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ISN'T IT ALL JUST A RIP OFF?
DISCOVER THE TRUTH
ON PAGE 18

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***SENSATIONAL* new ST music advance**

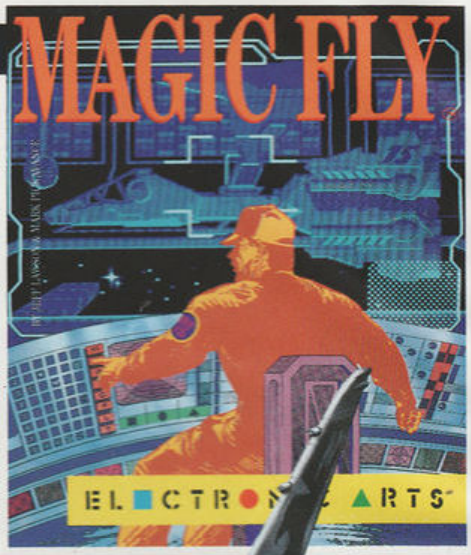
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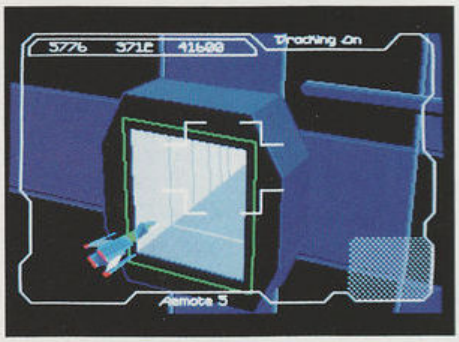
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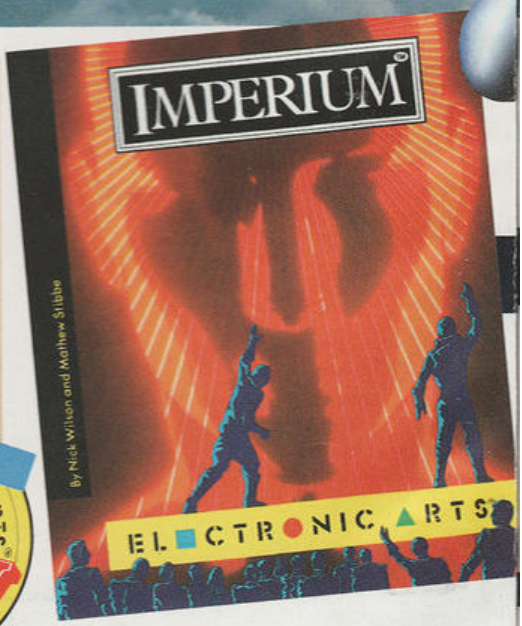
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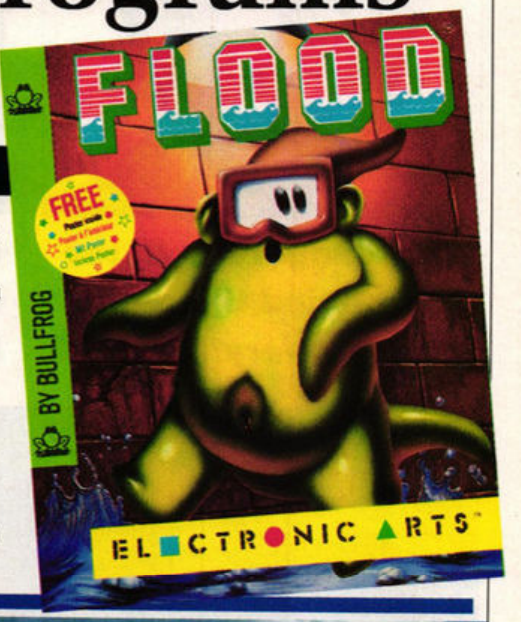
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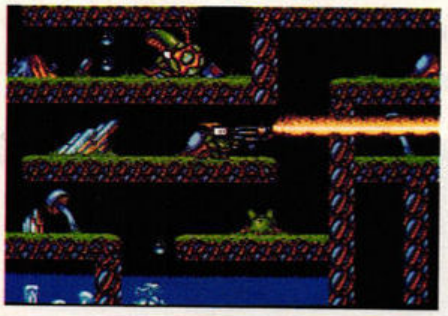
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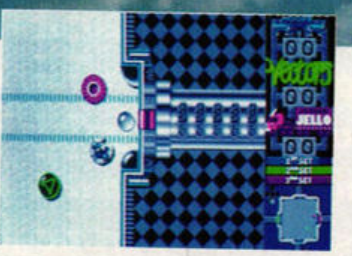
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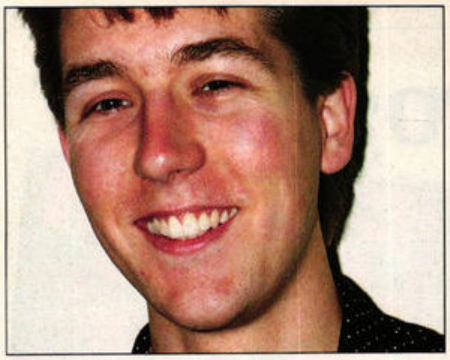
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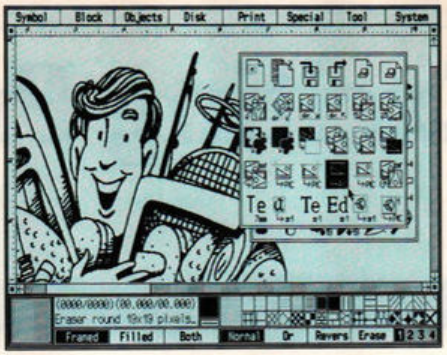


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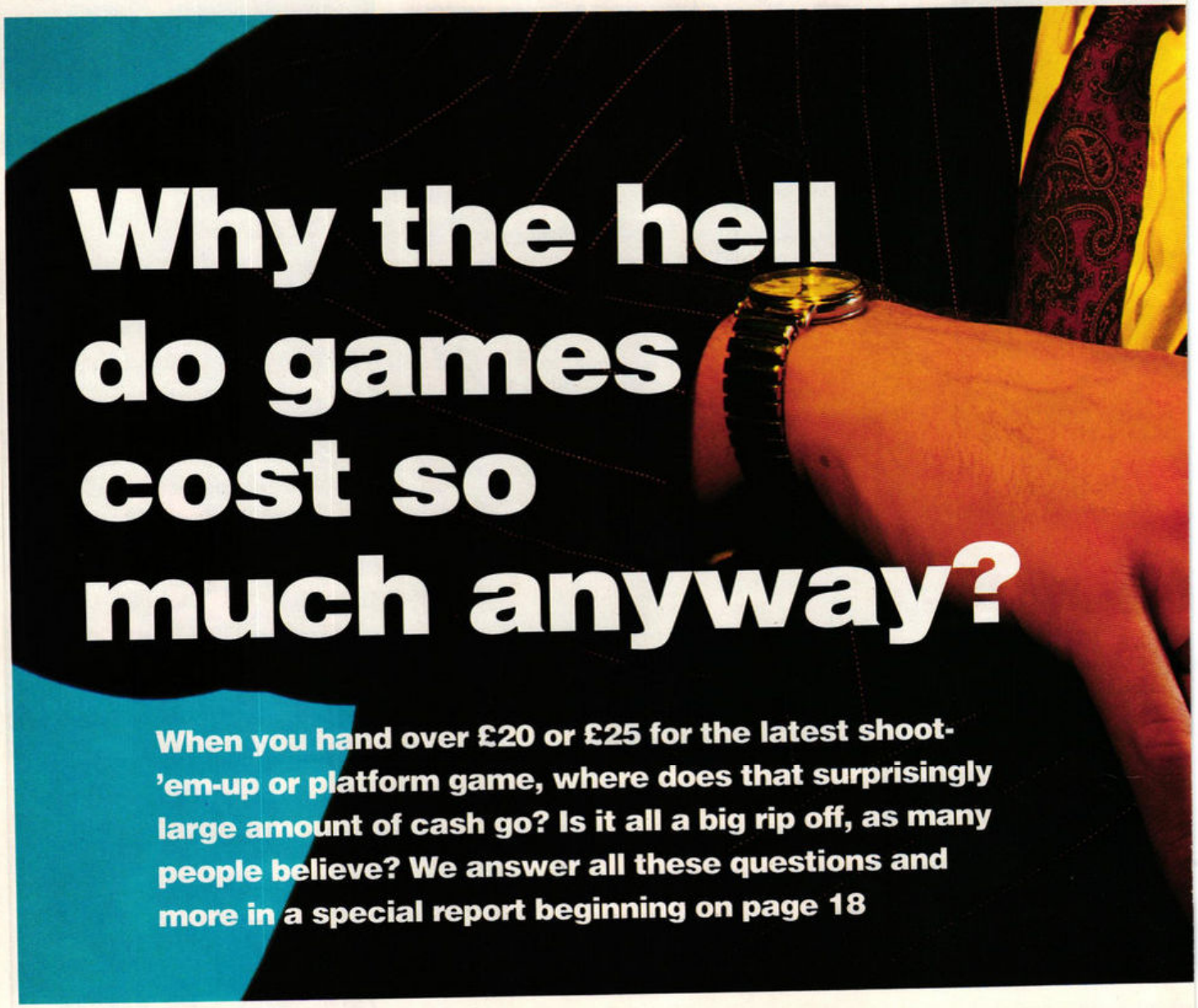
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On-the-spot report on an extraordinary ST music breakthrough ——**96**



Why the hell do games cost so much anyway?

When you hand over £20 or £25 for the latest shoot-'em-up or platform game, where does that surprisingly large amount of cash go? Is it all a big rip off, as many people believe? We answer all these questions and more in a special report beginning on page 18

ST FORMAT

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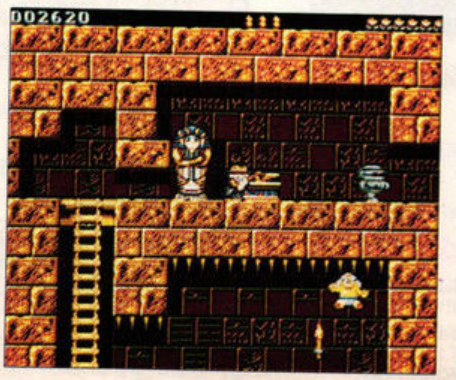
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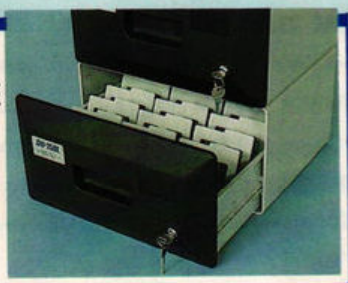
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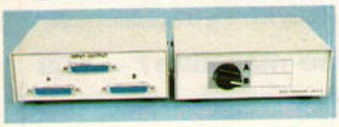
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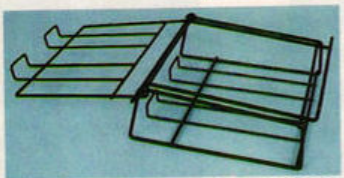
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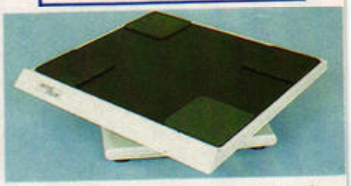
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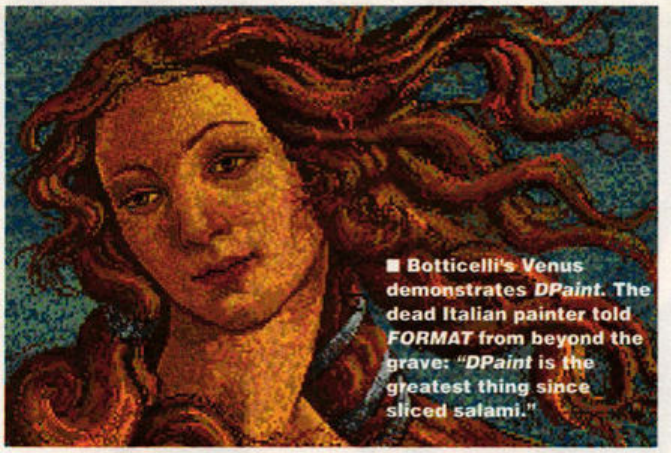
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■ ***FORMAT*** **graphics editor Mark Pickavance: "*DPaint* is absolutely amazing!"**



■ **Botticelli's Venus demonstrates *DPaint*. The dead Italian painter told *FORMAT* from beyond the grave: "*DPaint* is the greatest thing since sliced salami."**



■ ***DPaint;*** **the fastest graphic package around – get drawing, get painting, go ape!**

DPaint takes art world by storm

The ultimate art package hits the ST

by Andrew Hutchinson

The all-singing, all-dancing art package, *DeluxePaint*, has arrived on the ST – and it looks awesome. Indeed, if *DPaint* can live up to its incredible specification it's set to turn the ST computer art market on its head. It runs faster than any other graphic editor and boasts more drawing modes, tools and options than any existing graphic application – and the beauty of it is that it all runs on a 520!

The £50 package's amazing features include:

■ **Nine** drawing modes: draw, smear, cycle, blend, tint, smooth, half-smear, plus cycle and filter;

■ **Four** basic fills: solid, dithered, pattern and gradient;

■ **Fully controllable** Bezier curves enabling smooth curves of any shape to be created;

■ **Up to 16** fully proportional, fully editable colour fonts with 6 points of kerning;

■ **Three** printing styles: ordered, halftone and random, that can be used either horizontally or vertically;

■ **Real time magnification:** open a magnified image of the window and edit the normal sized picture at the same time;

■ And **Multiple animations** in memory: 1,000 animation buffers can be stored, each capable of holding 999 frames. Buffers can have their own palette and colour cycle information.

Mark Pickavance, *ST FORMAT* Graphics editor, is very impressed with the new program: "It's undoubtedly been worth the wait. It shows Electronic Arts are now taking the ST much more seriously than they have done in the past."

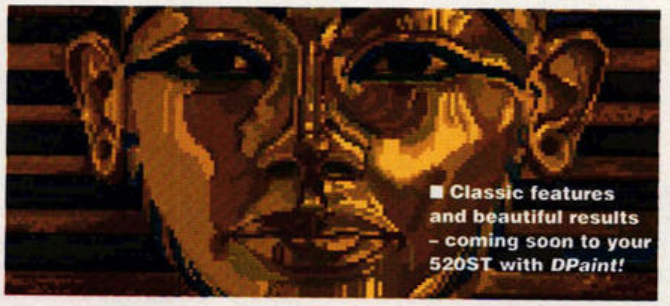
He points out that the unusual use of icons along the bottom of the screen rather than down the side is a major change of style necessitated by the sheer number of increased features on the new ST version of the program.

Additional printing facilities include poster printing, complete colour correction, different style outputs and a sizing option.

A spokesman for Electronic Arts told *FORMAT* that ST *DPaint* was a logical move because other versions had become industry standards. He added that their other art package *Degas Elite* was being "re-positioned" in the market rather than phased out, which in English means a budget version of *Degas* seems likely.

DPaint is scheduled for release at the end of September at a special and tempting introductory price of £49.99. Electronic Arts ☎ 0753 49442.

■ **Don't miss the boat: catch the full and *exclusive* review of *DeluxePaint* in next month's stonking *ST FORMAT!***



■ **Classic features and beautiful results – coming soon to your 520ST with *DPaint!***

THE METEORIC RISE OF *DELUXEPAINT*

The creator of *DPaint* was Dan Silva, an American who began his career in computers in the sixties. The *DPaint* package grew out of an in-house development tool designed for Electronic Arts. Originally called *Prism*, its name was changed when EA realised its market potential.

It first appeared in November 1985 and soon more than 50 percent of all Amiga owners had a copy of the package.

Since then it's undergone two revisions, but the current version available for the ST far outstrips all earlier incarnations. It's the best version there is!

It's CES show time, folks!

This month sees the first ever Computer Entertainment Show, to be held at London's Earls Court on Saturday and Sunday 15th-16th September. It's likely to be the noisiest, sweatiest and busiest place in the country for a couple of days as all the major software houses unveil their big guns for the run-in to the *Crucial Christmas Period*. They'll be desperate to impress you, and a good time looks certain to be had by all. See you there – and remember to bring your 50p off voucher!

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Protext gets major facelift

Users of *Protext* the popular text editor from Arnor will be pleased to hear that v5, the long overdue major update, has finally arrived. The major enhancement is the inclusion of mouse or keyboard driven pull-down menus. Unique among ST text editors, *Protext* was previously almost entirely keyboard driven.

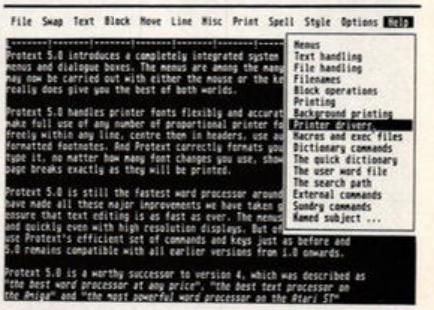
V.5 includes a number of new features to take advantage of increasingly sophisticated home printers; multiple proportional fonts, mixing of different font sizes on the same line, proportional formatting while editing and side margins are all included, making eye-catching documents easier to create.

The spell-checker has been revised. Poor spellers can consult a 116,000 word Collins dictionary which, now it works phonetically, promises to be ultra-fast.

If your documents verge on the epic then index and contents generation makes your life easier. This relies on marked words or phrases and collates them at the end of the document.

Other new features: a timed save function, centre tabs, newspaper style column printing, multi-line foot-notes and a 40 column mode.

Protext v5 is on offer at a reduced price until the 30th of September of £125: after that you'll have to find £149.95. Users of V4.2 can upgrade for £49.50 before the deadline and £60 after. If your version is earlier than v4.2 then an upgrade costs £64.50. Arnor ☎ 0733 68909.



■ **Sexy pull-down menus, just one of *Protext*'s many major enhancements**

■ **Review coming next month**

short stories

■ The operating system in new STFMs is now Tos 1.4. It occupies two ROMs and is 192K in length. Features include improved file selector, a move file facility, a group copy and delete, the option to skip a single file during a group copy, MS-DOS disk formatting, auto booting of applications and the ability to change a folder's name.

■ The £299 Demon 4 modem is a sophisticated device which can operate at speeds of up to 4800 baud and at protocols up to and including V25 bis. The modem features Miracom Networking Protocol level four error correction system and MNP5 data compression. Oh yes, apart from this wonderful techie spec, it also comes complete with a plug, telephone lead and telephone socket. Modem Marketing ☎ 0733 371388.

■ Upgrading the memory of an ST has always been frustrating because you have to disassemble the entire computer to get at the main circuit board. Evesham micros have released a range of RAM upgrades which only require the lid of your ST to be removed – and more importantly require no soldering. Evesham Micros can supply you with 1MByte, 2.5MByte and 4MByte versions of the boards at £99.95, £199 and £399 respectively. Should you already own the chips, an unpopulated board can be yours for £59.95. Evesham Micros ☎ 0386 765354.

■ If your old joystick is getting frayed from over-use the Konix Megablaster joystick might be worth checking out – particularly as its just dropped in price from £6.99 to £4.99. Spectravideo ☎ 081 900 0024.

■ And finally, congrats to Barbara Sommerville – see the feature on page 109 – who has just had her research project extended. Dr Sommerville now gets to spend three years at Cambridge, and firmly intends to continue using the ST in her work. Sensible woman.

Squeaky clean new mouse

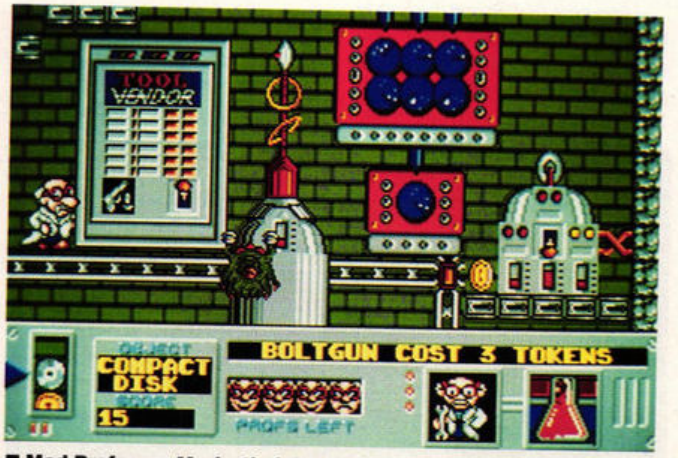


If your Atari mouse is looking weary then an upgrade may be in order. Logitech have just released the very sexy looking Pilot Mouse, and it's light years ahead of the standard Atari beast. The mouse is self-cleaning, house-trained and its sensitivity is fully adjustable through a Desk Accessory. If the prospect of moving your mouse with less than brute force seems attractive then Pilot Mouse is available for £34. Logitech ☎ 0753 37222.

■ **For all grubby ST owners; the new self-cleaning Pilot Mouse from Logitech**

The return of the killer ROM chips

New from Krisalis is a platform game called *Mad Professor Mariarti*. Your task is to close down the professor's five laboratories: chemical research, space rocket development, computer science, biological observations and the mystery lab. The game supposedly includes a strong puzzle solving element, a shoot-'em-up aspect and tasty graphics. Graphics include 3.5 foot computer disks with arms and legs, huge four-limbed joysticks, computer mice which are alive, snake-like ribbon cables and some killer ROM chips. *Mad Professor Mariarti* is out at the end of August, cost £19.95 from Krisalis ☎ 0709 368403.



■ **Mad Professor Mariarti picks up a tasty piece of hardware and deals out rough justice to the alien with the serious skin care problem**



■ **Said Captain, said "Wot?" Said Captain, said, "Wot you reckon to this 'ere new Monty Python game from Virgin, then?" That's right, *ST FORMAT* proudly welcomes Captain Sensible – a misnomer if ever there was one – to the reviewing team. "I'm over the moon to be working with the *FORMAT* team," a jubilant Captain said. Actually he didn't, we just made that bit up. Now turn to page 41 and discover just what the Captain makes of Mr Gumby and all that stuff...**

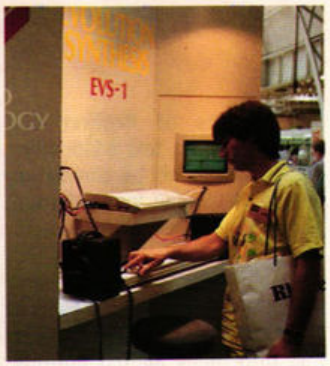
■ **Next month: steamy Kim Basinger reviews super-hot *Rick Dick II*.**

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■ BMF '90: lots to see, but the Olympia greenhouse effect kept the temperature high and the bars busy





■ One "Everything In One" unit, the £300 Sound Technology *EVS-1* (above), takes on another, Roland's £469 *Desktop Music System*

A special report from our man with the overflowing carrier bag, Steve Carey

British music fair '90

Despite the sweltering weather, the biggest ever British Music Fair at Kensington's massive Olympia (July 20-22) was most certainly the place to be for anyone remotely interested in MIDI, making music on the ST or just gawping at expensive and unattainable hardware.

Attendance was very busy, with the celebrated "Olympia greenhouse effect" doing its bit to keep temperatures high and tempers short, and the organisers claiming all sorts of records had been broken (including the largest ever collection of sweat in one place, no doubt).

There can be little doubt that STs are taking over the world of music playing and recording. There was the occasional sad-looking Amiga and even one or two friendless Macintoshes, but they were both easily outnumbered. Indeed, many exhibitors were remarking on the invasion of the Ataris.

Two developments: direct-to-disk recording and budget MIDI systems. Neither is new, but with ever more manufacturers hurrying to join in it's clear that the ST is definitely the professional and indeed amateur musician's choice.

For most visitors this was a first opportunity to see affordable direct-to-disk recording systems in action.

Sound Technology were packing them in for their excellent demonstrations of the Digidesign Sound Tools system (see our report on page 96 of a Brixton studio using this system), using a 1.2 Gigabyte hard drive (that's over 1,200 MBytes!), capable of storing an amazing one hour and 20 minutes of sound at 44 Mhz. (Of course, if you can afford £3,000 for an optical drive and £400 for a disk, your storage worries are a thing of the past!)

Sound Tools is amazing. It offers non-destructive editing, yet doesn't need any more space to save your edits, using markers to "remember."

At about £2,000 (without the hard disk) and running on a Mega 4 it offers a much cheaper and time-saving replacement for the usual tape-based systems currently in operation in music studios up and down the country.

Captain Sensible, ex-Damned guitarist and current *ST FORMAT* games reviewer (see page 41), was shopping for just such a system to record and master his new album on: "This puts techonology in the hands of the people," he enthuses: "It's bleedin' brilliant!"

And now that Sound Tools and C-Lab *Notator* and *Creator*, the most widely used professional MIDI software in the world, are talking to each other, it's set to storm into the lead in this fast-growing field.

Still, though Sound Tools may represent a great advance on physical tape editing, not everyone can afford £2,000, plus a Mega 4, plus a huge hard disk. Tucked away in a corner was the ADAC-ST unit from D2D Systems, with a price yet to be finalised, but expected to be a remarkable £850.

Apart from the price the ADAC has three other advantages. Firstly and least importantly the unit fits between the ST's hard disk port and a hard drive, thus requiring no opening up of your ST. Secondly it works with any ST from a 520 upwards.

And thirdly, if you own Steinberg rather than C-Lab software this is the one for you. On the other hand a brief examination of the software – running with a mere 30 MByte hard drive – suggests that its editing facilities may not quite match those of Sound Tools.

A growing number of manufacturers are rushing to join the budget music system bandwagon. Two of the best on show were the Roland "Desktop Music System" – (we're giving one away on page 130 to the winner of our special Roland competition!) – and Sound Technology's excellent £300 EVS-1 synthesiser system, which requires only a slave keyboard to provide you with everything you need to make beautiful (or indeed atrocious) music on your ST.

The Roland system, incidentally, has had its Dr T *Tiger Cub* software replaced by *Ten Trax*, written under licence by Steinberg and selling separately for £99.

At the professional end of MIDI software, C-Lab *Notator v3* was demonstrated, featuring a long overdue new 350 page manual. And *ST FORMAT* can reveal that there is to be a budget version of C-Lab software, expected to come in at or just under £200. ***stf***

■ Sound Technology ☎ 0462 480000; Roland ☎ 081 568 1247; D2D Systems ☎ 0223 420252.

