so there's plenty of variation in techniques."

If they keep this up, somebody's going to get hurt.



Water fighting's a tricky business - it tends to make your sword rusty.



Then we played, we fought, and I lost, so no surprise there. All the action's accompanied by some damn funky tunes and some great voice samples, but the impact sound effects are a bit sparse. All movements are available using a single button joystick, and the special moves are easy to access, so there's none of this 'up, then left, down, down, fire' nonsense to get to flashy attacks. And those graphics, wow.

Verdict so far: For a while now, programmers have been moaning about how they've pushed the A500 to the limit and are turning their backs on it because the A1200 offers more scope. Well boys, Terramarque are proving that that's a load of porkies, and it looks like the real reason that you can't get decent results out of the humble 500 is because you're simply NOT GOOD ENOUGH. *Elfmania's* stunning, and does things on screen that I wouldn't have thought possible, and with the prospect of data disks offering four more characters on top of the existing six, it



Those massive flarey trousers are a hazard of the job - they could really slow you down.

could well be a firm favourite of combat fans everywhere. At the moment the gameplay's not quite there yet, but Terramarque have got a good few months to tweak it. The sound needs beefing up, the characters need levelling out a bit and maybe a few extra moves would improve the gameplay, but let's face it, it looks so good you really want to stand it in front of a mirror so it can look at itself. For ever.

● CAM WINSTANLEY



He's well-camouflaged this Globdule chap. Trouble is, so are the nasties.



Game: Globdule
Publisher: Psygnosis
Authors: In house
ETA: Early 1994

Briefly: Creeps and ghouls and rabbits too can really cause you fear. So if you want to find out more I suggest you tune in here. (Er, yes. - Ed)

The creators speak: *Globdule*, eh? What's it all about? To answer these (and other) questions, Mark Blewitt, Psygnosis PR man extraordinaire, visited AMIGA POWER Towers earlier today and, contrary to his name, did not 'blow' anything. In fact the personification of the voice at the other end of the telephone turned out to be a well-spoken, charming and very funny young man. Some of his jokes quite literally had us laughing our (rebelliously white) socks off.

So, to *Globdule*. Mark pulled several 3.5-inch blue plastic squares from his magical leather briefcase and hilariously told us that they were the 'Up-and-coming preview disks'. Dave, unaccustomed to the intensity of Earthling humour, then had to take a leave of absence which so far has not been adequately explained. Someone did say they heard a panicky voice saying something like "Dave calling Orson" escaping from the sound-proof confines of the toilet upstairs. But this is only an unsubstantiated rumour. Dave is keeping mysteriously quiet about the whole thing.

But let's get back to the game. *Globdule!* Clever wording, I know. For the uninitiated, a 'glob' is a roundish dollop of a semi-liquid substance and a 'dule' is a prearranged fight between two people, only spelt wrongly in this case. So, you might have expected the game to be some sort of battle of honour between a pair of squidgy blob-creatures, maybe to prove once and for all which is the most viscous of the two. Unfortunately, you'd be wrong.

Enough speculation. After a few hiccups with operating system configurations and other exciting things like that, we finally got *Globdule* up and



Being a glob isn't such a bad thing. Not many people, for example, could hide in that space.

And this appears to be some sort of space cow animal.

GLOBDULE



Damp, dark dungeons are just the place to find your very own Globdule.



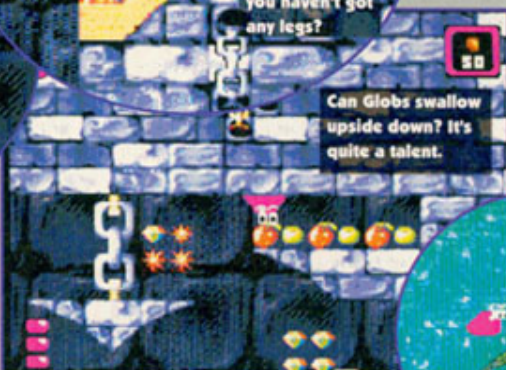
Dragons are the best mythical creatures ever. Okay?



He's teetering! Careful, Glob!



How do you keep the right way up when you haven't got any legs?



Can Globbs swallow upside down? It's quite a talent.

"I sometimes have my 'Trapdoor dream' by accident"

running. The first thing that struck me about it was that the eponymous hero of the game looks incredibly like one of the squidgy slimy high-protein low-fibre plasticine worms from that all-time kids' TV

animation classic, *Trapdoor*. I said as much to Mark Blewitt. With razor-sharp wit capable of cutting soggy rice paper at fifty paces, Mark answered, quick as a bullet. "Yes it does". It took us at least five minutes to recover from that particular 'bon mot', let me tell you. Luckily, Dave was still trying to contact Orson (allegedly). His alien constitution could have been ripped apart by the severity of the Blewitt comical parry

riposte. Lucky Dave! (Get back to the point, Steve, please. - Ed)

Where was I? Ah yes, *Trapdoor*. Berk the overworked blue blob of plasticine and his little-pet green blob Drut who likes to eat worms. Not to mention Boney - Berk's bonehead friend. And then of course there's the 'Master' thing that

you never get to see. Although in one episode you did get an eyeball at one of his eyeballs. It was horrible. I still wake up covered in blue globdules (sorry, beads) of sweat when I sometimes have my 'Trapdoor dream' by accident. (No, Steve, not that point. I meant get back to the other one. - Ed)

Oh, right. Anyway, this blobby, er, thingy (GLOBDULE! It's a GLOBDULE! - Ed) looks like a *Trapdoor* worm or Drut with no legs. But that's where the resemblance ends, because *Globdule* has abilities that are far more evocative of other creatures from the *Trapdoor* mythos - for instance, he can stick to walls, or change shape in morph-like transformations that enable him to pour through holes, spaces and the like. Hmm, so what's

the game actually about, then? Originally enough, *Globdule* has to go around collecting keys and power-ups while exploring large atmospheric caverns. But this particular go-around-collecting-keys-and-power-ups game, Mark Blewitt assured us, is completely different from all the other platform-puzzlers on the market. And - this time - he wasn't joking. **Verdict so far:** You can't get away from the fact that *Globdule* does look very pretty and cute. So, if you're into cute platformers, it looks like there's another one headed your way. But somehow it still reminds me of something. Maybe it's *Morph*. Or maybe it's just those worms from *Trapdoor* again. Did anyone see the episode where Berk had to collect all the different parts of a magical potion and one of the monsters went invisible... (FADE TO INTERMINABLE CHILDREN'S TELEVISION NOSTALGIA. - Ed)

● STEVE MCGILL



There seems to be a distinct lack of gravity in this world. Lucky, that.



It's Globdule in his wonderful, invisible flying machine



DREAM

WEB



Game: DreamWeb
Publisher: Empire
Authors: Creative Reality, Neil Dodwell, David Dew
ETA: January '94

Briefly: *DreamWeb* is the first game to come from the imaginative brain-fingertip interface of recently-formed softies Creative Reality.

Set in a black, sombre, no-hope-for-mankind world (that's right, it's 1993), the plot is like a derivative of Videodrome meets *Altered States* and *The Running Man* with lashings of *Sisters of Mercy* ambience on top. That being said, the seasonably reasonable plot is almost original and all wannabe cyberpunks are going to love it – you get to waste people with wanton abandon, jack into the matrix and walk about a top-down view *Blade Runner*ish city. Well, that's what I thought the obvious influences were when I first saw it – let's see if the authors agree.

The creators speak:

"*DreamWeb* throws together the elements of science fiction and adventure in a compelling game of pure style," they said. "The black mood is enhanced by stunning graphics in an overhead view that roars new life into the genre. Every animation has been beautifully choreographed and every pixel is exact. With an innovative magnify mode each pixel can be closely examined and tiny objects manipulated. You can even pick a pea off the floor and eat it – if you have the stomach!"

All this talk of strong stomachs, black moods and style makes me think that this game is going to be too much for some of our platform-cutesy players to handle.

"A strong stomach is what you will need when your task becomes ever more dangerous and violent. To fight for good you will need to be hard and unscrupulous – the end justifies the means. But you won't have many friends by the end of the game and the whole police force'll be after you."

Verdict so far:

The version I got to see was running on a PC and it has to be admitted that it was truly beautiful. The restricted colour palette prompts a creeping sense of claustrophobia, terror and tension all round.

The storyline, though linear in fashion, has enough hooks and sub-plots to keep the adventuring fraternity happy; while your character

romps around on his assassination operation a serial killer is also on a bit of a spree. The intention being that as you progress, the harder your killing spree will become.

I'll have to suspend judgement on the sound for this preview due to the fact that it was standard PC fare – ie not in the Amiga's league. Anyway, it's going to have to be top-notch to keep up with the graphics.

If you take a look at the overly-verbose review of *Hired Guns* in last month's issue of AP, you'll see that I'm a fan of atmospheric games. *DreamWeb* has atmosphere oozing out of its pixelated



"By the end the whole police force will be after you"

display unit. The level of detail is truly incredible. The blurb about being able to pick up a pea and eat it is no exaggeration. Everything

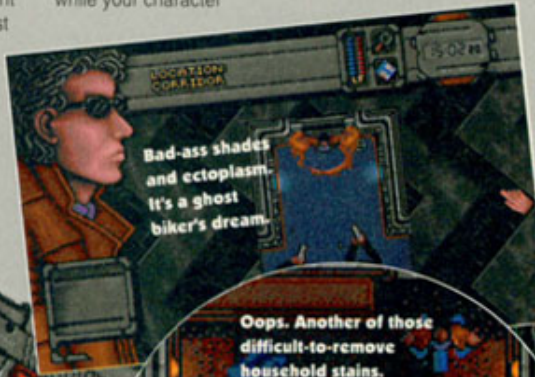
that you see in a room or building can be picked up. In one instance,

I managed to make the main character pick up a TV remote control. Imagine

my surprise when the TV in the corner of the room then switched itself on.

They weren't showing the usual BBC Monday evening schedule, so maybe the future won't be so bleak after all. Look out for *DreamWeb* around the beginning of next year. It shouldn't disappoint.

● STEVE MCGILL



Jack the Ripper

Game: Jack The Ripper
Publisher: Mirage
Authors: Intergalactic Development Incorporated
ETA: When the full moon rises over the dark shadows of old London town (That's enough of that. — Ed)

Briefly: Saucy Jack, Saucy Jack. Ooo, he's a naughty one. So sang Spinal Tap in their experimental and never released rock opera charting the life of England's most enigmatic, mysterious and, in many ways, most successful random motiveless mass murderer. Such is the mystery surrounding this killer who stalked the streets of London in 1888 that his sphere of influence spreads far further than comedy pseudo-rockumentaries featuring American actors pretending to be clueless English musicians. For example, when I was a kid, my local ice cream van had 'Jack The Whipper' painted down the side, and featured a shadowy figure in a black cape holding a '99' with raspberry sauce in his outstretched hand. Disturbing imagery for a seven year-old, I can tell you. Even Michael Caine and Lewis Collins weren't entirely sure that they'd got the right man in the TV version of the story, and one of them used to be Bodie in The Professionals, for crying out loud. But anyway, now there's a game about him.

The creators speak: Who was Jack the Ripper, why did he pray so mercilessly on 'ladies of the night' and what were his links with the royal family and/or the Freemasons? The fact is that no-one really knows, otherwise I tend to think that there'd have been a successful prosecution and the murders would have gone down in the history books as the 'Gary the Orthodontist Murders', or something like that. Unless of course, the murderer had actually been called Jack. Can you imagine his surprise and fear when he saw his name splashed across the front pages of newspapers? (Oh, do get on with it. — Ed)

Anyway, no-one was available when I phoned Mirage, so I thought I'd just bypass them and speak to the person



What an atmospheric opening screen, eh? You really can't beat a bit of dripping blood.

Hungry for stories, eh? Sounds a bit suspicious.



Oswald Allen is a journalist for The Pall Mall Gazette that is paid by the column inch and he is obviously hungry for a story. Allen believes that there is something out of the ordinary about this murder. Allen states that he arrived on the scene at 4:15 AM and Dr. Phillips was all ready at the scene of the crime.



Aha, the photo must have some significance, but quite what we don't know. Yet.

without whom the game would never have been written. Phone calls to Hell are pretty expensive though, even after 6pm, so I only had a short time to chat to the elusive Ripper who to this day lives a shadowy and reclusive existence in that sulphurous underworld. I started by asking him what form the game takes.

"I'd I have developed the game, and they have torn kittens limb from limb to get in the mood. HA HA HA ha ha! No, but seriously, they've taken all the available information on people involved with the crimes, the locations and the suspects. The game then puts you in the role of an amateur sleuth who sets out to track down the murderer and put a stop to the killings."

I pointed out that if it had been that easy, then the puzzle would have been solved, and asked him how the game gets round this.

"Well, as one street-walker said to the other 'Help me, choke, help, my throat's been cut. Aaaaargh!'. I'm joking of course, but to answer your question, I'd have included several vital but fictitious clues which will enable you to actually solve the crimes. Depending on how many clues you need before you work it out and how long it takes you, you not only get a different score but also reach a different conclusion. Tell me, where does your family live?"

I thanked him quickly and hung up. **Bad Jack's verdict:** "It's not often that a series of real-life murders gets a computer game of their very own, so for all of you out there who buy Serial Killers Quarterly and True Crimes Magazine, this could well be just what you've waiting for. With specially commissioned pen-and-ink drawings accompanying the game and a simple mouse-operated interface, my game will be the ideal way to spend those long, dark, cold winter nights. Sweet dreams, HEE HEE HA ho, etc."

● CAM WINSTANLEY



Allen believes that there is something out of the ordinary about this murder.

Oswald Allen is a journalist for The Pall Mall Gazette that is paid by the column inch and he is obviously hungry for a story.

Allen may do something unusual to manufacture a story for personal gain.

Fire and murder, eh? Nothing ever changes.

A dishonest journalist? That sounds like stereotyping!

JACK THE RIPPER

"Help me, choke, help, my throat's been cut"



Linda used to go to school round here, very near the working lads' institute. Spook!





Above: The crooked house proves as popular as ever.

Left: Street entertainment reaches new and dizzy heights in the park with blue chickens to cheer you on your way.

SIM THEME PARK

Game: Sim Theme Park
Publisher: Bullfrog
Authors: Bullfrog
ETA: Next year (Sorry)

Briefly: What's the first thing you think about when the subject of theme parks comes up in conversation? Could it be the rides? The facilities? The roads and pavements? The queues? The entertainers? The prices? What do you mean you don't know?

Apart from the first subject mentioned in the list, it's unlikely that you'll have paid too much attention to the others. Assuming the theme park was any good that is. On the other hand, if it was bad, you'd probably end up on a rant: "I tripped and fell on the mud path. The hamburger stall was crap, the chips were dripping with grease. They cost too much. The queues were too long, I got bored. There were no entertainers. What about the litter? It was everywhere. The staff were rude. And I

couldn't find the lavs 'cos they were tiny little unhygienic huts."
The creators speak: Okay, point made. Hopefully you got the gist. You're more likely to complain about bad points than you are good (psycho-profile demographically speaking of course). In fact, talk to the marketing department of any big company and they'll tell you that it's statistically provable that someone who's pleased with a product or service will tell two of their friends. But if he/she's dissatisfied, he/she will tell five of their friends and a veritable plethora of their colleagues. And if marketing people say that's the case, it must be true. Right kids?

So what's all this got to do with this particular preview? Lots and lots and lots actually. *Sim Theme Park* is the brainchild of Peter Molyneux, the constant innovator and agent entrepreneur

"You need more than just rides and thrills"

Hansel And Gretel City! Chew the grass and lick the trees!



Imagine living in a mushroom - wouldn't it be great?

of Bullfrog. He explained the basics and the strategy behind *Sim Theme Park*. "It's based around the successful management of a theme park. You start off with a piece of waste ground and a wad of money. You have to attempt to build a theme park that will keep punters satisfied and happy. To do this, you need more than just rides and thrills."

Unfortunately, you can't afford the best rides when you first start out. An infrastructure first has to be built and maintained: roads, paths, buildings, hi-bandwidth ISDN data information interchange networks etc. Facilities like chip shops, burger bars and Pepsi Max vending machines should also be

constructed in order to keep your daytrippers happy. "The people in the park all belong to different age groups and have different personalities and outlooks. Some of the smartest programming is tucked away in the artificially intelligent personality attributes. Everyone reacts differently. The more people you keep happy, the more you can charge for entry to the park, for the food in the shops and that kind of thing. An important part of the strategy is the instant marketing research ie you can click on someone and ask them questions. For example, the most likely question you'll find yourself asking is: what did you think of the rides and will you come back? Ask enough questions and you can tailor your theme park-building strategy to suit."
Verdict so far: To coin a favourite AP cliché, 'it's going to be one to look out for'. Especially as super-teenage-chess-genius Denis Habus (see the 'Jobs For The Boys' feature this ish) is doing most of the work on the artificial intelligence.

For some reason this reminds me of Legoland.

● STEVE MCGILL



Collect points in the hidden "bone-us" levels.

If you mistreat them, these bunnies turn into rampaging killers.

Ending up dead always hinders your plans.

He may be wonderous and heroic, but he's not always the top dog.

Rubber bricks were a bad idea for the flats.

I was stunned to discover that dogs can climb fences.

WONDER DOG

Game: Wonder Dog
Publisher: Core
Authors: In house
ETA: October

Briefly: Once upon a time, Core were approached by JVC to produce a Sonic-type character for the WonderMega. This was an odd sort of Mega Drive add-on that only ever sold in Japan and combined a CD drive with a karaoke machine, and sort of fell by the wayside when the Mega CD came out. Obviously, this somewhat limited-appeal format didn't allow the game to reach its full potential audience, so now it's set to hit the good old Amiga.

The creators speak: Richard Barclay from Core was keen to point out that this isn't just any old conversion. "It's the first game to be ported over from a Mega Drive CD title, and since we wrote the original version, it isn't as if we've got any problems communicating with the programmers."

The game revolves around the evil General Von Ruffbone and his aim of sweeping across the galaxy with his vicious dog troopers. As a last resort, the inhabitants of the planet K9 hastily inject a young pup with experimental drugs to boost his powers and provide their only line of defence. This so-called 'Wonder Dog' is then fired off into space, where he lands on Earth to begin his campaign against the murderous Von Ruffbone.

The basic story puts the campaign against animal vivisection back several decades, but there again, entertainment produced for a

Japanese market never seems to have been bothered with breaking social taboos. The Manga cartoon Legend of the Demon Womb, for instance, is a non-stop barrage of misogynistic, tasteless, violent and morally dubious imagery, so compared to this, having a small puppy injected with some untried (and possibly dangerous) new chemical is relatively harmless subject matter.

Anyway, not that any of this matters, because what we have here, as Richard admits, is a cutesy platformer. "The game features seven worlds spread into numerous zones, two hidden levels and loads of bonus rooms. The action begins in Bunny Meadow, where *Wonder Dog* has to learn his basic skills and collect bonuses."

Wonder Dog's skills consist of throwing stars in true platformy style, jumping on baddies' heads and flying around with the help of little wings on his hat. There's a nice feature in many of the levels where there are a load of neutral characters hanging about. In the Bunny Meadow level, they're (quite unsurprisingly) bunnies, and they hop about harmlessly until you accidentally hit them, in which case they turn into a blur of fur and teeth quite reminiscent of that scene from *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*.

"This version's virtually identical to the CD version," said

"The action begins in Bunny Meadow"

Richard, proudly, "and we've most of the music and all the original graphics, so it's just as good as the Mega Drive version." The music is worthy of a quick mention, as it's all vaguely reminiscent of some De La Soul tracks crossed with the theme tune from *Starsky and Hutch*, and although there isn't much in the way of in-game sound effects, this hardly matters as the music works brilliantly on its own. It's very similar to one of Core's other platformers *Chuck Rock 2*, and has shades of *Soccer Kid* in there as well (particularly some of the human bad guys) but that's no bad thing. Or in fact, er, not two bad things.

Verdict so far: *Wonder Dog* isn't set to break any new ground, but with great graphics and some awesomely boppy soundtracks, it's a platform game that just drips class. With so many other good platformers on the market, it's hard to tell whether being good's enough to get a slice of the market, especially when it'll be up against established characters such as *Zool 2*. I guess you, the consumers, will have to make that decision for yourselves.

● CAM WINSTANLEY

WONDER DOG



He just hated it when the houses were nosy and spied on him.



Here at down-to-earth, straight-to-the-point, no-messing-about **AMIGA POWER**, we don't even know the meaning of the word 'self-indulgent'. Unfortunately,

just who do we think we are?

LINDA BARKER

With Linda only in the office part-time, the rest of us have been let loose to indulge our own quirky senses of humour, so it came as a great surprise to the still-convalescing Ed when we forced her into a thin-lapelled black suit and shades and renamed her after her hair colour, magically transforming her into 'Miss Brunette'. "What's going on?" she enquired of the rest of the moodily-scowling team.



STUART CAMPBELL

"We're all pretending to be characters from an 18-certificate film that most of our readers haven't seen, and we're going to parody the movie dialogue to obvious, if somewhat out-of-date, comical effect," explained Scotland's very own Mr Black, who's been itching to wear shades in a photo shoot ever since he first saw *The Dogs*. "It's supposed to be funny. You first, Dave."



DAVE GREEN

"Let me tell you what Madonna's 'Into the Groove' is all about," said Mr, er, Green, already regretting this shallow and rather badly thought-out joke. "It's all about the end of Star Wars where Luke's got to pilot his X-Wing into the Death Star trench, proving his love for the Force. Hence - get into the groove. Simple." "Stop ad-libbing or you're fired," admonished Stuart, sternly.



SAL MEDDINGS

The aptly renamed Miss Blonde, like 90% of our readers, hasn't seen the film and so doesn't get the joke. Instead, we let her list her favourite dog-related movies, which are 101 Dalmations, Digby - The Biggest Dog in the World, and Sam Peckinpah's family fave, *Straw Dogs*. Sadly, she couldn't remember any funny dialogue from any of them.



CAM WINSTANLEY

Mysteriously changing his name to 'Mr Cam', Mark's finally solved the problem of answering the AP phone with a cheery "Cam here", and no-one knowing who the flipping heck he is. "Yeah, let's go to work," he added, gratuitously. "This was your idea, wasn't it?" Stuart added, with a tone of reproach becoming unconcealably evident in his voice.



LISA KELLETT

Free-minded feminist Ms White got into the movie dialogue thing straight away. "I'm hungry. Let's get a taco," she beamed, so we did. Minutes later, she'd finished eating and added, "I'm hungry. Let's get a taco," so we did. One Mexican snack later she chirped up with "I'm hungry. Let's get a taco," and (*Etc. - Ed*)



JONATHAN DAVIES

Mr Steely Grey, the supercool babe-magnet of the office, once went into a public toilet at a bus station. "I came face to face with four policemen and a German Shepherd. Calmly, I went to the toilet, picked up my bag and left, without incident," reminisced Jon, "but I still missed my bus. Maybe I shouldn't have cleaned up all the graffiti as well."



DAVE GOLDER

"If ever I get a PD supplier who won't give me the games I want, I break his nose on the butt of my joystick," admitted a stern-faced Mr Gold. "Sometimes if they get really uppity, I threaten to dress them up in ladies' underwear. Or something like that anyway. Can I have another look at the script please?" (*Seeing as the film won't be getting a video release for a while, buying the CD is probably the best way of figuring out what the heck this is all supposed to be about. If you care. - Ed*)



STEVE MCGILL

Once we'd explained the basic concept to him, Steve's face lit up and he vanished, to be found an hour later on the floor, wallowing in two gallons of raspberry syrup. We explained that this was highly likely to be copied by impressionable children and so made him mop up the mess, pay for the suit to be dry-cleaned, and cry.



TIM NORRIS

It was left to Tim to bring an element of common sense to the proceedings. "This simply isn't working, is it? If I was you, I'd 'Abandon Gag' right now and think of something funnier." "We can't do that, Tim," replied Stuart. "It cost 200 quid to hire these suits, and if we don't get at least a couple of decent photographs out of it we'll all be for the high jump."



TIM TUCKER

As Tim readied himself for a superhuman burst of method acting in an attempt to save the day, Colin The Publisher suddenly appeared on the scene. "Let me tell you what Like A Virgin's about," he boomed. "It's about this mag whose staff felt like they were doing an issue for the very first time, because they felt like they were all shiny and new - because I'd fired all the old staff after an embarrassing and expensive photo-shoot fiasco. You can collect your P45s at the door." Damn.



OVERDRIVE

It's a driving game, it's viewed from

overhead - Team 17

Game: Overdrive

Publisher: Team 17

Authors: David J Broadhurst (coding), Haydn Dalton, Mike Oakley, Andy Oakley (graphics), Allister Brimble (sound/music), Christopher Brimble (speech)

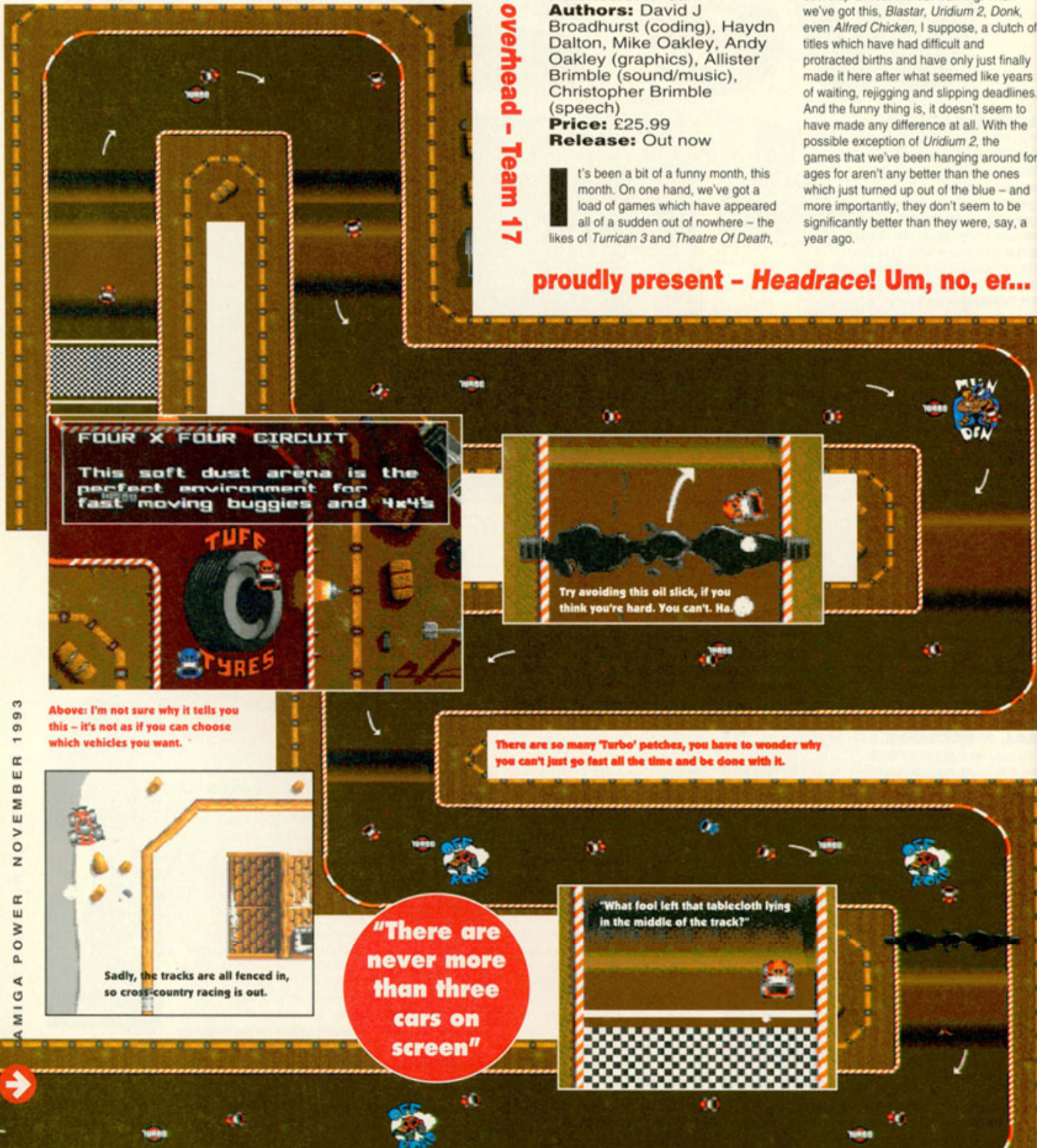
Price: £25.99

Release: Out now

which just appeared complete on our doorstep almost without warning. Then we've got this, *Blastar*, *Uridium 2*, *Donk*, even *Alfred Chicken*, I suppose, a clutch of titles which have had difficult and protracted births and have only just finally made it here after what seemed like years of waiting, rejigging and slipping deadlines. And the funny thing is, it doesn't seem to have made any difference at all. With the possible exception of *Uridium 2*, the games that we've been hanging around for ages for aren't any better than the ones which just turned up out of the blue - and more importantly, they don't seem to be significantly better than they were, say, a year ago.

It's been a bit of a funny month, this month. On one hand, we've got a load of games which have appeared all of a sudden out of nowhere - the likes of *Turrican 3* and *Theatre Of Death*,

proudly present - *Headrace!* Um, no, er...



FOUR X FOUR CIRCUIT

This soft dust arena is the perfect environment for fast moving buggies and 4x4s

TUFF

TYRES

Try avoiding this oil slick, if you think you're hard. You can't. Ha.

Above: I'm not sure why it tells you this - it's not as if you can choose which vehicles you want.

There are so many 'Turbo' patches, you have to wonder why you can't just go fast all the time and be done with it.

Sadly, the tracks are all fenced in, so cross-country racing is out.

"There are never more than three cars on screen"

"What fool left that tablecloth lying in the middle of the track?"

No-one has ever described car racing as 'A pleasant drive in the country spoiled'. But maybe someone should.



The qualifying option is somewhat mocked by the restricted nature of the grid.

To be fair, *Overdrive* hasn't actually been all that long in the making - it's just missed a lot of release targets, so it seems that way. Still, seeing how it's turned out in the end, I think I'd rather have waited another couple of months.

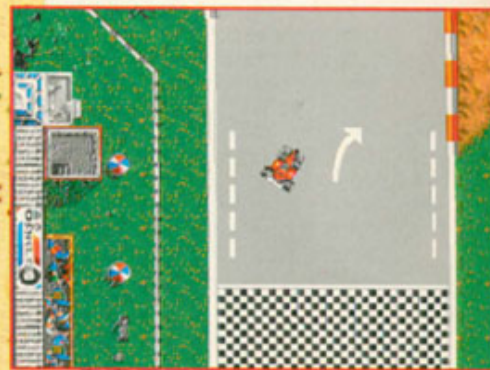
Overdrive is, as you can probably tell, an overhead-view *Super Sprint*-type racing game. It's got five different racing scenes, encompassing deserts, icy wastes and city streets among others, and four different types of vehicle to race through them, using two different control methods. The most surprising thing about *Overdrive*, though, is that these are pretty much the most impressive technical statistics on offer. Oh sure, it's fast and smooth in that 50Hz-update kind of way, but otherwise you might be rocked back slightly on your heels by the relative, well, pedestrian-ness of it. For a start, there are never more than three cars on screen at a time - you race either against the clock or against just two computer-controlled opponents, most of whom you won't see for most of the race. And there's another thing - computer-controlled opponents. There's no two-player mode in *Overdrive*, unless you link up two Amigas with a null-modem cable, and that's a major drawback as far as long-term game life goes.

Also, the game's structure appears to be almost non-existent. You get what appears to be a different, random, selection of tracks every time you load it up, which means it's very difficult to generate any feeling of progress either as you go through a single game or as you play lots and improve over time. Even the main menu screen is cluttered and confused, and you have to search around for any useful information you want to glean from it.

And how about those old Team 17 strong points, Mr Graphics and Mr Sound? Well, the graphics are fine enough in themselves, but the level of zoom-in on



Obstacles? We got 'em. In fact, the unavoidability of oil slicks in the middle of bends (as above) is one of the game's most annoying facets.



"I'd rather have waited another couple of months"

It's just occurred to me - if all the speech in *Overdrive* was done by Christopher Brimble, how come it sounds like a girl? Am I calling your pint a puff? Hang on, that's not right.



Mnnngggghhh! It's a slippy-slidey ice world! Luckily, it's not quite as slippy or slidey as you might fear. Or at all, really.



I've never seen a Grand Prix circuit with quite that much junk littering the surface. Somebody could get hurt, y'know.



the track is exactly wrong – it's not close enough for a real down-on-the-road feel, but it's too close to give any kind of overall graphical impression of the surroundings, or any useful idea of where the next corner's coming from. There's a scanner for that purpose, but let's face it, scanners are crap and nobody ever looks at them and the screen space would be better used on, I don't know, a nice picture of a teddy bear or something. The one in *Overdrive* (scanner, that is, not teddy bear. Obviously. You're just being silly now.) is worse than most anyway, being pretty zoomed-in itself and hence very little better than just looking at the track, where you at least get a big arrow on the road to warn you of corners fractionally before they happen.

And as for the sound, it starts off alright with good rocking tunes accompanying the standard revving and screeching sound effects, but after a lap or two the music seems to run out of puff and shakes and stutters and eventually loses its way altogether, to such an extent that it's distracting and annoying.

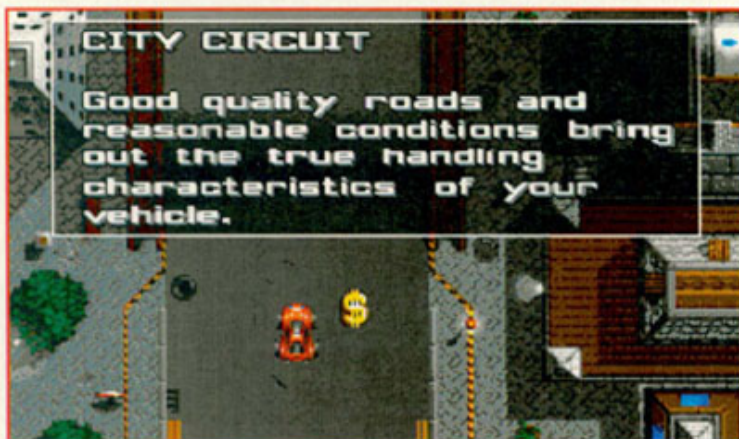
All these presentation and aesthetic flaws could be saved by gameplay, but, er, they aren't. There's nothing really very

wrong with the gameplay, you understand – indeed, the actual driving of the car's got a nice feel to it, and it's nice to have two options when it comes to control, even though the second one (an absolute directional control, whereby to go, say, down and right you move the joystick down and right, as opposed to the usual rotational control) is horribly unfamiliar and unworkable. The difficulty curve is reasonable, although it's a bit too easy to

lose a race by making one wrong turn at the start and watching the computer cars race off into the distance, never to be seen again no matter how flawlessly you seem to drive for the rest of the eight laps of the race (and there's another unfortunate mistake – eight laps is far too many in a game like this, and just gets tedious). It's just that there's nothing here that hasn't been done better before. And there, as they say, is the rub.

The truth is that pretty much every other Amiga game in this genre is better than *Overdrive*. Psygnosis' ancient *Nitro* is better-looking, more varied and more playable. The little-remembered *Champion Driver* from Idea is just as fast, but prettier and more controllable. *Supercars 2* from Gremlin has the two-player mode (albeit flawed) and the Codies' *Micro Machines*, of course, has all the features of all of them put together and then some. Any or all of them are a better bet than *Overdrive*, and that makes this an even bigger disappointment than last month's *F17 Challenge*. Pull your socks up, Team 17.

● STUART CAMPBELL



Going over bumps on the city circuit causes your car's engine noise to stop, oddly.

Another thing – you might have noticed from these pics that all the corners in *Overdrive* are exactly 90 degrees, which is very limiting in terms of interesting track structure.

More 'single car on right-angled corner' antics. No hum.

"It's nice to have two options"



Looking in the mirror, Dan was disturbed to note that his face appeared to consist of two badly-glued-together separate halves.

UPPERS It's certainly fast, and the controls are pretty good.

DOWNERS Lacking focus and obvious goals, it doesn't feel like a coherent whole, more a series of short, unconnected races. That said, the races themselves are still too long, and get tedious by about halfway through. And there's tons of disk accessing, too.

THE BOTTOM LINE

It's hard to say exactly why this feels so unsatisfying, but it does. (And if you think that's a cop-out, read the review for further elaboration. You lazy git.) Somehow, it's just all exactly wrong.

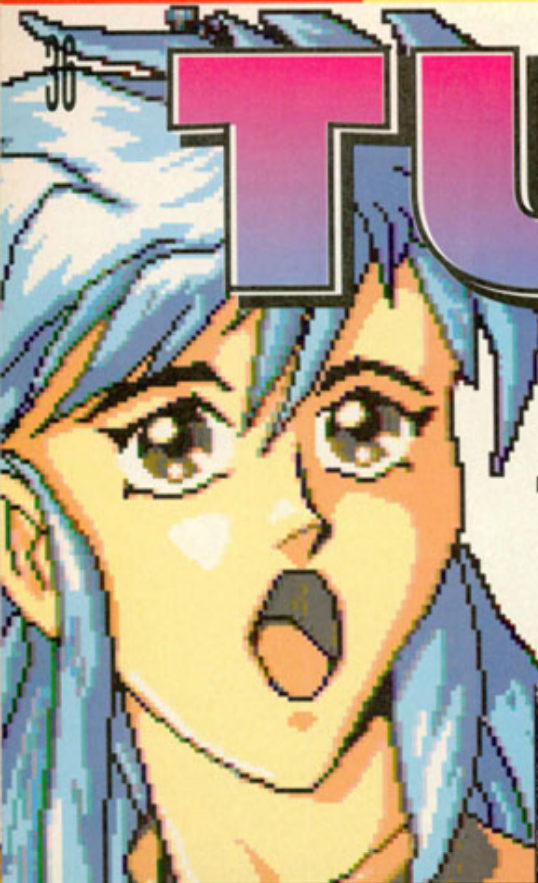
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PAGES

THE BOTTOM LINE

It's already more than **A1200** fast enough, and the things that are wrong with *Overdrive* are things that an A1200 just can't fix.

TURRICAN

First there was *Turrican*. Then there was another one



Game: Turrican 3
Publisher: Renegade
Authors: Factor 5
Price: £25.99
Release: Late October

Yoiks! Doesn't time fly when you're having fun? It's going on for a year now since I was plucked from the ranks of the unemployed to sit here in the corner of the

office and tap out several thousand words every month. Such is the non-stop party atmosphere of AMIGA POWER that it really doesn't seem like I'm going to work at all, it feels more like I'm hanging out with all my most favouritest pals. With so much fun and frolics, I've only recently got round to taking a week off, and while I was chilling out in the splendour of the Lake District, I read several of those summer special things, and it set me thinking. Wouldn't it be great to read a special

(No. - Ed) and fun-to-play games? (No. - Ed) And then I thought, hey, I write for a magazine, (That could very easily be changed. - Ed) I could do it! Sure, it would appear in the middle of winter, but that would be even better as it would remind all the readers about fun-filled summer holidays. Hoorah!

BREN TO THE RESCUE!

Bren McGuire was a hero, although he didn't yet know it. Sure he had an enormously manly jaw and purple hair, sure he owned a fearsome mechanical exo-skeleton capable of enhancing his strength, but at heart he was just a simple farm boy. That is, until the day that he got the special message from the foxy Manga babe.

She lived on a distant world and had blue hair (Bren always went for blue-haired types) but he couldn't resist this call to arms. The universe was being threatened by the Machine, which had destroyed dozens of planets and captured hundreds of innocent people.

(So the destruction of another planet could potentially mean the death of maybe 10, or possibly even 13 innocents.) He pulled up the zipper of his exo-skeleton and headed to face the evil of the Machine...

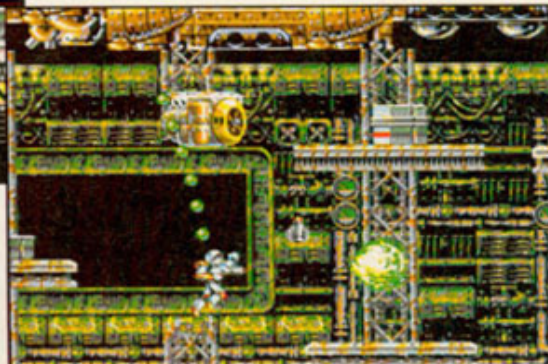
"(9)'s virtually the same as (11,12)"



Take out the slug-like baddie with a fearsome salt-firing rifle. Maybe.



Hustler. Word, I pull the trigger long, grit my teeth, spray till every alien's gone.



Here's that new rope-swing action. All together now, Ooo! Wow! etc.

WILL YOU LIKE TURRICAN 3?

1. What would be your ideal employment?
 - A. Accountant.
 - B. Chartered Surveyor.
 - C. Saviour of the Universe, jumping from platform to platform shooting all manner of robotic baddies across 15 different levels, defending yourself with guns that fire in all kinds of directions, plus homing missiles.

NOVEMBER 1993



Here's Bren in all of his square-jawed, tough-guy manliness.

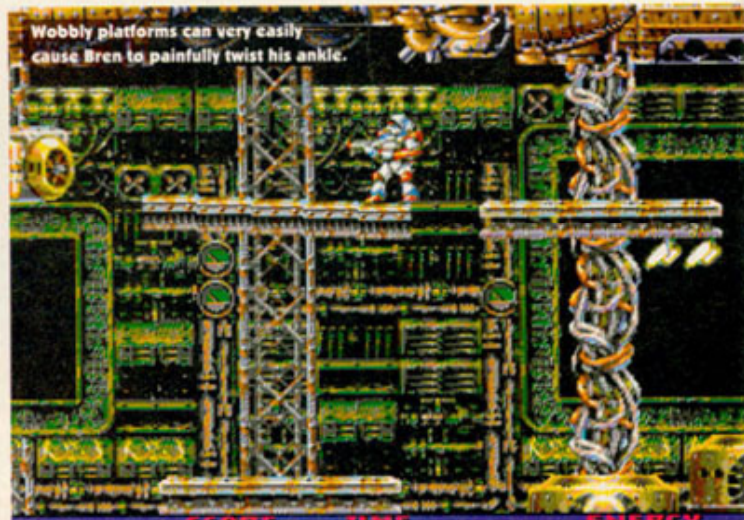
CARTOON CAPERS



IN A SHEEP OF TERROR THE MACHINE DESTROYS DOZENS OF PLANETS AND ENSLAVES HUNDREDS OF PEACEFUL PEOPLE.



And so Bren joins the battle in his exo-skeleton, which makes him look like a pig.



Wobbly platforms can very easily cause Bren to painfully twist his ankle.



Facing him's the Machine, who looks a lot like Zoltar from top cartoon Battle Of The Planets.

AN 3

it. Then there was another one of that one. Which is this.



It's the Flash Gordon level, complete with purple skies and 1930s-styled spaceships.



Yuk, it's biomechanoid time - influenced by Syd Giger or HR Mead or someone.



Massive fist-shaped end of level baddy alert! Hang on, wasn't this in Turrican 2?

2. Which of the following phrases best describe your favourite type of game?

- A. Thoughtful, methodical, intelligent.
- B. Puzzling, mind bending.
- C. Mindless, adrenaline-pumping, fire-button-hammering arcade action.



containing extra lives and power-ups. Which you didn't need before, because there weren't any hard-to-reach-without-swinging-on-a-rope bits anyway.

Answers:

Mostly As and Bs: You will not like *Turrican 3*.
Mostly Cs: You will like *Turrican 3*.

3. If you were going to save a girl from a mad, planet-destroying mechanoid, how would you do it?

- A. Phone the Intergalactic Police and let them deal with it.
- B. Circle the planet dropping 90 kiloton nukes, and hope you miss the girl.
- C. Land and then set off on foot, taking out every single one of the Machine's tiny minions individually.

4. If you were to make any changes to the popular arcade game *Turrican 2*, what would they be?

- A. Include more strategy, finesse and varying gameplay options.
- B. Add some more cute things, and maybe a fluffy bunny as the main character.
- C. Give the battle suit a harpoon gun that fires a rope. You would then be able to hang from platforms and swing, allowing you to get to hard-to-reach areas

REVIEWING BY NUMBERS

Next up we've got the 'review-by-numbers' section, where you use your skill and judgement to fill in the spaces. It's a bit like painting by numbers and many of the same rules apply, so make sure you put some newspaper down over the carpet before you start, and don't forget to rinse all the brushes out with warm water when you've finished. Hang on, here we go!

According to the blurb you get when you've finished (1), the adventure has only just begun, in which case, oh dear. This version has very little new to offer, so the prospect of numerous sequels fills me with a feeling very similar to the one you get when

you eat too much junk food at motorway service stations. You know the kind of feeling, you're glad you ate (9), but you still feel a bit ill and wouldn't really want to do (9) again.

The main down-side of (1) is that (9)'s virtually the same as (11,12), only with the inclusion of the (6) swing. This isn't such a terribly Bad Thing, as all the (11) games play well, but (9)'s a bit sad that we're having the same old thing recycled and pumped back at us time after time. The lack of imagination in having similar baddies, similar levels and the same old (6) run, shoot, run (7) is, quite frankly, terrifying.

On the good side, many of the levels are very (5). The underwater one hangs together the best, with the aquatic nasties fitting in well with the surroundings, and the animation of Bren being quite convincing. There's a frantic run across steel girders suspended from flying cars that looks gorgeously like that Flash Gordon movie with Peter Duncan in it (purple clouds, 1930s-looking sci-fi craft, the works) and some screens featuring loads of (2) layers that are truly wonderful. However, the first few levels and some of the end ones are a bit insipid, and let's face (9), numerous layers of (2) still don't cover up the incredibly superficial (7).

I realise that some people love shoot-'em-ups, and that they'll be reading this and thinking "Yeah, he just doesn't like arcade games," but there are some games that are as basic and thoroughly mindless as this is, but still a lot more enjoyable. *Walker*, for instance, or *R-Type* (12) or *Llamatron*, these all rely on

UPPERS Top mindless entertainment for fans of (11) and, er, (11,12). (Stop that. - Ed) Plenty of big levels to plough your way through, and some pretty parallaxing backgrounds.

DOWNERS It's still pretty much *Turrican*, isn't it? Including Flashier weapons and nicer backgrounds aren't going to fool anyone. There's no variation in gameplay, and very little to hook you.

THE BOTTOM LINE

It's almost as if this was *Turrican 2*, only with a rope to swing from. Come to think of it, it genuinely IS *Turrican 2* with a rope to swing from, so it depends whether you're into one-dimensional arcade action of the big-levels-and-lots-of-platforms variety. It's technically sound but just a bit vapid and uninspired.

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THE BOTTOM LINE

Exactly the same. It's almost as if you were playing the same game but on a slightly different computer. Oh, you are. That explains it, then.

your ability to press fire rather than to think, but they play well. (1) just seems to have much of the (3) sucked out of (9).

1. *Turrican 3*
2. parallax
3. enjoyment
4. you're
5. pretty
6. ropey
7. gameplay
8. fired
9. it
10. Snip!
11. *Turrican*
12. 2.

So there you have it, and wasn't that fun? I can see all manner of possibilities opening up (*Down at the Job Centre, perhaps?* - Ed) so don't be at all surprised if next time I do a review in the style of a Picasso painting, or as a scratch 'n' sniff card, where a complex series of odours are used to explain my feeling on the game, or maybe (10. 4.8. - Ed)

● CAM WINSTANLEY



Underwater action as Bren makes use of his Mecholung breathing system, Cyber-flippers and Dyna-waterwings.





We'd normally put some amusing joke or pun here. But we're in a bit of a hurry.

WIZ'N'LIZ

Game: Wiz'n'Liz
Publisher: Psygnosis
Authors: Martyn R. Chudley and Mike Waterworth
Price: £29.99
Release: Late October

Cutesy platform games, eh? Don't you just love 'em? Well, some people do, and if you're the kind of person who likes this kind of thing, then this is the kind of thing you'll like. All the same, you should try before you buy, because it's really for diehard fans of the genre only. Erm... spook! I seem to have come over all 'idiolect cliché'. And – hey – if you don't know what 'idiolect' means, you'll have to look it up in the (mythical) AMIGA POWER Dictionary, 'cos it's not in the real one – we checked. Ho ho, etc. Insert your own 'Get on with it' joke here. What are you, stupid or something? (Nurse! – Ed) This game looks quite good, but not as good as Asteroids. Asteroids is good. Pardon? You don't think so? I don't care. Me and my mates know a really good joke, but we're not telling you what the punchline is.