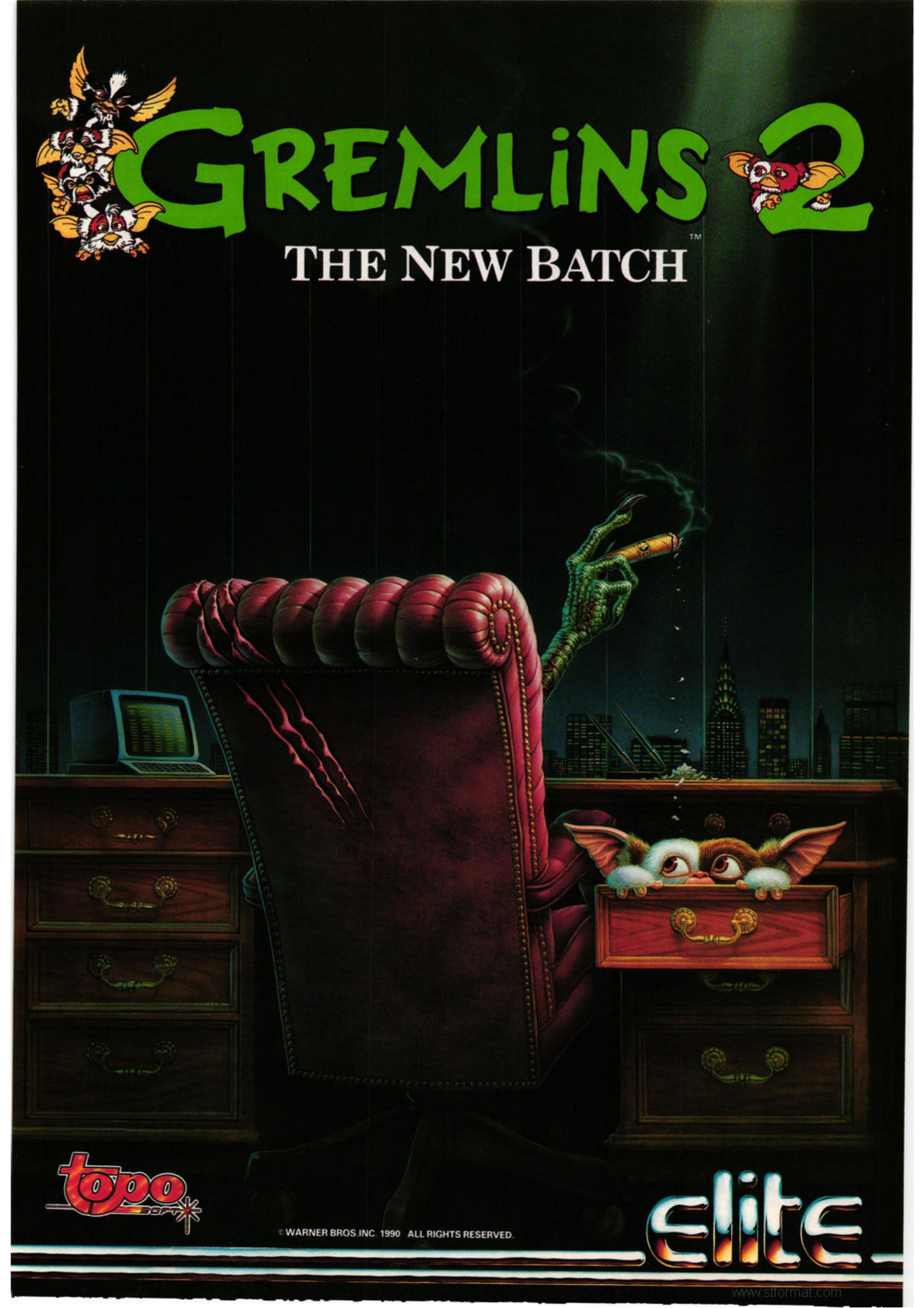


■ Sound Tech big wig Tony Williams: "Yes, we *will* be doing a budget version of C-Lab very soon"



■ Will Mowatt demonstrates the new version of C-Lab *Notator*

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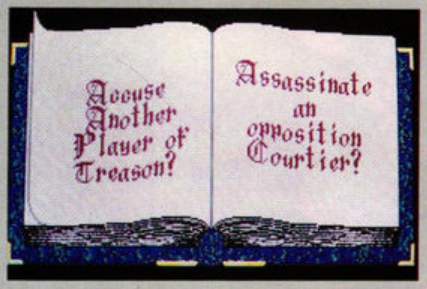
BETRAYAL

Microprose/Rainbird

Microprose have been establishing their "premium products" concept over the last few months; taking one of their better games, packing it up in a big box with a chunky manual and selling it for a wallet-bashing £29.99. *MidWinter* and *F-19 Stealth Fighter* both received this treatment and *UMS II* is destined for more of the same when it's released next month (see preview in *STF 13*). Undoubtedly big things lie ahead for *Betrayal* too.

Microprose are describing it as a board game without a board – interesting idea! What this really means is that you control a knight on a full-screen map and travel around the terrain visiting sites and encountering enemies along the way.

The game is pitched as more of a strategy than *MidWinter*, but much less of a strategy than the forthcoming *UMS II*. Set in the days of old when knights were backstabbing little snitches, you need to curry favour with the king in order to build up a following of men. This means discrediting other players in the game by digging up the dirt on them. Evidence can be bought or you can dispatch spies to discover it. Of course your opponents can do the same to you. As you travel around the map you can ransack villages, send out assassins to kill your enemies or attempt to depose bishops – actions which can all be used against you.



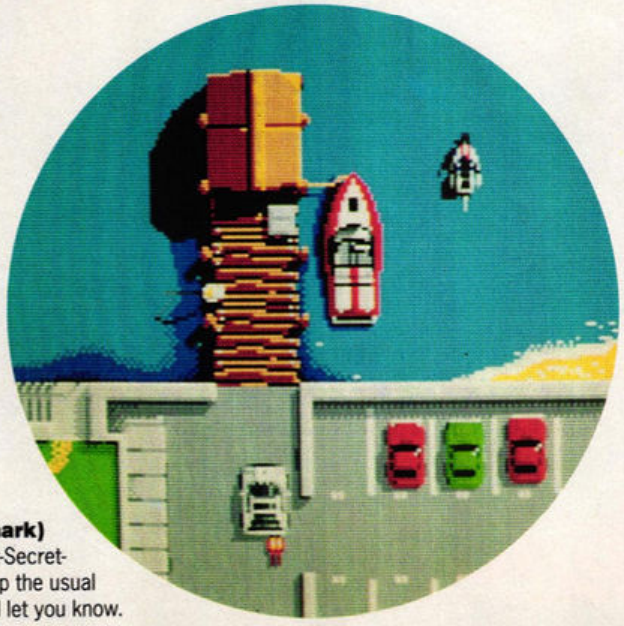
All the time you're in favour with the king you receive courtiers. These enable you to ransack towns or put them to work for the good of your wallet. The more cash you give to the king, the more courtiers you receive.

The game has been in development for more than six months, and we've seen advanced demos which suggest it could be up there with some of the classics. Action sequences comprise attractive graphics and the number of options available to you means it could take months to complete. We hope to bring you the full review next month.



previews

This month the FORMAT team look forward to a whole host of potential chart-toppers. With this much action and excitement in the making, there's something to please everyone in the coming months



■ THE SPY WHO LOVED ME (Domark)

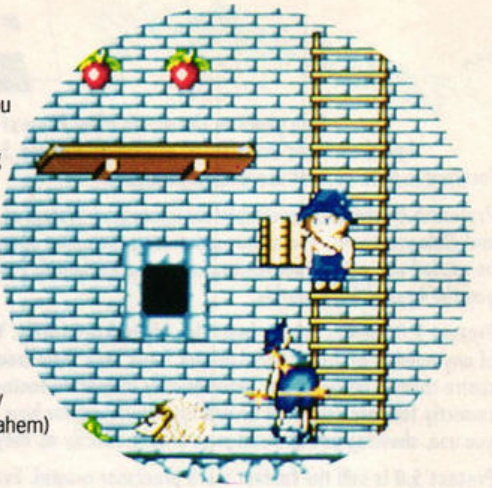
Bond is back in another Domark Game-of-the-Film-of-the-Book-of-the-sexist-Secret-Agent. Shaky, not absurd, Bond battles evil Baron Stromberg as he tries to stop the usual world domination plan (yawn...). Nobody does it better? We'll let you know.

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■ SNOW STRIKE (US Gold)
Dateline 1999: US drug problem so bad that the President sends troops into Columbia to eradicate it (wasn't that last week?). You fly the latest fighter jet, an F-14 LCB Cosmos in this coke-busting flight simulation game. Winners don't use drugs, they use missiles!

■ APPRENTICE (Rainbow Arts)
This cutesy platform adventure features you as a sorcerer's apprentice, struggling through 34 different levels. As usual there's a dragon to defeat, several thousand objects to pick up and plenty of shops to buy things in. Golly! What an original scenario. Only time will tell if it's as (ahem) good as it sounds.







■ LEGEND OF FAERGHAIL (Rainbow Arts/Reline)
According to Tolkien, elves are a peaceful folk, but not in this German fantasy role-player. Here, the elves have been taken over by the dark side and are evil creatures laying waste to the mythical land of Faerghail. Your job is to find out why they've been scrobbled and turn them back into the eco-friendly sweeties they really are.

■ CHUCK YEAGER'S ADVANCED FLIGHT SIM (Electronic Arts)
It features Chuck Yeager, it's a flight-sim and guess what? Yup... It's more advanced than its predecessor. Bi-planes and aerobatics make this a likely candidate for the upcoming Golden Sick Bag Award. Upchuck!



■ MURDERS IN SPACE (Infogrames)
Fancy being a weightless Hercules Poirot? Could you solve the mystery of the attempted murder on the Pegasus Space Station? In this animated whodunnit adventure by Bertrand Brocard, it's up to you to save eight other crewmen from certain death and boldly go where Agatha Christie novels never went before.

ALCATRAZ

Infogrames



More futuristic drug-bashing in this game as you try to destroy drug-meister Pedro Escobar. In an unlikely scenario, he's taken over the old prison island of Alcatraz and turned it into his headquarters. See... Drug-peddlars always end up in the nick.

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Presenting PROTEXT 5.0

Five years to the month after Protext version 1 was launched Arnor are pleased to present version 5, an enormous leap forward in both ease of use and performance.

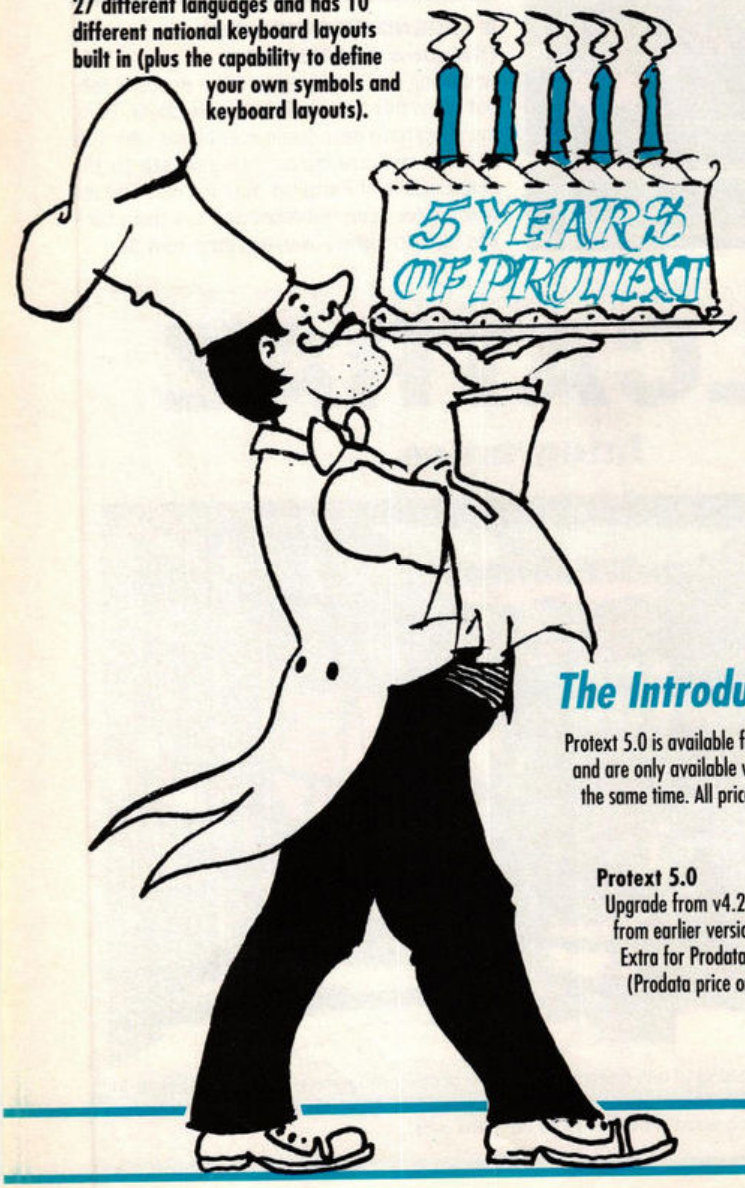
Protext 5.0 introduces a completely integrated system of pull down menus and dialogue boxes. The menus are among the many operations that may now be carried out with either the mouse or the keyboard. Protext really does give you the best of both worlds.

Protext 5.0 handles printer fonts flexibly and accurately. You can make full use of any number of proportional printer fonts, mix them freely within any line, centre them in headers, use automatically formatted footnotes. And Protext correctly formats your text as you type it, no matter how many font changes you use, showing you line and page breaks exactly as they will be printed.

Protext 5.0 is still the fastest word processor around. Even though we have made all these major improvements we have taken great care to ensure that text editing is as fast as ever. The menus work smoothly and quickly even with high resolution displays. But of course, you can use Protext's efficient set of commands and keys just as before and 5.0 remains compatible with all earlier versions from 1.0 onwards.

Protext 5.0 is a worthy successor to version 4, which was described as "the best word processor at any price", "the best text processor on the Amiga" and "the most powerful word processor on the Atari ST" (AUI, ST/Amiga Format, ST User).

Protext 5.0 heralds a new era of multi-lingual European software, in time for 1992 and the opening up of Eastern Europe. Protext may be used in at least 27 different languages and has 10 different national keyboard layouts built in (plus the capability to define your own symbols and keyboard layouts).



The Features



☆ **New fast & easy to use pull down menu system** with dialogue boxes and alerts; file selector; mouse dragging to set blocks. Menus complement existing commands and keyboard shortcuts, do not replace them. Menus may be used with mouse or keyboard. Amiga version follows Intuition guidelines.

☆ **Enhanced printing capabilities** supports multiple proportional fonts; mixing of different font sizes on the same line; proportional formatting whilst editing; side margin, headers and footers independent of main text font. Tabs, decimal tabs and centre tabs. Extensive range of printer drivers supplied.

☆ **Multiple file editing** - up to 36 files may be open; split screen editing.

☆ **Graphics mode support** on PC allows use in virtually any text or graphics mode including 132 column or 75 line VGA modes; user defined characters and on-screen bold, italics and underlining now on all versions; use of 14 different accents on any character.

☆ **Language support includes** Albanian, Basque, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Esperanto, Estonian, Flemish, Finnish, French, German, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Latin, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Rumanian, Serbocroatian, Slovak, Spanish, Slovene, Swedish, Welsh. (Recommended printers: Star LC24, HP Laserjet II or later).

☆ **Index and contents** generation. Indexer takes marked words or phrases; contents entries automatically taken from titles wrapped in control codes; many options for style of contents output.

☆ **Spelling checker** features completely new 120,000 word Collins dictionary with very fast phonetic lookup. Anagrams and find word pattern. Foreign language dictionaries (German, Swedish available now, others to follow).

☆ **Many other enhancements** including multi-line footnotes and endnotes; automatic timed save; add column or row of figures; indent tabs; find word at cursor; 40 column mode support; sentence operations; inter- paragraph space; much improved expression evaluator; self incrementing variables; Roman numerals; newspaper-style column printing; file sorting utility with special options for names and addresses; revised manual plus new tutorial guide.

☆ **And don't forget Protext still includes** background printing; box manipulation; macro recording; exec files; headers and footers; find and replace; mail merging; undelete; file conversion utility; configuration program; auto reformatting; on screen help; time and date; typewriter mode; line drawing; disc utilities.

The Introductory Offer Prices

Protext 5.0 is available from late August 1990 for the Amiga, ST and PC. These prices are valid until 30 September 1990 only and are only available when ordering direct from Arnor. You can also buy our database, Prodata, for half price if purchased at the same time. All prices fully inclusive. Amiga and ST versions require 1 Mb.

	Aug/Sep	from Oct 90
Protext 5.0	£125	£149.95
Upgrade from v4.2	£49.50	£60
from earlier versions	£64.50	£75
Extra for Prodata v1.1	£40	£79.95
(Prodata price only if ordered with 5.0 new or upgrade)		

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From the heart of ST activity in Germany – Don Maple reports on the latest European news

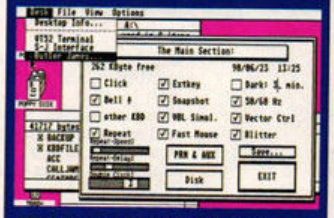
euro news

SHAREWARE FROM EUROPE

In addition to excellent professional software, there are also some incredible European shareware programs (see page 95 for a special report on Dutch PD). Each month we focus on one such program or author.

This month's tasty morsel comes from Luxembourg. *James* is an accessory written in assembler and nicknamed *The Desktop Butler* because of the number of small errands it runs. One neat feature is that your own programs can communicate with *James* using GEM message pipes.

It took student author Pascal Fellerich a whole year to write the program. For a copy send £7 and a formatted double-sided disk to: Pascal Fellerich, 45 rue des Genàts, 3482 Dudelange, Luxembourg.



■ ***James* offers a host of small programs, from *Snapshot* to *Fast Mouse***

TT will run at double speed

The traditionally well-informed Dutch tabloid *Atari ST Nieuws* reports that the final version of the TT will run at an incredible 32 MHz! This is twice as fast as previously announced and four times as fast as your plain vanilla ST.

Quoting Atari Benelux the *Nieuws* reveals that the new ROMs have grown to 512K and now contain support for several languages selectable by a dipswitch.

The price of a TT with 2MByte of RAM, one 720K floppy, 40 MByte hard drive and a multisync colour monitor is quoted as 6500 Dutch guilders (£2530). The TT should be available in October.



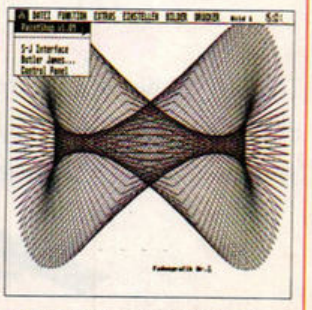
■ **The ultra-fast TT, reported to be running at an incredible 32MHz**

SHOPPING FOR PAINT

Paint Shop, **the new art package from SCET, follows the current trend of combining free-hand painting and object drawing. This excellent program costs only DM 59 (£20), when similar, but less powerful, packages cost ten times as much! It requires a monochrome 1040 and is highly recommended.**

"Do we need another paint program?" asks the *Paint Shop* manual. The answer is yes! In addition to standard painting tools *Paint Shop* offers unique features such as the built-in programming language for geometric drawings and automatic plotting of mathematical functions. It also has the ability to import *Signum!* and *Borland* vector fonts. GPL – Graphic Programming Language – even lends itself to animation.

To order or distribute *Paint Shop* contact: SCET, Postfach 500103, 3200 Hildesheim 5, F.R. Germany.



■ ***PaintShop*: graphically illustrating the ST's power without the price**

Mega memory on the Richter scale

Richter Computer in Germany are manufacturing a unique ST memory extension. Still in prototype, the extension currently works only with the Mega ST and will be available in configurations ranging from MB-6 to MB-12 in 2MByte increments. The top of the line MB-12 expands the Mega to 12MBytes and costs DM 4000 (£1,500).

The extended memory works with *Calamus* while *GFA-Basic* FRE() command shows a 12 with a lot of zeros.

The hardware originates from Austria and installation involves opening your machine and re-inserting the MMU. Richter plan to release it in time for the Dusseldorf show in late August.



■ **The Mega gets a 12MByte memory**

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520STE **£399**

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512K £899; 1MB £999
2MB £1099; 4MB £1199

*Requires case to be opened and may void warranty

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- STE
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- 15 Disks + Box

512K £899; 1MB £999
2MB £1099; 4MB £1199

Other Systems available including Calamus Pro DTP, Superbase Professional and Music applications
STOP PRESS SIMM 1MB Memory modules for STE now available £79

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The SM124 hi-res monitor **£129**

Phillips 8833 colour medium res monitor **£269**

The Kempston Hand Scanner **£229**



with touch-up **£399**

BLITZ TURBO



£19.95

Blitz is the ultimate personal backup tool that wil successfully copy most ST disks in a fraction of the time o GEM or other copiers. By cleverly bypassing your ST's disl controller chip, Blitz will copy a single sided disk from internal to the external drive in only 23 seconds, or 4 seconds for any double sided disk! Tired of hanging around Our unique copier will Blitz your backup time!

OFFER Buy any Power Drive and get Blitz Turbo for ONLY **£15**

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5.25 Disk Drive



This fully switchable 5.25" 40-80 track disk drive has a built in PSU and is ideal for use with PC emulators or as an alternative storage medium using cheaper 5.25" diskettes.

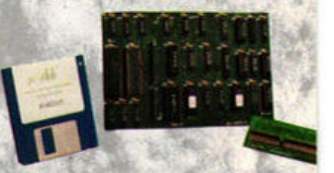
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SUPER CHARGER

The easiest IBM emulator to fit your ST. Simply plugs into the Atari's DMA port and uses IBM off its own internal RAM which can be used as an ST RAM disk.

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PC-DITTO II £22



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PRINTERS



- LC10 Colour model
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- 200 address labels
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- LC10 Mono **£169**
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- HP Paintjet Colour **£799**
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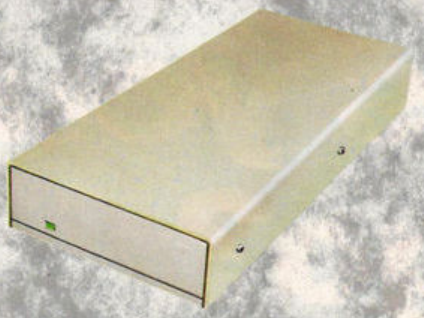
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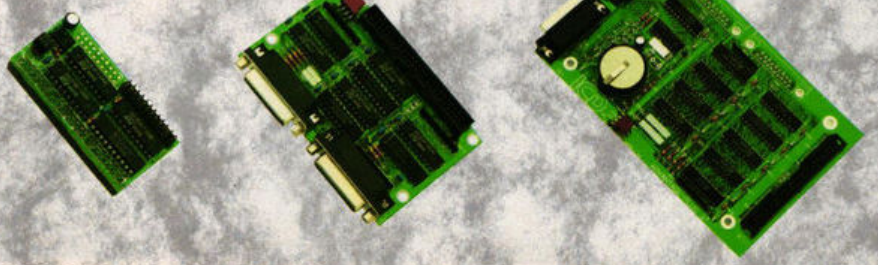
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where the hell does your money go?



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How can the software industry possibly justify charging you £20 and upwards for an ST game? Is there a conspiracy to keep prices up? How much do the fat cats cream off in sheer profit? Colin Campbell reveals whose pockets your cash is disappearing into

Every week *ST FORMAT* gets letters of the "it really is appalling" variety bemoaning the cost of ST games. Where the hell, they demand to know, does all that money go?

According to Atari there are more than 275,000 ST owners in the UK, and that figure is growing at the rate of thousands a month. Add to that the firm's estimate that four out of every five machines are primarily, though by no means exclusively, used for gaming. And finally, add to that the results of one recent survey which found that, on average, people are buying software at the rate of one full price game every four weeks. Work it out for yourself: that means serious money. So who is spending all your hard-earned readies?

"Top people earn £200,000 a year, along with a company car, business beanos in the Caribbean and expenses-paid lunches in posh restaurants"

In the beginning was the taxman, so let us turn 15 per cent of your £20 – that's a very substantial £3 for each and every game sold – over to one Mr J Major, who takes lots of money from lots of people to keep Great Britain plc chugging along. Value Added Tax is payable on virtually every product you can buy or sell, including computer software and excluding only a few oddities such as kiddies clothes, newspapers and groceries.

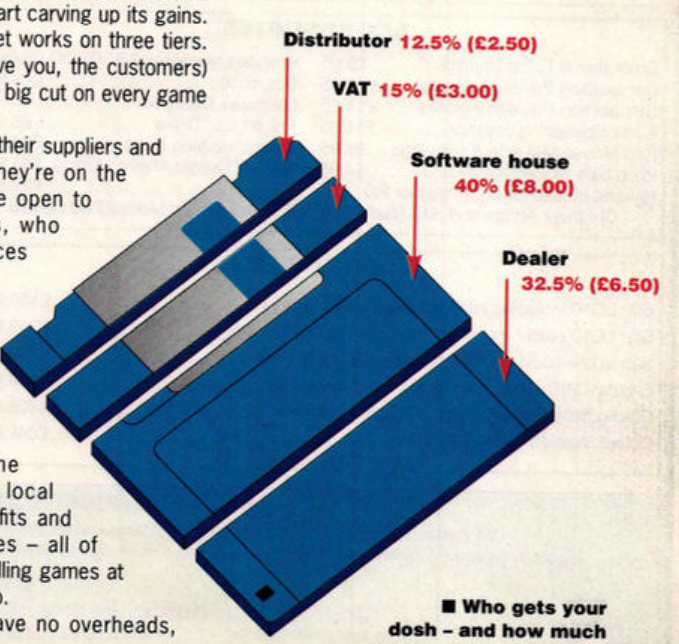
With Attila the taxman paid off, the leisure software industry can start carving up its gains. Essentially the UK market works on three tiers. At the bottom (just above you, the customers) is the dealer. He takes a big cut on every game – about £6.50.

Dealers moan about their suppliers and customers, because they're on the front line and therefore open to abuse from landlords, who charge outrageous prices for commercial floor-space, and from suppliers, who are forever trying to cut the dealers' margin and keep more money for themselves. There are also the perennial problems of local pirates, mail order outfits and High Street chain stores – all of which cost dealers by selling games at better prices than they do.

Pirates obviously have no overheads, mail order outfits don't have to pay for premium sites and chain stores such as Woollies can be sure that a certain proportion of the people who walk through their doors are likely to walk out with an ST game as well as that ill-advised pair of brown Crimplene slacks. Software stores, on the other hand, are unlikely to make many impulse sales. It's a risky old business, as the sad sight of painted-out windows and the "Ceased trading" signs demonstrate.

All dealers plead poverty, but they *can* make a good living: something in the region of £25,000 would not be unreasonable. The trouble is they can go bust at any time. The appearance of a new rival within ten miles has them utterly petrified, while a downturn in consumer spending has them doing the Headless Chicken Meets The Blue-Arsed Fly (the dance sensation currently sweeping the dealers of the nation).

On the other hand, the dealer's very vulnerability is his or her greatest weapon. If the dealer sneezes, the rest of the industry catches cold. For if there are no independent shops the only people left selling software are mail order outfits (whom the publishers dislike), the chain stores (whom the publishers fear) and the pirates (whom the publishers despise and fear). ➢



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Above the dealers are the distributors. This lot are bonkers. Their job as piggy in the middle is to get the software from the publishers, stick it in vans, and drive it to the shops. Distributors buy from publishers and sell to dealers. Profit on each game is minimal: about £2.50 on each sale, before overheads. But the distributor is "shifting" hundreds of thousands of games every week and therefore makes a healthy living. There aren't many distributors. The main two are Centresoft (interestingly, linked to publisher US Gold) and Leisuresoft (just as interestingly, linked to Rainbow Arts, a major software retail and mail order outfit).

A couple of years ago Electronic Arts had the bright idea of selling its games direct to dealers, thereby cutting out the middleman. But the bright idea remained no more than that, partly because change is a pain. If all games publishers were to indulge in this, dealers would spend all their time talking to software houses, which is absolutely the last thing that they want.

Instead dealers simply contact the distributor, place their order and await delivery. Inside every distribution centre is a babble of earnest sales people bellowing like maniacs into phones trying to shift ever more software packages to the dealers. But the dealer won't buy unless he has a hunch you want the games on offer.

"Dealers plead poverty, but they can make a good living: £25,000 would not be unreasonable. The trouble is they can go bust at any time"

Above this mess is the software house or publisher. This is where the games are dreamt up and turned into reality. For this the likes of Ocean, US Gold, Domark and Mirrorsoft take 40 per cent of your £20 – that's about £8 for a full price ST game.

If the distributor can't survive with smaller margins and if the dealer goes bust with flattened profits then it has to be the software house who is making all the money.

Yet it is not unusual for major league software houses to turn in nasty losses. They don't work on a hand to mouth basis – investing in a big game costs a hell of a lot of money – and in this financial climate it's pretty difficult to make money any other way.

Of the £8 received the publisher has already spent £7.50 getting the game out. About £2.40 goes on developing the game. That includes paying designers, programmers, music people and graphic artists. Big companies such as Ocean have in-house teams of hand-picked programmers, some of whom can earn about £15,000 a year. Other publishers prefer to employ teams of programmers (such as the Bitmap Brothers) who receive a jolly nice down-payment as well as royalties.

The choice of programmers generally has less to do with a big success than the choice of game itself. A glance at the Gallup chart reveals that licences are best. Coin-ops such as *New Zealand Story*, movies like *Batman* and character or event-led licences, from *Postman Pat* to the World Cup, are more likely to sell.

Obtaining the rights to these names is the battlefield on which software publishers really get serious. Most big name software houses approach a licencing agent with three things:
1) an impressive track record of converting names into games;
2) a strong likelihood of high sales; and, last but not least,
3) an outrageous amount of money.

Ocean, Mirrorsoft, US Gold and their ilk have an advantage in that they have all turned commercial names into top selling games. It's Catch 22 for smaller publishers who can't present a portfolio to agents and usually have to make do with lesser names such as Emlyn Hughes, *Subbuteo* or *Grange Hill*.

THE AWESOME POWER OF THE CRITICS


to the action...
waited, earth-shattering seq...
lovagen is at last upon us.
ackson talks to Benson, his
oard computer, on the long,
ourney into the heart of danger

e prospect of thermo-
al nuclear greenhouses
ice-age, polar eau-zones
shivering under the bed-
babbling with fear, then
les is not for you. There are
re catastrophic ways to die
look for them, and if you're a
oving mercenary you'll proba-
them.

An old Greek legend tells of Damocles (a distant relative of Johnocleese?), who congratulates the king on how jolly nice it must be, being king and that. The king thought differently and showed Damocles how kingship really felt by hanging a huge sword, business-end down, over his head at a dinner party. It was attached to the ceiling

comet
cles, hence the title) is
on collision course for
Eris, whose leaders
show similar bureau-
cratic inertia to the
leaders on Earth. Nowt
has been done except some talk-
ing, a bit of under-funded research
and some more talking. They did
send for you though, about four
years ago, but had just about
given up on you.

Arriving on Eris on a com-
puter-controlled flight, you meet
Benson, your ninth generation per-
sonal computer. In best Douglas

GOLD

you until you
out for yourself. The
he'll tell you.

His main p
pose is to prevent you from fly
too fast near the ground, and m
aging inventory and navigati
systems. He also reads d
ments which are fundamenta
the whole Treasure Hunt-type
It transpires that you ha
mere three hours to save
planet by either destroyi
diverting the comet. Not

In the software business the magazines are king when it comes to promotion. Ignore them, and a software publisher can watch the game stiff.

Publishers have dipped a toe into other media such as television, radio and youth-based general interest magazines, so far with little evidence that such tactics are worth the high expense.

The advantages of reaching a larger market seem to be outweighed by the uncertainty that the real target audience is being reached, for it is certain that the great majority of ST gameplayers get their information and guidance from *ST FORMAT*. The shotgun appears to be more effective than the blunderbuss (but then, we would say that, wouldn't we?).

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■ **Bidding for prime licences such as *Ghostbusters* can start as high as £100,000 and reach up to £250,000...**



■ **– but as *Batman* showed, that kind of expenditure doesn't guarantee the customer a great game at the end of it**

For mega-names such as *Ghostbusters*, *Ninja Turtles*, *Outrun* or *Batman* the bidding kicks off at £100,000. The eventual down-payment can go as high as a quarter of a million, with the agent also expecting a firm commitment on promotion. The winning software house then has to spend thousands more on advertising.

As soon as the word is out magazine sales people are on the 'phone babbling away about

"Big name software houses approach a licencing agent with an impressive track record of conversions, a likelihood of high sales – and an outrageous amount of money"

the advantages of placing colour page adverts in their publications. In *ST FORMAT* a double page spread can cost up to £2,000, while a colour page in a poor-selling rag can be snapped up for as little as £100 (but that is often viewed as a false economy). Large software houses are wise to the ways of magazines and can usually secure good deals by buying in bulk. Or they can opt for an *ST FORMAT* Cover Disk promo, the price of which usually depends on the prestige and importance of the game.

The only other place to be sure of reaching such a high proportion of potential customers is at major computer shows. At Earl's Court for this September's Computer Entertainment Show *(see page 7 for details)*, the software houses will once more be constructing their baroque mini-palaces – sometimes devoted to a single title. The expense is astronomical, and you can always find pundits who feel it's wasted time, effort and above all money.

But if a publisher tries to save on costs by failing to show up, rivals make the most of it: "You don't think Whosit Soft is, er, financially embarrassed, do you? Far be it from me to spread rumours..." Publishers worry endlessly and perhaps excessively about public profile, and, hardly surprisingly, are frightened of being forgotten by consumers.

In all these bread-and-butter running costs – administration, advertising, promotion and paperclips – take up a distressing 40% of that rapidly diminishing £8, slashing just over £3 off your average publisher's wad. Makes your heart fair bleed for 'em, doesn't it?

What with the licence, production costs, magazine advertising and show expenses a really big game can cost up to £1.5 million before it is even launched. And if a game of that magnitude fails to appear in the Gallup top three, then industry figures start reaching for their P45s.

Boring hardware also adds to the cost. It's a popular misconception that manuals, boxes and so on are a major part of the cost of the games you buy. Publishers pay about 50p for an ST disk, lay out an additional 20p for the box and a few more pennies for instructions cards. If it's deemed worthwhile they'll also spend a few pence and bung in a plastic novelty or novella. In all, the manufacturing process takes up about £1.95 of your £20. The software industry has about five duplication and printing operations which take care of this – some also duplicate for the music industry.

So, out of your original £20, the software house can end up with something like 35p in clear profits. It doesn't seem a great deal, does it? Worse, that money is fragile: any slip twixt cup and lip – delayed release, cock-ups in duplication, a clash between two similar games released at the same time – sends profits crashing. Already this year Tynesoft and Grandslam have gone broke, somewhat belying the common and cynical view that software houses are bleeding programmers and customers dry.

DOG EAT DOG

Publishers can save money by contracting different aspects of development to freelancers. This is a high-risk strategy, for there are freelancers working from home who find it difficult to comprehend the importance of deadlines. Many a horrified project manager has been known to wait months for work, only to find it practically useless on arrival.

Villainous publishers – of whom there are very few now – sometimes use such bad experiences to rip off programmers, claiming that good work is poor and therefore deserving of reduced payment. Cheques get "lost in the post," concocted and inaccurate royalty statements are issued, and everyone becomes extremely bitter and irate.

First class programmers, though, bursting with talent, enthusiasm and ideas, can play the field with a new program and secure a good royalties deal. It's sometimes argued that programmers are wiser plumping for royalties so long as they make sure the publisher will promote the title properly here and abroad; while others reckon it's far better to go for a big flat-rate payment.

Our breakdown is, of course, an average. A publisher's profits could amount to about £50,000, provided the game is successful. And it's worth noting that these kind of costs and profits would have anyone in the music business or book publishing falling about with laughter.

It's all a crazy, crazy gamble and, despite the jaundiced view of the average ST gamester, the fat cats of games publishing are few and far between. Sure, the top five people in the UK earn something in the region £200,000 a year, along with rakes of goodies such as a company car – probably not a secondhand Mini Metro – business beanos in the Caribbean and expenses-paid lunches in posh restaurants. Yet it would be foolish indeed to expect these people to take a cut in wages just so the price of software comes down by what would only amount to a matter of pennies.

One error frequently made by computer

"If the game is successful a publisher's profits could amount to £50,000 – the kind of profit that would have people in the music business falling about with laughter"

enthusiasts, and indeed programmers, is that decision makers in the software industry have some kind of interest other than financial in gaming. They don't. Most wouldn't be seen dead playing ST games and have no special desire to make your life any easier – unless there's money in it. "Producing quality product" is important to them, of course: but only because it leads to higher profits.

But there's no need to get bitter and twisted about all this. You're not being screwed, and indeed the ultra-competitive nature of the market is leading to higher and higher standards. All software houses these days know that a bad game, besides pissing off the poor customer, damages their reputation: a string of stiffs and it's so long and thanks for all the expenses. The men and women whose job is to work out what you want talk increasingly these days of "brand loyalty," reckoning that one good sale leads to another. The reverse must also be true.

So there is serious money being made from providing you with your month's ST entertainment – but then, you knew that already. Yet, of all the thousands of programmers, sales people, marketing bods, writers, drivers, PR whizzos, wheelers, dealers, artists and company directors there are only a very few people indeed who earn much above what they reasonably deserve or can live on. Most of your money is being spent keeping the games coming out, and it would take a remarkable shift in the fortunes of the ST to bring prices down. ***stf***

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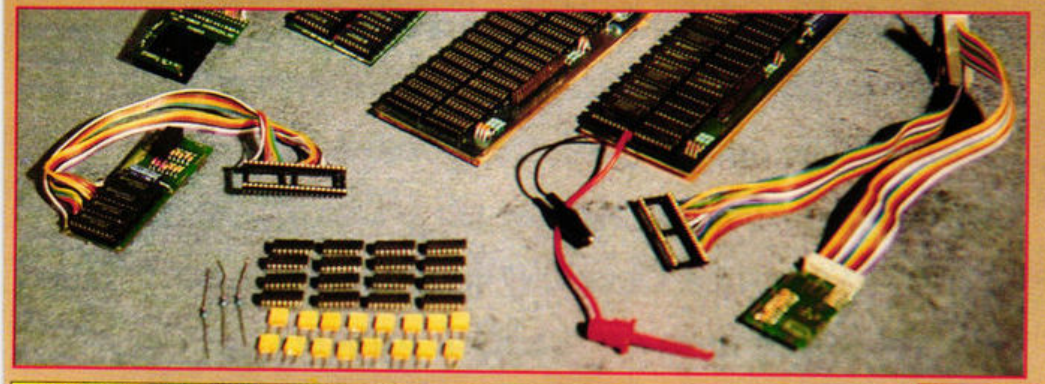
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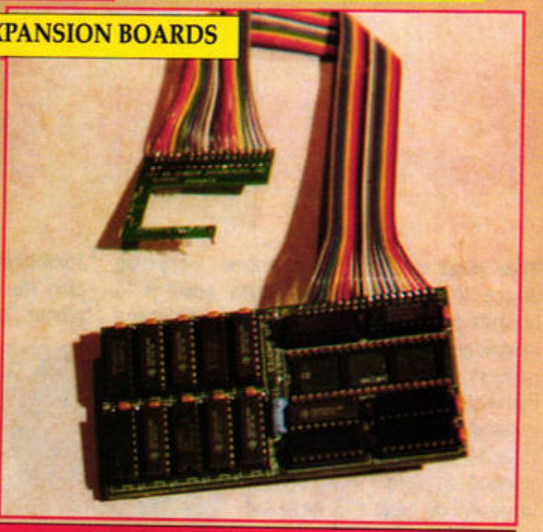
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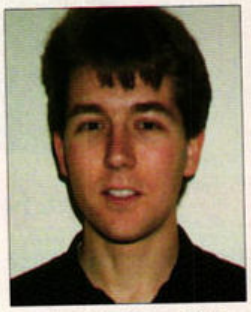
Core Design – the development house that grew out of a team working for Gremlin Graphics – have ceased to be. At least, they're no longer just a development house; Core have become a full software publisher, writing their own games and doing all the marketing, promotion and tub-thumping on their own behalf.

Their first home-grown release is *Corporation*, a game nowhere near finished when we visited – not that that had stopped two magazines "reviewing" it. Core's last piece of work was the sequel to *Rick Dick* (always refer to *Rick Dick*, never *Rick Dangerous*). Simon Phipps, Core's chief programmer on the project talked us through the making of the sequel.

Core Design are well known to most ST gameplayers. They built Action Fighter, the hilarious Dynamite Dux, the seriously wacky Monty Python and Rick Dangerous, one of the biggest hits and biggest surprises of 1989. FORMAT visited Core HQ to talk to Simon Phipps, main man on the Rick project

Core is dead –

The plot is a paper-thin *Indiana Jones*-type device to get Rick from bizarre point A to bizarrer point B through Z, and has something inexplicable to do with flying saucers, the return of The Big Fat Guy from *Rick Dick I* and an invasion of robotic penguins! Have Simon's previous activities, working on Core's *Monty Python* (reviewed on page 41), been getting to him, perhaps?



■ **Simon Phipps, *Rick Dick* head honcho**

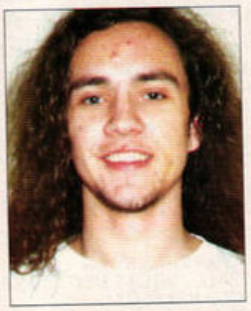
"Funny you should say that," says Simon, "because the inter-level cartoons, a big improvement on the original, use the *Monty Python* cartoon player. *Rick Dick I* had cartoons with one sprite and a tiny background – six characters by six – but this time we expand the screen and do all sorts of fancy things."

Simon feels it's important to have impressive intro sequences that may add nothing to gameplay but improve overall presentation. "It's exciting to see something moving when you get

"*Rick* was one of the first games I wrote – looking back at it, it's like spaghetti!"

to the end of a level and continue the story, rather than putting up that big Neochrome screen, just slapping it on and saying 'Right, onto your next piece.'"

The extra work done with the inter-level cartoons is just one among many ways in which Core have attempted to build on *Rick Dick*'s success, while at the same time taking the opportunity to improve on its weaknesses. Chief among these, without doubt, was the expletive-deleted difficulty, which prevented all but the most dedicated of gamesters ever getting to see the third level, let alone the fourth. (That's one reason why we've given you a sample on the Cover Disk from the later part of the original.) "Yes, it's all true!" Simon admits, laughing. "That was my first game, and it was simply too tough in places. That jump in the Egyptian Tombs on level two is an absolute bitch." It was also the first project on which Core's chief games tester Bob Churchill worked, and it appears the combined inexperience of the two gents resulted in a game that was a hell of a lot harder than it should have been.

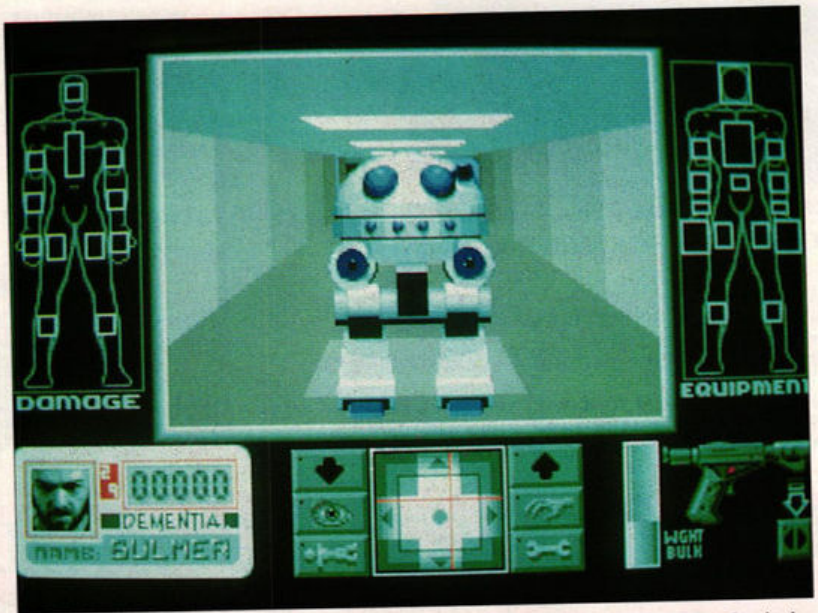


■ **Bob Churchill, Core's chief games tester**

This time the first level is meant to be an easy but by no means laid-back introduction to the game. There's also a nifty level selector that enables you to play the game from any starting point on the first four levels. But you'll only be able to play level five if you play right through from level one to four.

"We've also worked on the trap system," Simon explains, "which is the whole basis of *Rick*. Originally we had a sprite linked to a movement table, an animation table and just a box somewhere on screen you could detect. Once you entered this box, poked into it, shot into it or let your dynamite off into it, it set the sprite into motion and the sprite did something.

"With the system we have now each trap can have four detection boxes on screen, and they're affected by bullets, dynamite, Rick's presence or his punch. These all set the traps off: the thing is, we now have traps that are already in motion being stopped and started by you, traps that are stationary being set off, or traps halfway through a movement doing something else."

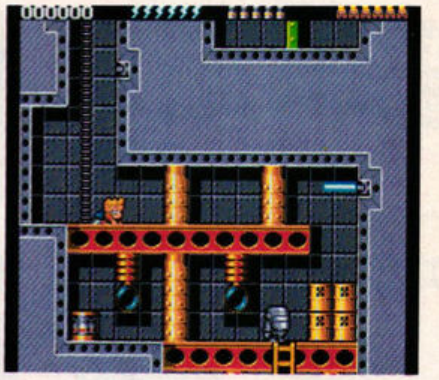


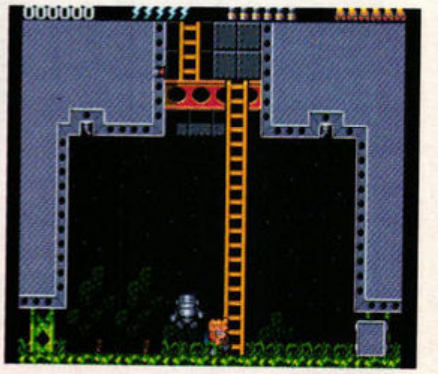
■ **Core's first release on its own label is *Corporation*, an eagerly awaited 3D role-playing adventure due later this month. Unlike two other magazines we were unwilling to review an unfinished version, so look out for the first *real* review, coming next month in *ST FORMAT!***

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■ **"Rick now has sliding dynamite," explains programmer Simon Phipps, "so you can skim it across the floor, as opposed to just setting it down. So we've included a lot more puzzles with him sliding dynamite onto platforms which certainly livens things up." (inset) The game's "palette" of textured walls**





■ **(above and below) Rick Dick, the man with the unfeasibly dangerous thingie, is in dynamite form and due for release in late September**

long live Core!

Having aliens trigger traps enables you to kill two birds with one stone, so to speak, by luring the fearsome creatures into traps and disabling a dangerous area at the same time. If there's a falling block and you're alert to the danger, you can trick an alien by leading him into its path and flattening the brute.

Traps can also set off other traps, similar to a set of falling dominoes. If you shoot something, it might knock something else over, set a barrel rolling or whatever – and you soon have a whole cascading series of incidents set off by a single action.

Everything concerned with *Rick Dick II* has been developed originally on the ST, with the graphics done in *Art Studio*. That's nice to know, but why the ST especially? "Easy: it doesn't keep crashing out like the Amiga does! And the Amiga is a little too slow, certainly for our purposes anyway."

On the graphics side "go behinds" have been added so sprites pass behind objects, there's lots more animation, and the scrolling's much smoother. "It actually tracks Rick up and down the towers now, and as you exit the screen it pans onto the new section. When we did the original it was basically a little platform and ladders game, but this time round we wanted to try and give it more sophistication and continuity."

So many exciting new features have been added to *Rick Dick II*, in fact, that as far as Simon can remember the high score is just about the only original routine left in the game! Why? "Well, you discover about a zillion bugs trying to take the stuff over. Anyway, *Rick* was one of the first games I ever wrote – looking back at it, it's like spaghetti!" ***stf***

■ ***Rick Dangerous II*** **and** ***Torvak The Warrior*** **are to be released in late September; *Corporation* should be available as you read this.**

Play the Cover Disk demo of *Rick Dick* and discover what a treat you're in for!



■ **Hot on the heels of *Corporation* comes *Torvak The Warrior*, a five level hack-'n'-slay that is considerably stronger on gameplay than originality. Due to be released in September, we review the sorry tale of fretful old *Torvak* in next month's *ST FORMAT***

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Side A

RICK DANGEROUS – The man with the hat is back in this fully playable thrilling platform demo
YOLANDA – stunning platform game steeped in ancient mythology and compelling arcade action
GRAFFITI – spray your Desktop with messages!
STARTUP – brilliant utility that executes a sequence of programs or a string of instructions on boot up
NO BOMBS – what those bombs really mean!
PRIVATE EYE – find out what lurks inside your ST!

Side B

ROBOTZ – stunning 40-level shoot-'em-up
C TUTORIAL – useful source code (see page 113)
STAR LC10 – popular printer gets accessory utility
HARLEKIN FONTS – add fonts to your set-up
TRANSPORT 90 – view and download printer fonts
DIARY – no excuse for being late again!
TOS TELLER – which TOS lurks in your ST?
FOLDER – brilliant time-saving utility
SPEECH – your ST answers back!

cover disk

■ Delve into the delights of this month's *ST FORMAT* Cover Disk which comes crammed with over 800K of demos, games and utilities.

■ Unfortunately not all STs have double-sided disk drives as standard. For that reason a special format has been devised which can be read by both single and double-sided drives. Single-sided drive owners can still only access the top side of the disk.

■ Rob "the sector skew every 10th track was slightly out, so I decided to do a new format" Northen is the man responsible for the disk format which enables everyone to access *Rick Dangerous*, *Yolanda* and all the other programs on side A of the disk. And lets those with a double-sided drive get at *Robotz*, *Speech* and Warwick Grigg's C source files on side B.

■ You can get to side B of the disk if you've got a double-sided drive by double-clicking on the folder SIDE_B.

■ A warning message appears telling you that there is data damaged on the disk if you have a single-sided drive and try clicking on the SIDE_B folder. The disk isn't damaged; it's just your ST's way of saying it only has a single-sided drive. Click on the CANCEL button in the box and all will be well.

■ Back-up up your Cover Disk before running any of the programs. And *do* remember to write-protect the disk before putting it in the drive!

RICK ♥ YOLANDA!

Rick Dangerous

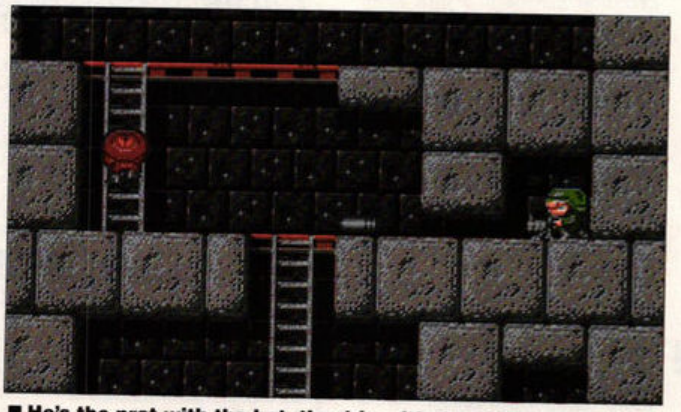
BY: MICROPROSE
SIDE: A
MACHINE: ALL COLOUR STs
FILES: RICK.PRG, RICK.DOC.

The man with the hat is back! The original *Rick* was too tough, hence a new version which enables you to start on any level. This is a playable demo of part of that version – way to go, Wick!

GETTING STARTED

Double-click on the folder RICK. Double-click on RICK.PRG to get the demo rolling. Ensure there's a joystick plugged into port 1 and press the fire button for action!

■ **Turn to page 26 to get the exclusive inside news on the creators of *Rick Dangerous II*, coming to an ST near you soon!**



■ **He's the prat with the hat, the drip with the whip: he's *Rick Dick*, back with a bang. Load up the disk and give him a go!**

Yolanda

BY: MILLENNIUM
SIDE: A
MACHINE: ALL COLOUR STs
FILES: YOLANDA.PRG,

Hercules decides daughter Yolanda should carry on his great work.



■ **Classic fun and games with *Yolanda*, the second of this month's superb playable Cover Disk demos. Can't be bad!**

Yolanda, a strapping 2,970-year old Greek blond bombshell, is subsequently cursed by the Goddess Hera, envious of the girl's stunning looks. The curse: anyone Yolanda falls in love with dies horribly within a week. If, however, Yolanda can re-enact the 12 labours of Hercules the curse will be lifted.

The full game features over 50 levels of tough platform action. In this demo you're on the first screen of one of the first 11 missions. If a screen is completed you can go no further. If you die (much more likely) a new screen is selected. This continues until you have no more lives.

Beware, your environment is lethal! Keep moving or the floor beneath you bursts into flames and disintegrates. Tarzan-style vines which appear harmless may suddenly explode in a fireball when you touch them. To survive, the correct route to complete the screen must always be taken, but finding it is a bugger.

GETTING STARTED

Double-click on the YOLANDA folder and then on YOLANDA.PRG. Plug a joystick into port 1 and press the fire button to start. Controls are simple enough: left and right for left and right movement and press fire to jump. ➢

DON'T BE DUMB! BACK-UP YOUR COVER DISK NOW! How? **See page 32**

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Graffiti

BY: PUBLIC DOMAIN
SIDE: A
MACHINE: ALL COLOUR STs
FILES: GRAPHITI.ACC, GRAPHITI.DOC

You've always wanted to do it, and now's your chance. Go plaster your Desktop with graffiti!

Don't hold the can over a single area for too long or the paint runs. For a larger but lighter spray area hold down the Alternate key. A larger spray area reduces the risk of runs and sags. To change colour, press the Control key once. The number of possible colours matches the current resolution. To spray a rainbow effect, hold the left Shift key down.

Cleaning up is easy. No mess, no fuss. Press Alternate and Control simultaneously. Anything you've applied quickly disappears. Except, that is, for paint on the menu bar. The menu bar is an especially sticky area and what goes on usually won't come off until you execute a program or exit the one you're working in.

GETTING STARTED

Inside the GRAFFITI folder you'll find a file called GRAFFITI.ACC. Because *Graffiti* is a Desktop Accessory you can't run it simply by double-clicking on it.

Instead, copy the file GRAFFITI.ACC to a blank disk or your boot disk. Ensure you place GRAFFITI.ACC in the disk's root directory (that is, outside all folders).

Once copied across to another disk, insert the disk with the copied version of *Graffiti* in the drive and reset the ST. Click on the Desk menu when the Desktop appears; you'll see the option Graffiti Fun. Click on it and get spraying.