(We interrupt this waterfall of drivel to bring you



Flopsy would live to regret falling asleep while the roadbuilders were in town.

the traditional 'useful game information apparently inserted into review as last-minute afterthought, for comical effect' interjection. Wiz'n'Liz is a fast-moving platform game remarkable for not having any enemies in it. The object of the game is simply to 'save' lots of cuddly wabbits (sic) by running into them, and incidentally collecting the letters of some unusual words along the way. Of course, this would be completely dull if there wasn't some kind of danger, and in Wiz'n'Liz it's the ever-decreasing time limit. Time's too tight to mention in Wiz'n'Liz (or at least it is if you're playing on the hardest difficulty setting, of which more later), and the only way to stave off clockwork



Now there's a six-thousand-and-fifty-niner if ever I saw one, missus.

doom is to collect extra seconds from saved bunnies. Disturbingly, that's literally all there is to the body of the gameplay here, and that's the big problem with the game. On Stuart's first go, he trundled away quite happily on what turned out to be one of the highest difficulty combinations, and after about 15 minutes sat back in his chair and said, 'Right, that's the first boss out of the way – I think I've got the hang of this', only for his smug smile to be replaced just seconds later by a look of horror and a disbelieving cry of 'I've finished it?' as the end sequence flickered in front of his eyes. The very hardest settings do help to

extend the game's length considerably, but it's still ridiculously easy to complete it. Right, let's see if he's managed to pull himself together yet. – Stuart's Editorial Conscience)

But hey, that's enough about the game – let's talk about something I don't like for three-quarters of a page. Like Whoopi bloody Goldberg for a start, or that appalling, appalling Scottish prat who used to present Gimme 5 on Saturday mornings – don't you just hate it





"I've run out of things to say about the game"



when (Snip! - Ed) (I didn't think so. I suppose it's down to me to do the bit where we go

"Hey, but it's not all bad", before coming up with a short list of a game's redeeming features then slagging it off some more again. In Wiz'n'Liz's case, the saving grace is the two-player game. Taking place on a horizontally-split screen, one player takes on the mantle of Wiz, the other Liz. The game is pretty much the same, except you're battling against each other - basically you have to collect letters while trying to stop the other player from doing the same, and there are various devious tactics you can employ which invariably result in you winning the game, but also getting punched quite hard in the face by your mate. It's great, and I don't care what anybody says.

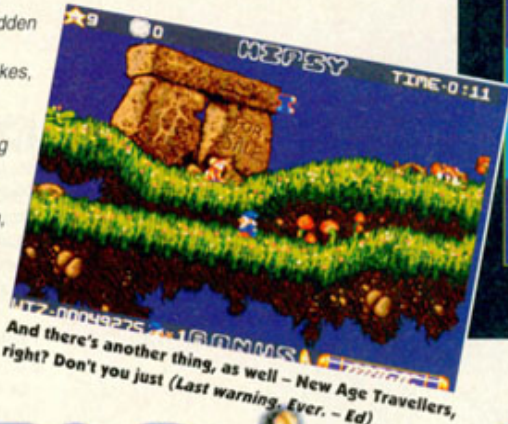
And in fact, there's another saving grace. The amount of hidden stuff in Wiz'n'Liz is just massive - there's hidden bonus sub-games, gameplay clues, wacky visual effects and pointless jokes, all of which are accessed by experimenting with the fruit you can grab in the ordinary levels and mixing them up in your cauldron. There are literally dozens of combinations and various ways of getting to everything, and it'll take you weeks to find it all. Well, that is, until someone prints the spell codes on their tips pages and completely negates the entire point of the whole game. But anyway, it's odd, in that

it makes the main game feel a bit like a kind of sub-plot that's only there as a means by which to access the hidden bits, but let's not examine that too closely, eh? Right, let's give him one last chance. - Stuart's Editorial Conscience)

And another thing - women drivers, right? (Where's that large housebrick? - Ed) I wouldn't say my wife's fat - she's a terrible cook, though! (I know I left it around here somewhere. - Ed) I know what you think - you think I'm just trying to pad this review out with a few crap gags at the end to cover up the fact that I've run out of things to say about the game, as usual. And you're right! Ha ha! (Aha, here it is. - Ed) I'm great and you're not! And I get paid for this too! (THWACK! - Ed)

Ow. (Bleeds.) This review was brought to you by an experimental prototype of the Eezi-Write Generic Auto-Reviewing Engine, a revolutionary new product of the Redundancy Inducement Corporation of Miyamoto, Japan. (You're fired. - Ed)

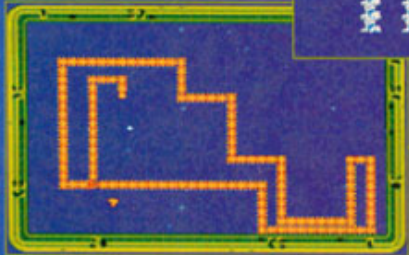
Ta-da!
● STUART CAMPBELL



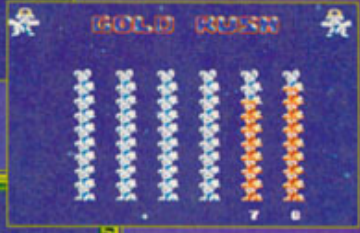
ER, THESE ARE SOME OF THE SUB-GAMES

- WIZ 'N LIZ**
- A A water whirlpool
 - B A wind eroded ridge of land
 - C A really heavy drinker
 - D Bark used in tanning

Here, you have to guess the meaning of the words you're collecting the letters of.



That old sub-game favourite, Snake. Doodling yet?



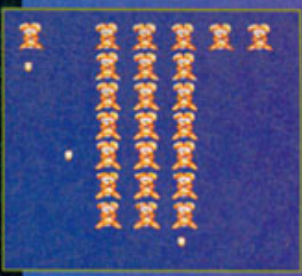
This is a sort of fruit machine skill-stop feature.



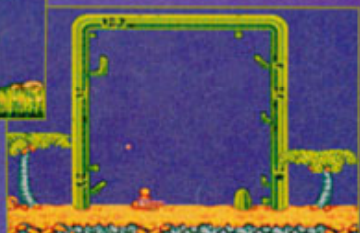
Bouncy, bouncy, bouncy, fun, fun, fun, fun etc.



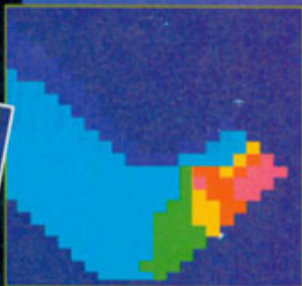
Catch a falling rabbit, and put it in your bonus points bag, etc.



Wabbit Invaders, Wabbit Invaders, Wabbit Invaders. Etc.



The world's dullest Breakout game - there's nothing to hit, or break out of.



Good lord, it's a Trip-a-Free variant. Ask your grandad.

UPPERS Graphics, animation and movement are all absolutely lovely, and the number of secret bonuses and hidden games tucked away in there is colossal.

DOWNERS Undeniably quite the slimmest game idea I've seen in a long time, and laughably easy on anything but the very hardest settings.

THE BOTTOM LINE Tough call, this one. It's actually a lot of fun to play, but there's almost nothing to it. One-player mode is limited in the extreme (although finding all the hidden games and so on will take you a very long time), but two players is a laugh riot. It's sweet and loveable, but dislikeably expensive. God. Um...

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THE BOTTOM LINE Look, I know objectively it's a bit rubbish, but I just can't help liking it, okay? Oh, and the A1200 version's much the same as the A500 one as well, except it doesn't slow down as badly when there's really an awful lot happening on the screen.





THEATRE

LIVE VIA SATELLITE

Satellite Cameras: These are real pain. Basically you have to select a camera then click on a soldier you want it to track. Why each camera can't automatically track each platoon is beyond me. It'd make life (or avoiding death, at least) much simpler.

Land: Got a soldier in a helicopter who needs to pop out? You'd better land the 'copter first then, or he might end up a sploody mess (but he probably will sooner or later anyway).

Halt: A brief round-up of how badly you're doing.

Troop Assist: Call for some reinforcements. This option is only available on certain missions.

Ammunition Indicator: Shows how much ammunition the currently-selected soldier has left.

Health Indicator: How near is the currently-selected soldier to copping it?

Air Strike: Some missions allow you to call in an air strike. Just tap in the relevant co-ordinates and watch your planes swoop in and miss completely because the enemies have gone and moved in the meantime.

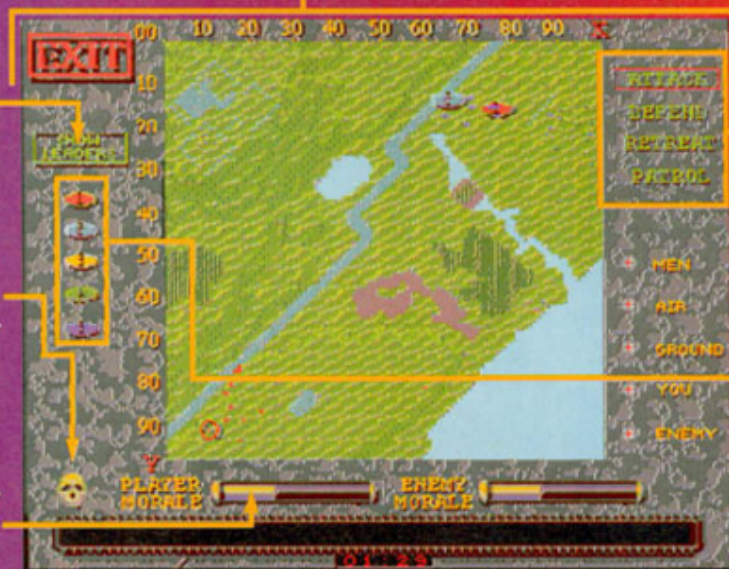
Weapon select: Each soldier can carry two weapons. You select them here. Weapons can be swapped at ammo dumps. We would show you some sexy grabs of them but the graphics are so weedy they're not even mildly titillating.

"A dog's dinner of a Frankenstein's monster"

Show Leaders: Click on this to see your platoon leaders highlighted on the map (why you wouldn't want them highlighted is beyond me).

Skull: Mission going badly? Then this is the coward's way out.

Morale Indicators: Which seem to be more to fill up the space at the bottom of the screen than for any other purpose I could fathom.



Movement Mode: The easy way to give a whole platoon orders so that they can be doing something useful while you're concentrating on controlling another one manually on the Live Action Screen.

Platoon Symbols: You can control the movement of whole platoons from the Map Screen. Just select a platoon, a Movement Mode, and where you want them to go to on the main map.

The word 'Theatre'

Game: Theatre Of Death
Publisher: Psygnosis
Author: Dave Anthony
Price: £29.99
Release: November

"Life is but a walking shadow that struts and frets his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more." How's that for a bit of culture? AMIGA POWER? Well, it was either that or the review of the 1966 Christopher Lee film Theatre Of Death from Halliwell's Film Guide. But the Macbeth clinched it for me, because the underlying meaning of the metaphorical intent... er... whatever, is basically, "life's like a play and you die at the end", the important concepts here being Theatre and Death, concepts which, bizarrely, are reflected in *Theatre Of Death*. Or, in other words, you kill lots of people. (Sob. - Ed)

ACT ONE, SCENE ONE

So, let's set the scene. Despite the title, *Theatre Of Death* isn't the license of some hammy Hammer film starring Vincent Price. It's actually a vaguely sci-fi, strategic military-type affair with a hefty dose of shoot-'em-up action thrown in.

The setting is a post-apocalyptic wasteland divided into four areas... or is it. Er, no, actually. Y'see this plot is actually a plot within a plot (very Shakespearean). What you're actually playing is, "the most advanced battle simulator ever created" at the Def Com Military Academy and the battle zones are just part of a virtual landscape. Basically it's a rather bizarre double-take which adds nothing to the game (except the opportunity for the manual to use buzz-words like Virtual Reality). So I'll ignore all this Academy nonsense and treat the wastelands stuff as the real plot.





can mean 'a building with plays in it' or 'an area of military operations', you see.

ACT ONE, SCENE TWO

Right, as I was saying there are four zones: grass, desert, snow and lunar, each ruled by an evil dictator commanding his own private army. The first three zones each have 15 missions, but you only need to complete 10 of them to move on to the next zone. The final Lunar Zone has five missions. Every mission has an objective which invariably contains the subtext "blast everything in sight."

The action is viewed from a satellite position, and there are two main screens. The Live Action Screen is where all the fun happens – ie, where you get to see all the blood and blow up buildings – while the Map Screen is where all your strategic decisions are made.

ACT ONE, SCENE THREE

At the beginning of each mission you have a number of platoons, usually containing five men, an objective and a limited amount of ammunition. The Action Screen shows you only a small section of the battlefield; for a complete view you need to go to the Map Screen.

Soldiers can be moved individually by selecting them or en masse as a platoon by selecting the platoon leader. Whole platoons can also be given orders from the Map Screen; platoons receiving orders this way will carry them out automatically so that you can leave them to their business while you deal with another platoon manually.

There are a number of vehicles that can be commandeered including helicopters, Armoured Personnel Carriers, Tanks and even moon buggies in the Lunar Zone. Weapons, such as grenades, rocket launchers and flame-throwers can be found in the weapons dumps.

ACT TWO, SCENE ONE

So, with the exposition out of the way, it's down to the nitty gritty; is the game any good? Well, there's certainly a lot of things that are impressive about *Theatre Of Death*... which is usually just the sort of thing you say before going on to list a whole host of faults. Which I'm going to do in a minute, but, as

I'm in a good mood, I'll put the case for the defence first.

It's a fast-paced game with a simple and initially appealing premise. The graphics are generally excellent, especially the various forms of transport (although the 3D's a little odd from time to time). The missions also work well, and the progression through the zones has been intelligently worked out so that new challenges – and opportunities – keep the gameplay unpredictable.

ACT TWO, SCENE TWO

The problem with *Theatre Of Death* is that it's a bit of a dog's dinner of a Frankenstein's monster of game. It's a bit all over the place, trying to be all things to all psychos, and generally failing a bit short in all departments. It's not fast enough to be a shoot-'em-up, or complex enough to be a strategy game.

Okay, the argument might be it's trying to be neither, but because it doesn't strike out in any new directions or offer anything unique, it ends up a rather unsatisfying experience.

Plus, there are a lot of irritating problems with the mechanics of the game, none of which are debilitating in

themselves, but which collectively do drag things down. The soldiers are too indistinct and in battles it's easy to shoot your own men. The screen doesn't always scroll when you move the cursor with your mouse; you have to resort to using the cursor keys. There's no easy way to get the Action Screen to flip back to a particular platoon or soldier because the automatic tracking system is a nightmare to use. The land vehicles get stuck behind trees. Half the action takes place off-screen. The list goes on (or rather it would, except that I'm bored of it and I think you get the point by now).

EPILOGUE

They say time flies when you're having fun. When you're playing *Theatre Of Death* it manages to take off, glides a bit, then hits some turbulence and nosedives into a swamp. I think Shakespeare said it better, but I can't quite remember when.

● DAVE GOLDER

These are apparently enemy craft. It's like being faced with an invasion force of Volkswagen Beetles, really.



UPPERS A sound basic concept and great graphics for a strategy game (except it isn't really a strategy game).



DOWNERS Despite attempts to keep the gameplay fresh it does become very samey. Plus there are loads of minor control faults that collectively make playing the game extremely irritating.

THE BOTTOM LINE

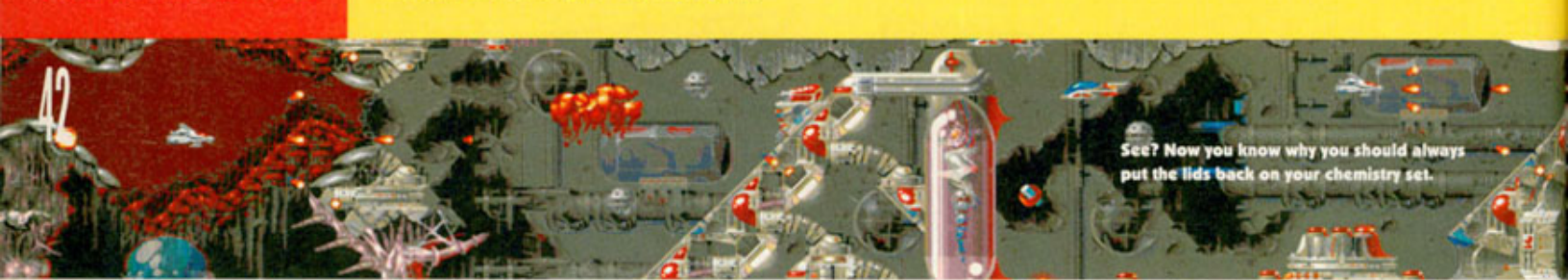
A sort of okayish-if-you-don't-play-it-for-too-long, not quite shoot-'em-up, but not quite strategy game that'd be quite fun to play if it wasn't so darned fiddly.

61 PERCENT

THE BOTTOM LINE

A1200 You have to hold down your mouse buttons when you boot up and adjust your settings to 'original graphics', otherwise it's flickerama.





See? Now you know why you should always put the lids back on your chemistry set.

DISPOSABLE

Game: Disposable Heroes
Publisher: Gremlin
Author: Lawrence Van Der Donk
Price: £25.99
Release: Out now

Lloyd Grossman writes: "Secreted around the AP offices amidst the posters, the stacks of disks and the subliminal messages are many books of lists. You can't see them most of the time, and casual visitors are probably oblivious to their existence, but they're there, lurking, and from time to time various members of the team write things in them."

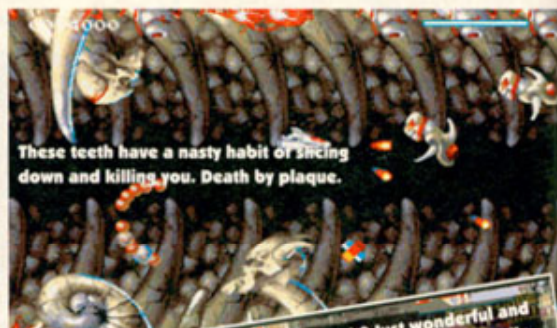
Some of them are bulky and dog-eared from frequent use, such as the Big Book Of PR Lies (where we write down the promised release dates of games, and which we then use to taunt companies when they fail to deliver the goods) or Songs That Stuart Plays That Everybody Else Hates (currently running into 14 volumes) but there are many more discreet ledgers. There's Dave's Book Of Observations From Afar, which hovers

mysteriously over the filing cabinet, and Cam's List Of Ominous Dreams, which is taped under a desk

Wahey! It's a horizontally-scrolling shoot-'em-up that doesn't so much dispose of the opposition as recycle its best ideas.



Interesting reflective water surfaces seem to be the 'in' thing at the moment.



These teeth have a nasty habit of snatching down and killing you. Death by plaque.



The binary cannon's a bit of a weedy blaster, but good fun nonetheless.

and booby-trapped with a block of C4 plastic explosive. And finally there's the office book of Nice Touches, a fabulously beautiful but slim publication of finest vellum bound in softest calfskin into which we employ a scribe to write Nice Touches in perfect copperplate handwriting. The ink's barely dry on the latest page, and our scribe is laboriously adding gold leaf to the illumination down the side, but peering over his shoulder I can share these few paragraphs with you...

NICE TOUCHES IN DISPOSABLE HEROES

- Getting power-ups in shoot-'em-ups is always a bit of an inexplicable, not to say surreal experience. What usually happens is that you shoot a spaceship which explodes, dropping a little blob which then gives you a power-up if you fly into it. *Disposable Heroes* has a much more logical system which involves you picking up blueprints of various fabbo new weapons, and then landing at the occasional but conveniently

placed research stations. Your ship has a certain energy output and all the modifications draw varying amounts of power, so you've got to work out which add-on configurations will fit into your energy output. You can then add bigger, better and more weapons that fire off in all directions, home in on enemies and generally make killing everything in your path a lot easier.

- The spaceship itself is a mass of little Nice Touches. When you nudge it forwards, the engines flare briefly to start your acceleration, and the truly wonderful thing is that instead of blowing up after a single hit, your little craft can absorb quite a few shots before plummeting to the ground, which is not only a Nice Touch, but also a Good Thing. When your energy bar's getting low, smoke starts to dribble out of the ship, and each successive hit adds to the smoke until you eventually give up and belly flop onto the ground. Almost entirely implausibly, the programmers have worked out that it's totally frustrating to gain masses of power-ups only to lose them on a difficult level, so once you've got them, they stay for the rest of the game. Hoorah!

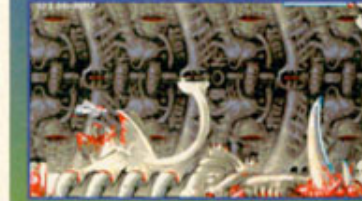
- Realistic water effects are a hugely pretty feature that add absolutely nothing to the gameplay but look



I never though that outer space would be such a funny colour.



For starters, Level One ends with this Gatling-gun-'n'-rocket-firing nasty.



After blasting this boss, his head comes off and alien blood sprays everywhere.



E HEROES

fantastic. Flying low over these pools rewards you with a delightful reflection of your craft, and when various huge mechanical beasts tramp their way across the screen, each footfall is marked with cute splashes.

- Most surfaces have bolted-on gun turrets. These animate in microscopic detail, spinning around and elevating as they try to draw a bead on you.
- Much of the evil nastiness in the game comes in the form of quasi-biological lifeforms that look like insects but fire off laser blasts at the slightest provocation. Indeed, one of the levels seems to be set entirely in the mouth of a large critter with retractable teeth, so as well as dodging the flak you've got to watch out for massive canines that leap out of rotting gums at terrifying speed.

So why the emphasis on neat little touches rather than the actual game? Well, because we've all seen the game before, haven't we? It's a horizontally-scrolling shoot-'em-up, so what else can you say about it? It plays like *Project-X* or *R-Type 2*, and although it's better than these two in some respects (most notably the masses of dinky little animations and the ability to survive a couple of hits) it doesn't

Three-way shooting and bombs – not bad.

really have any features that would make you drop what ever you were doing and dash out to the shops to buy it.

Maybe it's just me being overly cynical, but I really can't see what *Disposable Heroes* does that *R-Type 2* didn't do better a couple of years ago. Like *Pac-Man* clones and *Pong* games, horizontal scrollers seemed to run their course before suffering a drop in popularity, and this resurrection doesn't add to or enlarge on any gameplay features that weren't covered fairly comprehensively in *R-Type 2*. Okay, so there are masses of biological enemies, but there were plenty of these in the excellent *Apidya*, which may have had annoyingly sudden deaths, but also featured some of the most impressive music ever heard in a computer game.

Am I sounding wishy-washy? I hope

not, but the problem is that it's too good to slag off but at the same time is very hard to mention at all without going on about *R-Type 2*. *D-Heroes* plays like *R-Type 2* (but not as nicely), looks much like *R-Type 2* (but not as pretty) and has the same combination of big frightening baddies and small annoying ones as *R-Type 2*. This means of course that it's a good game, but at the same time hardly a novel or unique one. Like this review, it's just going over the same ground time and time again. Sorry.

Anyway, that's what it's like, so I'll end on a bit of blurb about the game that may or may not set your imagination alight. It's got six long and tough (really tough – in fact, this is one area where it does expand on *R-Type 2*, because it's much harder. And *R-Type 2* was no pushover, either.) levels, each of which feature a number of super huge and impressive boss-type enemies. The music's entertaining but

unremarkable and you can save your high scores. I found it hard even on the easy level, but I dare say all the pros will relish having a go on the manic arcade setting. And that's, um, that really.

● CAM WINSTANLEY

"A good game, but hardly a novel or unique one"



WHO'S THE BOSS?



Flame on! Torch-tabulous treats coming your way.



It's Mr Rotary Cannon Nose, with his steely death-dispensing nasal passages.



Fire tube one! Sub-aqua duelling delights, and there's still masses to go.



This ugly mother clomps towards you in an unpleasant way.



The mind boggles what all of these bosses do on their days off.



Isn't it weird the way bird's knees bend the wrong way when they bob down?



Now this is a silly design. It's top heavy and is bound to topple over at any time.

▲ **UPPERS** Challenging, uncomplicated, shoot-'em-up that doesn't stray away from its aims of destroying everything. The power-up system's the best one I've seen on a shoot-'em-up. Every feature oozes professional programming, from the ruthlessly efficient collision detection to the almost illegal number of Nice Touches.