Startup

BY: PUBLIC DOMAIN
SIDE: A
MACHINE: ALL COLOUR STs
FILES: STARTUP.PRG, STARTUP.DOC, STARTUP.INF

You've doubtless experienced the hassle of having too many programs in the Auto folder and not getting them to execute in the correct order. *Startup* is a batch program that executes on boot commands detailed in its file STARTUP.INF. *Startup* must be present in the Auto folder of your boot disk (start up disk) to work. STARTUP.INF must also be present in the Auto folder.

These two files need be the only files in the Auto directory because *Startup* locates all other files regardless of where they are. You no longer have to make sure of the order that you copied your files to the Auto directory because *Startup* executes programs as they are listed in STARTUP.INF.

The format for programs to be executed is to list the complete program name followed by any parameters to be passed. Any command or program name can be followed by a comment, although you need a text editor to alter the STARTUP.INF file.

GETTING STARTED

Copy the files STARTUP.INF and STARTUP.PRG to the Auto folder of your boot disk. You can find these files in the STARTUP folder on side B of the disk. Next, load a text editor – you could also use *Diary* from the Cover Disk – and edit STARTUP.INF to your requirements. For more information check the help file on the Cover Disk.

No bombs

BY: M MESSER
SIDE: A
MACHINE: ALL COLOUR STs
FILES: NOBOMBS.TOS, NOBOMBS.DOC, DIVZERO.PRG

At last! Stop those meaningless bombs appearing in the middle of the screen when something goes wrong. Instead you get the error message and the number of bombs that would have appeared.

No Bombs is what is known as a TSR (Terminate and Stay Resident) program. So once run from the Desktop, the Auto folder or a Command line, the program stays in memory waiting for an error to occur.

GETTING STARTED

Run the NOBOMBS.TOS program inside the NOBOMBS folder and exit to the Desktop by pressing a key. To check that *No Bombs* is working correctly, double-click on DIVZERO.PRG. This program forces a division by zero error. If *No Bombs* is working correctly you should get a message appearing stating this fact.

Private eye

BY: MIKE YOCUM
SIDE: A
MACHINE: ALL STs
FILES: PRIV_EYE.ACC, PRIV_EYE.DOC

Strictly for inquisitive techies, *Private Eye* displays all manner of information about your machine, including the version of GEM it's running (not the same as TOS), free memory, number of drives attached, and mouse and keyboard repeat rates.

GETTING STARTED

PRIV_EYE.ACC is inside the PRIV_EYE folder, but because it's an accessory you can't execute it simply by double-clicking on it.

Instead, copy the file PRIV_EYE.ACC to a blank disk or your boot disk. Ensure you don't place PRIV_EYE.ACC in a folder. Once copied across to another disk, insert the disk with the copied version of *Private Eye* in the drive and reset the ST. Click on the Desk menu when the Desktop appears; you'll see the *Private Eye* option to click on.

Robotz

BY: P FOX
SIDE: B
MACHINE: ALL COLOUR STs
FILES: ROBOTZ.TOS, ROBOTZ.DOC.

Don't let anyone rubbish a non-commercial game again; *Robotz* re-writes the rules. P Fox has proved it's possible to create a stunningly addictive and playable game without spending lots of money on development kit and countless man years coding. This game was designed, created and written in an amazing five days. But most importantly, it was designed to be played by mortals.

The graphics are superbly animated and executed. And with 40 levels to complete, *Robotz* keeps you glued to your seat for aeons.

The deep space exploration ship Darwin 8 has been invaded by hostile alien robots. As the last surviving crew member it is your job to deal with, and hopefully solve, the problem. The manic robots are all armed with laser guns and each group has at least one positronic generator from which they draw their amazing power.

Your rifle only stuns the robots while there is an active generator on the screen, so destroy these first and then kill the robots. Complete each level as fast as you can to pick up a decent time bonus, but be careful not to walk into walls or barriers because these have been electrified and contact with them is fatal.

GETTING STARTED

Double-click on the SIDE_B folder. Once inside double-click on the ROBOTZ folder. Double-click on the file ROBOTZ.TOS which resides inside. Shove a joystick into port 1 and prepare for battle.

C Series

BY: WARWICK GRIGG
SIDE: B
MACHINE: ALL STs
FILES: EVERYTHING IN C–SERIES FOLDER

Compilers, interpreters, the standard file handling library, printing, Desk Accessories and more are the subject of Warwick Grigg's eighth C tutorial. You'll find all the details on page 113.

Star LC10

BY: PAUL ROBINS
SIDE: B
MACHINE: ALL COLOUR STs
FILES: STARACC.ACC, STARCOLO.RSC, STARACC.DOC

A fantastically useful program that enables you to control all the usual functions of the Star LC-10 multi-font printer from your ST's Desktop. A smattering of functions only usually available through word processors and DTP packages like bold, inverse and double height are also available.

As with all Desktop accessories, *Star LC10* is accessed from the Desk ➢

FORMAT Cover Disk hotline 0225 442244 (2pm to 6pm)

Flummoxed by files? Perplexed by Cover Disk programs? If you have a problem with the disk – and you're sure there is no corrupted data – phone 0225 442244 between 2pm and 6pm on weekdays with your query. You'll be through to Neil Jackson, our Disk Editor.

Before you call have ready all the info Neil needs to help you: the model of your machine; the version of GEM/TOS you're using; and anything you've got attached to (or plugged inside) the computer. Have the disk handy and your ST up and running, and be ready to take notes.

Don't go without!

You single-sided drive owners don't have to miss out: get hold of the B-side by sending your name and address with a cheque or postal order for £1.75 to:

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30 Monmouth St,
Bath, Avon BA1 2BW

www.stformat.com

menu. The printer is reset the first time the program is called. This results in the printer being in a known state. If the printer goes off line at any time, the program detects this and prompts for suitable action.

Click on the button or icon to select the desired option. Selecting NLQ enables you to choose between any of the four NLQ fonts available on the Star. LFeed feeds the paper one line at a time. Holding the mouse button down on LFeed causes multiple line feeds. FFeed works in a similar manner for form feeds.

GETTING STARTED

Copy the files STARACC.ACC and STARCOLO.RSC to your boot disk. Insert the disk with the copied files into the drive and reset the machine. Once the Desktop appears you can access the utility by clicking on StarAcc in the Desk menu.

Harlekin fonts

BY: HISOFT
SIDE: B
MACHINE: ALL STs
FILES: EVERYTHING IN HARLY_FO.NTS FOLDER

Exclusive to *ST FORMAT* comes this collection of fonts for use with HiSoft's multi-purpose Desktop Accessory *Harlekin*. The fonts are all system fonts; they replace the ST's font with something more stylish. Included are Computer, Cursive, Desktop, Eight, Fraktur, IBM_1, IBM_2, Italics, Kids, Mac_08, Mac_16, Rockwell, Script, Stencil, System, Thin_1 and Thin_2. Phew!

GETTING STARTED

You need *Harlekin* to use the fonts in the HARLY_FO.NTS folder on side B. Enter *Harlekin*'s control panel and you'll spot a Load Font option. Click on this icon and then supply one of the font filenames detailed above.

■ For more information on *Harlekin* turn to page 94 where *Desktop* fully explores this brilliant utility.

Transport 90

BY: PUBLIC DOMAIN
SIDE: B
MACHINE: ALL STs
FILES: TRANSP90.PRG, TRANSP90.DOC, TRANSP90.RSC

A jolly utility to go with the *Star LC-10* accessory for downloading alternative character sets. *Transport 90* displays the various fonts built into Epson, Gemini and Star printers. It also downloads various alternate character sets to your printer.

GETTING STARTED

Double-click on the TRANSP folder inside the SIDE_B folder. Once inside, double-click on the TRANSP90.PRG and follow all the prompts.

Diary

BY: CRAIG HARVEY
SIDE: B
MACHINE: ALL STs
FILES: DIARY_16.ACC, DIARY_16.DOC

A text editing accessory that opens up a half-screen window which you can move up or down on your screen, and toggle between full and half size. It has no special diary functions other than being there when you want to jot something down.

Any text in the buffer stays there until you clear it or reboot – regardless of whether you have the *Diary* window open. *Diary* deals only with ASCII text.

Despite *Diary*'s small (10K) text buffer size, it can actually handle any file size (up to about 10MBytes!) by loading in only the portion of the file that is required. Neat eh?

GETTING STARTED

To load the program copy the file DIARY_16.ACC to the root directory of your boot disk and reset the computer. The program automatically loads. Clicking on the Desk menu and then on the *Diary* option runs the program.

Hit the Help key if you're stuck when using *Diary*.

TOS Teller

BY: RICHARD MONTEIRO
SIDE: B
MACHINE: ALL STs
FILES: TELLER.ACC, TELLER.DOC

To find out the version of TOS your machine is running, simply copy the file TELLER.ACC into the root directory of your boot disk. Reset the machine and the accessory automatically loads.

Click on *TOS Teller* in the Desk menu and a message appears in the top right of the screen detailing the TOS version.

Folder

BY: JAMES BESWICK
SIDE: B
MACHINE: ALL STs
FILES: GIZZMO.ACC, GIZZMO.DOC, GIZZMO.DAT

Don't you find it annoying when using an application that there's no option to create a folder? The usual procedure is to create a folder first, run the application and then save the relevant data into it. *Folder* enables you to create folders from within virtually any program – the reason it's so successful is because it's a Desktop Accessory.

GETTING STARTED

Because it's a Desktop Accessory, take the files GIZZMO.ACC and GIZZMO.DAT out of the FOLDER folder and place them in the root directory of another disk. Once copied across to another disk, reset the machine and *Folder* automatically loads. In the Desk menu you'll find a new option. Click on this to access *Folder*.

Speech

BY: PUBLIC DOMAIN
SIDE: B
MACHINE: ALL STs
FILES: SPEECH.TOS, SPEECH.DOC.

Who needs an expensive hardware sound sampler to get the ST to talk, when a software speech synthesizer does the trick? Type in a phonetic word and *Speech* does its best to throw it back at you.

GETTING STARTED

Double-click on the file SPEECH.TOS in the folder SPEECH on side B of the disk. Simply type something at the prompt and press Return to get a response. ***stf***

BACK-UP YOUR DISK!

Because the oh-so-delicious *ST FORMAT* Cover Disk is non-standard and squeezes in a whacking great 400K plus of data per side, the back-up procedure is not simple. Follow these steps, though, and you won't encounter any problems. Do it any other way and you could knacker your Cover Disk.

1. **Format a couple of blank disks – single-sided if you've got a single-sided drive, double-sided if you have a double-sided drive.**
2. **Write-protect the Cover Disk and insert it into drive A (if you have two drives, you lucky devil, insert the Cover Disk into drive B). Double-click on the drive B icon. If you're still saving up to buy a second drive, a message appears requesting you to put disk B in drive A. Simply click on OK.**
3. **Insert a freshly formatted disk into drive A. Double-click on the drive A icon.**
4. **Pick up a folder at a time from the Cover Disk window and plonk it into the drive A window.**
5. **If you have one drive then you'll be asked to insert disk A and disk B at regular intervals. Don't mix the two up! Disk B is the Cover Disk and disk A is the freshly formatted disk.**
6. **When you get a "disk full" error message, recopy the last folder – and subsequent folders – onto the second freshly formatted disk.**
7. **Double-sided owners, double-click on SIDE_2 once you've finished copying all the folders from side A of the Cover Disk. Job done!**

THE DISK NEEDS YOU!

We need *your* software – games, utilities, demos, anything good, original and preferably short. If you've written anything worthy of the *ST FORMAT* Cover Disk (and remember, it's the ones we reject that makes ours the best), send it with this form and full documentation to: Neil Jackson, *ST FORMAT* Cover Disk, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Allow four weeks for a reply.

Name _____
Address _____
Daytime 'phone _____
Program title _____
Size of files in K _____
What's so brilliant about it _____

Don't forget to: ■ Enclose an SAE ■ Include on-disk and paper documentation ■ Write your name and address on the disk ■ Use a virus-free disk ■ Say boo to a goose

Please sign the following declaration: This program is submitted for publication in *ST FORMAT*. It is wholly my own work and I agree to indemnify Future Publishing against any legal action should copyright problems arise.

Signed _____

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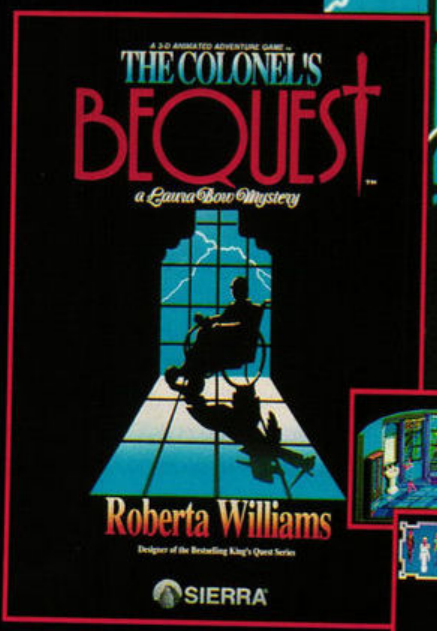
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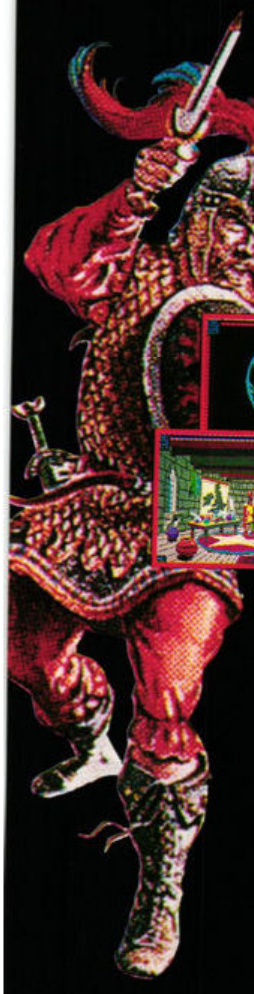


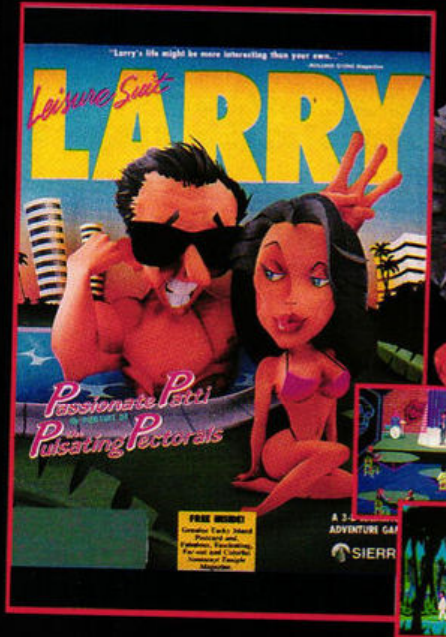














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ST FORMAT

Get yourself into a hot funk with 20 pages of heartstopping mindblowing frantic action. We do the biz on *Magic Fly*, set Captain Sensible loose on *Monty Python*, and give you high achievers the low-down on all this month's big titles. Screenplay is brought to you by Mark Higham (on the right) and the rest of the game-busting *FORMAT* team. Young guns get back, go for it!



screenplay



MAGIC FLY Get stuck into the gut-wrenching action. It's the ultimate super-fast tunnel-bound flight experience. It's magic, it's mayhem, it's more of a rush than Spanish Fly! **page 36**

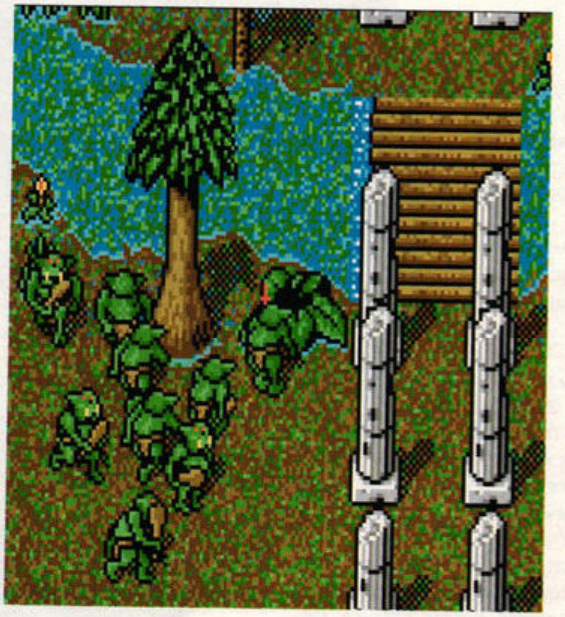
ANTAGO

Flip those flippin' counters around the screen in this wacky good versus evil puzzle game
page 58



BATTLEMASTER

(right) After last month's Cover Disk demo, the game is here. Duel with orcs, elves and dwarves and see how Hobbit-forming it really is
page 52





SHADES

64-player on-line adventure. The ultimate interactive adventuring experience or just a damned good gossip?
page 77

TRASH

After *Shades*, comes *Trash*. We test Micronet's new environmentally sound on-line adventure.
page 78

SLY SPY SECRET AGENT

(above) High-flyin', free-falling macho mega-blast. More bullet-pumping action than a Sam Peckinpah shoot-out!
page 55

LAST NINJA 2

(right) We sharpen our foot kicks, elbow nasties in the face and generally poke our tongue out a lot putting Activision's latest game through its paces
page 47



MONTY PYTHON

Flying sheep, Mr Gumby and the ubiquitous Spam. Has it captured the spirit of the series? You bet your sweet Ram's bladder cup it has!
page 41

DEBUT

The ultimate ecological head-twister. Ozone-friendly misanthropic *Sim City*-type planet creator. A megalomaniac's must!
page 42

BREACH II

Crikey who's that reptile with the bloody big teeth? Call out the marines!
page 44

KICK OFF 2

The World Cup is over, but could you have done any better? Put on the Pavarotti and find out in *Kick Off 2*
page 49

BLOCKOUT

Blimey! *Tetris* goes 3D. Guaranteed to give you tunnel vision
page 51

BACK TO THE FUTURE II

You've gawped over the posters, seen the film, read the book, sat on the loo, now the computer game is here (or is it there?)
page 56

MURDER

If you fancy yourself as an amateur sleuth get your grey cells working overtime in this Agatha Christie-style murder mystery
page 61

HARLEY DAVIDSON

Fat ass meathead biker bash. Squeeze that throttle, twist that wrist, oh and gobble those Freudian weeners!
page 62

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magic fly

ELECTRONIC ARTS £24.95

ST FORMAT GOLD

From lightning-fast 3D action screens right through to superb inventory lists, this game oozes technical wizardry. Even Mark ("Seen It All Before") Higham is dumbstruck by the awesome visuals as he clambers aboard the Magic Fly for the flight of a lifetime



■ The head-up display features a wealth of indicators and controls, but all the real action is concentrated in the middle of the screen. Navigate through winding tunnels, blasting aliens and overcoming monstrous obstacles in the greatest 3D game yet

We've recently seen a spate of sophisticated 3D games, which have proved more than ever before that your ST is at the forefront of games development. *Resolution 101* boasted the fastest 3D graphics ever, *Thunderstrike* offered a unique perspective on 3D plains and *Damocles* took space games into a new dimension with its 3D playing environment. Now *Magic Fly* has entered the 3D arena. Take a seat and prepare to be overwhelmed.

You play the role of a futuristic fighter pilot flying the Magic Fly craft. You use this advanced flight craft to patrol the universe and rid it of bad guys. But this is much more than a good-looking shoot-'em-up, because you're not hurtling around in outer space – you're trapped inside a vast underground complex made up of 3D tunnels and obstacles.

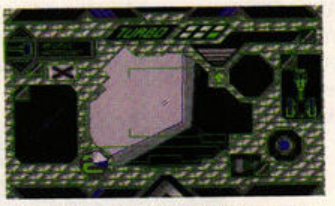
Just moving around these tunnels can be a nightmare because you need to make certain you can navigate the craft accurately. Each time you bump into obstacles or hit the sides of the tunnels, you lose valuable life-sustaining energy.

There are five objectives to be satisfied. The first four are to destroy the communications centre, reactor, missile defence system and computer centre. The final objective is by far the hardest. A new breed of space fighter called the Moth has been developed and you need to track it down and scan its design into your computer before blasting it into space. If you're clever you can destroy the entire complex in one go, but you need to discover a fast exit route to survive.

Magic Fly isn't just an unhindered jaunt through some tricky tunnels. Besides negotiating your way around obstacles, you also need to protect yourself from attack by the enemy craft. These craft, named after insects, act in different ways. Some fly straight for you and others cling to the surfaces of the tunnels.



■ Is this an enemy I see before me? Let's switch on turbo mode and chase him...



Trouble is, the turbos take five seconds to come on. By the time they're on, he's off

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THE INSIDER GUIDE TO HANDLING YOUR MAGIC FLY CRAFT

The main playing screen comprises head-up displays of your Magic Fly craft to present you with all the information you need to take on the enemies. Radar displays help you guide your way through the tunnels and energy banks keep you chugging along. Be careful your energy levels don't run too low otherwise you end up coming to a standstill in a tunnel and you're a sitting duck for an enemy to come along and blast you.

Watch out for obstacles. Your ship has shields to provide limited protection, but if you run low on energy you may need to switch them off. The slightest collision is then fatal. Life's a bitch and then you die.

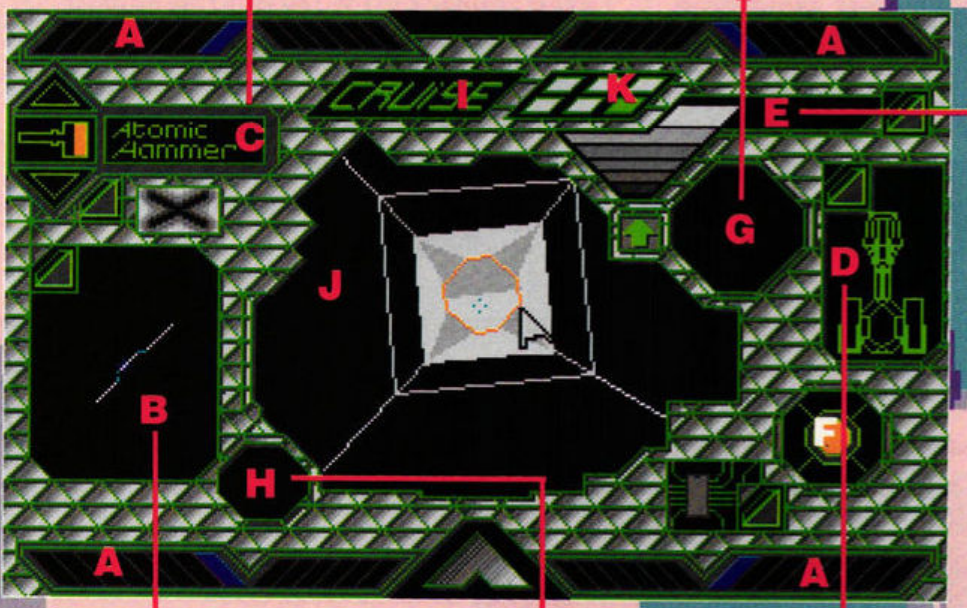
Weapons Selector

At the start you only have basic weapons, but as you advance you can pick up new super-weapons. From here you can view the weapons from all angles



Probe Docking Aid

You can't hurtle through tunnels without sustaining damage. When you decide it's time to visit the mechanic, keep an eye on the docking aid. If re-fuel and re-arm probes are close by, this aid is illuminated and you can use it to guide you to the probe, located in its own tunnel. Once inside, a loud *ping* sounds and you're sucked into an off-shoot from the tunnel wall where you can repair any damage, re-arm your ship with up to the minute weaponry and refuel the Magic Fly

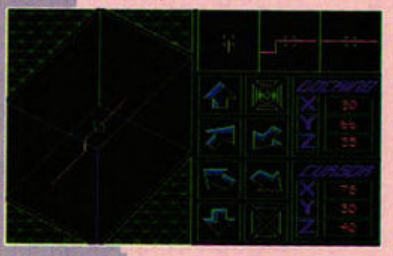




Energy Banks

Three energy banks and a reserve are represented. Everything you use absorbs energy in varying degrees: *engines* are the heaviest users; *shields* might protect your craft, but energy levels plummet when someone fires at you; *lasers* also use up power, especially the larger ones. Even harmless *hovering* drains energy.

If you're running low on power you can always disable front and rear shields – but if you hit anything, it's instant death



Radar

The radar display shows a small zone around you with junctions displayed in colour. By clicking you can access this full-screen view of where you've been in the tunnels

Turbo Countdown

If you want to race through the tunnels at super fast speed you need to hit the turbo mode option – especially useful for escaping from craft or pursuing them. You need to activate the turbo mode five seconds before you need it. The countdown display then shows you how much time is left before turbo comes on-line. Similarly, you need to switch off the turbo mode five seconds before you want the engines to shut down



Damage control

Revolve the ship and watch where the yellow dots occur, for they indicate where damage has been sustained

- **A** Throttle and thrusters
- **B** Map – radar
- **C** Weapons selector
- **D** Damage control
- **E** Energy banks
- **F** Zone indicator
- **G** Probe docking aid
- **H** Turbo countdown
- **I** Fight mode
- **J** Targetting area
- **K** Warning lights

Besides the enemy craft there are also static defence mechanisms to overcome, including doors and barriers.

If you find yourself under attack from the enemies or you need to pursue an alien craft, you can always switch on the turbo mode and go hurtling through the tunnels at an unbelievable speed. Unfortunately, turbo mode really eats into your energy levels and if you don't watch them carefully you can run out of juice altogether. If you let that happen you have no choice but to wait in the tunnel for an enemy craft to come along and blast you.

There are a wide range of weapons available to you. The impressive ones use up far more energy than ordinary ones, but they also have the best effect. High-powered lasers can wipe out aliens in an instant and missiles make trash of insects' craft. Besides these, you also have access to a number of special weapons such as proximity bombs which can be left in the tunnel to explode when the enemies venture too close.

The view of the tunnel appears through a small window in the centre of the screen, surrounded by icons and indicators to keep you informed of the state of your craft and to give you access to different weaponry. At any point you can call up additional screens to see a ➢

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➢ report on damage sustained, energy used or even a map of your progress.

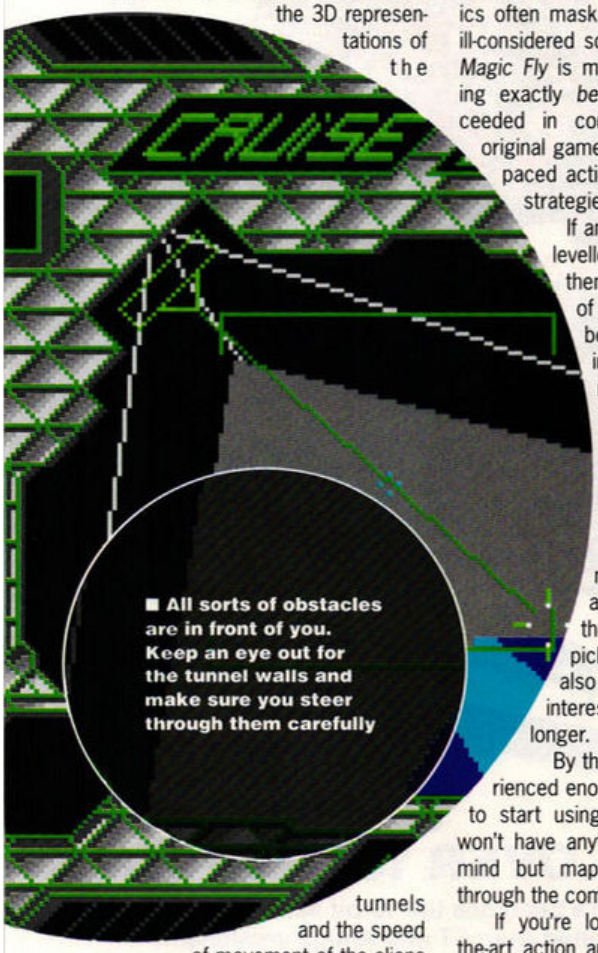
The game is controlled using the mouse or joystick, which besides selecting weapons and extra information screens control your speed and direction. Keyboard shortcuts replace many of the mouse and joystick options, making *Magic Fly* a dream to use.

Since the aim of the game is to work your way through the five objectives, it comes with a save game option. This means you don't need to re-tread old tunnels again and again.

EFFECTS

Arresting graphics might not necessarily make a great game, but they certainly go a long way towards it.

The visuals in *Magic Fly* are outstanding. It's taken well over a year to come up with them, but the 3D representations of the tunnels and the speed of movement of the aliens is unbeatable. You've only got to glance at the screenshots to appreciate how stunning the graphics are, and when you see them moving you just can't help wondering if you really are playing the game on an ST rather than on a fullblown arcade machine. This'll impress your mates!



■ All sorts of obstacles are in front of you. Keep an eye out for the tunnel walls and make sure you steer through them carefully

Spacecraft are solid 3D objects and the walls of tunnels are represented as wire-frames. Although the main action takes place in a small window, you can hit an icon on the display to see the tunnels and craft moving in full-screen mode with no noticeable loss in speed. Though useful, this means you lose access to those all-important indicators about the state of your craft.

A bout of sampled music introduces you to *Magic Fly* and this is followed by bursts of special effects noises in the game itself. Turn the volume up high and the lights down low and you can really imagine yourself in the role of a ship commander facing a fleet of enemy craft.

VERDICT

Magic Fly isn't so much a game as an experience.

The visuals are undoubtably some of the best we've ever seen and they go a long way towards making this a hit. Wonderful graphics often mask a poor game and ill-considered scenarios. Not here. *Magic Fly* is maddeningly absorbing exactly *because* it has succeeded in coming up with an original gameplan marrying fast-paced action with demanding strategies.

If any criticism is to be levelled at the game then it's only that a lot of emphasis has been placed on making certain you can navigate your way through the tunnels. If you screw this up your craft can end up powerless in no time.

Although this makes it daunting and tricky to use the first time you pick up the joystick, it also keeps the game interesting for much longer.

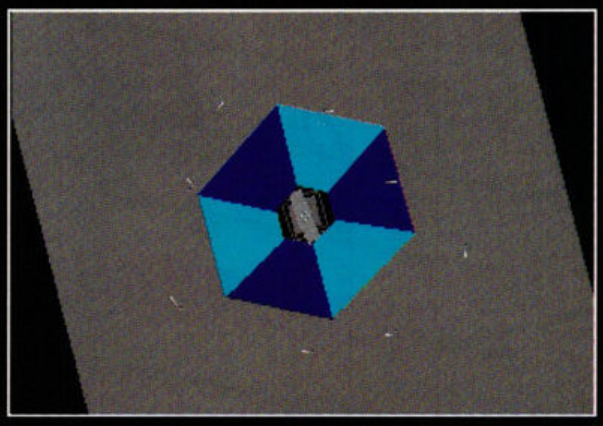
By the time you're experienced enough at the controls to start using turbo mode you won't have anything else on your mind but mapping out a route through the complex.

If you're looking for state-of-the-art action and addictive gameplay, look no further than *Magic Fly*. It's the ultimate 3D experience.

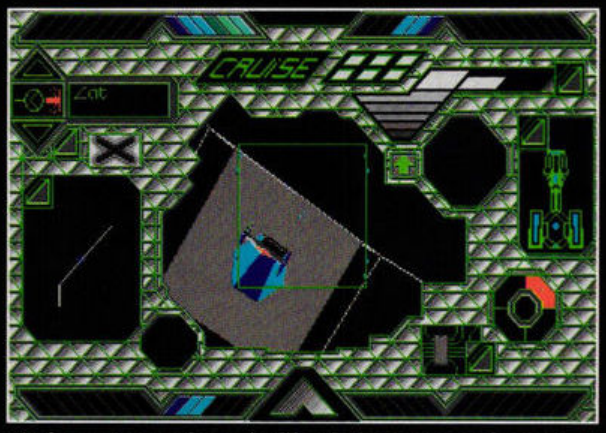
MARK HIGHAM

GRAPHICS	9
SOUNDTRACK	8
INTELLIGENCE	7
INSTANT APPEAL	8
LONG TERM INTEREST	9
OVERALL	**91%**

WHAT A LOAD OF WALLS



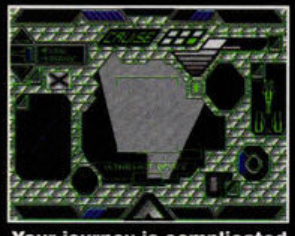
■ You race round the tunnels in full-screen mode, seeking out those nasty aliens. For some reason the hairs are standing up on the back of your neck, so, quick as a flash, you flip back to the main head-up display where you can...



study your control panels. Watch the scanners for any sign of enemies behind you and, before those vicious creatures decend upon you, shoot back and...



send them crashing to the ground. If this is your first time trip, make sure you have the right weapons at hand. You may have won this encounter, but you'll come off worse in plenty of others!



Your journey is complicated by obstacles like these...



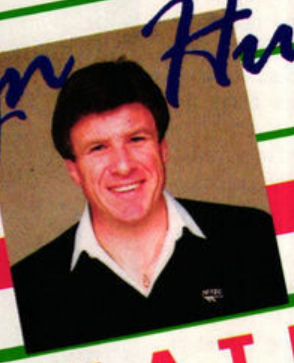
but charge at the right spot and the gate opens

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monty python

And now for something completely different... I prised open the small package. Another gold disk? A fan letter from Selina Scott? No, a 3.5" floppy disk. I inserted said disk into Tebbit (what's *your* ST called?) and waited for it to load.

I was pleasantly surprised to find the game that nice Mr Carey had sent was based on my old fave TV comedy *Monty Python's Flying Circus*. Fab gear! *Monty Python* the ST game goes in for the same off-beat humour, with strange disjointed limbs sticking out of the ground and hills in the background that resemble the many changing haircuts of a certain Mr Bowie.

And there, standing in the middle, is the star of the show, that great working class hero Gumby, who would appear occasionally in the series chanting "And Now For Something Completely Different" for no obvious reason. Dressed as he is in wellington boots and knotted hankie he is certainly that. But in this game anything can happen, and before you know it his body is plucked off and replaced with that of a fish! Now, what you have to do is guide this poor fool around several surreal landscapes in order to retrieve the four segments of his brain.



The first piece has to be fought for in a labyrinth of mechanical tubes that looks like a scene from a drug-ravaged *Pipemania* (great game, by the way).

Gumby can count among his enemies characters from most of the prominent Python sketches: Eric The Half A Bee, the silly walking chartered accountant, and those nice blokes from the Spanish Inquisition whom nobody expected. These last lot keep heaving pillows at you ("Aargh ,not the comfy pillows!") which it's advisable to avoid.

Of course, you get hit now and then, and it becomes necessary to get hold of Gumby's favourite snack, a tin or two of life-enriching Spam. (This only goes to prove, incidentally, that the only people left eating meat are the stupid.) He seems to enjoy it, though, for each time he guzzles the vile stuff a deep satisfied belch rings out.

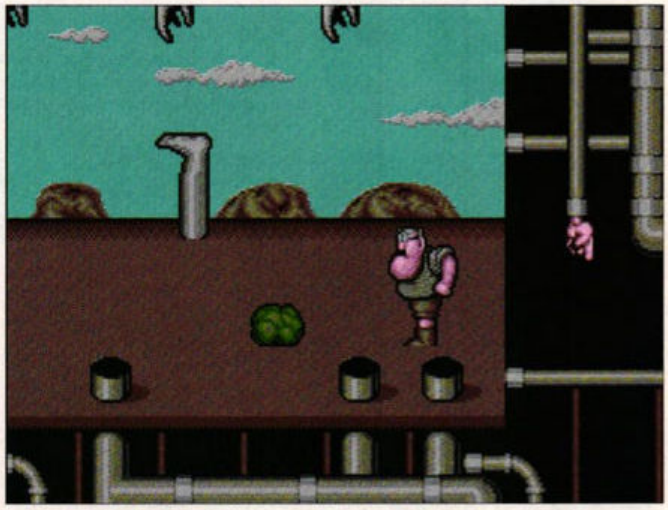
These tins are concealed all over the place, but even if you can see one it's another thing getting hold of it! Throughout the game there are ludicrous interruptions, as in the TV show.

Just as you're involved in a tricky maneouvre, for instance, you receive advice on how to recognise a certain tree from a great distance. Or there could appear a "Game Over" sign for no apparent reason – followed by restoration of the wrong game – *Arkanoids!*

Anything could happen here. If I said that Dr David Owen strides purposefully into the abbatoir crooning "Sexual Healing" to a gnu, that would probably give suffice to give you some indication of what to expected: the unexpected. And why not, say I – a mad game for a mad world.

EFFECTS

The influence of Terry Gilliam, the genius who designed the bizarre backdrops and animations for *Monty Python*, is stamped all over this game.



■ **Mr Gumby rolls up his sleeves and goes in search of his brain (not the green thing next to him – that's a bush, of course!)**

But where this game really scores is in the audio department. There are some truly heroic farts and burps whenever something interesting happens (wonder why they chose this game for me?), along with some well chosen samples of speech straight from the show.

The argument sketch is noteworthy here, obliging you to disagree with the statement being uttered by the jobsworth seated behind his desk in an "Oh yes it is!" "Oh no it isn't!" kinda fashion. Wonderfully moronic – just like real life!

In fact, the only thing that bothers me is the original theme tune, a decidedly dodgy old military march, which probably had the cast in fits each time they heard it. Fortunately you can turn it off yet retain the rude noises.

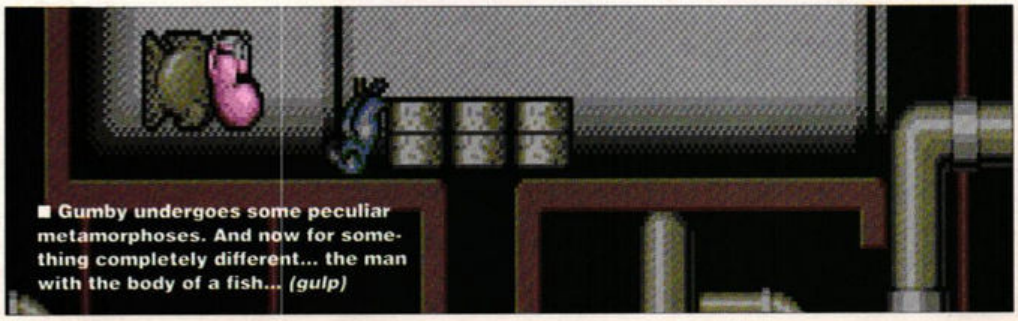
VERDICT

This is all glorious escapist stuff which had me laughing aloud. But more than that, it's an absorbing game. Some situations were so desperate I found myself shouting "Gotta get some spam!" – and I'm a vegetarian!

You don't have to be a *Python* fan to enjoy this ST game. I can't wait for a cheat to come along so that I don't keep getting dumped back at the start, just when I've done all the tough stuff. Jimmy Tarbuck would neither understand nor like this one: there can, I think, be no higher recommendation.

CAPTAIN SENSIBLE

GRAPHICS	8
SOUNDTRACK	9
INTELLIGENCE	-50
INSTANT APPEAL	8
LONG TERM INTEREST	8
OVERALL	**84%**



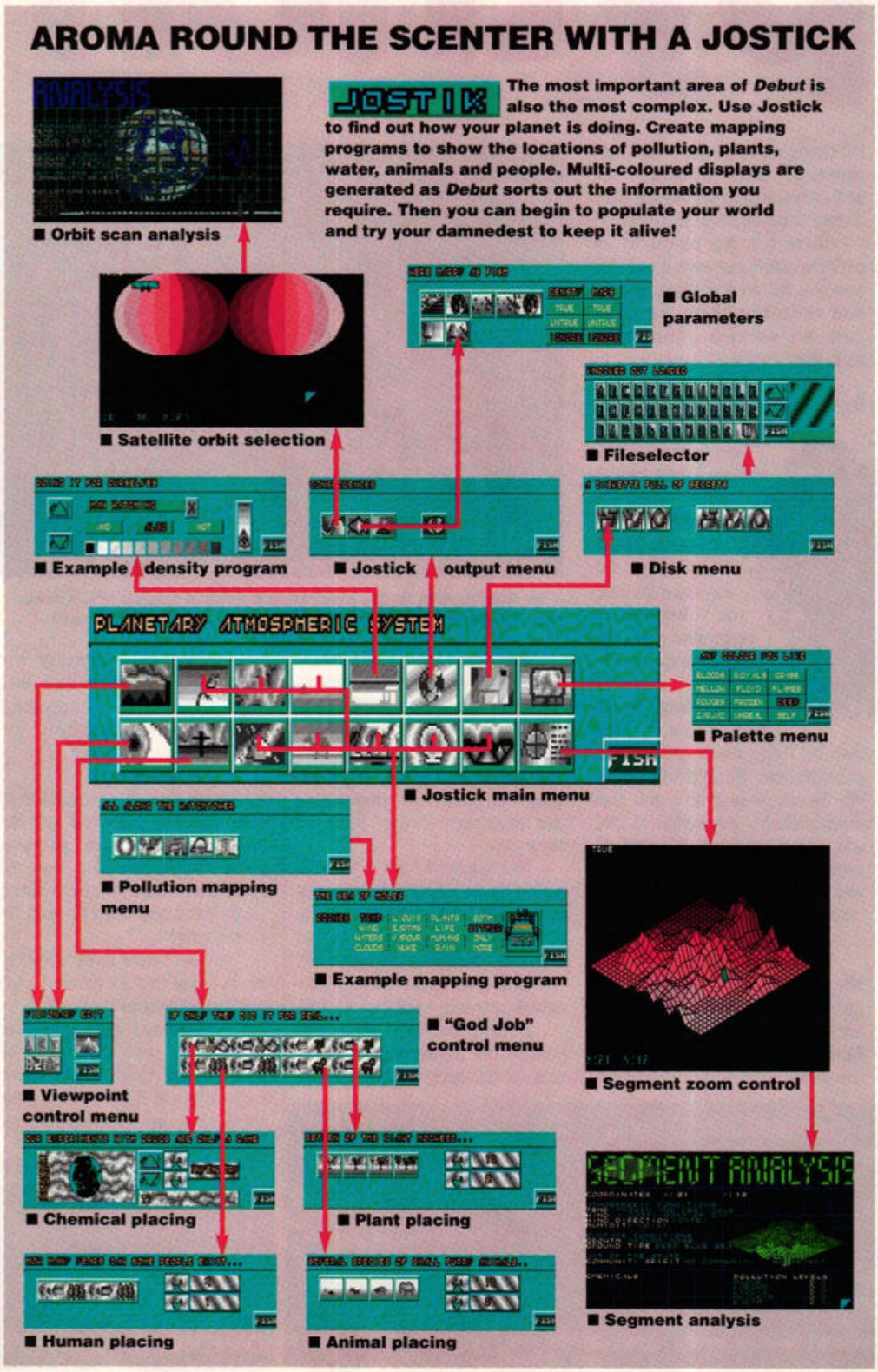
■ **Gumby undergoes some peculiar metamorphoses. And now for something completely different... the man with the body of a fish... *(gulp)***

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debut

PANDORA £24.99

AROMA ROUND THE SCENTER WITH A JOSTICK



How would you like to live in a world without pollution or global warming. where *you* control the weather and the lifeforms that exist? It's all possible in Debut, the new planet simulator from Pandora.
Neil Jackson plays God (and loses)

Regardless of your religion (or lack of it) the thought has probably crossed your mind that someone or something is responsible for the Earth. Imagine if you were Mr Omnipotent and could influence every factor of a planet's existence. Imagine the stress and responsibility. In *Debut* you get the opportunity to play that super-being and you have your very own planet to wreak havoc upon.

With a concept as grand as this, *Debut* is hardly likely to be an easy sort of game. In fact to call it a game at all is an understatement, because it's really a simulation – and a big one at that!

The *Debut* world is similar to Earth. It has weather: rain, clouds and prevailing winds. It has a certain amount of life: plants, animals and humans. And it also has problems: pollution emanates from the humans' underground cities endangering the entire planet. If you haven't already guessed, this is where you come in.

Your task is to restore and maintain an ecological balance on the planet. You must close down the vile underground cities and convince the humans to live on the surface in harmony with the environment (man).

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THC ■ **Entering Time-Hounded Conscience takes you to the underground cities. This is the main platform and lifts arcade section of Debut**

To do this you have several God-like abilities. You can place or remove chemicals, plants, animals and people anywhere on the surface. You can combine chemicals, split them up, create new ones and then use them to promote life, aid growth, and combat pollution.

But your power isn't free. To obtain certain chemical you have to trade with the humans. This can only be done if you have cash which is difficult to find. You start with enough to begin experimenting, but to progress further you must visit the cities.

Deep in the cities, filthy nuclear reactors power automatic defences. If you can shut these down, you make loads-a-dosh and can force the humans to the surface. Finding the reactors involves much searching and you have to pass defence droids which defend the population.

On the way you find loads of items to pick up. Some are useful immediately, but others must be taken back to the surface. You can find lasers for defeating droids, chemicals for experimentation and cashpoint cards for stealing money from the underworld.

EFFECTS

Debut features some incredible programming to simulate the planet's changing environment. It's like those old *Conway's Life* programs which simulate successive generations, but on a vast scale. You can look at your planet in several ways: as a whole globe, in isometric 3D segments, graphically (using colour to map it out), or as text (in status readouts).

The underground exploration is a platform-style arcade game using full colour sprites and joystick control which effectively makes *Debut* two totally different games linked by a common thread. Absolutely mind-boggling at first, but you'll get used to it. You'll have to work hard though, because the drones you meet are not easy to defeat. Lose all your lives here and you're in trouble.

Some excellent music is provided in sub-sections of the game and there's an atmospheric sampled soundtrack by Tau Zero.

TRADE ■ **Buy and sell chemicals via the Trading menu using the money earned in the THC section. You need chemicals to experiment with. Then you can create ideal conditions for life on the planet's surface**





STATUS ■ **This icon gives the low-down on the overall state of your planet. It tells you the levels of pollution and life that are currently there**

MISC ■ ***Debut* has no well-defined ending, instead you save your planets to disk and just keep going forever. The Miscellaneous menu is where you can find your old games, as well as some new planets to play about with**



VERDICT

If you don't have much patience with "deep" games, then forget it, *Debut* will do your head in. But if you like the idea of experimenting with a planet-sized chemistry set and being Mr Big then you'll love it.

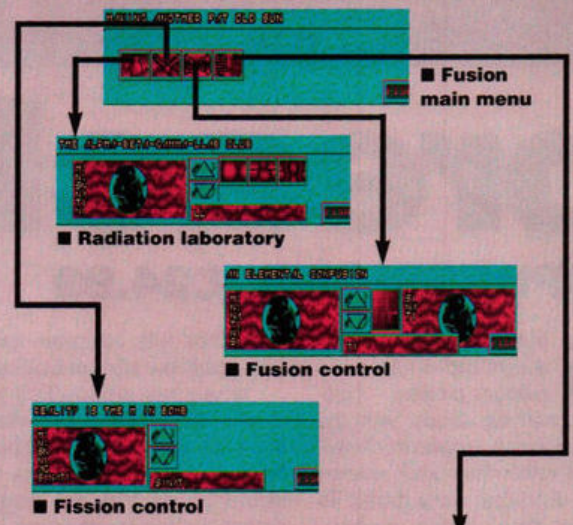
It's good to come across an absorbing game where the villain of the piece isn't just a muscle-bound ninja thug, but you have to be prepared for some serious hard work. Taking charge of a planet is like owning a dog; it ain't just for Christmas. You soon find yourself fretting miserably when all your pet humans die because you accidentally poured sulphur into their water supply.

Debut isn't easy to understand and is even harder to play properly, but stick with it – it's a game the size of a planet!

NEIL JACKSON

GRAPHICS	8
SOUNDTRACK	8
INTELLIGENCE	9
INSTANT APPEAL	5
LONG TERM INTEREST	8
OVERALL	**77%**

EXPERIMENTS IN CONFUSION



■ **Fusion main menu**

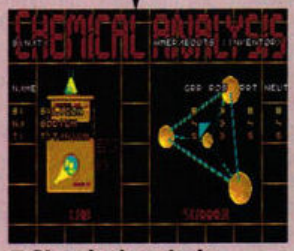
■ **Radiation laboratory**

■ **Fusion control**

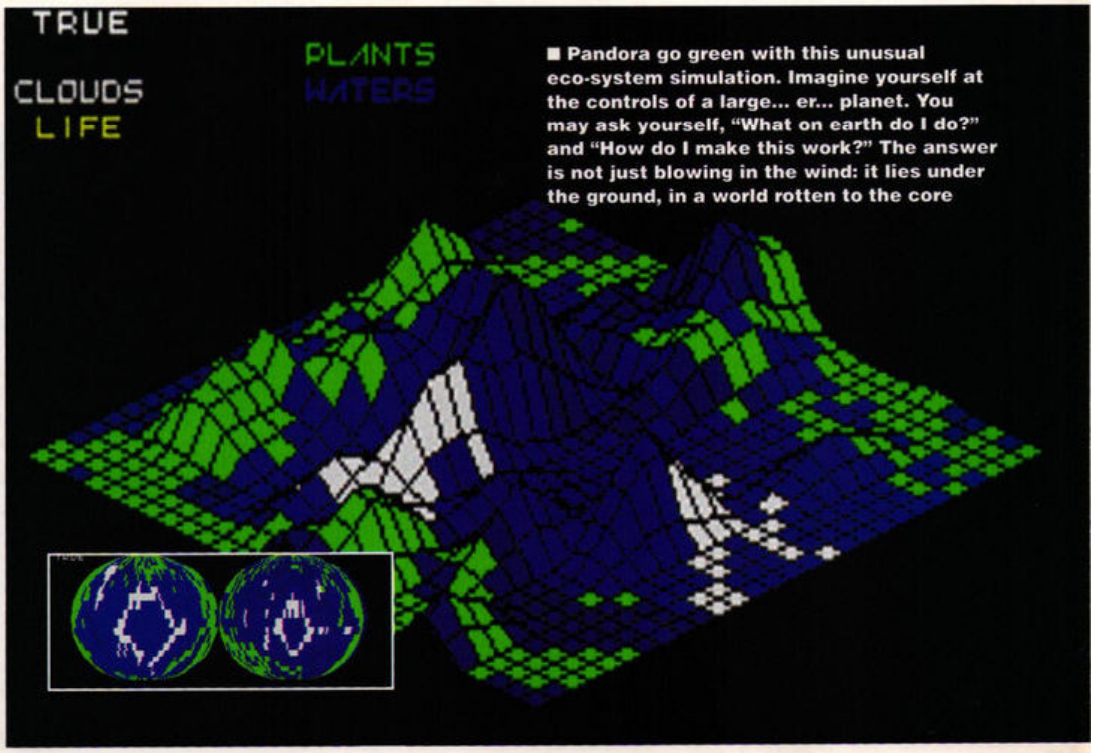
■ **Fission control**

FUSION

■ **Half a pound of plutonium, half a pound of treacle... The fusion centre is where you mix 'n' match chemical elements to make life-sustaining (or exterminating!) compounds. After mixing, pour gently on to a hot bed of earth and leave to simmer...**



■ **Chemical analysis**



■ **Pandora go green with this unusual eco-system simulation. Imagine yourself at the controls of a large... er... planet. You may ask yourself, "What on earth do I do?" and "How do I make this work?" The answer is not just blowing in the wind: it lies under the ground, in a world rotten to the core**

www.stformat.com



■ Put yourself in command of a troop of futuristic marines in *Breech 2*. Lead your team through a number of dangerous missions and then yomp home for some marmite on toast

breach 2

IMPRESSIONS £24.99

Strategy games have always had a bad public relations problem – probably something to do with the genre requiring a modicum of intelligence rather than quick reflexes and a distended, warty thumb. To counter this aversion programmers try combining elements of other game types with a strategy format. So far the results have fallen short of the mark and these games have remained the property of people with huge, funny-shaped dice and the complete set of JRR Tolkein books. *Breach 2* attempts to redress the balance.

You command a crack squad of futuristic do-or-die marines sent out on various missions. You move your men around an isometrically portrayed landscape by icon control and fight, blow up and generally annoy enemies in order to carry out your long term objectives. These objectives range from simply capturing the enemy to battling with aliens.

Gameplay is suprisingly quick considering that it's played in a series of rounds. Each member of the squad has a number of moves allocated per round. These are used up by moving through the landscape and carrying out actions such as firing a gun. The number of moves each member of the squad gets depends on their health, encumbrance and vitality.

In order to carry out your objective each squad member is kitted out with essentials such as anti-grav boots, laser rifles and crack units. Before you start worrying about drug-crazed marines (no this isn't Vietnam), the latter is in fact hacking equipment used in conjunction with computer terminals to get floor plans of buildings.

Moving men is fiddly. First you choose the individual by holding down ALT and pressing the mouse button. Then you need to click the mouse on the man and draw a dashed flashing line to where you want him to go. The length of the line depends on how many moves that squad member has and the direction is affected by the landscape and buildings. If you place the line incorrectly then it's necessary to retrace the line and re-route it. The situation isn't helped by the difficulty in seeing the line on certain backgrounds such as the forest.

To shoot a member of the enemy, point the squad member in the right direction by pressing Shift Z and choose the appropriate weapon for the job. These include a laser pistol, a laser rifle, a neutron bomb and a rocket launcher.

Firing of the lasers is flexible, though the range is better on the rifle. The rockets have to be accurately launched or they fly (very gracefully) straight past the target, but they do have a long range which can be useful.

Other available objects include medikits, detectors, tablets, smoke grenades that incapacitate the enemy for one round, data packs and the very useful laser shield and camouflage suit.

EFFECTS

The graphics are very colourful, a relief after years of ZX81 type block graphics effects on other strategy games. The icon control system is clear, nicely drawn and so easy to use that the instruction book is made redundant.

Sound effects are excellent throughout. A sampled *Star Trek*-like woosh announces a door opening and the players all scream satisfyingly when blown up.

Enemy groups vary from devastatingly stupid to devastatingly devastating and from humanoid to alienoid. The enemy seriously hamper your progress and possess varying degrees of intelligence adding to the skill required for any one of the ten scenarios. For example, in the "River Crossing" event the enemy are the humanoid marauders who unerringly choose exactly the same tactics as you: even on the beginners level they can wipe you out.