▼ **DOWNERS** Even on Easy level, it's fearsomely hard, and although you can take a number of hits, there's still a fair number of sudden and seemingly unavoidable deaths.

THE BOTTOM LINE

It's a hard game to knock, but also one that I found it hard to get very excited about. It's fun to play even though I found it extremely hard and everything is slick and professional, but we've still seen it all before. If you've already got *R-Type 2*, then you'd have to be a real shoot-'em-up fanatic to buy this one as well.

77 PERCENT

THE BOTTOM LINE

▲1200 Exactly the same. It's a nicely done shoot-'em-up that doesn't add anything new to the genre, okay?

ALFRED CHICKEN

Finger-lickin' good or just another platform turkey? You decide.

Game: Alfred Chicken
Publisher: Mindscape
Authors: In house
Price: £25.99
Release: Out now

Playing *Alfred Chicken* has set me thinking – about game characters. And I'd like to do a sort of experiment, if you'll bear with me for a couple of paragraphs. Imagine you're a programmer, and

you're writing a cute platform game. Probably the first thing you'll want to do is decide on a character to centre it on. Someone to do all the running about and collecting things. So, go on then – choose a character. (*Huh? Er. Who, me? – Lethargic Reader*) You'll need to decide what he (okay, or she) will look like, how he'll be controlled, and a bit about his personality.

You could do some sketches if you want. Give yourself about five minutes. Right. Time's up.

Now, I'll bet any money that you've picked either (a) a sort of amorphous blob with big eyes (in which case you have little imagination and may play no further part in this experiment), or (b) an animal of some sort. Say, a gerbil. What you won't have chosen, I'll wager, is a person.

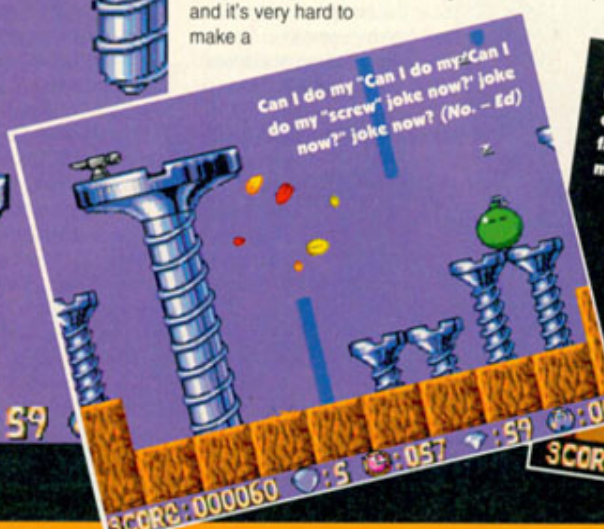
But that's not what concerns me. After all, people all look pretty much the same in the genealogical sphere of things, and it's very hard to make a

platform game stand out from the crowd if it's got a person in it. You've got to give him a football to kick about or something.

Animals, on the other hand, are distinctive. As long as you pick one that no-one's done before – that gerbil, for example – you'll have a game that people will remember simply because it's got a gerbil in it. And getting him to look like a gerbil couldn't be simpler. Some brown fur, a pair of beady little eyes, and he's made.

But the point is, if I'm anticipating

"The best game character I've seen for ages"



ALFRED 'STRUTS' HIS 'FUNKY STUFF'



A chicken lived on Hilltop Farm, Keeping all the hens from harm. For years he'd pecked his life away, The same routine day after day.



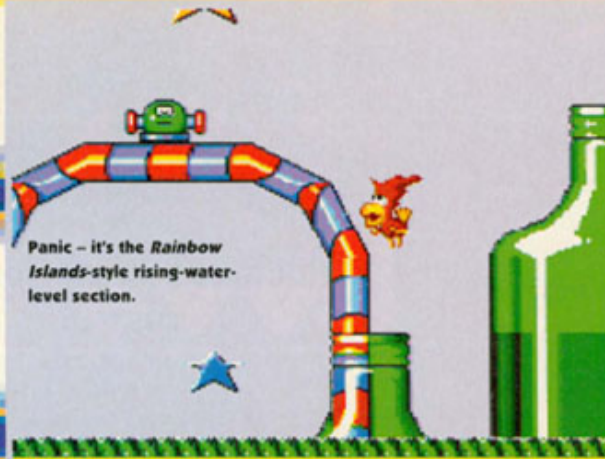
Then one day he heard a sound, Looked up and saw, miles from the ground, An aeroplane, high in the sky, And said, "I might give that a try."



With the pluck that impulse brings, He clicked his heels and spread his wings. A run, a jump, and up he went, Airborne thrills his sole intent.



Up and up the chicken soared, His chicken mind quite over-awed. But as he rose a thought occurred: A chicken is a flightless bird.



Panic - it's the *Rainbow Islands*-style rising-water-level section.



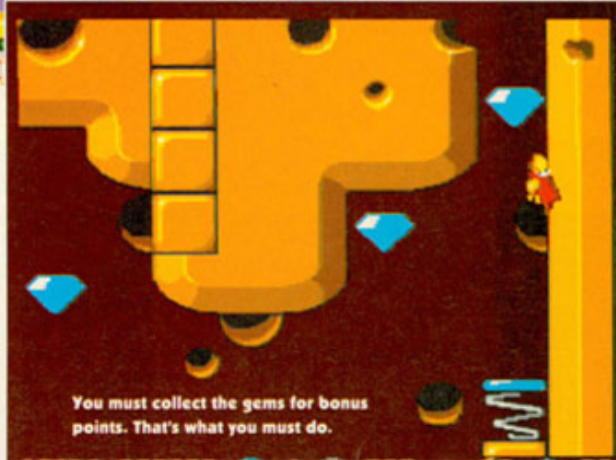
Alfred hitchhikes a ride on - of all things - a moving platform.

you correctly, that he's unlikely to behave much like a gerbil. He may well walk around on his hind legs, for instance. He'll be wearing clothes - probably jeans, plimsolls and sunglasses, the way things are these days. He might even talk. What he won't do, however, is spend much of his time eating toilet rolls, or asleep in his nest. He won't spend ages and ages

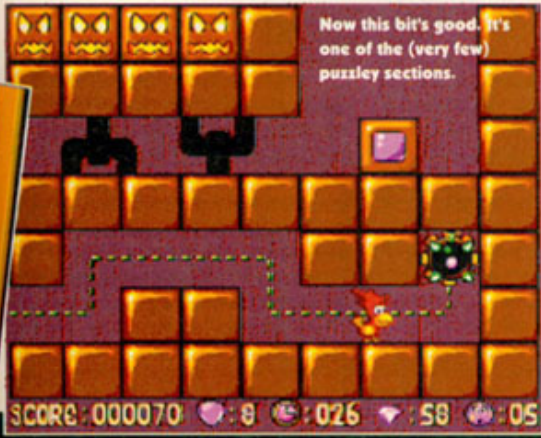
fruitlessly trying to dig a hole in the corner of the screen, or chewing at the bars above his head, even though he knows there's no chance of escape. There might be a few token sunflower seeds for him to collect, but that'll be about it. In fact, while he might look superficially like a gerbil, he'll actually act more like a person. A gerbil-shaped person.

And that's what's so refreshingly different about *Alfred Chicken*. Alfred not only looks like a chicken, but he also behaves like one. He struts about, rather than walking. He pecks at the ground to activate switches and things. He can jump quite high (something that chickens have

to do to reach their perches in the evening). He can't fly, but he can flap his wings a bit to slow his descent. He can do these really neat powerdives at baddies, ending up with his beak sticking in the ground and his legs



You must collect the gems for bonus points. That's what you must do.



Now this bit's good. It's one of the (very few) puzzley sections.



Down and down our hero fell, and down crashed all his hopes as well. He flapped his wings and vainly clawed at the air that past him roared.



And so, before too long, he found his beak embedded in the ground. "Oh well," he sighed, "if that's too hard, I'll stick to scratching round the yard."

Technically, though, *Alfred Chicken* (the game) is hardly cutting-edge stuff. You'll search in vain for parallax scrolling, gigantic end-of-level bosses, or more than about ten colours on the screen at once. Instead we're given flat, primitive graphics that lend the game a very peculiar, abstract feel - which is nice in a way, as it makes Alfred look even more lost and out of place, and you even more determined to help him out. Comical music also helps towards the surreal atmosphere.

There's never an awful lot to do, either. On each level (they're small, four-way scrolling jobs, and there aren't very many of them) you've got to release a certain number of balloons by biting through the strings that attach them to the ground, and collect diamonds for bonus points, but that's about it. The skill's all in jumping about avoiding baddies and trying to remember where you're meant to be going. There are a few puzzley-type bits involving switches and things, but not many.

Alfred himself is great, then, but his game's merely middling. I was never itching to see what came next (one level's pretty much like the next anyway, with only the scenery changing to provide a selection of hackneyed gaming environments), but I was quite happy playing it, watching Alfred wander quietly about. I even smiled gently each time Alfred got killed and exploded in a cloud of feathers. (Er, that's to say that he exploded, not me.)

I could easily find a place for *Alfred Chicken* in my Amiga games collection, just not very near the front. **● JONATHAN DAVIES**

UPPERS Alfred's a great character, and pleasure to play with. The graphics aren't all bad - there are a few neatly animated sprites. And I checked, and chickens can be boys as well as girls, so the game *shouldn't* be called 'Alfred Cock' (as the rest of the team seemed to take great delight in suggesting).

DOWNERS But strip away Alfred, and underneath there isn't much going on. The levels are a bit samey, and all you get to do is collect things, with a few puzzley bits here and there. And the sameyness isn't alleviated by having all the sprites the same size (ie really small).

THE BOTTOM LINE A fabulous hero, and a pleasantly different feel, but it gets boring more quickly than it probably should. It doesn't look much like a mid-'90s Amiga product, either. I'd place it about mid-way in the platform game pecking order. (You're so fired it's unbelievable. - Ed)

70 PERCENT

THE BOTTOM LINE Alfred's still a great character, but the game still lets him down somehow. There's no special AGA-related antics to speak of.



DONK

A duck-based platformer. Enough said.

Game: Donk
Publisher: Supervision
Authors: The Hidden
Price: £26.99
Release: Out now

what it may have been. We guess that we're not big, hard or clever enough for that type of adult joke. Poor us.
Donk is a platform game. It comes packaged in a cardboard box with an outer plastic-laminated paper sleeve. Inside this box, which incidentally you have to take the sleeve off of to get into, are three diskettes and the instruction manual. They contain the program code and instructions respectively for the *Donk* game.

Everybody knows how tortuous life on the dole can be. One of the few ways to pack up your troubles and escape for a couple of hours is to lose yourself in a computer game. Money supply is as tight as a pair of bath-shrunk Levis, so you have to make sure you get your money's worth.

Alternatively, you could write your own game. Who knows, you might just get lucky and hit the big time; free lunches, name on cardboard, Andrew Braybrook, throwing up in trains and travel for hours and hours to the loveliest places on earth.

This is just what happened to Craig Howard, William Bell and Simon Leggett, who collectively are known as 'The Hidden'. Allegedly, their name is derived from the fact they all live in Norfolk and would prefer this information to remain hidden. They all attended the same college and obtained HND's in Computer Studies for their troubles. How were they rewarded? Straight down the Job Centre, that's how.

Being enterprising types, they began coding PD demos and games and that kind of thing. Their ideas and programs finally caught the eye of a commercial software house; Supervision.

Rumour has it that *Donk* is not the original name of the game and that the eponymous hero was not even a duck. Collectively the AP team cannot work out

If you switch your Amiga on and put these 'diskettes' into your computer's 'disk drive' they will be put through a process known as 'loading' or 'booting'. Wait for a few minutes or less and a screen, known as a 'requester' screen will appear. This screen asks you to press key zero for 'normal mode' or key one for 'AGA mode'. Here you will have to engage in some product research. If you own an Amiga 1200 or 4000 then select 'AGA mode'. Everyone else will have to content themselves with 'Normal mode'. Well 'ard, don't-give-a-duck, A1200 and 4000 types can prove how 'wacky' they are by choosing Normal mode just for laughs.

"27 quid? Quack quack oops"

There are another couple of requester screens, but the only one of note is the options screen. This allows access to the number of players, music on/off selection and jump controls. The last option listed here is very interesting. Too many games of the platform nature (such as this very month's *Oscar*, for example) don't allow for the fact that many players find it easier to use the fire button to jump than the up control of the stick. One up for The Hidden there, for sure.

Now that all the details on how to get into the game have been satisfactorily

POWER-UPS AWARDED — PUNISHMENT WITHHELD



Collect enough of these to exit.



Switchable blocks respond to this.



Drillable platforms let you go down.



Amazingly, this is a switchable block.



View the whole level with this handy facility.



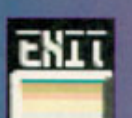
Only available in two-player mode. Nicely confusing.



Spikes. Land here and you die.



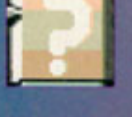
An 'eggstra' shield to withstand attacks.



Mystery exits can usefully help you out. (Get it?)



Smart bomb egg. Very explosive.



Float egg. Can be just dandy.



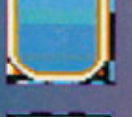
.controls your reverses one This



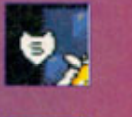
The goal of most levels is the non-mystery exit.



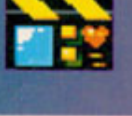
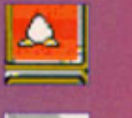
Megalomania in the shape of a powerful shield.



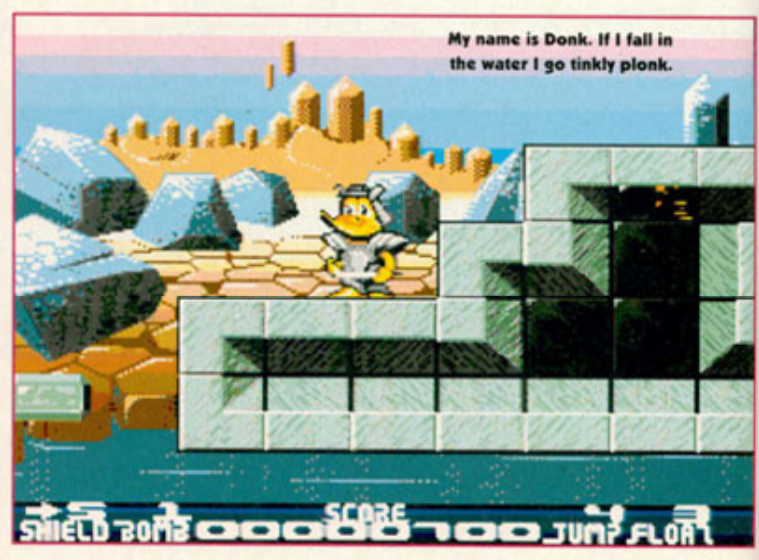
Big jump and jump big.



If you die you can start up here.



Old Timer. Everything monochromes.





explained, let's discuss the game itself. (And not before time. — Ed)

At the start, you are faced with the 'Adventure Map'. It is from this map that you will be able to gain access to the whole 112 levels.

Yes, that's right, 112 levels spread over seven exciting worlds. Each world contains 15 thrilling levels and one fortress. The fortress can only be entered after having collected an access key. It is in these fortresses that you get to fight your arch enemy 'Eider Down'.

Eider down is usually found inside expensive quilts. It is very light, very warm and very expensive. Conceptually, the fact that Eider Down is Donk's enemy could be described as humour; 'eider down' originates from the fine plumage of the Northern Sea Duck. The only thing we know about Donk is that he was an ugly duckling. But that's more than enough for us to make the connection, right kids? Ho Ho Ho. (Hello? Anybody home? — Ed)

So, to business. How does the game play, what does it look like, why do you want to play it, where might you want to play it, and when is it playable?

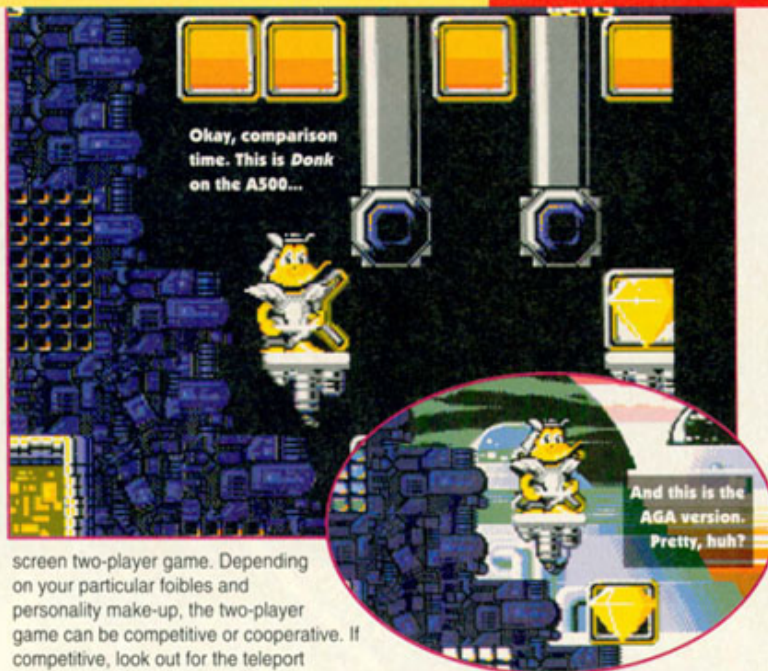
The game plays much like any other platform game. You always start at the left of the screen. From there, it's just a matter

of exploring the level, collecting gems (the mainstay of *Donk*) obtaining power-ups, switching switches, killing baddies and generally trying to stay out of trouble. So far, so bloody what, eh?

Donk, despite the fact that you get a nice sense of parallax with the A1200 background screen, looks like one of the better PD games. It doesn't have that glitzy glossy gel-like sheen that many of us have come to expect from modern commercial releases. *Donk* seems to have suffered from pixel abrasion as if a steel-wool brillo pad had been drawn across the screen. This may sound harsh, but Cam was playing *Disposable Hero* on the A1200 while I played *Donk* on the 1200. *Donk* was apocalyptically eclipsed by *D-Hero's* radiant beauty.

Graphics do not a game make though. *Donk* has plenty of endearing little touches. The hero himself is likeable, though not exactly loveable. When left to his own devices, he puffs and pants and blinks like a nervous person with a tic. Power-ups are usefully varied and add a fair amount of strategy to the scene.

It's probably advisable to play *Donk* in your bedroom/study/nest with a friend, for one of the best things about *Donk* is the ability to play a simultaneous split-



screen two-player game. Depending on your particular foibles and personality make-up, the two-player game can be competitive or cooperative. If competitive, look out for the teleport function, whereby both players are simultaneously swapped in location. This can be disorientating and frustrating, all from one handy little capsule.

So, is *Donk* playable all the time? The simple answer is yes. You're not going to finish it in one sitting. A handy little save/load function lets you save the game at any time and restart from that point whenever you feel like it. This is much more convenient than having to write down code numbers and stuff.

Conclusion time now. *Donk* isn't going to ruffle your feathers with outstanding innovation or originality. What were you eggpecting? But, on the other hand, it won't make you feel 'down' 'eider'. (Stop this right now. — Ed) But 27 quid? Quack quack oops. No way! Despite the quantity of levels and variety of creatures, *Donk* is overpriced for what it is. Asking people to shell out any more is quackers. (Nurse, bring me the big stick with nails in the end. — Ed)

● STEVE MCGILL

UPPERS Likeable main character. Nice power-ups and facilities (such as the big scroll-around map).

DOWNERS Doesn't look too good, even with the AGA extra screen. And after a while, your ability to differentiate between the various levels becomes severely diminished.

THE BOTTOM LINE

A nice game, but it really should have gone out at the lower price point of £17 that it was originally aimed at. As it stands (and despite the numerous levels), it just isn't worth the money.

76 PERCENT

THE BOTTOM LINE

Much prettier, with lovely parallaxing backgrounds. Apparently there are more than 256 colours on screen at one time, even. Same old game, though.



Let's face it, there's not a man jack amongst us who doesn't enjoy dressing up in some sort of kooky fancy dress number, and it seems that this inherently human trait is also shared by computer game characters. Whether it's a sleek lycra body stocking to go with his futuristic setting, or a dusty Mexican poncho for that 'Rodent With No Name' Spaghetti Western look, Oscar's always happy to blend in with his surroundings. I'd also like to point out that Lisa made this huge caption box, so I'm sorry about all this wibbling.

That small question mark is a baddy that can kill you. Hard to believe, I know.

Giger's alien in sneakers, what a truly novel concept.

The showers of stars from Trolls are back! Again.

The flatulent elephant from Trolls is back!

The yo-yo from Trolls is back!

AS IF BY MAGIC, THE SHOPKEEPER APPEARED...

The Amiga equivalent of Sonic? Yeah, right.

OSCAR

Game: Oscar
Publisher: Flair
Authors: In house
Price: £25.99
Release: Out now

Here's a curious tale, and one that's strangely relevant to one of this month's releases. Having spent a happy few years occasionally going to college in Bournemouth, I decided to don my mirrored shades and gun my Harley Davidson Fatboy down to the south coast. For a bit of entertainment, I dropped into the Tower Park leisure complex and found

myself faced by a bewildering array of movies at the fine multiplex cinema that lurks there. Spoiled for choice, I was eagerly scanning the large display, when I noticed a small fluffy creature lurking in the shadows. This was strange as I'd just seen that Disney's Winnie The Pooh was in a late-night triple bill (along with Troma's Surf Nazis Must Die! and Dario Argento's Zombie Apocalypse) and for a moment I thought I'd forgotten to take my medication and was once again mistaking hallucinations for reality.

Rubbing my eyes, I looked again, and there really was a creature of

uncertain origin and undeniable cuteness nibbling some discarded popcorn behind one of those big chrome bins. He looked up and saw that I was looking at him, and with a wry grin, waved me over. Resolving to get to the bottom of this mystery, I crammed into the gap behind the bin.

"Hi, I'm Oscar," he chirped, sounding like one of the Chipmunks who'd gone through puberty. "You're going to find the

next hour terribly exciting, because not only are you the best-looking, healthy young man in this cinema (*Oh dear. - Ed*) but you're also into computer games, I know. I've come straight from the offices of Flair, and they've announced that I'm going to be THE game of the year. Put these on quickly."

Out of his magic pocket, he produced a set of faded jeans and a cowboy hat, and I was midway through changing into them when a security guard appeared and started to threaten me with a charge of indecent exposure, but Oscar saved the day.

"Woop, woop, you can try but there's no catching me. Heh, heh, I'm the cheeky young scamp Oscar. Weeeeee!" he trilled, grabbing me by the collar and yanking me off my feet with more strength than I'd generally attribute to a two-foot rodent. As I flapped behind this spiky-haired critter like a poorly constructed kite, I thought it would be a great time to question his motives.

"I'm featuring in the first game to use the A1200's F-Mode, so my 16-colour dual playfields give a greater depth of hue to the background screens. Hah hah, with

Some of the lushest backgrounds appear in the prehistoric level.



over 100 colours on screen at any one time and seven film worlds, I'm going to be a sure-fire hit. Here we go!" And with that we dived into one of the cinemas, where the strangest thing happened. We were suddenly in the film, which happened to be a Western. And then my heart sank.

"Hold on a moment," I said, "This is a platform game."

"Right on the button!" squealed Oscar. "I've got to dash around collecting little Oscar trophies before finding the clapperboard and zapping out. Once I've completed a level, I can go through a bonus door and go into another level. And look, hidden in that film can be a yo-yo that lets me smash walls and bad guys and swing from platforms. Wahey!"

"Well, all you need is a big red elephant as a restart point, and you'd be just like Flair's groovy and sickly-sweet platformer *Trolls*." I commented sarcastically, jumping on the head of a cowboy three times amidst a shower of pretty stars and watching him plummet off the ledge.

"You mean like this big red elephant," giggled Oscar as we ran past a suitably scarlet pachyderm, "I've got those as well. Nim nim!"

"And like *Trolls*, you've got themed levels as well, I suppose," I queried, simultaneously picking up a pair of trainers that allowed me to run faster and pushing my investigative journo talent to the limit.

"Indeed I have. They're all based on movies and TV, with a sci-fi level, a horror level, and get this - there's a war movie level that's (giggle) actually in black and white! Pretty wild stuff, huh?"

"Just like the black-and-white newspaper world in *Trolls*?" I fired back.

Before he could reply, we passed the clapperboard and reappeared outside the cinema, where a perfectly tailored silver suit and microphone were waiting for me. I quickly changed and then we were off into the game show

land, where we carried on doing exactly what we were doing before. "So let's get this straight in my mind - just like *Trolls*, you've got a yo-yo."

"That's right, but look how pretty everything is, look at the pretty backgrounds."

"Quite, and like *Trolls*, you leap around themed levels collecting objects before finding an escape route, and... Oof!" Something hit me and sent me sprawling. I peered into the mass of colour but couldn't see anything apart from a small question mark. Turning round, I was

hit again. Oscar shouted to look out for the pogo stick, but it was so hard to distinguish between the foreground and the background that I was smashed about a few more times until Oscar whacked it with his yo-yo.

"I'm a little offended that you're making all these *Trolls* references," he moaned, "because the troll was a bit of a childish character immortalised by numerous revolting plastic toys, whereas I'm a bit of a tough guy, although you can't help but love me. See, I dress up in different costumes for each level and everything. Although I'm obviously a furry mammal of some sort, you can't quite work out which, but I'd look great on sports bags and T-shirts. I'm going to be the *Sonic* for the Amiga, for crying out loud, and all you can do is go on about some superficial similarities to another Flair game, damn you!"

At last I was getting somewhere - the cute image of Oscar was crumbling, and beneath it I detected the hard-bitten features of a businessman. I refused to put on the space suit that Oscar thrust at me for the next level and started to take control of the situation.



Time traveller Marty McFly dressed like this in *Back To The Future 3*.



Personally, I didn't like it as much as the other two films.



"Trolls A1200 was a much better game"

UPPERS Pretty graphics, cute sound, a lovely central character and... it's no good, I can't manage it any more. AAAaargh!!!

DOWNERS AAAargh!!! It's another platform game, it's no better or worse than half a dozen others and it's about time someone had some better ideas. The lush graphics mess up the screen so much you end up running head-on into enemies - YOU CAN'T SEE THEM PROPERLY.

THE BOTTOM LINE
How many times must I be forced to say **A1200** "You run around and jump on baddies' heads while you collect things?" Oh yeah, this one's got a yo-yo in it as well. Well hoorah for that. Buy *Trolls A1200* instead, as it's got the same great backgrounds, but they don't mess up the game screen as much.

66 PERCENT



It's a black-and-white level. Just like *Trolls*.

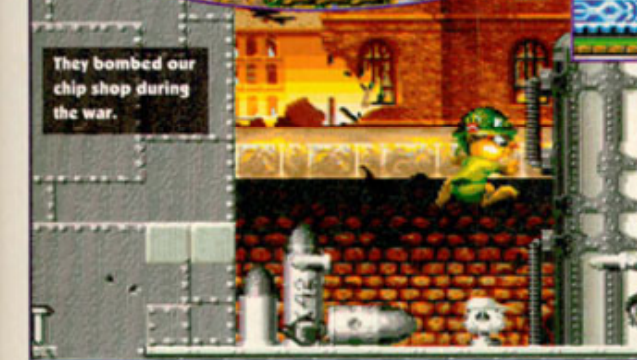
I told him that his game was nothing more than a shallow revamping of the game *Trolls*. I told him that since *Trolls* was associated with those crappy little dolls, he'd been created as a ploy to appeal to a much older and broader age range of people, and that dressing him up in different costumes didn't necessarily constitute a major leap forward in game design. I told him that it was all very well having loads of colours on the screen, but that this didn't mean diddly squat if you couldn't play the game properly because the baddies usually merged into the backgrounds in a confusing, garish graphical mess. Finally I told him that *Trolls A1200* was a much better game, and that I thought Flair should have tried coming up with a new idea, but by then he'd bounded over to another person and was telling him that he was the best-looking youth in the cinema. I left in a state of confusion and resolved to rent a video next time.

● CAM WINSTANLEY

THE BOTTOM LINE
There's going to be versions for the A500/A600 and the CD32 along soon, so we should be looking (well, squinting painfully) at them in next month's issue. See you then!



Oscar's Munster suit is thankfully drip dryable.



They bombed our chip shop during the war.

Here's the foyer area where I had a chat with Oscar. Honest.

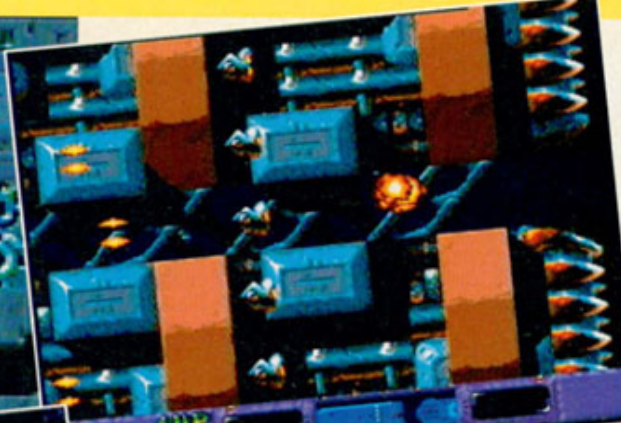


A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE PLATFORM

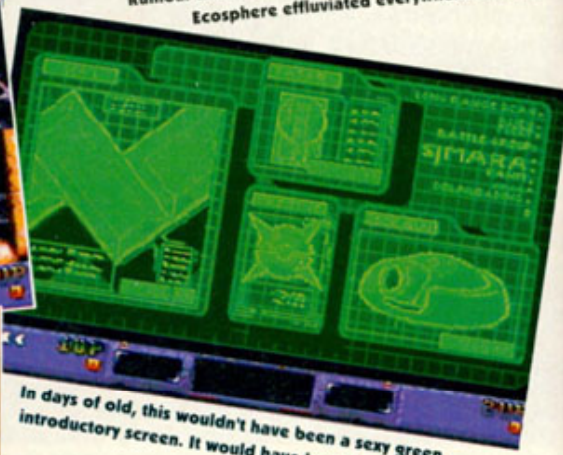
It's a bit of a tradition for cute platform characters to do funny things when you're not looking, so here's a selection of some of the best ones, the ones that had us chuckling around the AP office and wiping tears of mirth away from our red-rimmed eyes.



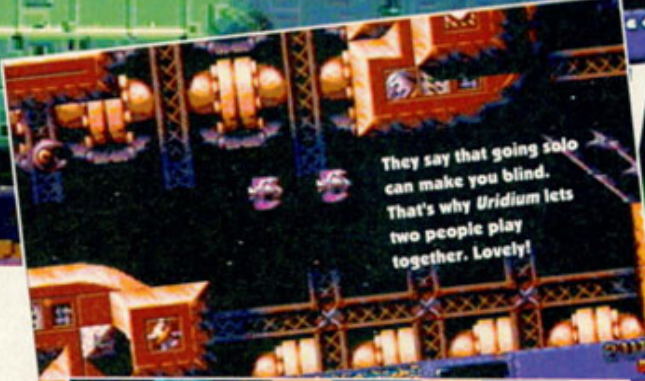
Dichard Uridium fans will quake in their un-ironed jeans when they see the aesthetic differences.



Rumour has it that the exalted Emperor of the Eastern Ecosphere effluviated everywhere ecstatically.



In days of old, this wouldn't have been a sexy green introductory screen. It would have been Kenneth Kendal.



They say that going solo can make you blind. That's why Uridium lets two people play together. Lovely!



£500 goes to the first alien to tell us why Uridium 2 kept crashing our Macintosh grabber thing.

Game: Uridium 2
Publisher: Renegade
Author: Andrew Braybrook
Price: £25.99
Release: Out now

The Amstrad CPC464 and 6128 were never very well known for their graphics. Occasionally, CPC programmers produced a beauty out of their assembler hats that outstripped the Amstrads' two main rivals of the time. One instance of this was *ATF* (All Terrain Fighter). Contrary to the usual jerky frame update, the scroll of the undulating landscape in this wonderful game was unbelievably smooth.

When I used to work in an independent computer shop, we had an Amstrad monitor attached to a CPC6128 atop the glass fronted counter. I never could quite work out why someone would want to buy such a set-up. Okay, you got an independent monitor (which was really just a cheap TV with the tuner taken out) as well as a three-inch-drive 128K computer. For the same price or less, you could get a three-and-a-half-inch drive 512K Amiga. So before I get a "Steve just what are you wittering about?" from the Ed, I'll get to the point. Due to the Amstrad's location in the shop, I used to be able to play Amstrad games while serving customers. I got to know the games reasonably well.

Despite my misgivings about the 6128, I forgave it all of its sins when the owner of the shop ordered *Uridium* on disk. Although I had played the original on the C64, it never quite took my fancy; too garish and blocky. The Spectrum version was virtually unplayable; the control system was crap and the ship was indistinguishable from the background. Imagine my surprise to find that the Amstrad version of *Uridium* was beautifully sculpted with all the right bolt-on parts for a shoot-'em-up; plenty of power-ups, loads of enemies and

a freedom of movement which so few shoot-'em-ups permit. This last bit, as well as the velvety scrolling, sold *Uridium* to me (albeit at a knockdown bargain price).

Your average shoot-'em-up consists of a non-arbitrary horizontal or vertical scroll and several attack waves of aliens. The main tactic involved lies in the learning of the attack patterns, how to obtain the best power-ups and use them properly and, er, that's it. With *Uridium*, you had a lot more choice over what you wanted to do.

First you had to discover the layout of the dreadnought ship you were supposed to destroy. This was important from the point of view that once properly

surveyed, you could rush up and down the ship without hitting solid things like walls. Once scouted, you then proceeded to take out the ship's defences, which included several attack waves of alien ships, and land on a designated runway. This done, it was on to the next dreadnought with more fiendishly difficult defences and aliens. All in all, a good blast and highly therapeutic after dealing with an obnoxious customer on a boring Monday morning.

"Beautifully sculpted, with all the right bolt-on parts"

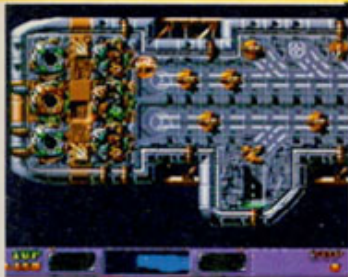
THE EVOLUTION OF DESIGN
 Anyone who's been watching BBC2's utterly absorbing Sunday escapades on evolution in 'Nature by Design' probably couldn't have avoided thinking about the parallel progress of computer games. Okay, so it was probably just me thinking that, but *Uridium 2* provides a perfect vehicle to discuss games evolution.

On booting, the code on the disk checks to see what kind of Amiga,

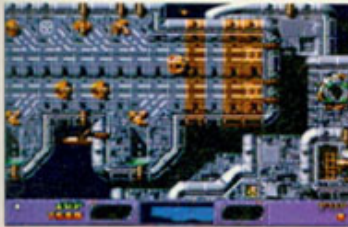
Yeah, we know we over-use the phrase 'blast from the past'. But this time it really

URIDIU





First of all, no-one believes you that the grabber doesn't work with Uridium 2.



Then you get sent to the Amiga Format office over lunch. Still no joy and no eats.



Finally, in desperation, you get sent down to the Sega Zone office to do them.



That works, but Sally says they're not as good as they usually are. Oh, thanks.



Now, as I'm captioning this, I find myself wondering what Sal was talking about.



Attack waves are never predictable. That's why there isn't one here now. Just like buses. Eh kids?

processor and chipset you own. If your set-up is any different from a standard 1.3 machine with one meg of memory, it's likely that you'll find enhancements of varying degrees of enormity, eg smoother scrolling, better sound samples and better homing missiles etc. Get the picture?

So with that little piece of techno-info out of the way, let's investigate Uridium 2's finer points.

Industrially decadent dreadnoughts are wreaking havoc throughout the lanes and systems of the local space motorways. Your job as a lone-wolf Manta commander is to put paid to these monolithic ram raiders by issuing go-slow destruction bans, ie destroying them.

This isn't easy. Each dreadnought carries an arsenal of quick-fire use-the-force-Luke defences in the shape of fast-fire joyriders. Nice touch beam-me-up Scotties reside in their attack patterns. With the original Uridium, hierarchy structure keep-formation onslaught lines were used. With U2 the flight orders change. No chance of Gestalt stasis here. Aggression impetus with extreme prejudice is required, rather than blasé 'I know the form' passionless stroke play. Keeping to this strategy leads to big-bang looks-better-kills-best weapon power-ups: smart bombs, ioniser toothpaste, fluorolasers etc. Some of these power-ups are vital to completion of rote sync plans.

For example, your recon pre-plan footprint (scanner) can be knocked out by the dreadnought's radio-scramble jammers. These can only be expiry defactoed by bomb or torpedo. Front-fire weapons having no discord factor effect in this instance whatsoever. (Nrrngggh! - Ed) Difficulty influence is progression-

feedback stimulated. This is only fair and just. Challenge must be maintained for smart-boy-out-of-the-way-sonny fire-fist freedom fighters. This it does. Walls have to be reckoned with. Space can be cleared for more doglight room and escape routes. Quickfire dexterity bucks will even find the further levels a wrist-stretch brain-jack. Praise be to

Allah for the improved tactile feedback control system. Original Uridium fans will love the speed-turn, over-roll back-flip quick-velocity new shape Mantas. Balance is kept in check. Some enemy commanders break formation and come for you, Darth-Vader-feral style. Nice touch high-involvement factor.

Lo-mo no-goes are the sequences after dreadnought destruction. The pretty-pic shoot-the-core animation impels dissonance in non-game context. What is it doing here? Big bore, no fun. More originality please on this section. It does no justice to the rest of the game.

Temporary faults aside (I am now devoid of polysyllables), just how much is Uridium 2 an evolution of the original? Control is massively improved, you can fly upside down and turn on a veritable sixpence. The difficulty factor is progressive. Up to nine different attack wave fighters defend each fleet. Extra weapons are much more desirable and collectable. Aggressive play is encouraged by this and rewarded accordingly, discouraging the rush for an early landing. Two-player modes have been tweaked. Rather than simple alternate turns, there's a lot more variety. A pair of you can attack the dreadnought all at once or alternatively fly lone missions with a drone on tow. Plenty of fun to be had there.

Also worth a special mention is the beauty of the graphics on the 1200 version. On later levels, the dreadnoughts are dotted with realistic rust-spots. The smoothness of the scroll is as good as anything the so-called 'superior' console jocks can come up with (would you expect anything less of the 1200 though?).

Fans of the original Uridium will love the sequel. Other unkind people will simply point out that Uridium 2 is Uridium with brass knobs on. And who knows? They might be right.

● STEVE MCGILL

"With U2 the flight orders change"



ON THE OTHER HAND...

Steve, Steve, where's your historical perspective? Actually, sod historical perspective. I never played the near-legendary C64 Uridium, and I never really liked the Spectrum version, but this is a stonking updated blast that truly belongs in the 90s, both time-wise and score-wise. It doesn't seem like much when you start, but it reels you in like an expert fisherman and soon becomes all but unputdownable. I mean, "It's still Uridium"? What kind of a criticism is that?
● STUART CAMPBELL

UPPERS Beautifully smooth scrolling and control interface. Lovely-to-look-at graphics. Interesting weapons and enemies. Vertical as well as horizontal scrolling. Superfast gameplay.

DOWNERS It's Uridium with ton-up tweaks and no great variation in gameplay.

THE BOTTOM LINE Its been quite a few years now since the original version was on the go. Despite the snazzy graphics and bolt-ons, it's still Uridium. **78** PERCENT

THE BOTTOM LINE Absolutely gorgeous. **A1200** Slick, fast, smooth and a joy to play. Am I allowed to say 'kinaesthetically experiential'? (No. - Ed)

is an updated classic shoot-'em-up.

M2



They call him 'Rich' Pelley - and not without good reason. For he is 'rich' indeed, though his wealth is measured in hints-and-tips-related knowledge, and not by pounds and pence. He uses his fortune for good, not evil - he uses it to maintain Complete Control.

DUNE 2

(Virgin)

Last month we may well have printed more *Dune 2* tips than you can shake a spice-rack at, but I'll wager my bottom dollar that old Marky-boy didn't mention that whilst under attack by an Ornithopter on the later levels, by adjusting the game speed to 'slow' you can effectively cheat by making it easier for your turrets to destroy them. Not for the first time, the skill of a man who plays computer games for a hobby (Mark Sezry of Dublin) is proven to outweigh that of a man who plays them for a living. (Oi, Rich! Cut that out! - Cam 'ex-Mark' Winstanley)



through walls and doors? (In the game, that is.) Well, nor did we - not until it was brought to light by Danny Allen of Witney and Piotr van Dun of Tilburg, Holland.

Here's how. Step up to where you want to walk through and turn around. Hold down Fire and tap the direction you are facing (as if you were going to run), but quickly pull the joystick back and remove your finger from the Fire button. With any luck you should magically take a step right through the wall or door in question. Very handy.

FLASHBACK

Erm, this is the really detailed bit to be used in conjunction with...



...this, which is the, erm, less detailed screen. Use them both wisely and you could go far.

(US Gold)

You very well know how to complete arguably Delphine's finest hour from the complete solution we ran two issues ago, but did you also know that it is possible to actually walk



What's a golf course doing in the middle of a game of violence and intrigue, eh?



Ah, that's more like it - dodgy dealings and a dead body in the street.

SYNDICATE

(Bullfrog)

It's only a select handful of games that make a massive impression on us here at AMIGA POWER. *Syndicate*, however, was one of the chosen few. We covered general mission tactics last month, but

some of you out there obviously decided that this wasn't enough. Space is short, so what we'll do is combine the thoughts of Steven McMahon of Sunderland, Lee Griffiths of Warblington, Lee Randall of Uxbridge and Ben Twitchen of Essex with



Call us impressionable, but this impressed us. Are we going soft, or is this a great game? Here's a clue - we're dead 'ard. Us.

that of Alex Trowers of Bullfrog (thanks, Alex). Weeding out the more rudimentary advice, we arrive at the following.

Research

The cost of research is proportional to time. So, by funding a research project at the start of the mission, commencing play, wandering around (or staying still) in relative safety for a time and Escaping back to the Statistics screen, although you will be told you have withdrawn from the mission, research will be complete. Stocks of every weapon and body part can be built up this way. Modify eyes, chest, arms, brain, legs and heart in that order for body refinements; heavy, assault and miscellaneous in that order for weapons.

Movement

Group mode can be devastating if under attack, hence the Scatter option. Once you've got the hang of it, you may like to try a more complex method: the 'Skirmish

Line'. Line your agents up side by side (to cover the width of the screen) and move forwards, concentrating your firepower on one spot if an enemy is engaged. The line should also be sufficiently wide to negate practically all enemy cover. It will also attack from multiple directions.

Not enough for you? Then try a 'Drag' formation: one well-armoured or shielded agent leads, two others act as flankers, the third blocks behind and to the side whilst the fourth supports with a Mini, Long Range, Laser or Gauss gun. The leader shows the locations of any enemies - if the flankers cannot deal with them, open up with the support agents.

New Agents

If an agent needs to be replaced, you can safely Persuade an enemy by placing all agents up against a building with a solid wall facing out of the screen, upping the Adrenalin of the Persuadertron agent and ambushing from a blind corner.



GUNSHIP 2000

(MicroProse)

They say you can't have too much of a good thing. We presented some discreet advice for virgin pilots last month, but for those with more experience, thanks are in order to Dominic Chung of Manchester for sharing this subsequent wisdom.



Search And Destroy is also a great Iggy Pop album.

Weapons

When arming helicopters, Hydra 70 M261s are the best general purpose rockets. M255s and M247s can be used, but are really intended for specific targets – check how plentiful they are in your mission orders. Use the longest range weapons available: TOW-2s have too short a range, Penguins are only of use on ships, and only two Mavericks can be carried so use Hellfires (or Hellfire MMWs with the Longbow Apache), else Hellstreaks. Carry Stingers or Sidewinders on your wingtips as well.

Damage

If your tail is damaged then reposition your course and activate the autopilot. If an engine is down, stay high up; go low and one missile can knock you out of the sky. When terminally damaged, land and remain stationary for around two minutes and the chances are you'll get rescued.

Tactics

When given a Search-and-Destroy mission, consign



Impossible to win (apparently), but dead pretty with it.

Rebellion is likely to occur in earlier missions if taxes are raised. You'll have to repeat the mission, but it is a chance to gain new agents. The enemy will have inferior weaponry, so if you have chest protection and modifications you can walk straight up to them.

Killing

To deal with any guard in the open: wait well out of range, and use the Long Range

your light section directly over the target on the large scale map for the point attack. Accompany your heavy section in search of the moving target, circling two choppers in corresponding directions while you fly direct to the marked area. Ensure your men are armed appropriately! Whenever possible, split up into two groups. So on Search-and-Rescue and Tactical Support missions, send one section to the secondary objective whilst you rally your troops.

Winning

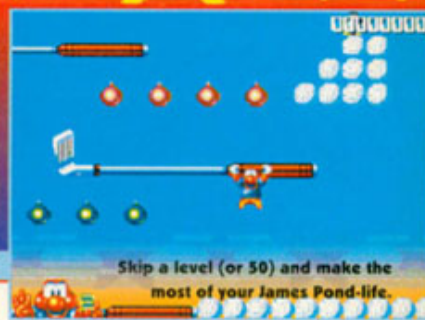
It is possible to win the Congressional Medal of Honour without all the settings on hard, as you may have thought. Set the cockpit switches to Flight – easy, Landing – no crashes, Avoidance – off, Wind – realistic, Visibility – realistic, CM and Enemy quality – crack. Use the other helicopters as shields in order to sustain as little damage as possible and destroying every target in sight as quickly as possible, and success should be yours. Congratulations!

Rifle. For guards in the open but not far enough away: if possible, use a car. If not, split the squad and attack from opposing directions, and when the agents are in close, switch to Group mode and move in, shooting as you go. For guards behind closed doors: use high Intelligence and Perception but low Adrenalin, and select Shotguns. Attacking from both sides, get right and burst in. If the guards are too far back then you'll need a different weapon.

ROBOCOD 1200

(Millennium)

They enhanced the backgrounds, they upgraded the colours, they improved the sound, they increased the number of levels and, er, they changed the cheat too. This time you have to type O.S. FRIENDLY on the title screen – pressing M in the game then calls up a menu, from which you just type a number (1-55) for that level.



Skip a level (or 50) and make the most of your James Pond-life.

ACTION REPLAY POKES

Hey! Hey! Hey! Action Replay pokes! (Much, if entirely for space-filling reasons, as we like receiving these things, it might be worth pointing out that we've absolutely no idea of how much use they are. How many people own an Action Replay cartridge? And if you wanted a cheat for a game you can get no further on, surely with minimal knowledge you could work it out yourself rather than wait around for someone else to? Still, every month we are invariably left with a-list-of-Action-Replay-pokes-sized gap to fill each month, so we'll keep on printing the things until someone persuades us to do otherwise.)

Game	Code	Effect
Arabian Nights	06BFBA	Lives
Assassin	085BQE	Lives
Alien ³	036CB1	Lives
Chuck Rock 2	00C899	Lives
Creatures	009F13	Lives
Gunship 2000	0CC713	Inside wing
	0CC729	Outside wing
	0CC73F	Wing tips
	0CBFD3	Inside wing (when Captain)
	0CBFE9	Outside wing (when Captain)
	0CBFFF	Wing tips (when Captain)
Lethal Weapon	09A1D5	Ammo
	09A1C9	Lives
Morph	0492C8	Morphs.

Thanks to Damian McAvoy of Wallsend for those.

Tactics

Commandeer a car by shooting at it, and drive over as many enemies as possible until the car explodes. Use energy shields when there is more than one squad of enemy agents. Head towards one group and the other should mow them down for you. To pick off lone enemies, place one man at the top of a flight of stairs, three facing different directions at the edge and the rest on the roof. You will have a clear shot of the enemy but his shot is greatly impaired. Entice enemies around corners, then toast them with your Flamethrower. Waiting behind doors with a Flamethrower bar-b-queing agents as they open the door is even more malicious. Stash your weapons when moving around a city that has an active police force – this may require you to lower your agents' intelligence to stop them getting their guns out whenever they are startled.

Global domination?

To complete the world tour, head from the UK to Russia and cross over to the top half of North America. Go down from Russia to Australia, proceed from the top of Africa downwards and finally work your way south through America, saving the Atlantic Accelerator for last.