VERDICT

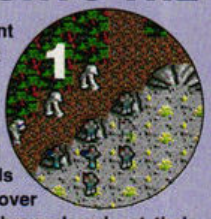
Breach 2 offers so much action it's bound to appeal to a whole new audience of strategy games enthusiasts. People who enjoyed *Dungeon Master*, *Midwinter*, *Carrier Command* or *Xenomorph* will love the strategy/action cocktail and the futuristic setting. The ability to build up a squadron leader who can rise through the ranks adds to the game's long term appeal.

The movement of players is frustrating and the save game facility is only available at the end of each round, but these minor criticisms apart it's a hugely enjoyable game.

ANDREW HUTCHINSON

GRAPHICS	8
SOUNDTRACK	7
INTELLIGENCE	8
INSTANT APPEAL	7
LONG TERM INTEREST	9
OVERALL	**82%**

ONCE MORE UNTO THE BREACH DEAR FRIENDS



(1) "Ver lads" assemble in front of three Biped robots with Sgt Rubberunderwear guarding the teleport. The three men train their laser rifles on the unsuspecting monsters and unleash a spray of fire. Bipeds destroyed *(2)*, the boys step over the shrapnel and get their bearings. Now it's time for a quick yomp through the forest. The men check their positions *(3)* and secure the area. Ensign Mad Mick draws point duty again and leads the men from the security of the landing zone out into the forest in search of an enemy encampment.



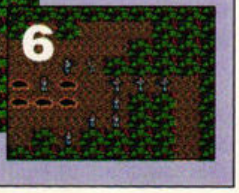


(4) There's nothing much happening in the forest, so the lads decide to play follow the leader.



They soon encounter an enemy unit *(5)* guarding a datapack, the squad's mission objective. The silly sods have got their backs turned! The men deploy themselves and completely surround the blighters. Time to drop a number of large grenades into their foxholes. *(6)* It's a complete rout and the enemy are dispatched. You've captured the datapack, and your mission is completed. Hoorah, hoorah!

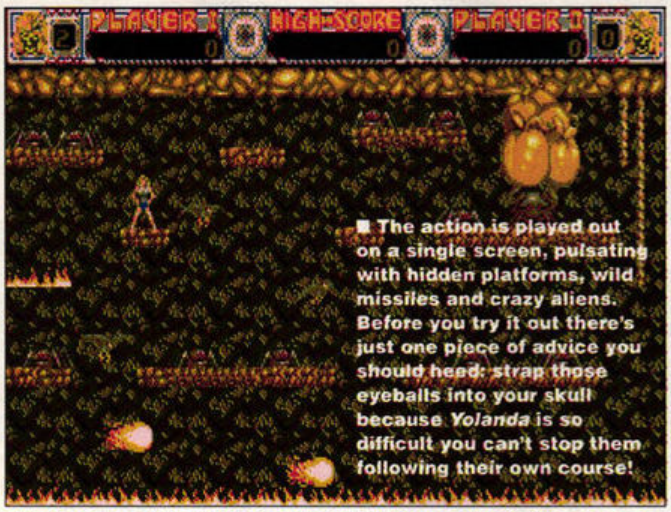




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■ The action is played out on a single screen, pulsating with hidden platforms, wild missiles and crazy aliens. Before you try it out there's just one piece of advice you should heed: strap those eyeballs into your skull because *Yolanda* is so difficult you can't stop them following their own course!

MILLENNIUM £19.99

yolanda

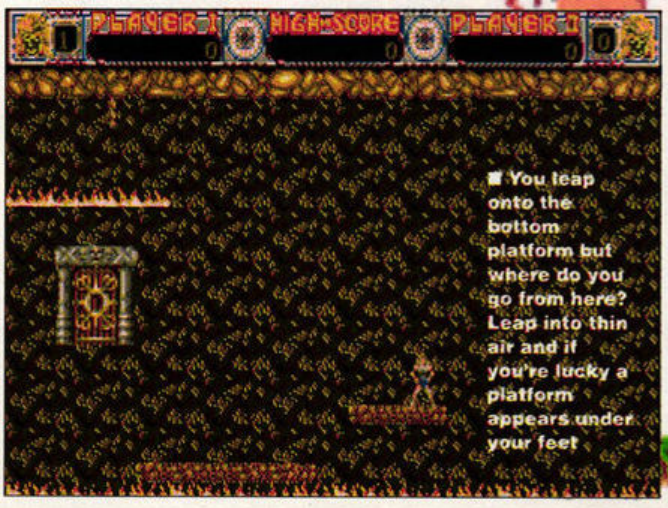
We've all seen infuriatingly difficult, disorientating games that scramble your brain, warp your retinas and send your hands into an involuntary shake. It's usually the result of a programming fault, but in *Yolanda* the action has been deliberately designed to be as complex as possible. Before you take it on just make sure you can afford the psychiatrist's fee to get your senses back into order.

The game is simple, just a platform challenge played on a single, static screen. The skill lies in moving your hero around the platforms in an attempt to reach the exit to the next level.

In some of the levels the platforms are hidden from view and the only way to make them appear is to leap headlong into thin air and hope for the best. These are the easiest of the levels to complete because they don't depend so much on fast reflexes. In others you face an onslaught of fireballs and other lethal missiles and the key to success is timing – fast timing.

The character you direct through all this mayhem is only a few pixels high. She has to leap around the platforms avoiding aliens, but because she's so tiny it's tricky working out the best way to encourage her to take an athletic leap that would carry you clear of the aliens. If you screw up you burst into flames and die. As if all these things weren't enough to have you reaching for the Paracetamol, you also have to contend with platforms which burst into flames the moment you land on them. This game is a pyromaniac's wet dream.

The game is split into a tutorial section and the main game. The tutorial levels are slightly easier than the others, but only slightly. If you're looking to learn tactics in this game, the only real way is to play it and discover your own solutions.



■ You leap onto the bottom platform but where do you go from here? Leap into thin air and if you're lucky a platform appears under your feet

EFFECTS

Graphics are particularly small – especially considering the size of sprites in today's ST games – but there are vast numbers of things going on at once.

With fireballs, animated aliens and a mindboggling quantity of offending missiles, the action is some of the hottest seen in an ST game.

Sound effects are limited to spot effects and other ST sound chip noises, which at least serve to complement the gameplay.

VERDICT

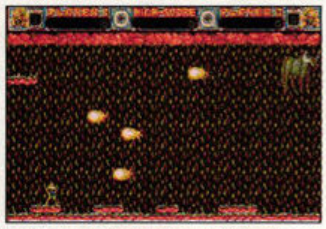
Even if you're an dead hard gamester, don't imagine you're going to race through the first five levels in an instant. You aren't. Just the sheer number of missiles and aliens complicate the levels so much that it's going to take you a good 20 minutes just trying to escape off of the first level. Make no mistake, no matter who you are you're not going to get far in this game.

Fortunately there are no lengthy disk accesses to tolerate. Just a few clicks of the joystick after a defeat and you're reincarnated ready for the next game.

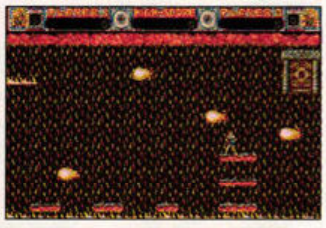
Another useful feature is that there are a number of level ones you can tackle. Even if you can't get past the first scene, at least you're not going to spend hours staring at the same screen each time.

You have to be a serious masochist to want to tackle this one, but it's an absorbing challenge and if you end up a psychotic wreck from over exposure to manic gameplay, at least you'll have interesting stories for the psychiatrist's couch. "There's this little tiny chick jumping over fireballs and..."

MARK HIGHAM



■ You leap off the platform onto the ground...



Dash across the ground and click fire to climb up...



Make a desperate leap for the exit but avoid that fireball

GRAPHICS	6
SOUNDTRACK	6
INTELLIGENCE	7
INSTANT APPEAL	7
LONG TERM INTEREST	5
OVERALL	**58%**

www.stformat.com

NINJA GOES APE IN THE BIG APPLE



■ Behind the curtain there's a secret switch. But you've got to get past the meathead first...



Get out using the open trapdoor (don't worry, it's just a stage you're going through!)...



Under the stage you find a small key. Pick this up and use it to get out to the park...



Outside in the grounds you're sure to run into more trouble. Watch that energy!



You need perfect timing to jump the river. Don't try to be too smart: use the boat as a stepping stone



■ Confucius he say, "Man who play *Last Ninja 2* should be ready for many hours of action." He never said anything about wearing out your joystick though!

last ninja 2

ACTIVISION/SYSTEM 3 £24.99

The first thing that strikes you about *Last Ninja 2* is the absence of a *Last Ninja 1* for the ST. Why release a sequel without a successful forerunner for it to follow? According to Mark Cale, head of System 3, the ST version of the original *Last Ninja* wasn't released because it was "substandard." Now why don't all software houses think like that?

Fortunately *Last Ninja 2* can be played without knowledge of the original. You play Armakuni, last of the Mystic Shadow Warriors. In ninth century Japan they were the fighting elite, their skill and dexterity so finely honed that many believed they possessed supernatural abilities. To be a Ninja was to be in perfect control of mind and body, to exert total restraint over emotion and to react faster than the speed of light for the cause of good.

In a bastardised version of *Highlander's* plot, you're busy building a new order of Ninja warriors when without warning you're time-warped into the twentieth century – to New York of all places – and you can feel the evil presence of an old adversary you thought was dead, tingling the back of your neck.

Using a three-quarter angle view on the area around you, *Ninja 2* charts your course through the Big Apple. Your first problem is to get out of the building you're in. A trapdoor lies enticingly in front of you, but there's no visible means of opening it.

Nipping through the curtains behind you takes you to a room with an unfriendly-looking skinhead pacing up and down. Get near him and he tries to pummel you to death, so punch him by pressing the fire button and pushing right/left.

Kick him in the goolies with a combined pull-down and press. You'll see the right-hand energy meter receding if you're hitting him where it hurts.

When you've trashed him, go to the wall he was guarding and punch the symbol there until it changes colour. Return via the curtains and *voila!* One open trapdoor.

The room below the trapdoor contains a key you need to open a gate later on. To pick it up, get your hand to touch it while you're in the crouch position. Once collected you can use it by pressing Undo, which cycles through the objects you can hold.

Clr/Home selects the weapons you have. Unfortunately you start with none, but there are staffs, nunchukkas, and throwing stars scattered around the first locations. Pick them up you're gonna need 'em!

EFFECTS

Ninja 2's display technique is unlike any seen before. It takes a little time to redraw each backdrop as you move from area to area, but the end effect is worth waiting for. The colourful, detailed locations look realistic and provide fantastic settings for the action.

Less appealing is the control method which takes a bit of getting used to. Armakuni has a tendency to point the wrong way and puts his weapon away at just the wrong moment, though with a little effort this can be overcome.

Music is another downer, but less important, as you can turn it off (thank God). Accompanying sound effects are bog-standard thumps, bumps and groans.

VERDICT

This out-of-sync sequel is worth the wait. It'll keep you occupied for hours, probably become a *Gamebusters* long-runner and drive you bananas until you complete it. Then you'll sit there like an abandoned baby, waiting to be fed more of the same. Perhaps then we'll see the forthcoming *Last Ninja 3* (or is it *Ninja 0.5?*), which is already underway.

A worthwhile addition to any collection, if only for its visual beauty, *Ninja 2* does for beat-'em-ups what Richard Branson did for condoms: makes them bigger, better and far less embarrassing to talk about in public. Buy one and show it off to *your* mates!

NEIL JACKSON

GRAPHICS	9
SOUNDTRACK	4
INTELLIGENCE	6
INSTANT APPEAL	8
LONG TERM INTEREST	8
OVERALL	**86%**

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THE NIGHTBREED

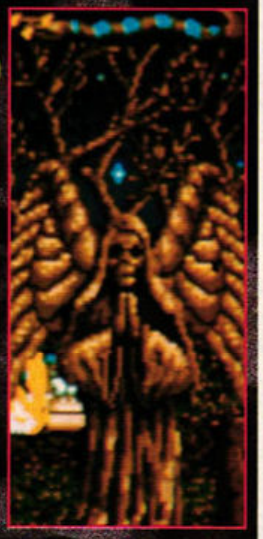
THE ACTION GAME

THE



TAKE CONTROL OF BOONE AS HE MAKES HIS WAY THROUGH THE DEPTHS AND CAVERNS OF NECROPOLIS TO

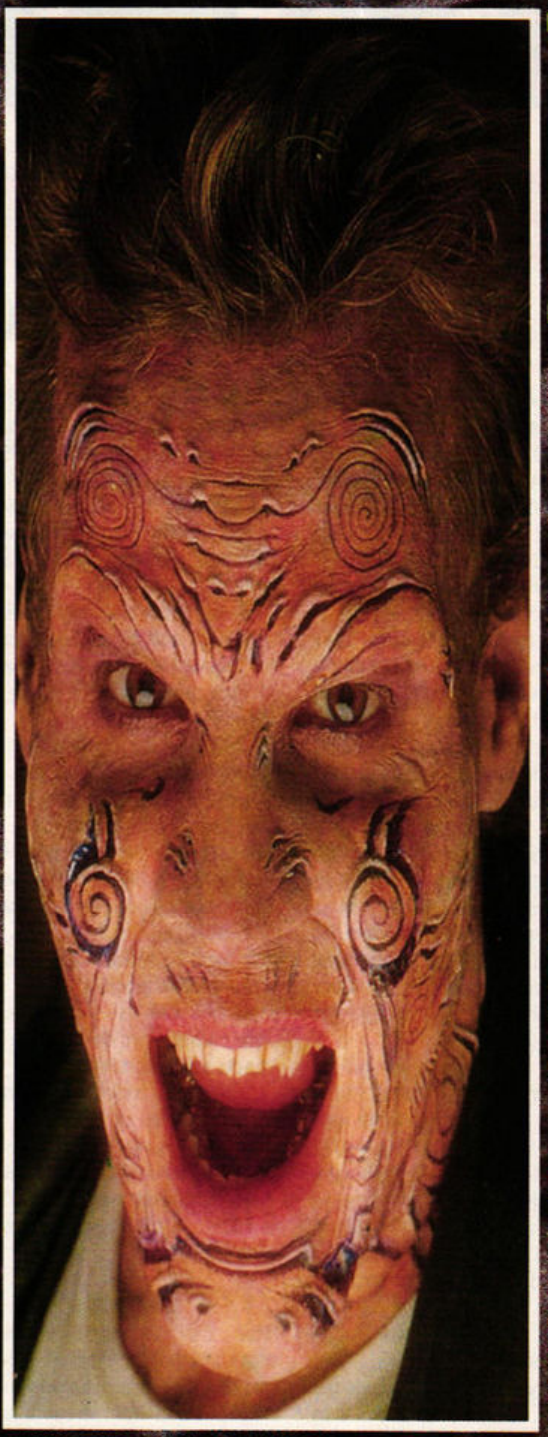
HAS



THE UNDERGROUND CITY OF MIDIAN WHERE DWELL THE NIGHTBREED. SUPERNATURAL CREATURES WHO HAVE SHIELDED THEMSELVES FROM



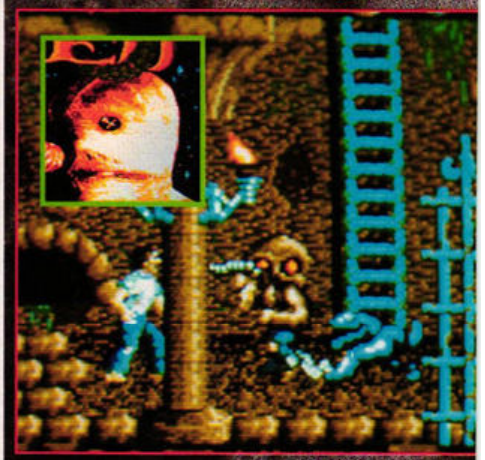
THE INHUMANITIES OF MAN.
NOT ONLY MUST YOU CONFRONT AND DEFEAT THESE CREATURES BUT



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NIGHTMARE

YOU MUST PIT YOURSELF AGAINST TH
MURDEROUS REDNECK GANG FROM TH
NEARBY ABOVE-GROUND CITY AND ULTIMATEL
DEFEAT THE INSANE SERIAL KILLER KNOWN A
"THE MASK"



BEGUN

THIS ALL-ACTION ARCADE ADVENTURE ALLO
YOU TO SHOOT, PUNCH AND JUMP AS Y
EXPLORE THE TERRIFYING UNDERGROU
ENVIRONMENT OF THE NIGHTBREED.

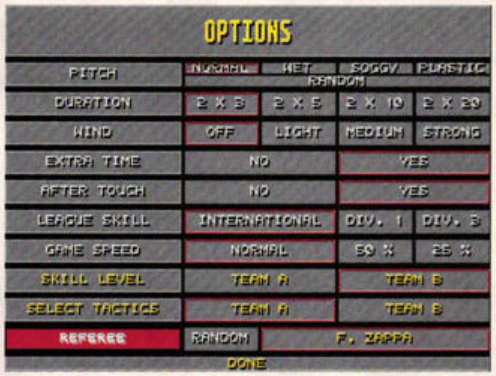
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■ ***Kick Off 2's*** **main option screens: any game that enables you to control an international team on a soggy pitch in a force nine gale against a fourth division club wearing pink and yellow stripy shirts with Frank Zappa refereeing has got to have pretty varied options**

ANCO £19.99

kick off 2

Kick Off 2 was the game of 1989, winner of all the top awards for sports sims and undoubtedly the best football game of all time. It became an industry standard, the yardstick that all other soccer sims were measured against, and as software houses caught World Cup fever this summer and hordes of mediocre football sims were released, its status as the ultimate soccer conversion was confirmed again and again. Well football, as they say, is a game of two halves and the new, improved, ever-so-bouncy *Kick Off 2* has arrived on the ST.

The scope of gameplay options before you even get on the field is breathtaking, with different playing surfaces, wind conditions, skill levels, speeds and tactical formations. You can play cup, league or international football, practice on your own, design your own kit, load your own team from *Player Manager* and even choose your own referee!

Once you've done the pre-game tactical planning and selected your team according to each individual's pace, stamina and aggression, it's time to get out on the pitch and show your mettle. (Ron Atkinson lovers can feel free to mouth platitudes at the monitor for hours under the delusion they are still having some effect on the play.)

Up to four players can play at a single time and you can take on the clockwork precision of the computer or the rough 'n' tumble, kick 'n' rush style of your friends. You can control a single player or whichever player is closest to the ball, though the latter is much more involving and lets you dominate the speed, style and tactics of your team with more precision.

The teams run out on the field together, separate into their respective halves, line themselves up in formation and kick off!

The action is just out of this world. Using the joystick and fire button you can make players trap, pass, shoot and head the ball and time inch-perfect sliding tackles. You can chip the ball, bend it round the wall using After Touch, and rely on the rest of your team to run into intelligent positions off the ball. Options on corners and free kicks give you total freedom in dead ball positions, while a quick throw-in is always a good tactical ploy to catch a defence off guard.



The goalkeepers, controlled by the computer, are top-notch ball handlers – even the Scottish ones! It takes a hell of a lot more ingenuity to beat a keeper in *Kick Off 2* than it did in the original.

The keeper is king of the six yard box effortlessly snapping up any loose balls or crosses. Long shots need wicked After Touch to curl them beyond the reach of his outstretched arms. The best ploys are to attack the goal diagonally, follow-up for any rebounds or dribble into the area to draw the keeper out of position and fire the ball across the face of the goal for a Lineker-like nudge in. Such smooth linking of players in a goal-mouth frenzy obviously takes a calm head and some nifty joystick action, but when you've done it once and seen your goal scorer run the length of the pitch doing somersaults you won't be able to stop yourself going for more.

EFFECTS

Kick Off 2's faultless multi-directional scrolling and realistically scaled players make it a gem to play. The players run smoothly, jump for headers, limp off dejectedly when injured and somersault like crazy when they score. Sliding tackles are so smooth you just know that no-one's going to have grazed knees in the dressing room. And as an added bonus, an action replay facility means you can watch all those moments of glory again and again.

The crowd roars encouragingly as the teams come onto the pitch, and bays for blood at the first sign of a nasty challenge. A piercing whistle controls play and a satisfying thud signifies the meeting of boot and ball.

VERDICT

What a game! The best football sim just got a whole lot better. Purists won't be able to get enough of the one-touch, choreographed, passing that can split defences in half. Cynics will revel in extra-curricula delights such as professional fouls, time wasting on goal kicks and debilitating opposing teams by constant heavy tackling.

Unless programmer Dino Dini included national anthems, shirt pulling, and Saint 'n' Greavsie, it's hard to imagine how this magical game could be any more authentic.

DAVID COLLINS

GRAPHICS	7
SOUNDTRACK	6
INTELLIGENCE	6
INSTANT APPEAL	9
LONG TERM INTEREST	9
OVERALL	**92%**

WHO ME REF? HONEST I NEVER EVEN TOUCHED HIM REF!



■ **The winger breaks free and you start your sliding tackle...**



But it's a mistimed challenge and a foul is awarded...



Your defence build a wall to protect the goal...



but the keeper still has to make an acrobatic save

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blockout

Even before the Wall came tumbling down a game called *Tetris* sneaked out of Russia and proved a phenomenal worldwide success. In fact it was so popular on home computers that it was converted into an arcade machine.

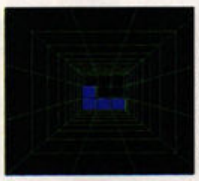
The game involved slotting together a series of shapes by rotating and placing them like a moving jigsaw puzzle. Like all good games, *Tetris* spawned a number of clones, none of which really came close to the original. *Blockout* is the latest in a long line of *Tetris* look-alikes, but it differs from the original because it takes place in a 3D tunnel.

The opening menu enables you to choose a number of options including which variation of the game you wish to play, practice mode, help, see the demo and a save settings option.

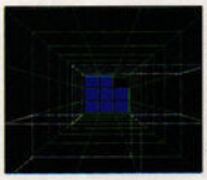
The various game types are "Flat Fun," "3-D Mania" and "Out of Control." You can create your own customised versions of the games and these can be saved to disk. The games vary in difficulty from the relatively easy to the keyboard destroying.

Other parameters can be adjusted to make the game harder or easier. The length and width of the tunnel can be changed, an extended set of blocks used to increase the difficulty, and block rotation can be slowed down or speeded up.

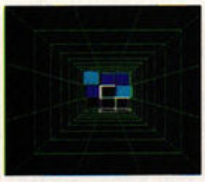
The game is controlled via the keyboard and mouse. The keys Q W E and A S D control the blocks rotation in three dimensions. The mouse positions the block at the mouth of the tunnel and the button sends it down to where you positioned it. Every time a layer is completely filled in, it drops off the bottom of the tunnel: the game is over when the pieces reach the mouth of the tunnel.



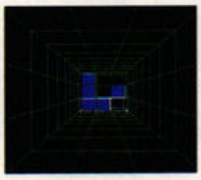
1. This L- shaped block fits snugly along the bottom of the screen



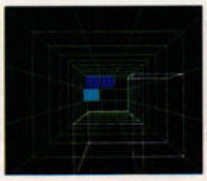
2. Two identical blocks appear. Spin one on its end and voila!



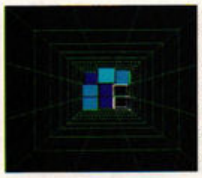
3. Then this dodgy three-pronged block can fit neatly at the bottom



4. Invert an L-shape to plug that hole in the bottom right

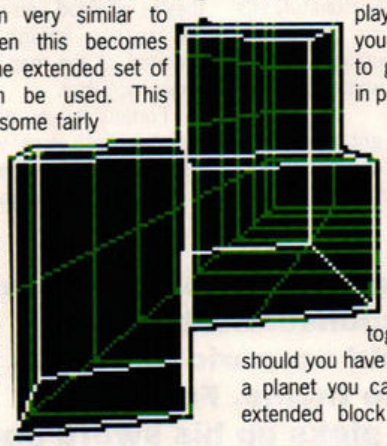


5. Another L-shaped block in the top right-hand corner completes the layer



6. When yet another L-shaped block arrives your score is soaring

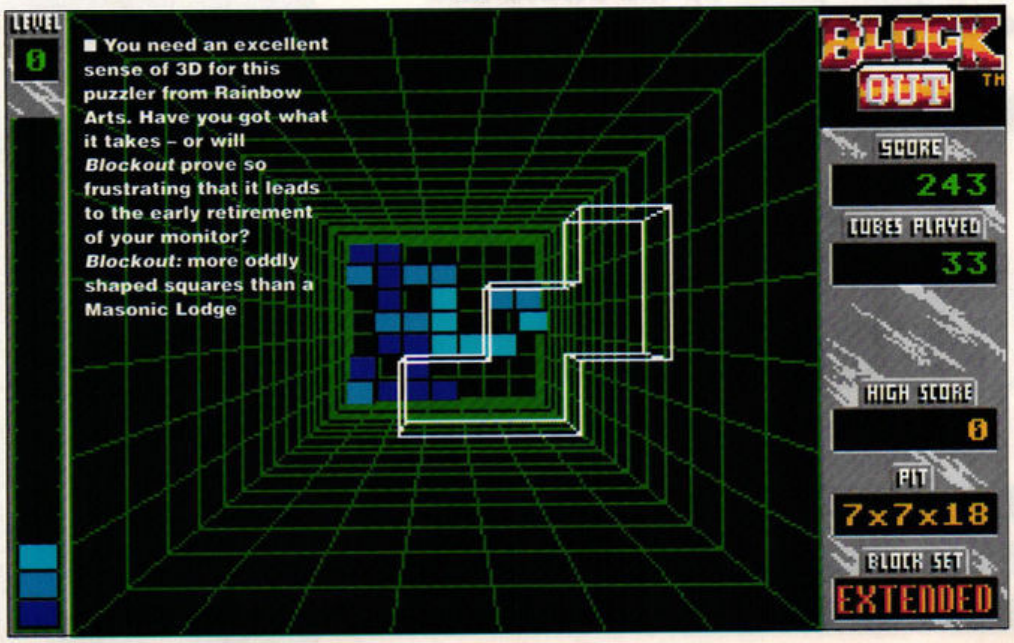
The first game type, "Flat Fun," is fairly simple and offers a good way of easing into the game. The shapes are simple and don't have awkward extensions, making this section very similar to *Tetris*. When this becomes too easy the extended set of blocks can be used. This introduces some fairly unusual shapes which take some effort to fit together. If it proves too hard, the tunnel can be lengthened giving you more time.



■ Rotate the various shapes so they all fit together like a jigsaw

"3-D Mania" has a set of blocks with extensions in all directions. Some pieces extend as much as three layers towards the player which means you have to think fast to get all the pieces in place.

"Out of Control" is by far the toughest of the options because it includes really weird shapes which are almost impossible to slot together. However should you have a brain the size of a planet you can always use the extended block set. For people with a brain the size of a games reviewer, "Flat Fun" is probably your best option.



■ You need an excellent sense of 3D for this puzzler from Rainbow Arts. Have you got what it takes – or will *Blockout* prove so frustrating that it leads to the early retirement of your monitor? *Blockout*: more oddly shaped squares than a Masonic Lodge

EFFECTS

The graphics in *Blockout* are pleasing, though the tunnel is a trifle bland. The blocks are wire frame at the mouth and enable you to see all its dimensions.

The 3D manipulation of the blocks can't be faulted because the speed can be changed to suit the tastes and ability of the player.

Sound is monotonous and can fortunately be turned off from the options menu.

VERDICT

Blockout is simple to operate and the simultaneous use of mouse and keyboard means manipulation of the blocks is fast and easy. When it comes to dropping blocks into the right place, however, it's more a matter of luck than skill, because lining them up to fall correctly is mindnumbingly tricky.

It's an amusing puzzle game and a lot of time has been spent on its design. Although it's a simple game, *Tetris* proved that simple concepts can be real killers. Whether it's going to rival the forthcoming *Welltris* (previewed in *STF 13)* remains to be seen, but early demos suggest that it has a lot to live up to.

ANDREW HUTCHINSON

GRAPHICS	6
SOUNDTRACK	3
INTELLIGENCE	8
INSTANT APPEAL	8
LONG TERM INTEREST	7
OVERALL	**72%**

www.stformat.com

In *Turbo Outrun* you could hit your jets and disappear into the sunset, in *Gravity* you could climb aboard a spaceship and escape Earth's problems, and in *Thunderstrike* life was just a violent TV game. *Battlemaster* offers no chance of escape. In this game you need to use your bare hands to fight for survival and beat orcs, elves and dwarves to a pulp.

Your role in this nightmare is to track down and defeat the four kings in the four racial capitals (orcs, elves, dwarves and humans) and deliver their crowns to the watcher's tower. The kings are located in random places around the map. Before you discover them you need to overcome a barrage of enemies and discover ways past a host of puzzles.

Battlemaster is split into a number of scenarios seen on the map as villages, castles, mines and wilderness. Each of these scenarios is populated by one of the four races or by monsters. In each scenario there's an objective. Often it's to solve a puzzle such as tracking down the key to a gate, but it can also be to find specific objects like food or weapons.

Whatever the objective, you have to work it out for yourself; there's no help provided. For example, when the game begins you're placed in a random position on the map depending on the leader you chose. In one of these positions you're outside the walls of a castle. You can't venture into the mysterious castle because you don't have a key to take you through the front gate. You wander up the map until you stumble across the key. Fortunately it's unprotected, but it's common to find monsters standing over the top of items just waiting to singe your eyebrows.

When you've got your sticky fingers on the key you run back to the castle and charge straight through the open gates. A legion of enemies immediately descends on you and you need to shoot the whole miserable bunch. When they're all dead you can pick up the treasure lurking inside and proceed up the map to the next tricky encounter.

Fortunately you don't take on this major task alone; you have the support of a small band of men. This is where the strategy element comes into play. You control the men using a set of icons at the side of the main playing area. You can, for example, choose to lead from the front, bring up the rear or wander off on your own, and you can make the men walk abreast or in single file.

Positioning the men is very important because in the correct formation they can easily wipe out monsters. The men aren't just

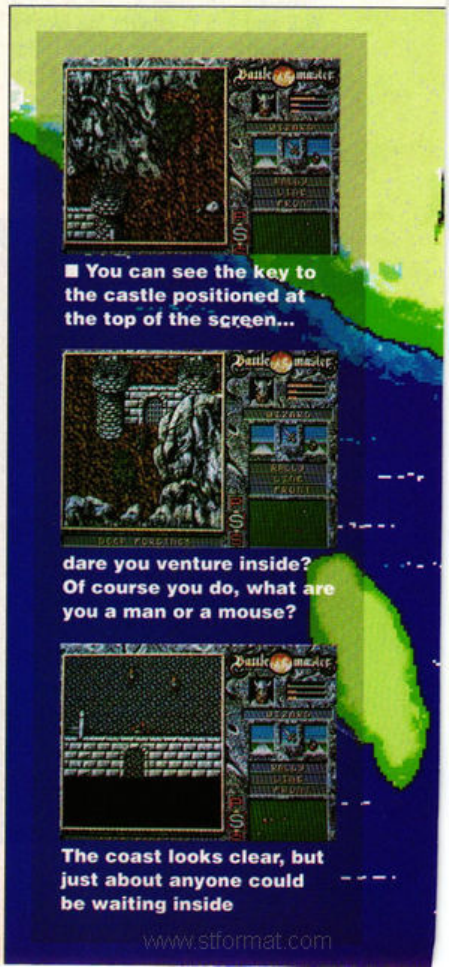


■ **The main playing screen presents you with a number of icons. When you hit the spacebar they can be used to activate the functions listed here**

Mention elves and dwarves to a seasoned gamester and you get a big yawn in response. Battlemaster might conjure up that same old scenario but offers some bizarre variations on the theme. Fearless Mark "the orc-hater" Higham picks up his sword and bravely goes where no games addict has gone before...

MIRRORSOFT £24.99

battle master



■ **You can see the key to the castle positioned at the top of the screen...**

dare you venture inside? Of course you do, what are you a man or a mouse?

The coast looks clear, but just about anyone could be waiting inside

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MASTERING THOSE NEFARIOUS MONSTERS IN BATTLE



■ The scenario begins and you're leading a bunch of humans...



trot up the edge of the wall and make sure you pick up that key...



now rally all your men together and charge headlong inside...



you're unchallenged at first, but that doesn't last for long...



when you've killed your foes, search for food and other goodies

mindless brutes though. If comrades die in battle their morale starts to plummet. As you wander the terrain you find that many of them start lagging behind and the only way to re-group them is to hit the Rally icon. Alternatively, if you're performing well and racing through the scenarios in no time, morale is high and your men eagerly run off ahead looking for people to attack. Again, Rally can be used to call them all back.

You don't have to plunge headlong into battle all the time. Provided you're not in territory occupied by monsters (beasts other than the four races), you have the option to Parley. Click on the Parley icon and you're presented with three options – buy troops, buy free passage or buy objects. You can only buy troops if you're in a scenario occupied by the same race as yourself.

Buying yourself free passage is acceptable in other cases, but you need to have enough money to be able to do it. Alternatively you can buy items from the local population. At the end of a battle this icon changes into a world map to enable you to select another scenario to visit.

EFFECTS

If you played last month's Cover Disk demo you already know the graphics aren't going to make you dance with joy. Scrolling is jerky and the backdrops are tedious. Wake up in the back row!

The game is played with tiny sprites and it's often difficult to work out whether your characters are engaged in ferocious battle or brazenly making babies.

You can see exactly where you're going because a red arrow hovers over your leader's head. This is helpful because the entire team can occasionally disappear behind boulders or houses. All you can see then is the red arrow jauntily moving around.

Sampled noises give you the impression of strenuous fighting. Each time one of your team is maliciously sliced in two by a pernicious enemy, you're treated to a piercing scream before he disappears in a puff of smoke.

VERDICT

This is a game all about developing successful strategies. Overlook the forgettable graphics, they're good enough to do their job. What's important is to look at how the game plays.

Battlemaster might not be particularly original – battling against orcs, elves, dwarves and monsters has been done thousands of times before – but it takes a welcome detour from the well-trodden adventure path.

The way you lead your team of men through their bloody campaign is novel. It isn't clever enough to make this a classic, but it's certainly inspiring. Different formations can improve your attacks and you can recruit new men to replace those who've ended up like a jar of ketchup.

Even if your plight is hopeless, there may still be a way of winning when you reach the next villager. It's this formula of heart-racing action and innovative strategy that keeps you playing *Battlemaster* over and over and over again.

MARK HIGHAM

GRAPHICS	7
SOUNDTRACK	7
INTELLIGENCE	6
INSTANT APPEAL	8
LONG TERM INTEREST	7
OVERALL	**82%**

THE BATTLEMASTER SCENARIO



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■ **Ocean's big new licence is a conversion of the *Secret Agent* coin-op. Pit yourself against the Federation of World Terrorists, save the world from Mr Big and shoot every blasted thing in sight**

sly spy
secret agent

OCEAN £19.99

Arcade game conversions have always been big business, but the majority are seriously flawed. Some software houses seem incapable of creating a decent game based on an arcade original, but Ocean usually do a good job and *Sly Spy* is no exception.

This is a horizontally-scrolling shoot-'em-up/kick-'em-up across ten levels. The idea is to get to the headquarters of the Council for World Domination Terrorists (winners of the Longest Bad Guys Name of the Year Award) and thwart them by any and every means at your disposal. In short kill everything in sight.

The first level sees our intrepid agent leaping out of a plane and freefalling to earth. Numerous bad guys appear and you shoot them. The next level involves entering a building and shooting some more bad guys. Then you shoot even more bad guys as the big bad boss tries to escape in a big black sedan.

At this point your sly spy hops onto a motorbike and deals with legions of enemy operatives who are either on motorbikes or hovering in the air with jetpacks. The big black sedan comes into sight and is swiftly dealt with.

The enemy boss lets slip where their HQ is and you scoot off to the harbour. This provides the backdrop to lots of jumping around and shooting on boats, and (stop me if you've heard this one before) lots more bad guys to annihilate.

At this point the action transfers underwater. Enemy agents appear in wetsuits and you harpoon them. Sharks also arrive on the scene and meet a similar fate. The next level is set in a warehouse where (get ready for one of those giant imaginative leaps) tigers are roaming around. So it's time to please the animal conservationists and blow away half the world's tiger population.

Level seven is set in a weapons storage cave where a large guy with a lethal hat, a la *Goldfinger*, tries to separate your sly spy head from your sly spy body with some nifty frisbee action. Duck sucka!

It's then time to don the wetsuit again for an assault on the enemy's HQ. After dealing with an enemy operative in a deep sea diving suit it's upstairs for more bad guys and more of those displaced tigers. Complete that and it's finally time to confront and terminate (oh spare us all this excessive originality) Mr Big!.

EFFECTS

Software creations have done an excellent job converting this game from the arcade original. Unfortunately this just isn't enough. The arcade game had poor animation and so has this. When you kick in the air there are just two sprites, one for leg down and one for leg up. It's the same story with the sweeping low kick.

The end-of-level bad guys are animated true to the arcade, which means two or three sprite movements, but the backdrops they perform against aren't innovative or interesting.

Enemy agents monotonously arrive stage left and right, occasionally lob a grenade at you, and get monotonously blown away by your lethal weaponry.

Moving around the screens is the same on each of the terrestrial levels and involves little more than clambering over boxes, jumping gaps and climbing ladders.

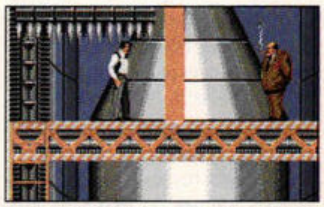
Sound is pretty much what we've come to expect from conversions. Nothing awe inspiring, but it does the job.

VERDICT

Sly Spy doesn't set any records for originality and doesn't set the world alight with its animation. It's a competent conversion and that's its biggest failing. Ocean aren't doing themselves any favours faithfully replicating the original. If the licences are so restrictive, perhaps they should spend money on original games instead.

If you have a Bond fetish, miss those "all because the lady loves..." adverts and require some serious shooting practice then *Sly Spy* is just the game you're looking for. Only gamesters who dislike strategy and have itchy trigger fingers are going to run and run with this one.

ANDREW HUTCHINSON



■ **Finally it's time to deal with Mr Big. One kick in the right place and he's a goner**

GRAPHICS	6
SOUNDTRACK	5
INTELLIGENCE	2
INSTANT APPEAL	5
LONG TERM INTEREST	2
OVERALL	**59%**



■ **Sly spy tries a spot of skydiving and is accosted by hordes of enemy agents**



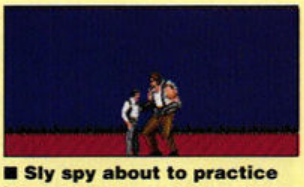
■ **Abraham Lincoln looks on impassively as sly spy battles it out with terrorists**



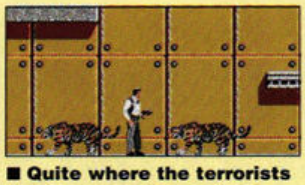
■ **A tip off leads you to New York's harbour where Fidel Castro is making a getaway**



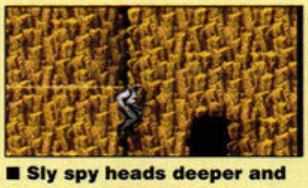
■ **Things get a bit hot, so it's time for an aerial escape to another boat**



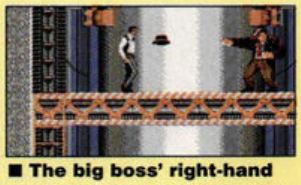
■ **Sly spy about to practice his ball skills and bring this mean mutha to his knees**



■ **Quite where the terrorists (or the programmers) got these tigers from is puzzling**



■ **Sly spy heads deeper and deeper underground hot on the trail of Mr Big**



■ **The big boss' right-hand man can do suprising party tricks with his hat**

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■ Level 2 (2015 AD): help Jenny escape by opening the right doors and letting her out



■ Level 3 (1985): those neighbours peep out their windows when they hear trouble



■ Level 4 (1955): Marty is a mixed-up teenager on that *difficult* sliding square



■ And finally (1955): back to the past – but still with your hoverboard. Hit it!

MIRRORSOFT/ IMAGEWORKS £19.95

back to the future II

Normally the film's hardly stopped rattling around the projector spools before a computer tie-in hits the shelves, but *Back to the Future 2* has taken an age to be released. Fortunately for Mirrorsoft the movie cycle has come full circle and the sequel of the sequel, *Back to the Future 3*, is currently doing the rounds of the nation's fleapits and free publicity is up for grabs.

The film revolves around Marty McFly's journey to 2015 to stop his son from getting into trouble with the law. He's about to get involved in a robbery with Griff, the grandson of Biff (the thug in the first film).

You play Marty and must get to the Town Hall to stop Griff's robbery. Unfortunately you're being chased by a gang of hoverboarding punks. You've got a hoverboard too, but you've got to be pretty good at riding it to get there in time.

You skate up and down roads and sidewalks, avoiding Griff's heavies, cars and other traffic hazards. You pick up bonus items on the way giving you extra speed and energy, and can even hitch a ride on the back of passing cars – though you'll probably get run over attempting this.

The second section shows an overhead view of your girlfriend, Jennifer's house. She's in danger of meeting herself in the future (a well-known time-travelling problem). You control the doors in the house and must let Jenny out without her meeting any members of her future family.

Complete that and you're thrown into an alternate 1985 where Biff is causing mayhem. He's nicked a Sports Almanac from the future and transported it back in time to make himself rich. He's now the head of a big gang of criminals which you have to defeat in a left scrolling beat-'em-up.

After that you have an abstract logic puzzle to solve. It's one of those old-fashioned sliding puzzle squares where you rearrange the pieces to show a picture. The subject of the picture is you, performing in the school jazz band in 1955.

If you make it through all that you face another hoverboard scenario, but this time in 1955. The traffic's different and the enemy are reduced to pedestrians making the game a bit easier. The same rules apply and the same bonus items can be picked up. The most important item is the Almanac, your passport to a safe future.



■ Level 1 (2015): avoid Griff's henchmen on your 21st century hoverboard

■ The game of the film *Back To The Future* was a hit for Activision three years ago. Now it's Mirrorsoft's turn to convert the sequel, *Back To The Future 2*

EFFECTS

Back to the Future 2 is a colourful and somewhat schizophrenic game, comprising two logic puzzles and three arcade-style sections. It's an interesting combination of styles, using *Paperboy*-ish and *Dragon Ninja*-type action with old-style games like chess and puzzle squares.

Graphically and musically the game is superb, with some excellent attention to detail. There are introductory animation sequences to each sub-game, and a tuneful rendition of the *Back to the Future 2* theme.

VERDICT

The different sub-games sound great in principle, but *Back to the Future 2* is a pig to complete and suffers from an incredibly tough first level. The collision detection is well out of order, as is the joystick response – *very* frustrating.

The puzzles provide a well-needed breathing space between action sequences and though the game is not what it could have been, there should be something in it for everbody – if you can just get far enough to reach it!

NEIL JACKSON

GRAPHICS	7
SOUNDTRACK	8
INTELLIGENCE	5
INSTANT APPEAL	6
LONG TERM INTEREST	6
OVERALL	**62%**

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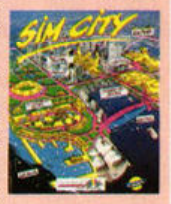
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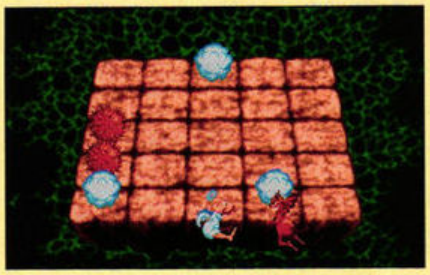


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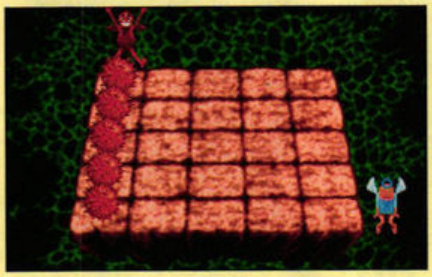


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■ If you can't win with flair, then why not lose disgracefully? A poonch in the goots won't help you win, but it sure is fun!



■ Yahoo! Another win for your side. Chalk one up to the horny little Devil, while the Angel sulks in the corner



■ Even "perfect" Angels get bored. Your opponent shows his contempt for your tardiness with his fiddling *(ooer)*

antago

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It's an old cliché, prevalent in the computer games world, that simple ideas are often the best ones. *Antago* falls fairly and squarely into that category. It has no subgames, plot or whizzo state-of-the-art graphics – just an easy to learn board game style, with bags of appeal. It's the simplicity of the playing method that makes *Antago* such a gas.

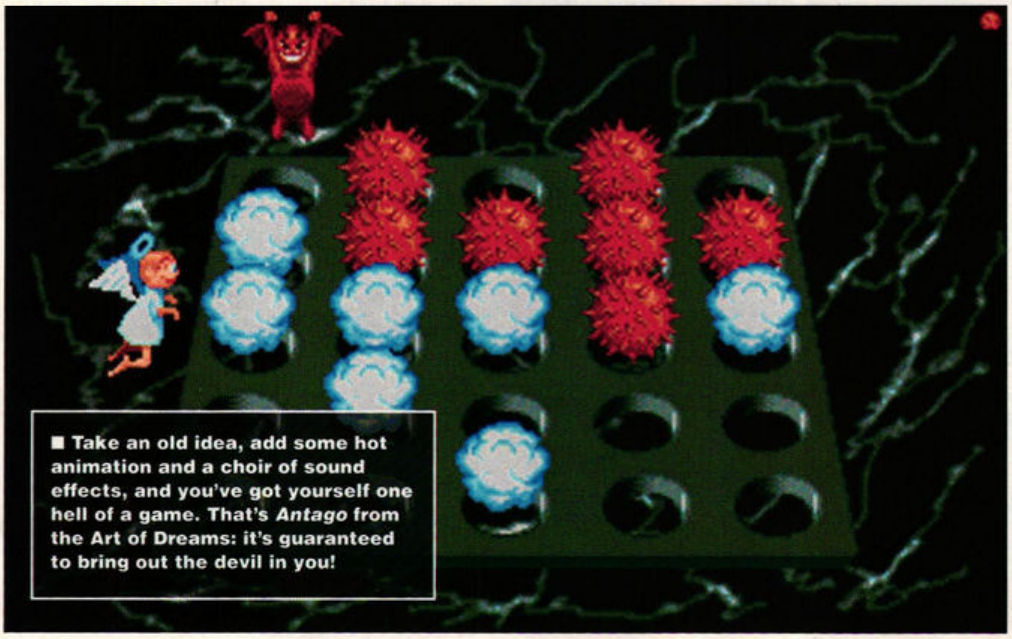
It centres around a battle of wits between a devil (played by you) and an angel (played by the computer or a friend). The two of you walk around the outside of a strange 25-square chess board. Each player takes it in turn to place a counter – a spiky red ball in the case of the devil or a bluey-white cloud for the angel. The aim is to place a line of five counters across the board, vertically, horizontally or diagonally. Sounds easy? Well, it would be, but for the challenging rules which mean strategic planning many moves ahead is necessary to win.

You can't just plonk counters anywhere. You're limited to placing them around the edge of the board, which means to get them into the centre you must place them on squares which are already occupied. The first counter then moves one square inwards, making space for the new one. In this way, you can block your opponent by shoving counters in the way, pushing them off the edge and disturbing his plan of attack. The only stipulation is that you can't push your opponent's last counter off the board.

You control the placing of counters with the joystick. To move your character around the board, simply push in the desired direction. If you happen to bump into the opposing character, it gets pushed backward to the corner of the board, with a suitable grunt (this is purely to satisfy the spiteful streak we all possess: it achieves nothing in terms of advantages). When your character's at the position you want, hit the fire button to deposit a counter.

The computer opponent has ten levels of play, ranging from ridiculously easy to exasperatingly difficult. A few matches (they're all "best-of-three" types) and you'll soon suss out your own skill level. Easy and difficult games are usually over in about three minutes, but when the games start to take longer you know that you're well-matched.

You can also select a board which has counters already positioned for each opponent. There are 50 such boards, and you can have hours of fun trying to beat the computer from a losing position. Great fun if you can do it!



■ Take an old idea, add some hot animation and a choir of sound effects, and you've got yourself one hell of a game. That's *Antago* from the Art of Dreams: it's guaranteed to bring out the devil in you!

EFFECTS

The graphics are cutesie-style with the angel wearing typically angelic attire right down to little flapping wings and white smock. The devil is a comic book demon with tiny horns and dragon wings.

What makes them both come alive is their impatient asides while they're waiting for the other one to make a move. The demon puffs and groans and falls asleep in real spoilt-brat style. When defeated, they hang their head in shame and look so desolate you can't help feeling sorry for them.

The intro music is a catchy sampled tune, while sound effects are reduced to sparse and atmospheric groans and clonks.

VERDICT

Antago is good fun, but won't satisfy you forever. It's one of those games you play when you've a few minutes to fill and can't be bothered to get into something too serious. But it's a thoroughly enjoyable boredom-beater that delivers solid brain-taxing gameplay. Isn't that what we all want from a game? Grab a copy and stretch your mind!

NEIL JACKSON

GRAPHICS	6
SOUNDTRACK	5
INTELLIGENCE	8
INSTANT APPEAL	8
LONG TERM INTEREST	7
OVERALL	**84%**

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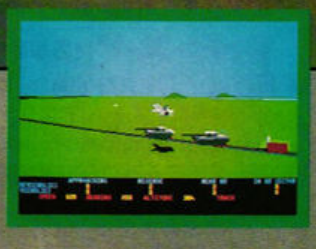
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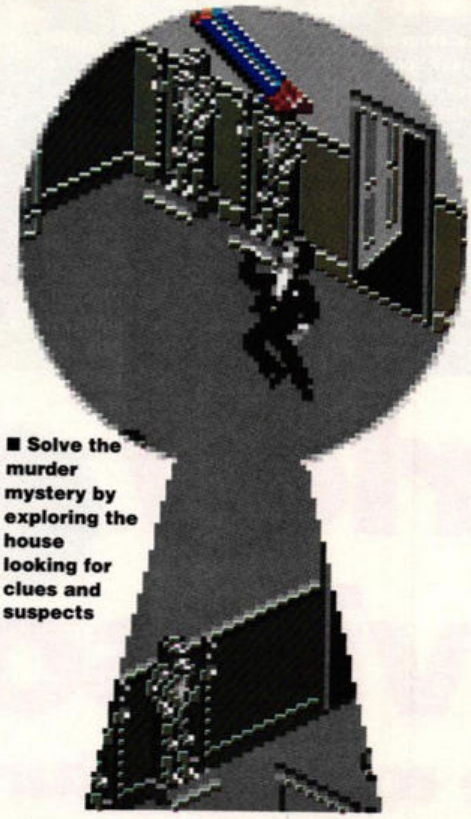
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murder



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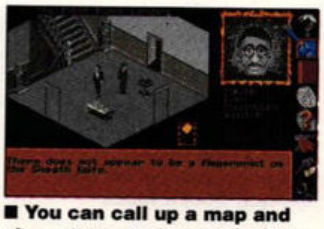
Get those grey cells out of retirement and let them loose on a bizarre murder investigation. Someone at your party has killed one of the other guests and you've got two hours to go through your Hercules Poirot routine and find the murderer. This Agatha Christie style question and answer investigation follows CRL's *Herewith the Clues* which trod similar ground last month.

Load up the game and use the face designer to change the appearance of your sleuth. If you don't go for the mustachioed Poirot look, you can always go for a shabby loose-eyed Colombo or squeaky clean Ellery Queen.

After the photo-fit session you're through to the real murder. The game is played with a 3D isometric view of the room you're standing in. At the start of a game this is the room where the murder has occurred. You're next to a dead body and a witness and if you want to be a first-grade PI you better interrogate the witness to glean all the information you can.

The objective is to work out who committed the crime and with what weapon. Some murders have clues suggesting how the victim was killed, others don't. For example, you can be told that the victim was stabbed, but there are so many knives scattered around that this actually means very little.

Murder is played in the rooms



■ You can call up a map and view all the floors at any time

of a house with four floors. At any moment you can call up a map to look at the location of the rooms, but you cannot search the rooms for evidence or characters unless you actually walk into them.

As you meet suspects you can interrogate them by clicking on them and selecting the question option. Using a series of icons you can ask delicate questions such as, "What was the relationship between you and the deceased?" or the more direct, "What do you know about the palette knife?" or even the B-movie classic, "What do you know about Dr. Forbes and the garage?" Since you can only ask a limited number of questions, it would be far quicker and easier if these could be selected from a list of possible options.

Many characters are carrying suspicious items such as guns or handkerchiefs that provide crucial information. If the fingerprints were wiped clean in the murder room, the culprit isn't carrying that handkerchief for his nasal probs. Useful information can be saved in a notebook and called up later.

Besides meeting suspects, you can also stumble onto evidence. If you wish you can check it for fingerprints and save these into a jotter. If you're satisfied that the fingerprints match others you've found then you can hold the item as exhibit A – the suspected murder weapon.

When you think you know the murderer and weapon, click on a pair of handcuffs. You're then told whether you deduced correctly or not. If you screwed up then it's on to one of the other three million murders to be solved. If you got it right, then pause for a celebratory glass of champers – just remember to check it's not poisoned!

EFFECTS

A 1930s mis-en-scene reinforces the old-fashioned murder mystery ambiance. Obviously those were the only days when murderers were so full of stealth that they conveniently stuck around the scene of the crime to get caught. To re-create this period effect the interior graphics are all monochrome. It's unfortunate that a sepia tint wasn't used because black and white looks incredibly drab and boring.

Apart from this crucial criticism, the visuals are ultra-exciting. *Murder* employs a face creation utility which supplies different features for all the characters used in each game. If you've ever toyed with *Fun Face* (*STF* Cover Disk 2) you'll know exactly how enjoyable it is creating ugly mutants by playing genetic havoc with eyebrows, noses, glasses and beards.

Aside from a sampled intro tune with loud screams there are only occasional spot effects which add little to the atmosphere.