And here's a fresh angle you can also try for the Atlantic Accelerator mission. Arm one cyborg with a V3 chest, legs, arms and heart, three Energy Shields, three Medikits and two Mini-guns and send him in alone. By alternating between energy shields you will be effectively invincible between their recharges. Wait until he's surrounded by enemies, self-destruct but immediately use a Medikit. You'll be unharmed, while the enemy are reduced to ashes. Repeat as necessary, but try to pick off lone targets, resting your vitality in-between.

NICKY 2

(Microids)

Here are the codes for this unashamedly Gallic platformer, sent in (with minimal irony) from

- Nicholas Leeds of Hertfordshire:
 Level 2 – DRACO
 Level 3 – ATIKH
 Level 4 – FIRAM
 Level 5 – LURNA
 Level 6 – PALET
 Level 7 – MIURA
 Level 8 – SLORY.



Young Nick certainly knows how to have a good time.

DON'T FORGET

Tips don't write themselves, you know. We'd certainly prefer not to rely on it for next issue's Complete Control. So unless you are prepared to find yourself staring at two completely blank blue pages next month, keep on sending in all your tips, cheats, level codes, pokes, mini-guides and anything and everything really to: Complete Control, AMIGA POWER, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.





2



1

the Kubo



3



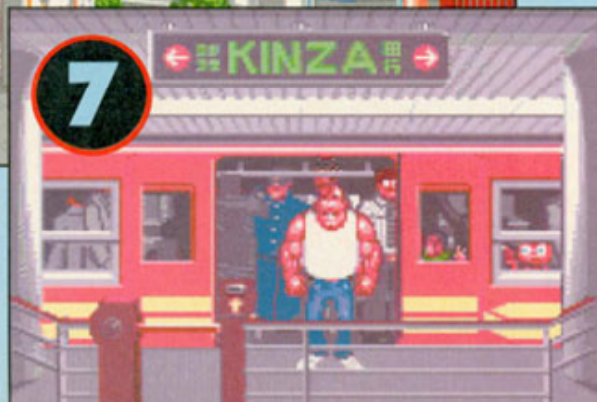
4



5



6



7

Konichi-wa gamers, it's Cam here, welcoming you to the world's only Anglo-Italian-Oriental graphic adventure. As owners of the game will know, completing the whole thing involves manipulating three characters. People not owning the game don't actually need to know this, and if you don't have *Nippon Safes* and are still reading, may I suggest that you go and read a book or something. Slaughterhouse Five by Kurt Vonnegut is an excellent novel, and I recommend it without reservation.

Okay, so in no particular order, here are tips to get two of the characters started. First up, there's Dino Fagioli, the strong-but-stupid type who gets into all sorts of moronic scrapes. After him is the first bit of Doug Nuts' solution, and coming up right now are the codes needed to get these two characters:

ネリホワイキ
NE RI HO WA I KI

ワキキララホ
WA KI KI RA RA HO

1 Soon after the start, Dino gets locked in the strong room, and to get him out you need to open the second and fourth boxes from the left.

2 Combining the beans and the statue will result in super beans, and eating them will give Dino special strength, which shows up as an icon. Take the Mona Lisa and the thermometer that are hanging on the wall, then open the first box on the right and break the contents with your special fist. Take out the lighter that's inside and fill it with the alcohol from the thermometer. Next, set fire to the Mona Lisa and hold the burning piece of priceless art history close to the fire detectors in the ceiling.

3 Your next task is to move the statues around, but when you arrange them with the smallest at the left and the tallest at the right, Dino knocks them over and gets fired. Downer.

4 After your chat outside the museum, speak to the taxi driver then go to the Hot Sushi bar. Head left from here until you go past the Imperial residence, then go into the park.

5 Head down until you reach the fountain. Handily, there's a coin in there, so grab it.

6 Go back to the newsstand and buy a ticket for Kinza. Go to Honest Chan's and exchange the lighter for an Allen wrench, and then catch the train.

7 Once out of the subway, go into the tower that's opposite and open the door. The handle comes off in your hand, but if you've got the Allen wrench like I told you to, then you can use that instead.



8 Go up the stairs and have a bit of a chin-wag with the guy who's contemplating bursting his fragile innards over the pavement at the end of a very long drop. Take the hat that's lying on the ground and examine the parcel twice, as you may miss something the first time. Head back down the tower and talk to the Femme Fatale and then wander into the sumo arena and talk to the fight organiser.

9 After this, go back to the subway and use the hat to beg for money in front of the newsstand, which'll give you the dosh to buy a ticket to Subu. Head back to the outside of the museum and take six leaflets from the distributor, and then go to the restaurant behind the park, where you'll be able to hand over a leaflet to get a free tasting.

10 When you eat some beans, you'll get the special strength again and be brawny enough to open the door at the sumo wrestler's place.

You Must Be Nuts!

11 Okay, onto Doug's story then. Once you're out of prison, turn left and go and rummage in the second bin, where you'll find a ring pull. Go to the right of the prison and vandalise the phone with the ring pull to call yourself a taxi.

12 Talk to the taxi driver before and after you've looked at the pendant.

13 Once he's decked you, go into the Hot Sushi bar and show the letter to Dr Ki. Talk to him then Max and Kos, and offer them a beer to find out where the Sumo arena is.

14 Enter the alleyway, go into Doug's house using the key and then open the chest. Take out the monkey wrench, open the pantry and use the wrench to get the magnet out of the radio. Turn on the telly with the remote control, then read the letter in the mail box on your way out. Go back to the museum and talk to the taxi driver then wander off and return again. Strange I know, but this time the pamphlet distributor will be there and you'll be able to get six leaflets off him. Use the wrench on the parking meter to get some cash.

15 Buy a ticket for Kinza and go there on the subway. You'll bump into Dino Fagioli there, so speak to him, and then go back into the subway. Here you should read the sign which will tell you about the Pachinko hall. Swap your wrench for a large pot at Honest Chan's and then head left until you reach the park.

16 Wander into here until you meet two punks, and hand them the red leaflet, which mysteriously prompts them to drop a magazine. Take this to the news vendor and he'll give you some money for it, which is odd, because normally that kind of transaction happens the other way round. Anyway, this gives you enough money to buy a subway ticket for Subu.

17 Subu's got a Pachinko hall, which is a kind of bizarro Japanese slot machine game involving thousands of tiny ball bearings. Handily, ball bearings are made of steel, so if you use your magnet on the machine, you'll be up to your eyeballs in Yen before you can utter the names of the top five international motorbike manufacturers.

18 Fill the pot up with the cascading torrents of Pachinko balls, then take all the balls and exchange them for cigars from the machine.

Have you worked out what's going on yet? Me neither, but I dare say that things will get clearer in the next thrilling instalment which'll be next month. Probably. ●



Where Am I? In The Village!

1 It'll be against all of your better instincts, but the first thing that you're going to see after setting out is a woman being murdered by three thugs. At this stage completely disregard the parable of The Good Samaritan, and on no account should you try to sort them out. They're too big and hard. As they say, all good things come to those who wait.

2 Instead, go to the village. Familiarise yourself with and use your map at all times from the 'Act' icon. This helps minimise wasted time and all that unpleasant fantasy-world disorientation.

Anyway, it won't be long until you reach the village. Once there, go to the well at its centre. Turn the crankshaft; you can only do this if you face the well straight on. A character looking suspiciously like ancient French soothsayer Nostradamus will appear from the well. He is Kudsac. Enrol him, take all of his money and then kill him. Do not, repeat do not let

him join your merry band. He is as deeply dodgy as Ken 'dodgy' Dodd trying to avoid a tax inspector. In a dodgem car.

(Allegedly. - Ed)

3-4 Done that? Good, now it's time to pay a visit to the village's two taverns. Again, if you find yourself walking around in circles, refer to the map.

Enrol an archer, a warrior, a scholar and a magician. If possible, enrol Eliandr the scholar and Zoloran the magician. An archer is indispensable, as you'll be finding out later on.

5-6 It's also well worth visiting the village's two shops; the armoury and the food store. Top up with a

sword, armour, as many arrows as you can carry and energy replenishing food.

Trouble With The Law

7-8 Now to inject a little heat into the adventure. Go down to the harbour in the south-west portion of the map. Your path will be blocked by one of the village chief's guards. He'll probably



ISHAR 2

Ishar 2 has proved to be every bit as successful (and just as tricky) as the original Istar. So, in order to optimise your doom-laden adventuring, here's Steve McGill with a playing guide that should see you all the way to Zach's Island without too much trouble.



ask you for some spare change. Belt him once and once only for his cheek. You should soon get arrested for doing this. Hey, what did you expect? You can't just go round hitting people all the time you know. You're not at school any more.

9 The chief, as with all these RPG-type head honchos, is a sullen fellow whose only interest in life appears to be the fact that his daughter's necklace is missing. This is your chance for a bit of

proper adventuring action. Say cheerio and prepare to leave the village...

10-11 Remember those big hard men whom you had to back off from at the start of the adventure? Now's your chance to go back and kick some serious posterior with your swords and arrows. Go down to the stone circles. Before you reach them, though, it's worth saving the game up to this point - just in case anything untoward happens, you understand. As this is your first foray into a melee, it is also worth experimenting with the chessboard formations of your group. In general, keep the weaking scholars and magicians to the rear. Oh, and finally, it's worth noting what the girl has to say as she dies, and don't forget to pick up the pendant which you'll find lying there on the ground.

You'll be tired after the big battle, so eat whatever food you've collected. Return to the village

and buy things like shields, helmets and more food. Even bigger fights are in store. No, not in the shop, in the future. You clot.

Fruits Of The Forest

12 The next part isn't strictly relevant to this part of the adventure, but the objects you collect will come in handy later on. Check your map and head east straight through the forest to the other side. If you can, try and travel along the relatively clear area of the woodland. You may have to fight some Orcs, but these guys are easy and should present no problem. Go as far east as you can and then turn north. You will find some black-and-white mushrooms. Pick these up and hold onto them. Further north from the mushrooms' location is a bunch of dandelions. Pick them up too.

13-14 Now for another of those rollicking fist-fights that make role-playing adventures such fun. Go back into the forest and

head for the clearing which is easily located on the map. Here, you will come across an ambidextrous giant of an Orc. This guy is your toughest opponent yet. Therefore, without wanting to sound too repetitive, make sure you save your progress before reaching the clearing. This Orc can absorb an immense amount of damage, so take care, and don't go wading in straight away with all weapons flailing - back off and keep hitting him with arrows until you figure it's safe enough for a bit of hand-to-hand.

15 You'll notice that the Orc was wearing a necklace. Gobsmaekingly, this is the necklace that the village chief has lost. Take it back to him. You have now won his favour. He forgets about the incident with his guard earlier on and allows you access to his boat. You are now ready for the next stage of the adventure. Before heading for

the harbour, spend the night in a tavern - eat, drink, sleep and you'll be more than ready for the next day ahead. ●



WITLESS?

Then you need...

THE LAST RESORT

with Rich Pelley



He may look like he's just stuck his head in a photocopier, but take it from us, Rich Pelley knows his games – and knows them well. His job depends on it.

Amiga games can be a bitch at times, but if you're in dire straits then I'm afraid you may well have come to the wrong place. There's no way I am going to hand over advice to anyone who has played a part in inflicting such a crap selection of records on the

general public. Everyone else is welcome to write in, of course – in fact, for the thousands of Amiga gamers worldwide who seek or offer advice, sticking a covering note in an envelope and whisking it off to The Last Resort is the usual status quo.

LOOSE ENDS

These readers appear to have dropped their car keys of computer-gaming confidence down the deep storm-drain of despair. Can you possibly call the AA?

Q "I'm stuck in CRUISE FOR A CORPSE: 1. When I speak to the statue of the mermaid in the rear hall, all I get is a strange code – what does this mean, and how do I get past it? And 2. Where is the tool box?"
Robert Cetti, London

Q "Hello. I'm Stuck on ISHAR 2. Hopelessly and completely. And only you can help me. Please. On Akeer's Island, I've drained the sewers and feasted my eyes upon a big room with a corridor leading from it. When I try to head down it, a spirit rises out of the floor and kills me. Weapons or spells seem to do it no harm, so how do I kill it?"
Matt Graham, Taunton

Q "In BAT 2 I can make an appointment with the bank manager and I can find the dead body, but that's about it. A pointer in the right direction would be nice."
Robert Penn, High Wycombe

Q "I am trapped on Level Four of the Research Complex on Bardot 4 in

SHADOWWORLDS. My progress is hampered when I arrive to either of the three planet surfaces, because all my time is spent trying to avoid a constant barrage of laser shots."
Garth Bright, Oldham

Q "After following the KGB solution in issue 25, I get back to Voulou, but the game keeps ending because I let the American leave. However, according to your solution, this was the correct thing to do. Are you sure?"
Andrew Whittle, Littlehampton

Q "While playing DEUTEROS I have no silver or platinum so I am unable to build any essential equipment such as R-Frames or Asteroid Mining Attachments. I've tried trading with the Mechanoids but they refuse, and when I build an Orbital Factory around a planet with the respective elements on, such as the moon, there is no R-Frame present."
Andrew Clarke, Manchester

Q "I've tried using the tip in AMIGA POWER 18 concerning Level Two

of the Treiadwyl Dungeon of LEGEND to gain access to the south in the room with the damage door, but I still can't get a path to the door."
Anon

Q "I'm also a bit stuck too in the same game (LEGEND). My problem lies in a room on Level Eight of Fagranc. The door to the right seems to be completely immovable, beyond the door to the left is a pillar which reads 'Venture forwards with your rune' and a Paralyse rune on a brown slab, and in front of the floor pressure pad there are 16 magic circles and a chest. If anyone is still with me, then maybe they could help me out."
Laurence Browne, Luton

Q "In HEIMDALL, although I've apparently collected everything on World Two, there is still one door, which I think leads to the Orchard of Iduna, that I can't unlock. How the heck do I open it?"
Steve Jarvis, Rugby

Q "I'm afraid it's EYE OF THE BEHOLDER 2 which is giving me

hassle – again. More specifically, my problems are:

1. A note informs me that there are only four horns and they must not fall into the wrong hands, but I have only been able to get my hands the one which I found with the note in the guard barracks or the guard's chambers in the underground level.

2. The note also mentions a seal. I suspect that this is the stone carving of the four winds which you find as you enter the Darkmoon Temple, but again I am not entirely certain about this.

3. To break the seal do I need to blow all four horns? And do I need to do this in any particular order?

4. In the underground level I have come to a door that requires a skull key but I have no idea where it is.

5. And finally I have arrived at a door with a mouth in the cleric's chambers. This door says that none may pass without the mark of Darkmoon. Where is it, and how do I open the door with it?"
Kenneth Shackleton, Cheshire

Q "In the first base of CAPTIVE, when I throw the dynamite into the generators and run out there is a wall blocking my escape so I always get caught in the explosion. Is there another way out? Also, how do I use the camera, laser and sonic packs? Do I require more experience points?"
Rich O'Meara, Ireland



MONKEY ISLAND 2

Q "On Part Two I have located the first piece of the map, but when I try to procure the second from the bottom of the cliff with the fishing rod, a seagull always beats me to it. What am I doing wrong?"
Mark Knopfler, So Far Away

A (You're fired. - Ed)

HOOK

Q "How do you get the Pirate's uniform? I've tried pinching it from Mrs Smeedles' washing line with the pole."
Sirish Parekh, Preston

A I trust you already own the hat. Knock on Mrs Smeedles' wash-room door but - and this is the trick - swing back on the rope before she opens it. Go back all the way round to round about where the game started (I can't quite remember where - sorry) and you should be able to snatch the jacket with the pole. If you were already doing this, you just need to do it faster!

Q "I have no money to purchase a magnet to get Dr Chop's clock."
Kerem Cetindamar, Leicester

A Try to pick up the pots next to the portcullis on Hook's ship and you will find some gold. This should secure you the magnet from the Pirate tailors that you have been dreaming of.

FLASHBACK

Q "On Section Two I am unable to reach the second platform from the first. I must be doing something quite heftily wrong, but what?"
Martin Lowrie, Co Durham

A Thijs Vissia of Apeldoorn, Holland (should he ever get to read this) was having similar problems. The majority of Flashback players will be sniggering behind their anoraks over this one, because your problem is merely lack of comprehension of the controls. By simultaneously pressing then releasing a direction and Fire, Conrad will run and automatically catch hold of a higher floor, including floors which are slightly too high to grab with a running jump. Why the instruction manual was not consulted on this, I think we'd better not ask.

MEGA LO MANIA

Q "I am infuriatingly stuck on Epoch Seven. Can you give me the codes to Epochs Eight and Nine?"
Richard Newman, Berkshire

A "I'll do better than that - I'll offer two codes for each: MMYAFZEZXF and SOYACRZXFE for Epoch Eight, and IQUBTYQSPAD and ORUBOVESPAE for Epoch Nine.

WIZKID

Q "How do I do Level Five? Do the secret screens have anything to do with it? How do I gain my legs? And does it lead to Level Six or must I take a different route?"
Glen Turner, Sunderland

CASES CLOSED

These readers have been, as Mr Kipling would have it, 'exceedingly' helpful in sorting out the more unfortunate among you. We'd send them a cake each only they'd go stale in the post.

GRAHAM TAYLOR'S SOCCER CHALLENGE

Q Back in May, James Wylie of Somewhereorther was worried that shortly after the start of the season, his players' ratings dropped off alarmingly. Jonathan Davies offered his advice but, even though our expectations weren't high, this proved about as useful as a closed binocular-hire shop on the edge of a nudist beach.

A "To constantly raise player values, train the team as a whole as follows (ceasing training on days you have a game):

Sunday - indoor game and circuit training
Monday - circuit training and outdoor game
Tuesday - rest
Weds - rest
Thursday - outdoor game and skills
Friday - skills and set pieces
Saturday - rest.

Keep to this pattern all year round, arranging a friendly at home once a month on Tuesday or Saturdays when the season ends."

Paul Robson, Preston

LEMMINGS 2

Q How could Michael Allison of Yorkshire get to the crux of Beach Level Seven two issues ago?

A "Having made the second Lemming into a Runner, wait until the first Lemming reaches the slit below and make him a Platformer to block it. Now the majority of the Lems are safe, concentrate on the Runner. Swim him across the lake, bash him through the palm tree, at the peak of the handle appoint him a Jumper and do so again the instant he has rebounded from the metal block. Jump the purple clam, make him a Miner at the first red-striped hut, a

Basher when he reaches the level of the sand, a Platformer across the gap, and a Basher through the green bucket to release the others. Appoint the first Lem to reach the can a Basher and watch them trundle home."

Mark Brooks, London

BODY BLOWS

Q Can you defeat Kossak with either Junior or Lo-ray in arcade mode?
A Allen of Bristol couldn't - the girl.

A "Hold down fire to throw a fireball at him, then jump-kick him.

Immediately preceding this, bend down, kick him, jump away and repeat as necessary. If he attempts his spinning move at you, stay well clear and have a fireball tucked up your sleeve to whip out at the appropriate moment. And be sure to remember to leap back after a sweep kick or you'll be fried."

Who forgot to include their name, eh?

DEUTEROS

Q "What on earth is the Sonic Blaster for?" pondered Khalid Shawwa (and his brother) of Croydon.

A "It is fusion-powered, emits pulses at preset intervals and frequencies, and boasts a power adjuster. But it's not much cop as a weapon. All it does is play music."
Ray Smith, Bletchley

KID GLOVES 2

Q Back in issue 19 Adam Brumhead was stuck on the Mermaid boss. Unless Leicestershire is a lot further away than I always imagined, I've no idea why this reply has taken so long to reach the AP office.

A "World One, Stage Two is your first stop. When you are next to the snowballs, head left before killing them

and you'll meet a bear. Kill him and collect the resulting fireballs. Complete the stage, then on the next leap from the ice cube on its initial ascent, go across the branches and kill the snake. Take a running jump onto the ledge, kill the snowball and pocket the critter. Stopping off to kill the fish and take the anchor from World Two Part Two, destruction of the Mermaid boss should prove no problem with a little help from the fireballs and the critters."

John Perry (age 9), Leicestershire

D/GENERATION

Q Phillip Marshall of New Zealand was about this [MIMES SMALL GAP BETWEEN FINGERS] close to completing Mindscape's masterpiece, but the fake Derrida had him stumped.

A "Meet, talk to and touch Derrida. In the screen to the right, walk diagonally right and down, then right and up to exit the Eye screen and rendezvous with the fake Derrida. Talk to him, walk to the top of the cross, exit first this screen, and then the following screen to the right.

The appearance and movement of the glowing man is your cue to hurry left and follow the red arrow path down to the key hole at the bottom left. Touch it when the man is in front of the radar dish to kill him. Return to the glowing man's abode, locate the computer and use the jet-pack to fly away."

Ray Smith, Bletchley

Would you believe it? It seems like hours since I started marshalling together this month's Last Resort, and already we've reached the end. Please make my life worthwhile by sending your 'Questions' or 'Answers' (marked accordingly) to: The Last Resort, AMIGA POWER, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Cheers!

A Go to the shop and buy a hidden screen, and lose all of your stars by headbutting the bombs. You'll be sent back to the altar, but you won't lose a life. Use the cross to kill Dracula and a kitten will appear. In answer to your second question, there are no legs in this round, and in answer to the third, it is possible (if ill-advisable) to skip from Level Four.

HEIMDALL

Q (I'm quoting direct here. - Rich)
"I am having some mager problems with Core design game, and I could do with some hepl. I have completed the first world, were I found Thor's Hammer, but I can not find Frey's Spear in Utgard. I have found the apple and the necklace but I can not locate the ited to give to the youngest sister. I have been trying to find it for nerly

a mouth now and it slowly driving me mad could you please please help."
Stephen Palmer, Dorset

A Sounds likes you need rather more help with your English to me, young man. (Thanks Rich, you're all heart. - Ed)

LOGICAL

Q "Recently I became the member of AMIGA POWER subscriber family. At present this letter I am writing you since I am not able to finish Level 81 in time due. So I cannot go further. Please let me help with further passwords since with them I can go further with this game."
Marko Davila, Berislaviceva, Croatia

A Okey-dokey. The code for Level 82 is THE SECRETS. And to save you

having to write in again, you might also like to try ON THE ROAD, ITS LOGICAL, TOMORROW or FINAL SURPRISE. And if you'd like to take a look at the Construction Kit, enter THE FINAL CUT. (Well done Rich, that's better. - Ed)

LURE OF THE TEMPTRESS

Q "My disguise as Selina freed the girl, and I now know that I must find the dragon. But how?"
Scott Hetherington, Inverness

A No issue 19, Scott? Visit Luthern's mum and take the missing herb to Goewin who will mix up the potion necessary for control of the dragon, have a chat with Grub in front of the Maggie, and head off for Weregate... ●



BLASTAR

Gratuitous plotline aho! Alien ships stream out of a nether dimension to obliterate the Earth. Looks like a cue for non-stop blasting to me.



The landscape wobbles beneath you on this level.



Bang, blam, shoot, explode, kapow, zap, boom, etc.

The best shoot-'em-up

on the Amiga. Not!

a proven track record for bringing out impressive games, it looks great and sounds wonderful, boasting 800K of music and 200K of sound effects. It's even got a groovy intro sequence that's wonderfully filmic and shows the last few moments of your mothership as aliens attack Earth. And then at the last hurdle, you play it and realise that all the flashy graphics and clever programming were in vain since it just isn't any fun.

Blastar's a multi-directionally scrolling

shoot-'em-up that follows the typically flimsy plot line of you being Earth's last line of defence, and you having to blast your way through 12 stages to destroy the threat of slimy aliens paddling in the Gulf of Mexico and polluting Covent Garden with their septic xenomorphic filth. You've got the idea, then? Fly round, shoot things, pick up power-ups, kill things, use smart bombs, kill things, and so on.

The high point of this carnage is undoubtedly the amount of thought that's gone into making it look pretty. The scanner in the bottom corner pulses, some of the backgrounds throb and heave like real living tissue, and there are loads of odd creatures that float, run and slither their way towards you. You explode, they explode, everything explodes, but that's what the game's all about.

And the bad side? Well, that's what the rest of the review's about. For a start, the intro sequence is all very pretty and lovely and everything, but once you've seen it a couple of times, then that's it really. Unfortunately, it comes on disk one, as does the 'Start Game' part of the game, and the rest of it comes on disk two, so every time you start a game or get killed, you've got to swap a disk. Wouldn't it have been a much better idea to put the last levels on the intro disk, and the start-up bit on the same disk as the first few levels? I think so.



Left: You can tell by the scanner that this is a main target...

But it does look like everything else.

Game: Blastar
Publisher: Core
Authors: In house
Price: £25.99
Release: Now

Think of a kit-car Ferrari replica. It's got that rich ruby-red paint job, the badge of a prancing horse on the bonnet, the bucket seats, the fat tyres and even that cute little chrome gate on the gear stick. But under this fantastic exterior lurks an old car, a chassis and engine from some other cheaper, older car. It looks like a Prince Of The Road, but in reality it's just never going to live up to your expectations.

Which brings me neatly round to *Blastar*, which at first seems to have all the prerequisites of a real stunner. It comes from Core, who have

"All the prerequisites of a real stunner"

In no uncertain terms, the computer tells the operator that all is not well in the ionosphere.

UPPERS Nice graphics, sound and introduction sequence. Yeah, great.

DOWNERS Dull as dishwater, and about as much fun as falling in a smelly old canal. In January.

THE BOTTOM LINE
Inspid shoot-'em-up that fails to even live up to the pretty pictures on the box. **37** PERCENT

THE BOTTOM LINE
A1200 Much as I'd like to say that the gameplay really comes alive on the faster machine, I cannot. Because it would be a massive lie.

AMIGA POWER NOVEMBER 1993



NO MATCH
WEEK 1 OF 1993

MONDAY



Join us in the incredible world of Football Management, where all your responsibilities are shown in easy-to-decipher icons.

Game: Premier Manager 2
Publisher: Gremlin
Authors: In house
Price: £25.99
Release: Out now

PROLOGUE: I gazed at the package on my desk. "Have fun, now!" chirruped Stuart, skipping out of the room, as every reviewing instinct told me to run away as quickly as possible.

Right. A football management game, then. *Premier Manager 2* is the sequel to what's widely regarded as just about the best football management game there is. That fact, and Tim Tucker's unquenchable joie de vivre, netted the original *Premier Manager* an unprecedented 80% in AP22. But what's so good about it? And – more to the point – what's so good about the sequel? And is what's good about the sequel better than what's good about the original? And, furthermore, are there things that are good about the sequel that aren't even in the original?

First, the basics. You're the manager of a lowly Conference football club (having initially been torn between Dover Athletic, Woking and Merthyr Tydfil, I eventually plumped for Bath City – ever the patriot), and by managing it in the correct fashion you've got to try to get it promoted to the 'FA Carling Premiership', or whatever they're insisting on calling it these days.

'Managing' involves buying and selling players, choosing team tactics, recruiting trainers and physios, looking after the ground, jiggling finances about, and a host of other responsibilities. And there's football in there too. Each time your team participates in a match you'll be given a blow by blow account of the action – "Brown moves forward", "Smithers shoots", "Ferguson deflects" etc – along with animated sequences on one of those illuminated scoreboard things to illustrate the really exciting bits. It's not quite match highlights in the traditional, stick-

If only there was a more glamorous side...



A thrilling world where the crowd cheers you on.

Match statistics for Bath City vs. Bath City:

WEATHER: WIND & CLOUDY	10:45
ALDITCHMAN GOAL	4:23
SMITHERS ATTENDED	18
TACKLES: MAN	4:22
BATH CITY GOAL	
SMITHERS ATTENDED	15
TACKLES: MAN	

A dynamic, ever-changing world of corporate decisions.

clearly, attractively almost. There's even a fab tune at the start, with samples like "What a lovely bend on that ball", and "Goal!".

It avoids over-complicating things, providing enough to make an absorbing game without going into tedious detail. And it's fast. Some football management games lock up for whole minutes at a time while they do their sums; with this you're barely aware it's doing any.

"It's rather amusing to bump the speed up to ultra-fast"

Match Tactics and Player Info for Bath City:

PS	PLAYER NAME	NM	TK	PS	SH	CR	F
1	HEDGES	1	10	10	10	10	10
1	JONES	1	10	10	10	10	10
1	VERNON	1	10	10	10	10	10
1	CROWLEY	1	10	10	10	10	10
1	COWINS	1	10	10	10	10	10
1	BANKS	1	10	10	10	10	10
1	HESTON	1	10	10	10	10	10
1	KITNEY	1	10	10	10	10	10
1	RAMDALL	1	10	10	10	10	10
1	KINGS	1	10	10	10	10	10

Watch your pants ignite at the sheer excitement.

If you've already played the original, don't expect any surprises. *Premier Manager 2* is more of an update than an all-new product, and you'd have to be alarmingly serious about the game to want to own both.

Oh, and look out if you're part of a football management-loving gang of chums – the original's four-player option has been reduced to a still-optimistic two-player one.

EPILOGUE: "Well, I suppose that wasn't too painful," I admitted grudgingly, as I handed the three disks (hard drive installable, mark you) back to Stuart. "But if it's okay by you, I won't be reviewing any more football management games for AMIGA POWER." Stuart smiled knowingly.

● JONATHAN DAVIES

PREMIER MANAGER 2

Football games, eh? Some folk can't get enough of them.



But there is! Check her out, lads, in all of her Manageress-like glory. And then...



UPPERS Slick, fast, friendly and nice to look at. The worrying number of people who've been craving a sequel to *Premier Manager* can feel justly, erm, something or other.

DOWNERS No proper match highlights. And, if you've yet to get down to the football management beat, even this treat is unlikely to tempt you onto the dancefloor.

THE BOTTOM LINE
One of the Amiga's best football management games just got a whole lot better!
(Steady on, JD. - Ed)

THE BOTTOM LINE
You're expecting me to say "It's pretty much the same", aren't you? Well, you're right.

AMIGA POWER NOVEMBER 1993



79



The Space Marine corps are the fearless freedom fighters of tomorrow.

Which is a shame, because I wanted to be.

SPACE HULK

Don't make these aliens

Game: Space Hulk
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Authors: In house
Price: £24.99
Release: Out now

Some things demand to be ripped off. Not ripped off like Robert Maxwell's pensioners, I mean copied artistically. For example, James Brown must have known that he couldn't get away with being so funky without a few thousand other people thinking, "I'd love to sound like that." One of the most emulated ideas of recent times has to be Aliens. Everything from TV ads to, er, computer games have taken a page out of that book (*But it's a film.* - Ed) and created their very own Aliens scenario.

Space Hulk has got 'Aliens' written all over it. The basic plot involves a group of Space Marines (like Ripley and co) fighting a host of alien creatures known as Genestealers (God knows what they do with all those Levis), who inhabit derelict spacecraft. The Genestealers look so similar to Giger's exo-skeletal nightmares, you'd be forgiven for thinking the whole idea had been ripped off wholesale. Because you'd be absolutely right.

Space Hulk isn't the first game to put the Aliens idea onto the Amiga. Ignoring the obvious Alien 3 (when it eventually comes out), Alien Breed springs to mind, and indeed Space Hulk is very much a mixture between Team 17's overhead view shoot-'em-up and Dungeon Master - with a few of its own ideas thrown in too.

You control teams of special Space Marines known as Terminators (another familiar phrase) engaged in the endless task of defeating the Genestealers. The main view screen offers the *Dungeon-Master-*

type view point, and you control your troops moving down corridors in very much the same way as the classic RPG. You can easily switch between the different members of your team, too, enabling you to create covering

situations and so on.

The trouble is, Genestealers move very quickly, much quicker than your cumbersome Terminators, and if your only control was the "ambuling along corridors" variety, the whole team would be dead within minutes.

Instead you need to go to the Planning Screen, where you can determine the paths of all the different Terminators in your group and set them all off at once. For this you utilise the Freeze Time option, which gives you a limited amount of time in which to plan your assault. When you're not freezing time, you really are working against the clock, as the blighters often storm you before you can say "Sigourney Weaver".

The crux of play, then, is a sort of strategy combat game. Get your troops into the most effective positions

against the alien threat, set time back to normal and do battle.

You can leave your troops to fight it out, but they don't last very long without your help, so you're constantly skipping back to the main view screen to fight. This makes the action very start-stop, as you constantly flit between real time, frozen time, planning stages and main views. As such, it works very well. The atmosphere is highly-charged tension, very like that scene in Alien where they're

The glowing blobs indicate Genestealer presence. Run!

Here you can pre-determine the route a marine takes.

angry - you wouldn't like them then.

hunting the creature through the ship. The music and sound enhance this superbly, and you're soon caught in the spell.

What lets it down is the lack of variety. You never see any other aliens apart from the Genestealers, which puts it behind even the archaic (but still great) *Dungeon Master* for diversity. There are other assignments, like retrieving objects from the hulks, but you're still subjected to lots of very similar looking interiors, and the odd flash of Genestealers either tearing you to pieces (it happens a lot) or going up in flames. *Space Hulk* is a game to get seriously involved in, but you shouldn't expect many too surprises.

● TIM TUCKER



▲ **UPPERS** Superb sense of atmosphere, excellent strategy elements, great sound. It's very large too, with over forty missions to accomplish.

▼ **DOWNERS** Too much of the same, with not even any variable alien life forms to face (well not as far as I've been, anyway). Also, disk swapping; the three disks enjoy a good deal of drive hopping during a session.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Space Hulk takes a lot of elements from other sources, but still retains its own identity. Once you're into it, you're hooked, but you may find yourself losing interest just as quickly.

76

THE BOTTOM LINE

A1200 Works absolutely fine on the 1200 with no hassle, and scrolling around the map is improved too.

"Space Hulk has got 'Aliens' written all over it"





I'm a troll, roll-de-el and I want you for my supper. Yum!



DIGGERS

Subterranean? Homesick? The CD32 classic hits the A1200.

Game: Diggers A1200
Publisher: Millennium
Author: Toby Simpson
Price: £34.99
Release: Out now

For many a long month now I've been dreading something like this happening. You know how you sometimes see a game and you think "This is a really worthy game but, to be absolutely honest, I don't really like it"? You can see that it's quite a clever idea and it's been very well put together and all that but somehow it just doesn't grab you. It happens to me a lot. A lot of things happen to me a lot, though, so I suppose I'm just unlucky like that. I just hoped they wouldn't happen to me when I was trying to review a game.

Diggers... blah blah... CD32... blah... bundle... blah blah – you probably know the story by now. You control a party of small digging chaps who, er, dig. They dig in search of mineral wealth and, should their digging exploits prove successful, they make huge profits and you win. You have independent control over each of a party of five of the little chaps and you can tell them to walk or to dig in any direction. They carry on doing whatever you tell them to do until, (a) they hit an obstacle, (b) they get bored, or (c) something else happens.

Diggers from others races try to beat up your diggers should they happen upon them. And that's it. Pretty much.

Apart from the 'music'. Have you ever played around with a tape recorder? You know that weird wowing noise you get when you wind it by hand? It sounds quite amusing, doesn't it? At first. But the appeal dwindles after about, say, a couple of minutes. After three hours you feel like Harry Palmer in *The Ipcress File* and you're ready to do anything anyone tells you – JUST MAKE THAT AWFUL NOISE STOP.

A bit negative so far, isn't it? And that's what's been giving me

traumas. In just about every respect (apart from the 'music') *Diggers* does everything a good game should do and does it jolly well. So why didn't I enjoy it? What's wrong with it?

As far as I can make out, there's nothing actually wrong with it, except that it's not, actually, fun to play. I spoke to a number of 'actual experts' on the subject and we agreed that there was something about the whole experience that wasn't quite right. Something about the way you rapidly lose track of at least two of your party and find that they've been vapourised while you weren't looking annoyed us a little. Then there was the way you could play merrily for an hour and a half with your remaining three diggers, amassing wealth, buying mining equipment, and generally having an absorbing time of it, only to find that, without any prior warning, the computer's diggers have won. No warning, no clues, no 'by your leave' – you've lost, mate, off you go. We didn't think that was fun.

And that brings us to the inevitable last two paragraphs where I search valiantly for a final mark and some way of justifying it to you, The Reader. Let's examine the evidence. There's a game here with almost everything we look for in a Good Game.

It's even been improved over the CD32 version, with some of the more annoying quirks that we complained about ironed out, although you lose four of the 32 worlds. The sound's vile, but you can't have everything.

But there was something not quite right about the whole thing. I didn't really feel as if I'd had a good time playing it and I don't think I'd play it again.

But it seemed like it should have been such a good game. Damn, that's three closing paragraphs and I said I was only going to do two.

● TIM NORRIS

"It's not, actually, fun to play"



One Digger looks pretty much like another, to the untrained eye.



It's kinda, like pretty conceptual. Muh?

And, tonight on Blind Date...

The little house was at the mercy of the elements. Ahhhhh!



So why isn't this thing making a noise?

UPPERS It's an extremely well-crafted game that looks and plays extremely, er, well.

DOWNERS I didn't enjoy it. Sorry.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Somewhere there's a rest home for game reviewers who have been sent dribbling mad bonkers by having to find a way of being fair to a game that they think is terribly worthy and has everything a good game should have, but which, in the end, didn't really grab them, or anyone they know. I'm off there now.

72 RECENT



Garn! You can't tell the orcs from the priests these days. Now, when I was a lad...

pretty much the same ground, only the setting's in a space station.

It's a fairly standard dungeon romp, but with a really natty control system that involves clicking on different limbs for different tasks, so you click on the head and then an object to look at something, an arm and then a baddie to fight him, and so on. You wander round killing people, picking up clues and generally being a stereotypical fantasy character until, well, until you get to the end, I suppose.

The gimmick that occasionally adds to the gameplay is the realistic lighting effects, which create pools of light around each light source. Some puzzles require you to light certain areas, and loads of handy objects aren't visible until you light the room. It's all very clever and moody, and works surprisingly well, even though it's a tad blocky. There's nothing particularly original in all of this, but at the same time there's very little you can find to complain about either. Top fantasy fun all round, if you ask me.

● CAM WINSTANLEY

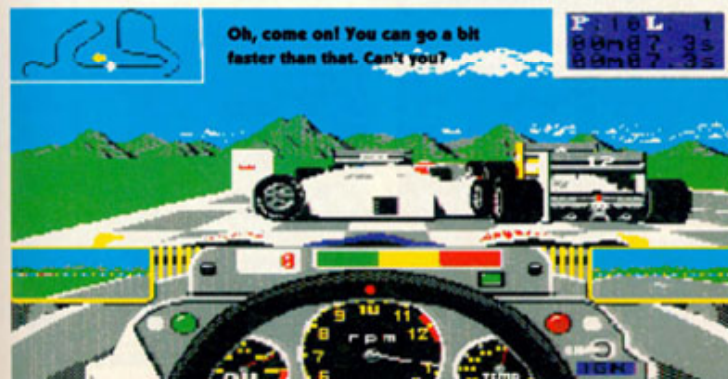
THE BOTTOM LINE
It's moody, atmospheric and claustrophobic – despite its clunky graphics, blocky lighting and dodgy scrolling rather than because of them – and looks a tad dated compared to the similar but much better sequel *Shadowlands*. However, it's still a great adventure with one of the friendliest player interfaces I've ever seen on an RPG.

80 PERCENT

GRAND PRIX CIRCUIT

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

"An awesome racing experience..." proclaims the quote on the front of the



box. A quick flick through the now-legendary AP dictionary reveals one of the definitions of 'awesome' to be 'dreadful', which is altogether a far more appropriate usage of the English language for this descent from the present.

Apparently this grand-daddy of Formula One racing offers a world of high-tech, high-speed, incomparably glamorous excitement. Actually, it's about as exciting as Nigel Mansell explaining his golfing handicap while speaking into the wrong camera. Oh well.

Grand Prix Circuit harks back to the days when all you needed to sell an Amiga game was to have more colours, better sound and a faster screen update than the Commodore 64. Unfortunately, though, GPC can't even manage these minimal requirements. This wouldn't be too much of a handicap if the car felt like a car should, but again, expectations are cruelly dashed.

Rather than righting itself, the car slews around the road until the joystick driver corrects the lurch, effectively ruining any chance you thought you had of driving in a straight line. If you drove in this manner in real life, Formula One car or not, it wouldn't be long until you encountered a uniformed gentleman driving a nice white vehicle with a pretty blue light on top requesting you to blow into a little plastic bag.

GPC showed its age in 1988 before it was even released. Yes it is a grand-daddy of the genre, but this grand-daddy should have been locked up in a secure rest-home a long time ago. Top Tip: save the tenner GPC would fleece you of and put it toward *Formula One Grand Prix* from Microprose. It's worth it.

● STEVE MCGILL

THE BOTTOM LINE
Grand Prix Circuit suffers from negligible sound, limited screen colours, poor frame update and dreadful handling. Apart from that, it's pretty terrible.

24 PERCENT

SUPER SPACE INVADERS



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

Space Invaders, eh? Where would we all be without *Space Invaders*? *Space Invaders*, *Space Invaders*, *Space Invaders*. But that's enough nostalgia. The best thing about *Space Invaders* is that we don't have to play it any more, because if we want a nostalgic thrill we can get all the atmosphere of *Space Invaders* in a far better game, the brilliant arcade sequel. *Super Space Invaders* (the



How many you got today, Stan? Just two? Well, we are going to have to try harder.

coin-op) is a fast, pretty, action-packed blast with all the feel of its grandparent but a truckload of '90s-style gameplay dropped in on top (like *Smash TV* or *Strike Force*, which we've ascertained since last month is the real name of Midway's *Defender 3*, as seen in *Overkill*), and it's great. However, *Super Space Invaders* (the Amiga game) is, er, *Space Invaders*. *Space Invaders*, *Space Invaders*, *Space Invaders*.

What went wrong here? It's not like *SSI* is the most technically demanding arcade game ever written – the sprites are mostly pretty titchy, they don't do anything particularly clever like spin round or zoom in and out of the screen, there aren't particularly many of them (not



They're a bit sulky, these aliens. Anybody'd think they were hard done by.

compared to *Smash TV*, or *Overkill*, or even PD games like *Microbes*). So how come this game is so horribly, unplayably slow? How come it looks so totally poxy? How come it doesn't even recognise a second disk drive? I can't believe there was too little memory left to check, (which is the usual, pathetic excuse), not in *Space Invaders*. (And I didn't have the heart to dock *SSI* the usual 10% for this dimly common flaw – it would have been like kicking a cripple.) These and other flaws mean

that in play, Amiga *SSI* is uncannily like playing the original *Space Invaders*, which somewhat defeats the object of the exercise.

It's a shame, because the programmers are obviously talented enough (as can be seen in the nifty little intro animations and the large chunks of code they devote to introducing themselves in the demo sequence), but they clearly didn't bother their backsides when they were writing this.

● STUART CAMPBELL

THE BOTTOM LINE
Probably the Amiga's worst coin-op conversion ever, and a godawful game in its own right. Heads should have rolled for it – this re-release only adds insult to injury.

14 PERCENT



THE IMMORTAL

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

The one thing that's fairly obvious about all the characters in *The Immortal* is that their grip on life is a lot more tenuous than the name suggests. They know that they're nothing more than an eternal soul in a fragile package of fluids and soft tissues simply because at every twist and turn, there are examples of organs, tubes and other assorted viscera lying around all over the place.

The Immortal's the sort of graphically violent adventure game that would cause (yet) another campaign against computer games if Mary Whitehouse or one of her clones ever became aware of its existence. You control a wizardly-type character on a quest to free your elderly teacher Mordamir from an uncertain fate. Seeing as your character's no spring chicken, we can only assume that Mordamir's a truly elderly duffer, which translates as 'a wise and most powerful



QWAK



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

Now here's a funny thing – a brand-new budget release from Team 17, almost unheralded, technically simplistic, no scrolling of any kind, and touted as the new *Bubble Bobble*. Caught me out, anyway.

Qwak is a platform collect-'em-up, very much in the style of the aforementioned Taito coin-op classic. You're a little duck (or if you've got a friend, two little ducks) (*House! - Ed*), and you flap around dozens of single-screen, er, screens collecting keys and fruit, as is usually the way with this sort of thing. It's unnervingly frantic, with lots and lots of little sprites zinging about all over the place in an initially confusing manner, but once you've been playing for a few minutes things begin to settle down a bit perception-wise and you can work out what's going on. Assuming that

there's only the one of you, that is – with two players on at once, it's all a frenzied blur of activity as you race each other to grab all the goodies.

Not only that, though, but the two-player mode also features elements of the veteran coin-op *Joust*, in that you get different kinds of screens – ones in which you have to co-operate with the other player, ones

in which you can shoot each other and have to battle for power-ups and so on. (Well, when I say 'and so on', what I actually mean is 'and that's it', but it sounds better the first way.)

Qwak is, as billed, less than astounding from a technical point of view. The graphics, to be honest, aren't much above PD standard, and for a cutesy arcade game the colours are horribly wishy-washy. Sound is good, though, with endearingly annoying tunes and intelligent use of jingles when 'special' things happen, and disk accessing, joyfully, is almost completely absent – you can zip through this game just as fast as you like, with no tedious hanging about looking at 'Loading... Please Wait' messages or watching bonus counts between screens. It's user-friendly to the nth degree, and it's about time something was.

It's full of nice touches, too, like the way the expiry of your time limit doesn't result in instant death, but instead in a rain of spiky cogs which still give you a chance of getting to the exit, or the hidden bonuses like the 'Peacefully done' 10,000 points you get if you complete a screen without shooting any of the baddies. Also, the stages within each of the eight levels come in random order (and sometimes get flipped around horizontally), so you don't have to get bored looking at exactly all the same screens if you get stuck on one particular stage all the time. There are so many little things like this scattered around in *Qwak*, in fact, that it could almost have been written by the same people who brought you *Bubble Bobble*, *Rainbow Islands* and *Parasol Stars*, and that's just about the highest recommendation I can think of. (I'm sorry, I'll try to think of a higher one next month, okay?)

● STUART CAMPBELL



The manual claims you can "become immortal for 20 seconds". Yeah, right.

one' in adventure speak, rather than 'he who drools and wets the bed' as he'd be known these days.

Through a series of rooms presented in isometric 3D and message boxes, you progress through seven levels of quality dungeon romping. You meet people, pick up things, and commit some hideously explicit violence upon all manner of baddies before completing your quest. Although there's a simple combat system with a handful of moves, the emphasis of the game's on puzzle solving, and here's the rub. Once you've done it, then that's it really, there's little reason to go back and play it again, and not enough options for you to try alternative routes. It's limited, but as it's on budget, the price still matches up with the entertainment.

● CAM WINSTANLEY

THE BOTTOM LINE

Challenging and impressive visually, *The Immortal* loses most of its marks by being too linear, so once you've done it, I can't see you going back for more. It's great fun while it lasts, though, and the amount of thought that's gone into the gory deaths is almost scary.

76 PERCENT



THE BOTTOM LINE

The obvious next successor to *Bubble Bobble*, this is an unfailingly cute and busy arcade platformer and it's a load of fun, in both one-player and in two-player modes. The more I play it, the more I like it. And that's a good thing.

88 PERCENT



HUCKLEBERRY HOUND IN HOLLYWOOD CAPERS

Publisher: Alternative
Price: £9.99
Release: Out now

Lord, can you hear me? I seek enlightenment. I seek knowledge, and teachings in the way of the word. I seek to discover what the bloody hell's going on in the world when someone thinks they can get away with releasing a gargantuan pile of utter, utter crap like this as an Amiga game in 1993. I seek to find out what was going through the minds of Quex Development Limited when they thought "Right then, that'll do" and sent *Huckleberry Hound In Hollywood Capers* off to Alternative with a covering note

It's dark, it's probably damp and there are no palm trees.

saying "It's finished, send us our money now." I'd like to know exactly how long they spent working out the insulting excuse for a plot. I'd quite like to be told exactly how the 'Hollywood Capers' of the title relate to the platforms-against-a-wibbly-green-and-black-background that comprise the game's graphics. I'd be quite pleased to learn if the programmers had any tricky moments drawing the total of four different frames required for Huck to walk and jump in two directions. I wouldn't mind asking someone in the know if this was really knocked up in 20 minutes one rainy Wednesday afternoon by a six-year-old with a copy of *Totally Useless Platform Game Construction Kit*, as it appears to have been. I'd like to know if Alternative can sleep at nights, thinking about some little kid who's just forked out £10 of his

Got it! It must be a film set for Siegfried and these are all little Niebulungs working away in the earth's bowels.



hard-saved pocket money because he likes Huckleberry Hound, only to have been landed with this unforgiveable, unimaginable, inexplicable, inexcusable, unbearable garbage. Most of all, I'd like to know why, lord? Why?

● **STUART CAMPBELL**

THE BOTTOM LINE

The worst pile of dog's crap inflicted on Amiga owners since *Edd The Duck 2*. Much, much worse than it looks, and you can see how it looks.

5 PERCENT



CRYSTAL KINGDOM DIZZY

Publisher: Codemasters
Price: £9.99
Release: November

The world seems to be divided into two groups when it comes to this Dizzy chap. There are those who have never been able to see the attraction of the objectionable ovum and loathe him with a passion bordering on the psychotic. Then there are those who think he's the best game character ever

devised and who, when sufficiently provoked, will threaten to inflict actual physical harm upon the first group. In my usual wishy-washy way, I hop from group to group depending on my mood and the particular Dizzy game I'm looking at at the time.

If you've missed out entirely on the Dizzy phenomenon, please allow me to explain. Dizzy is an egg. He has arms and legs (and boxing gloves). He has a girlfriend. The girlfriend keeps getting kidnapped. Dizzy keeps

rescuing her. In order to do this, he must negotiate platforms in a platform-game style. But he must also collect objects and use them to solve puzzles. The puzzles are never complex. There are currently 3,726 different Dizzy games on the market.

Crystal Kingdom Dizzy is the sort of game that makes me wonder how I

could ever have had any patience for the be-limbed egg. It's not very much fun at all. Although it has, at least, managed to vary the 'kidnapped girlfriend' format by using, instead, the much more original 'stolen magical treasure and kingdom in peril' excuse for a plot.

There's a lot of trudging about and picking things up and carting them about the place in a tedious sort of way and you rapidly wonder why you bothered - it somehow doesn't seem to have the appeal of some of the earlier Dizzy outings.

There's a school of thought that says the Dizzy



Oh dear, the programmers seem to have lost all sense of perspective.

games are designed for 'younger players' and that the simplicity of the puzzles has been tailored to their limited cognitive powers. So, if your cognitive powers are limited, you'll find the solving of these puzzles quite a rewarding experience. But if you're a bit of a thinker, well...

● **TIM NORRIS**

THE BOTTOM LINE

It's another Dizzy game, and there's no harm in that. It's just that it's a crap one.

36 PERCENT



It gives a whole new meaning to term 'tree-house'.

DIARY OF A GAME...

SPODLAND by The Hidden

Continuing our behind-the-scenes look at The Hidden - the guys behind *Donk!* AND the authors (allegedly) of the AMIGA POWER reader-designed game, *Spodland*.



1993 AUGUST

Today Paul Douglas travelled all the way from sunny Croydon to the jewel of East Yarmouth, bringing with him his groovy new disk routines that'll stop people copying *Donk!* While he was at The Hidden's HQ, we managed to bring up the subject of *Spodland* and how it needs a programmer of massive skills to program it. Paul, being

the modest chap he is, didn't actually catch onto the heavy hints that we kept dropping, but once we'd managed to get his thumbs in the vice he finally admitted that he wanted to do the code for us. (Wow, person-management skills really are my forte.) The rest of the day was then spent discussing *Spodland* and how it's all going to shape up.

Saturday 14

1993 AUGUST

Supervision (publishers of *Donk!*) had told us to get our butts into gear as the Autumn ECTS show was approaching, and they wanted to show off *Donk!*

there. Luckily, now that *Spodland* is being coded by Paul, we were able to bash on at *Donk!* with a clear conscience. Now, I'm not a clever man, but by the end of a whole day working on *Donk!*, I had a horrible sneaky feeling that something was wrong. Very wrong.

Sunday 15

1993 AUGUST

At last I realised what the cause of my worries might be: I still hadn't worked out the controls for *Spodland*! A quick call to Paul cleared up the matter - luckily he'd

been on the case already and had decided that to move a Spod left you needed to move the joystick to the left, and that to move a Spod right you had to move the stick to the right. He'd also come up with the appropriate actions for joystick up, down and fire. Blimey, eh?

Friday 20

1993 AUGUST

Time for a break from *Donk!*, I thought, as I headed off to construct an arena for all the *Spodland* spitting to take place in. Sticking to my original idea for digitising the background from video, I searched for a suitably flowery part of my garden and

some nice pretty stones. However, once I'd filmed the entire set-up, I found that my digitiser was up the spout. In a frantic, "Oh crikey" sort of mood, I therefore decided to draw a *Spodland* title page (*The one over on the left. - Ed*), just so people wouldn't think I was skiving!

Saturday 21

1993 SEPTEMBER

It's ECTS show time again. But this one was different, as Supervision had a very swanky stand which we had to hang around while showing *Donk!* to

prospective customers. There was a lot of CD-based stuff there, but though not very many CD32 games, which was a bit of a shame. But luckily for CD32 owners, a super-duper *Donk! Special Edition* is being written for them. Anyway, back at the ECTS, there really were very few Amiga games around, but all the ones we saw were perfectly formed.

Monday 6

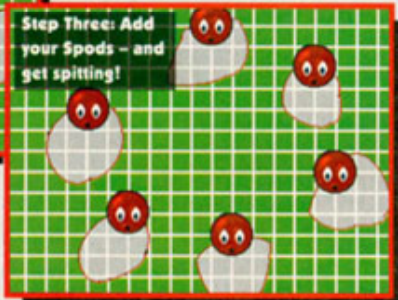
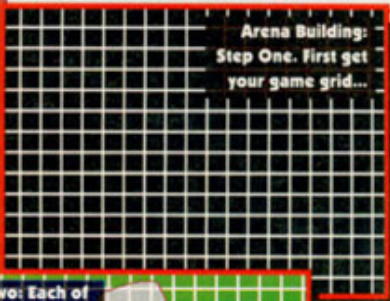
1993 SEPTEMBER

After a few days recovering from the ECTS I put together a final arena graphic for *Spodland*. First I drew a grid of 16 by 16 pixel squares (which is how the

game divides up the screen), and then positioned the rocks that the Spods are going to stand on, the Spods themselves, and the digitised pic of my back garden. After messing around with this to get it to fit, I'm pleased to say that the whole thing looked absolutely terrible.

This meant lots more messing around with the picture, until I finally ended up with something rather impressive - that you'll have to wait until next month to see! (Chuckie.) Anyway, now all I need are some Spods - if anyone out there would like to send in their designs, I'll immortalise the best ones in video-game form. So, until next time, this is a fully mature, adult, hairy-chested Craig saying "Byeeeeee!"

Friday 10



AND ANOTHER GAME

CANNON FODDER by Sensible Software

The world's first interactive Diary Of A Game is here - experience the history of Cannon Fodder for yourself. Jools Sensible explains.

It was precisely antics like these that got 'Sensible' Software their ironic name.



Hello again, chums. I guess by now you have already loaded up and had a few plays on the wonderful Cannon Fodder coverdisk and

of Goal! (See last month's AP for 'details'. - Ed), so that's still up for grabs...

To get back to the main demo-disk menu from the quiz, click on the dog that's having a go at Jon. What we originally intended to do for this disk was try and show the progress of the game over the last year or so, but of course that would mean re-implementing the old control systems and all the bugs and glitches that

you have decided to read this because you're wondering what the hell it's all about. Well, do not fear, 'cos Jools is here - every mystery will be made clear.

Okay, let's get the quiz out of the way first. I'm going to assume you've got as far as the main menu screen (which you get by switching on your Amiga and putting the disk in. Sheesh.) Move the pointer to somewhere in the 'Sensible Software Quiz' box and click your left mouse button. The screen will fade out, the Amiga will load from disk for a couple of seconds, and a lovely photogenic pic of us lot will appear. Got that? Good. Right, to be in with a chance of winning the fantastic Sensi-prize, all you've got to do is answer ten questions. These can be found by clicking on the people and the four small photos in the corners of the screen.

For example, try clicking on Chris Chapman (the programmer of Sensible Soccer) - he's the guy on the left, the one having a little bit of trouble with his arm. A new pic will appear surrounded by details of Mr Chapman, with a rectangular box marked 'Question Five' over on the left. After reading through Chris's enthralling details, you should notice that one is missing ('Cannon Fodder Job'), which ties in with the question at the bottom of the screen: 'What did Chris do on Cannon Fodder?'. Now you either have a massive brainstorm of an answer or just make up some amusing and/or insulting joke and pen it onto your postcard as Answer Five. Easy peasy, eh?

Questions One to Four are found by clicking on the four boxes around the main photograph of us lot standing against the jeep. When you've found all ten questions, and are completely satisfied with the answers on your postcard, send it off to AMIGA POWER, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon BA1 2BW. The person with the most correct answers (or, in a tie-break situation, the card drawn from Dave Green's big army helmet) will win a talking toy gun, a signed copy of a game and any other rubbish we find lying around the office. And while we're on the subject of competitions, nobody has yet come up to me in the street and said "Where's my pork pie?" in order to win that signed copy

we've since corrected. And then you'd end up with a demo-disk that's nowhere near as playable as the one you've got. So what we've produced is something which shows how a Cannon Fodder mission is built up, from the map being laid out from a rough design all the way through to the finished thing.

For example, if you click on Stage One of the map you will find yourself playing on a sparsely detailed background with only two sprites: your man and a single enemy positioned in the top left-hand corner of the map. On the other three stages you should look out for boxes and barrels - pick these up by walking over them and you'll be rewarded with grenades or bazookas. (You can fire these by holding down the right mouse button and clicking the left one.) Oh yeah, and clicking with the left button makes your man (or men) walk to the point you clicked on. To shoot you can either hold down the right button or click on it repeatedly - whichever you prefer.

If you've got more than one man, you can split them into different groups by clicking on the names of the ones you want in the new group in the icon box. Then click on the top icon (it looks like a snake at first but changes into a cross between a bird and a snake when you highlight a man's name.) And there you have it: the new 'breakaway' group appears, with an eagle symbol to identify it.

Right, I think that's about it for now, so go and have lots of fun with the demo disk, buy the game and have a sleepless year or two playing it. Which means it's four byes from me till next time and don't forget: Cannon Fodder - war has never been so much fun!



It had to happen. But strangely it didn't. So Dave Golder settled down with a warm cup of cocoa and took a shifty shufti at the latest PD releases instead. "It might be cheap," he mused, "but it's certainly not expensive."

WIBBLE WORLD GIDDY

First Choice



As Max Bygraves once sang, "You need hands to prove that you're not Dizzy."

No. It can't be. Not here. Not in the public domain. I thought I was safe here. But no. He's followed me here. That hideously smooth, ovoid body. That stupid spinning jump. That vile grin. Those ridiculous boxing gloves... hang on, he's not wearing gloves.

This ain't *Dizzy*. Let's be thankful for small mercies. I've seen hardened reviewers reduced to something out of a John Carpenter movie at the prospect of a *Dizzy* game. I've heard them beg to be given a flight sim instead.

So if this isn't *Dizzy*, what is it? A *Dizzy* mickey-take, would you believe? And it's not as bad as it sounds (well, it couldn't be). Oh sure, it has its faults: the puzzles are ridiculously simple; the controls are annoying; there seems to be very little logic or point to it all; the screens flip at the most irritating moments; yep, just like any in any *Dizzy* game.

But it's still worth checking out. Why? Because it's all done with tongue firmly in cheek. And as a game, despite the faults, it's still got a lot going for it, like the fact that it's massive, it looks great and has a lot more substance and playability than most PD games.

VERDICT: As satire goes it's more Carry On than Have I Got News For You, but it's still a great little game nevertheless.
RATING: ★★★★★

ROAD TO HELL

PD Soft
Shareware £5

Right, this is an M25 joke-free zone. But it's still open season on Chris Rea. I mean, wouldn't you get a dig in about the fat, boring old muso given half a chance? (Allegedly. - Ed) I mean, has he got more than two songs in his repertoire: the slow one with the slide guitar and the fat one with the constipated horn section?

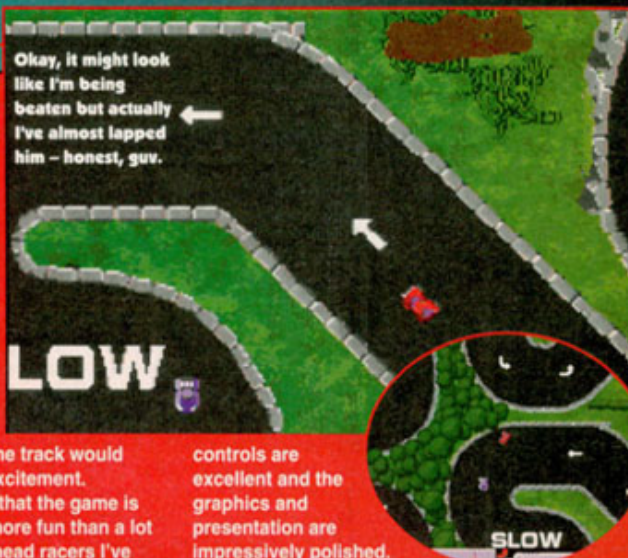
Anyway, I'd love *Road To Hell* just for giving me the chance to get that off my chest. But luckily I can award it a hefty five stars anyway, because it's just darned fantastic.

It's an overhead racing game that's got just about everything but the kitchen sink; 'kitchen sink' in this

case being a euphemism for more than two cars in any race. Every race is a head-to-head, either against the computer or a mate, which is a shame; a few more computer-controlled cars on the track would have added to the excitement.

But apart from that the game is superb, and much more fun than a lot of commercial overhead racers I've played. There's an impressive range of tracks and difficulty levels, missiles, smoke screens and a variety of tournaments. It's frantically fast, the

Okay, it might look like I'm being beaten but actually I've almost lapped him - honest, guv.



controls are excellent and the graphics and presentation are impressively polished. Turtlewaxed, even.

VERDICT: Just get it.
RATING: ★★★★★

Does this look like one of the radar bits from *Wacky Races*, or what?

MR MEN OLYMPICS

Unity Inc

Hello. Mr PD Reviewer was reviewing some PD one day when he came across a game so downright silly he was just had to review it. It was a five-event sports sim starring the Mr Men, probably because they are the easiest sprites ever to draw (except *Dizzy*). Mr Nosey pole-vaulted using his famous proboscis; Mr Skinny was used as a javelin; Mr Strong had his weight-lifting talents; Mr Dizzy chucked the hammer; and Mr Rush did the 100m dash.

Mr PD Reviewer wanted to say something nice about the game, so he did. "It's very colourful and kids will

love the way the characters are used," he said. But because he was Mr PD Reviewer he had to give both sides of the argument. So he admitted, "The controls are very awkward and it's awfully slow."

VERDICT: If you're into the seriously silly or downright kitsch this has got what it takes. As a game, it's the worst sort of wobble-frenzy.

RATING: ★★

ROBOULDIX

Telescan
Payware (sic) £18

Boulderdash Deluxe is what *Robouldix* sets out to be. The basic concept is a PD favourite; you move your sprite

around the screen digging tunnels to get to jewels and the like, the problem being the tunnels also loosen rocks and boulders that can fall and crush you. But *Robouldix* throws in so many other ingredients into the brew that you end up with a mixture so rich it's almost physically overpowering.

It's certainly an impressive piece of coding, with loads for the player to think about. Nearly every move you make has an effect on the outcome of a level, to the extent where you give up thinking too hard and just go for trial-and-error (luckily you get as many goes as you want).



I could say that this game requires skill and determination, but I value my job.

Unfortunately it's rather disappointingly presented. The graphics are garish but strangely unimpressive and the trimmings, like the option menus, are similarly cheap-looking. Normally I wouldn't pick on minor things like that with PD, but have you seen what they're asking for a registration fee? And what exactly is 'payware' supposed to be anyway?

This PD version is a very cut-down version of the full game you'll get on registering, with only a fraction of the levels. From the few I saw on show here, I'll admit that *Robouldix* is an entertaining puzzler, but there's no way I'd spend £18 for more of the same.

VERDICT: The demo version is decent enough, but I can't see many people registering £18 for the full version.
RATING: ★★



Let's face facts. John Alderton was rubbish at doing the voices to the Mr Men. Arthur Lowe's interpretation was seminal.

KLONDIKE



Cor, look at the graphics on that (and other Benny Hill-style innuendoes).



Telescan One meg only

Three disks. One meg required. AGA. This sounded good. What could it be? A shoot-'em-up of epic proportions? Maybe. An adventure with lovely lush graphics? Perhaps. A platformer extravaganza? You never know your luck. A game of patience with using girly playing cards? Nah, couldn't be, could it?

Yup. It certainly is. After waiting around for three disks to load, all I ended up with was a

card game. The reason why such a simple game consumes so much floppy space is the graphics; they are admittedly very impressive – technically.

Each card displays a high-res picture of the sort of lass who might have titillated sex-starved squaddies during World War 2 – they might even be digitised cigarette cards for all I know.

The problem (apart from the fact that you'd get a lecture on sexism from any right-on dude who happens to see the game) is that because every card has a picture, the value of the cards is hidden away in the corners. Combined with the high-res graphics this makes some of them very hard to read, especially when the cards are piled up on top of each other.

VERDICT: It's all a bit pointless really. Mutton dressed up in wolf's clothing, or something like that.

RATING: **

NEIGHBOURS

First Choice

Yes, it is *that* Neighbours. Is the world prepared for a down-under TV soap adventure? Probably not, but we've got it anyway.

The gimmick here is that all the pictures have been digitised from the TV. I have to be honest – they stink. They're all horrible, grainy, mono messes which become tiresome very quickly. The actual plot isn't up to much either but then that's keeping in the spirit of the show. Paul wants to chuck everybody in Ramsey street out of their houses so that he can build a new development. Who's working with him? Who's working against him? Who cares?

But the game does have some points in its favour. The control system is excellent, though the grainy pictures do cause some problems; you're never too sure what's relevant in a picture, so you have to do a lot of random clicking, hoping to hit something interesting every so often. The descriptions, however, are



DR MARIO WONDERLAND

First Choice

Yes, it's based on that Nintendo game, and thank God that it's being distributed as pure PD otherwise there would be the smell of lawsuits in the air (whatever they smell like, but hey, it's a metaphor, okay? Not a great one but a metaphor – lay off me.) And anyway, the main character isn't really supposed to be *that* Mario. I mean, how many plumbers do you know who are Doctors?

The game is a platformy fruit-collecting exercise, in which the main character – a plump, mustachioed fellow dressed in a red cap – has to dash about switching on loads of lights embedded in the platforms. The main obstacles are the creepy crawlies that blob around the platforms as well; if he touches them, he's dead.

Actually, they aren't the main problem. That's the inertia. Your bloke skids around the platforms like they're covered in ice. This makes the game extremely tricky to master, but it also gives it an edge over other standard platformers.

The first level, though, is far too tricky (especially if you're playing on a 1200). A couple of easier levels to get used to the controls would be handy. But on the plus side the game does come with a level editor, so you could design yourself an easier level if you wanted (though isn't this just laziness on behalf of the programmer? This DIY ethos is too much like hard work to me.)

VERDICT: It's infuriatingly tricky but still fun, though not a patch on the game that inspired it.

RATING: ***



occasionally genuinely funny; like this month's *Dizzy* parody, it's all been done very much with tongue in cheek.

VERDICT: As a game it's pretty darned awful, but it scores for novelty value. It's fun in a warped kind of way.

RATING: ***

Oh no, Mel's been hit by a cheap BBC laser effect!



AIR ACE

First Choice

Look, I tried to avoid it, honest. But recently I've been using up decent software at a fair old rate. So it had to happen. Yup. The *Shoot-'Em-Up Construction Kit* review of the month has returned.

This one, as you probably guessed from the name, is all about World War 1 fighter planes engaging in dogfights (and we're talking poodles rather than pit bulls here). It's



the usual vertically scrolling tedium, though the graphics are a darned sight better than usual, the difficulty increases intelligently and the enemy attacks are a lot more unpredictable than in most *SEUCK* games. Hey, could this have been programmed by someone with a smidgen of imagination? Surely not.

But before it sounds like I'm going soft in my old age, let me assure you that it is still very irritating. It's sorely in need of a few power-ups or even extra lives (as if you'd really want to play it for any longer).

By the way, the other day I saw a *SEUCK* game that impressed me because it displayed a spark of originality. Some bloke had actually created a maze game in *SEUCK*. That's right. It didn't vertically scroll. And it was vaguely enjoyable. Think on it.

VERDICT: We've seen it all before (apart from the end-of-level airships, but they don't really save it).

RATING: **

THE RIGHT PROFILE



Yes, we know this is Eric Matthews of The Bitmap Brothers and not Martyn Brown of Team 17. We just wanted to print this picture again.

His team of seventeen-ness have brought you some of your most favourite games ever. So now it's time to discover the secrets of Martyn Brown.

What do you believe in?

I believe that you should take each day as it comes and certainly not think about tomorrow. I have zero religion and also believe in having a damn fine time – which is something I believe I'm particularly good at.

What was the first thing you said today?

I told my girlfriend to (*Snip. – Ed*) because she was moaning about me not getting out of bed while she was in the bathroom.

Who's your favourite historical figure?

I don't really have one except Davey Crockett – and only then because he had a smart hat.

What's your Number One object of desire?

I desire nothing. I have everything I could ever wish for and more besides. If I'm hard-pressed, I'd have to say that I'd really like to own a raccoon and name it (*Snip. – Ed*)

What have you got in your pockets?

A snotty tissue, my wallet (empty except for some credit cards, video membership cards, my Leeds Utd Premier card, a ticket stub from a recent Jean-Michel Jarre concert and an Asda receipt), and 5p in coins.

"I don't watch KYTV, because I think it's crap"

Is the character of Martin Brown in KYTV and Radio Active based on you in any way?

No, he's not a bit like me at all. I don't watch KYTV either, but not because of him, because I think it's crap.

Which is best – money, fast cars or beer?

Money, with it comes beer and lots of it. I don't drive.

Are video games killing pop music?

I certainly hope so.

What's your favourite Bon Jovi song?

Blaze Of Glory. I know that's Jon Bon Jovi but it still counts.

What's your favourite planet in the Solar System (except Mars)?

Uranus, because it's got lots of scope for sad toilet humour.

What's the nicest thing anyone's ever said to you?

I don't know really. Katrina, my girlfriend, has said a lot of nice things. I'd like to think that I'm quite nice to people myself and that means people are usually nice back.

Who would play you in a movie of your life?

Mel Smith.

Have you any ambitions left to realise?

No, but then I never had any to start with. I suppose I used to dream about driving a Porsche when I was a young kid, but I still haven't learned to drive yet.

Are you a 'Benny' tied to a stick?

What the chuff's that? Certainly not, at least I hope not. (*"OH NO! BENNY ON THE LOOSE!" – The AP team*)

CURRICULUM VITAE

FULL NAME: Martyn James Brown

DATE OF BIRTH: 30.01.67

PLACE OF BIRTH: Wakefield, West Yorkshire

STATUS: Single, although 'living under the brush' with the lovely Katrina, a Yorkshire lass, my girlfriend.

OCCUPATION: Director, Team 17, in charge of development/press.

FOOTBALL: Leeds Utd through and through.

PET HATES: Pretentious people, people who can't take a joke, all egotistical types and everything Manchester United.

FAVOURITE GAMES: *Doomdark's Revenge* (Spectrum), *Paradroid* (C64), *Super Sprint* (ST), *Kick Off 2* (Amiga), *Sensible Soccer V1.1* (Amiga), *Rainbow Islands* (Amiga), *Civilization* (Amiga), *Railroad Tycoon* (Amiga) and our very own *Qwak*.

WORST GAMES: Text adventures, film-licences, anything hugely commercial... I could go on.

FAVOURITE THING ABOUT THE SOFTWARE INDUSTRY: I enjoy the get-togethers with various journos when we chat about nothing in particular and usually try to put the world to rights. The industry has given me a lot of very good friends and not too many enemies.

WORST THING ABOUT THE SOFTWARE INDUSTRY: All the ego-trips, the pretension, the arrogance, the bullshit, the people who come from other walks of life and think that after three weeks they know games inside out.

THINGS I'VE LEARNED SINCE WE STARTED: That you have to take criticism as constructive, however hard it can be. And that whatever you do, it's very, very seldom perfect.

HOW I GOT WHERE I AM TODAY: Bit of a mystery, really. I've always been into games since the mid-late 70s and worked in retail, set up 17-Bit PD and through the many contacts I eventually (along with the MD) set up Team 17.

I've done bits of everything in my time, even coding, which means I can understand most aspects of game development, which is why I spend a lot of time project-managing.