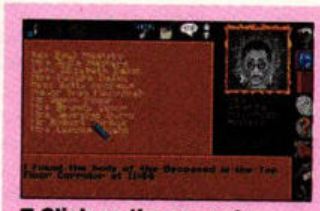
VERDICT

Good graphics, a variety of rooms, well-hidden evidence and a mountain of red-herrings make this a fatally addictive murder game. Unfortunately the frustrating way you have to construct questions means it's sheer bloody murder interrogating anyone.

However, with three million murders waiting to be solved, which is more on the scale of Pol Pot than Agatha Christie, you can be sure you'll be solving homicides in every spare moment.

MARK HIGHAM

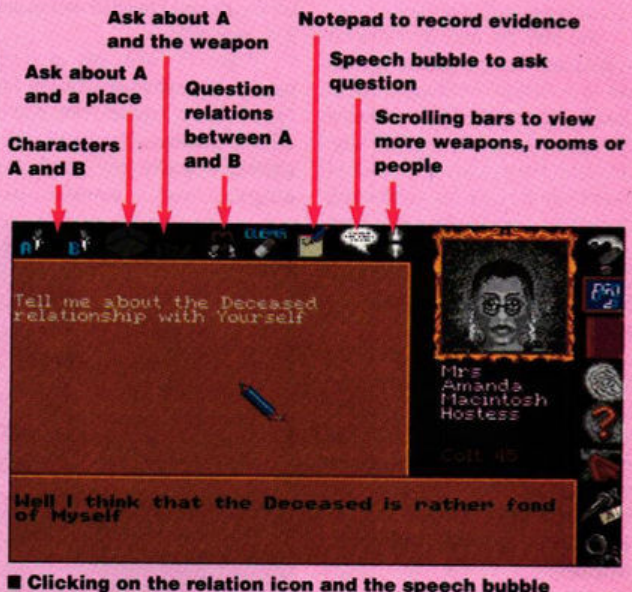
GRAPHICS	7
SOUNDTRACK	6
INTELLIGENCE	6
INSTANT APPEAL	8
LONG TERM INTEREST	6
OVERALL	**72%**



■ Click on the correct icons to interrogate any suspicious suspects

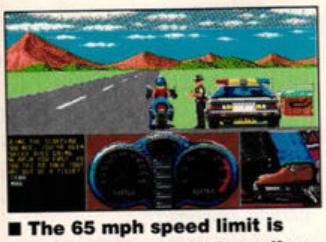


■ Select the name of the second person who is involved in your questions



■ Clicking on the relation icon and the speech bubble enables you to construct and then ask the crucial questions

www.stformat.com



■ The 65 mph speed limit is strictly enforced by the police, but you can blag your way out of a fine if you stay cool



■ Picking up girls in *Harley Davidson* is easy. Just find one who can't run away! You can then indulge in mindless, macho mayhem in Mindscape's greasy biker simulator



■ Pick a card, any card, to win the poker sub-game and some serious spending money for the next festival



harley davidson – the road to Sturgis



MINDSCAPE £29.99

Motorbike games are usually dedicated to high-speed, lunch-repeating, thrills 'n' spills – *RVF Honda* and *Super Hang On* being obvious examples. *Harley Davidson* takes a more sedate approach. Named after the US bike favoured by American Hell's Angels, it depicts the leather-clad rebels behaving much more genteely than you'd expect. Gone are the days of Sonny Barger's ton-up kids screaming around town like the Toecutter's crew in *Mad Max*. Nowadays they're more likely to be seen helping old ladies over the road.

You play the part of one such hairy-faced moron desperate to get to a festival in Sturgis, South Dakota. You start with a pocketful of cash, your trusty (rusty?) bog-standard Harley and the kind of biker's garb only a commuting stockbroker would wear. You have ten days to get from the East Coast to Sturgis and improve your biker credibility, in looks, machine and riding skills.

You do this during the long trek across country. Each town has a bike shop where you can buy custom engines, uprated extras and a host of mean-machine kit. You can also buy items of a more aesthetic nature, like jackets, helmets, and boots. Shopping's a simple affair; point the mouse at an item and click. You can then kit yourself out in the coolest colours and the hottest Harley this side of the sun.

For extra prestige, you participate in the events staged from town to town. These are all typical nutty biker stunts. In the Slow-Ride Contest you ride along as slowly as possible without falling off (harder than it sounds). The Weenie-Run is the dumbest of all dumb-biker tricks. You need a passenger on the pillion and she (for it is always a girl) stands up "on the pegs" and bites Frankfurters hanging on strings above the road, while you steer beneath them. It all sounds a bit wacky and Freudian and indeed it is. Very odd.

If you do well, you gradually receive the admiration of the rest of your biking cronies, who pop up a lot to introduce the various sub-games. If you're any good you'll progress from a wanna-be to a real highway bro' and finally to that most-hallowed of motorcycling accolades, the Ultimate Biker God (barf). If you're crap, you'll either stay at the low levels or kill yourself, both to the delight of your "friends." It's a cruel world isn't it?



■ Crawling along in the Slow-Ride sub-game is far more difficult than it looks

Road tripping between towns gives you the opportunity to pick up the occasional stranded female, break the speed limit and dodge junk in the road. Just the wind in your hair and the flies in your teeth as you zoom down the long road to Sturgis, love, peace and alcohol poisoning. What a life!



■ For extra meathead style points why not go shopping for a tattoo of your mum or a nude (or both at once)? It's sure to impress yer mates

EFFECTS

Harley's colourful graphics should appeal to everyone and although none of the digitized piccies win prizes for beauty, they'll certainly make you laugh.

The game's main "hook," the riding section between towns, has been well put together and is smooth and easy to control. At the same time there's a fair amount of realism, with clutch controls, realistic stalls, tumbles and crashes.

The intro music is unexciting, but the in-game sounds are better, featuring (most importantly) a believable motorbike engine noise.

VERDICT

Harley is an unpredictable game and its wackiness keeps you occupied for ages. If you like road-race games, but you're looking for a bit more depth, *Harley's* what you're after. It's an easy-to-operate, good-humoured *Easy Rider* romp into meathead sexist prat territory. After the Weenie Run even the girls will find something to laugh at.

NEIL JACKSON

GRAPHICS	7
SOUNDTRACK	5
INTELLIGENCE	7
INSTANT APPEAL	6
LONG TERM INTEREST	8
OVERALL	**76%**

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THE 1990 ATARI ST PRODUCT GUIDE

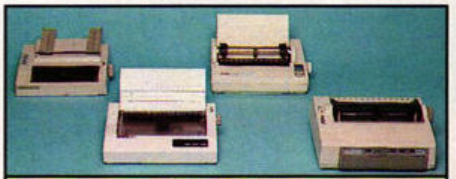
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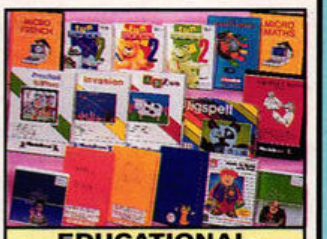
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screenplay extra

More games are released each month than the overworked, bug-eyed FORMAT team can review. In the start of a new series we check out some dark horses, near misses, late arrivals and also rans

ASTATE

New Deal Productions
£19.95

French games used to have a reputation for combining excellent graphics with non-existent gameplay. The situation has improved recently with Delphine's superb *Future Wars* which broke new ground in ST games programming, but *Astate* does little to further the image of French software.

Your task is to find five pieces of a statue that are sprinkled about the French countryside. The graphics are great and the backdrops are extremely well-drawn, but any interest this encourages disappears when you actually try to play the game.



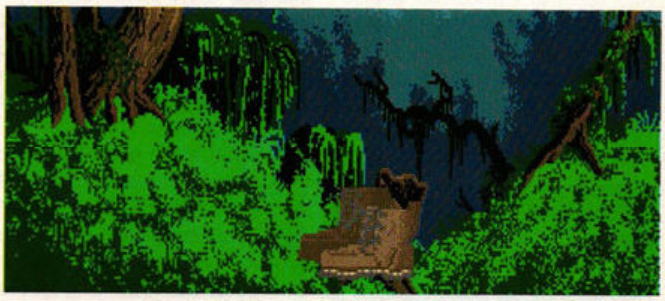
■ **Attempts to pickaxe this castle leads to a clip round the ear from a very nice man from English Heritage**

Using a pair of boots, a drill, a detector, a sturdy pickaxe and a hand, you have to investigate screens and locate miscellaneous items.

Quite simply it's *boring*. You trudge around the countryside drilling trees, pickaxing houses and checking meadows with the detector, occasionally chancing upon something incredibly exciting such as a tin can or a key, but these items prove to be of little or no use solving the game.

The *Astate* legend is something of a mystery and that's exactly how this game remains to me – a complete mystery.

STF Rating – 38%



■ **Continuing a long tradition, the screens in *Astate* are lovingly created, but the gameplay has been sadly neglected**



■ **Caressing lonely tree stumps is a weird affliction**

WILDLIFE

New Deal Productions
£19.99

New Deal Productions win the misnomer of the month award. At nearly £20 *Wildlife* is certainly no deal and is most definitely old hat. Back in *STF 6* we reviewed a game from Infogrames called *Safari Guns* that was already a rehash of a game called *African Safari* by US Action. The only difference between *Wildlife* and *Safari Guns* is the bottom icon line.

Your objective is to travel to various parts of the world and photograph wild animals. While ➢ you're a *Question of Sport* fanatic or a major football buff only the £200 prize money for the highest score acts as an incentive.

STF Rating – 57%

FUNNY OLD GAMES THAT AREN'T AT ALL FUNNY

TREBLE CHAMPIONS

Challenge Software
£19.95

Football games used to look like this in the dim and distant past when graphics meant asterisks and hash signs. This game might appeal to an ST user with an extremely fertile imagination and a massive interest in football, but no-one else.

The software company claim the game is a "stunningly realistic football strategy game," but realistically they're being stunningly economical with the truth, because it looks more like a sixth form computer project.

The only graphics screen is a static image of the fitness training section. It could be argued that this sort of game doesn't need graphics because the whole game is simply an exercise in number crunching. This one can stay on the shelf until Accrington Stanley are in the First Division.

STF Rating – 19%

THE OFFICIAL EVERTON FOOTBALL CLUB INTELLIGENSIA

Amfas
£19.99

This unlikely sounding game isn't a licenced football simulator and isn't really anthing to do with Everton FC. It's a football quiz and as such it's a welcome relief from the glut of mediocre football sims launched on the back of the World Cup this summer.

The game is played as a football match with each correct answer moving the ball further towards your opponent's goal. Failure to answer a question costs you a kick backwards or if you've made a particularly bad mistake, a goal against you.

The game features some neatly digitised graphics of players, adequate sound effects, and a weighty 1,700 questions. Amfas tell us that another 1,500 questions are being prepared for Christmas (cost £9.99).

Unfortunately the game lacks any sign of woolly v-neck sweaters and has nothing to match the breathless insensitivity of David Coleman, so unless



■ **Just look at the "realistic and stunning" match screen**

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INFOGRAMES

SAFARI GUNS

£19.95

A little while ago an amusing game appeared called *African Safari* from US Action. The objective was to line up the sights of a gun on all the wildlife which ran past you and blast everything to death as fast as you could. *Safari Guns* offers a "green" variation on this, but the idea is still the same.

The sights have turned into the viewfinder of a camera and the objective is to take photographs of the creatures who are passing by. There's still a bout of shooting involved, but this time you take aim at the nasty poachers who pop up all over the place.

The purpose is to take three photographs of each animal: take more and your score suffers. At the end of an allotted time period, all the photographs you took are displayed so you can assess your success.

Some clever, fast moving graphics make it tricky lining up the viewfinder in time, and with poachers popping up all over the place it's easy to blast the brains out of friendly wildlife by mistake (there are times when "sorry" just doesn't seem adequate).

VERDICT

Though it's addictive for a short while, *Safari Guns* isn't what you could call state-of-the-art software. Where it falls down [illegible]

GRAPHICS	8
SOUNDTRACK	5
INTELLIGENCE	3
INSTANT APPEA	

the Ed loved the game to bits, but then, what the hell does he know? (I heard that, pardon – ed) Graphically, it's quite an achievement but the wildlife on-screen isn't done any justice by the tame gameplay.

MARK HIGHAM



■ Poachers crop up all over the place and you need to blow 'em away before they can do any damage



■ "Shoot" all the animals who run in front of you by lining up your viewfinder and shooting by [illegible]

■ **Reincarnated! *Wildlife* appeared in *STF 6* as *Safari Guns***

➢ photographing the beasts you also have to see off various natives who seem to harbour an intense dislike for international wildlife photographers.

Icons to click on range from a hand and a normal camera to a telephoto camera and a gun. Your sole purpose is to snap or shoot (depending presumably on your politics) the various animals which pop their heads up. It's like one of those interminable afternoons out with your parents, you keep wondering when something interesting is going to happen, but nothing ever does.



■ **Threaten that cute wildlife with your blunderbuss**

Wildlife would probably appeal to a young age group deprived of access to the zoo or re-runs of *Daktari*, but even a three year old's interest would wane after blowing a couple of choice rhino away. The best advice is to save your money and buy something a bit harder and more thought provoking – like a brazil nut.

STF Rating – 21%

TEN REAL BANANAS

Ten games the *FORMAT* team wouldn't be caught dead playing

1. WARP
Grandslam
Bland, pea-sized shoot-'em-up for games freaks with good eyes

2. WILDLIFE
New Deal Productions
Tame safari nonsense – less enticing than thrice-chewed gum

3. STAR COMMAND
SSI
Laborious role-playing drivel. If this is science fiction I'll eat my lasergun

4. PETER BEARDSLEY'S INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL
Grandslam
Dull and impossible to play – bit of an own goal for Grandslam

5. BRIAN CLOUGH'S FOOTBALL FORTUNES
CDS
Save yourself the money and play along with *Question of Sport* instead

6. SNOOPY
The Edge
Comical attempt at a game. A completely wet blanket

7. DRAGON NINJA II
Ocean
Mindless thuggish beat-'em-up – utterly banal and unoriginal!

8. STARWREK
Castlesoft
Destined to boldly go where no ST game has gone before – the dustbin!

9. KENNY DALGLISH SOCCER MATCH
Impressions
Patronising old hogwash from the old tyke himself. Lacks everything you need for exciting gameplay

10. DR DOOM'S REVENGE
Empire
Captain America has never looked so weedy. Third-rate, out-dated and doomed to failure

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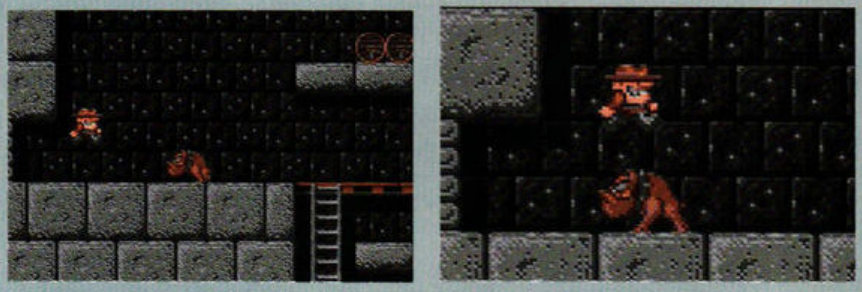
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game busters

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Microprose

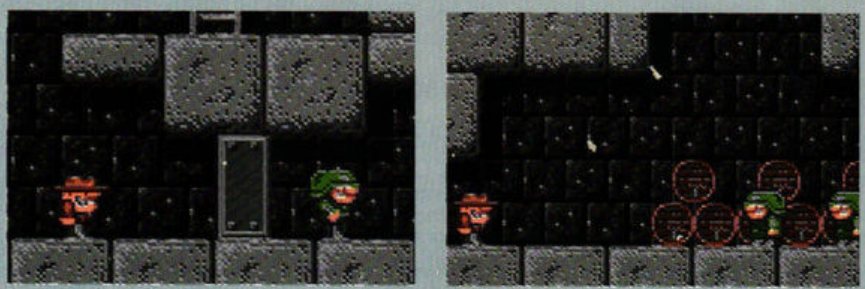
If you've loaded up the Cover Disk playable demo of *Rick Dangerous* and find the bulldog keeps taking bites out of your pants, fear not. Here's a quick solution to the puzzles...



As soon as the game starts, move right and jump to clear the speeding dog...



(Left) Dip your toe down at the bottom of the ladder to awaken the dog and move a little way back up the ladder. In the next screen (right), practice makes perfect. Bounce your way right so that you're directly above the ladder and climb down at the right time. This screen is a real sonofabitch and takes several attempts to clear...



Blow the wall with a stick of dynamite and shoot the guard. You can also blow up the guards with a stick of dynamite. Make your way right to complete the *FORMAT* demo. Well done!
(In the complete game, try typing POOKY in the middle to cheat!)

From adventures to strategy games and from puzzles to coin-op conversions, we've got the lot. Stand by for lift-off as the FORMAT crew present yet another stonking selection of ST games tips...

INDIANA JONES

Lucasfilm games

■ The computer grail diary is the package under the junk mail in Indy's office. If you look at the wine bottle on the table in Venice then you can pick it up. Search the library for "How to fly a bi-plane," which is useful later on.

■ Find the arm (or hook) when underground. Use the wine bottle on the torch after the bottle has been filled with water. Use the red cordon on machine then push wheel once.

■ Use the hook on the plug (when you're underneath it) then use the whip on the hook.

■ Play the bones in the order 24641, as if the bones were in the order 654321 facing you (if you see what we mean). Thanks to **Neil Evans** from Cheltenham.

Goldrunner

Microdeal

Start the game as normal and then type in ATARI to go straight to the first bonus screen. Thanks go to experienced runner **David Coleclough** from Manchester for this one.

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CHAOS STRIKES BACK

Mirrorsoft

LEVEL SEVEN – THE CISTERN

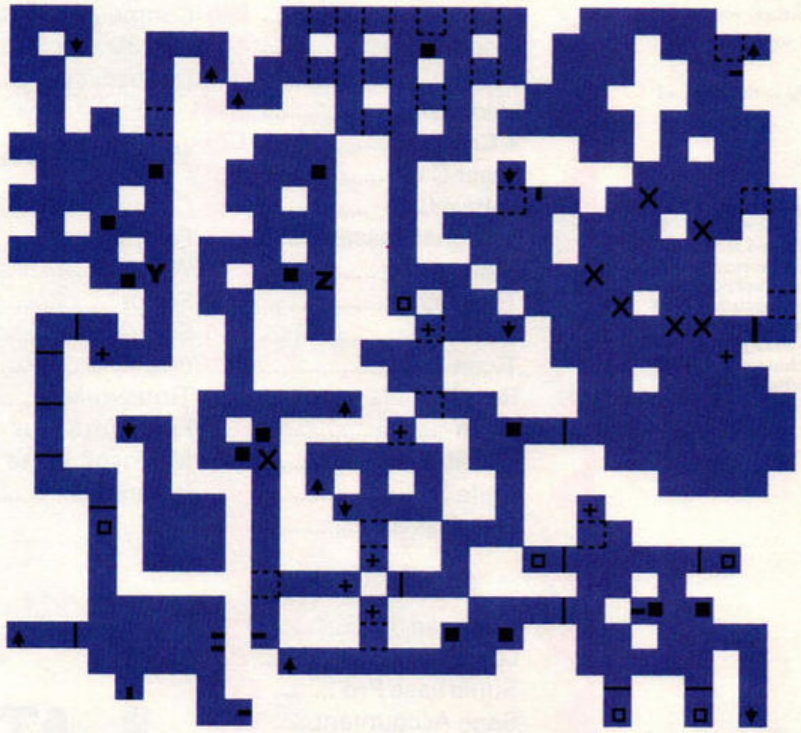
If a water element passes over a grate it is sucked into oblivion. The secret passage to by-pass the field needs an onyx key. The door in the southwest of the cistern gives access to a pit which drops to the junction of the ways.

In the room containing the four alcoves, drive the mummies into the pressure plates using the horn of fear. They then open the door to the passage. The button on the pillar opens the secret room containing the cross of Neta.

The complex full of rivers and water elementals is actually two areas joined by a teleport square. The button at the bottom of the passage fires the DES EW cannon to destroy the ethereal creatures. Go up the stairs in this room to reach the cone room. Come back down to reach the north end of the complex.

In the area with the false walls, use the pressure plate to close off the hidden pit in the north passage. The squares either side of the other pit spin you towards it. Removing the torch from the bracket gives access to the mummies and Death Row but opens a pit behind you.

- Pressure Pad
- Magic Field
- Pit
- Stairs Up
- Stairs Down
- Key/coin/object
- Button
- Launcher



FUSION

Electronic Arts

Score enough to enter the high-score table and type in SWAMP THING to activate the cheat mode. Now while playing the game press B to upgrade your present weapon, S to install shields, T to cycle through the further weapons available and E in conjunction with + and – to go back and forth through levels. Thanks again to super cheat **Abdul Saleem.**

NEW ZEALAND STORY

Ocean

Several warp gates are scattered around the game and they send you to higher levels. The first one is situated on level 1.1 on the top platform, just before the bird cage. Shoot at the highest point on the left wall until your shots seem to disappear. Shoot this five times and the gate appears giving you access to level 1.4.

The second gate is situated in level 2.2. Play the level as usual until you come to the first lot of bears on coloured balloons. Shoot near the top of this right wall until your shots disappear. Shoot this five times and the gate appears giving you access to level 2.3.

The final gate is on level 3.2. When you come to the first bit of water in this level, jump into it and swim to the nearest wall. Squirt water over this wall enough times for the gate to appear and you get to level 3.3. Mega thanks to **Jude Kracmar** from Muswell Hill for opening those doors.

STARRAY

Logotron

On the options screen type in AL YANKOVIC then press F5 and resume the game: you're now immune to alien attack. Thanks, **Simon Cunningham** of Camberley, for that helpful hint.

DOGS OF WAR

Elite

Type in TIMBO while playing the game and press F5 for sprite detection override. Thanks to **Sean McNally** from Grantham.

BATMAN

Ocean

On the title screen type in JA and then press M until the screen turns upside down. You've now got infinite Bat-lives and by pressing F10 you can change levels. Thanks to Bat freak **Matthew Payre** from Essex.

KNIGHT ORC

Level 9

Jason Grace and **Karli Watson** from Sawbridgeworth have some great spells and know exactly where to find them:

Charisma, from the Lake
Empathy, from the Rotten apple
Cold, from the Maze
Jump, from the Smooth pebble
Eye, from the Fire
Location, from the Rainbird
Grow, from the Marrow
Knives, from the Vampire

SPHERICAL

Rainbow Arts

The passwords for the complete game:

1 Player mode:	2 Player mode:
RADAGAST	**GHANIMA**
YARMAK	**GLIEP**
ORCSLAYER	**MOURNBLADE**
SKYFIRE	**JADAWIN**
MIRGAL	**GUMBACHACHMAL**

Thanks to **Lars Nielsen** from Denmark.

DALEY THOMPSON'S OLYMPIC CHALLENGE

Ocean

If you're not feeling particularly happy about performing the next event, follow **Abdul Saleem's** advice and type in HINGSEN.J to activate any event you fancy with the function keys.

KLAX

Domark

Hit the 4 key and you go to level 100. Simple as that!

INTERPHASE

Rainbird

When this dream-like experience turns into a nightmare try typing in FENNY at any point and see what happens. Thanks to **E Bergin** from Manchester.

BOMBUZAL

Mirrorsoft

Steven McClean from Co. Tyrone. and Paul Wells from Cleveland suggest typing in the following codes to advance to a new level.

ROSS, Level 8	**VASE, Level 60**
RATT, Level 16	**RING, Level 64**
LISA, Level 24	**PILL, Level 68**
SINK, Level 28	**GIRL, Level 72**
DAVE, Level 32	**SPOT, Level 76**
BIKE, Level 36	**GOLD, Level 80**
IRON, Level 40	**PALM, Level 84**
BIRD, Level 44	**OPAL, Level 88**
LEAD, Level 48	**LOCK, Level 92**
TAPE, Level 52	**SONG, Level 96**
WEED, Level 56	**SAFE, Level 100**
LAMP, Level 112	**FIRE, Level 104**
TREE, Level 120	**WORM, Level 108**

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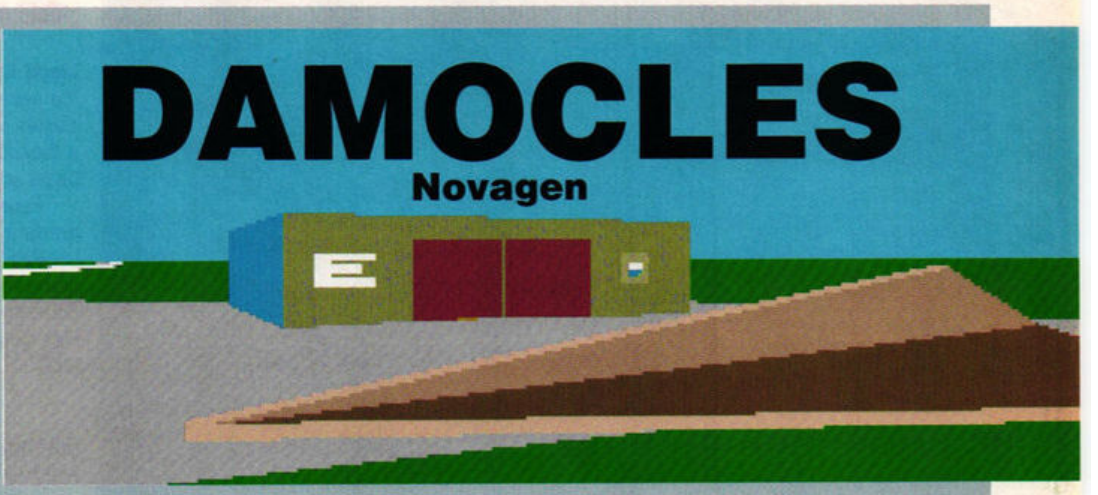
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DAMOCLES

Novagen



Save the planet Eris from certain doom with this winning solution. It's one of several ways to prevent the comet hitting the planet and takes you to only a few of the game's weird and wonderful locations.

At Eris Capital spaceport, enter the building and pick up the key to the VIP Limo. Jump in the Limo and the first building you find is the State Office.

Inside, pick up the Damocles file and have a read. Then jump in the lift and go to the President's office. Haggle with her for the bounty: she goes up to 20 million ECUs and tells you where to find the key for a spacecraft. Fetch it and get back in the car.

You find the craft itself at the Moorby School of Flying. Jump in, take off and head for Eris Capital 15.03. There's a trader here with a Pressure Suit for sale. Buy it, because you need it later.

Fly to Key West 07.07 and go into the basement. You find Antigrav which you need to pick up your spaceship.



Then go over to Hantzen's Laboratory at Bare Island 06.05. Go to the basement and pick up Key B, which is for his new hiding place. Upstairs are some interesting documents to read. Then nip down the road to 06.06 and buy Thermal Underwear from the trader. You need this on hot planets *(Warning:* occasionally the thermal undies cause you to get stuck in transporters. If this happens, reload and before you enter – *drop 'em!* Use the ship as soon as you exit from the transporter on inhospitable planets.)

Go to Snow Island Sorting Office at 03.00 and read the documents there. You find Detonator 2 disguised as a cupboard. When you have it, go to Eris Capital 11.08, pick up your spaceship and go inside. Here you find a transporter which you can use to jump from planet to planet without wasting time in space.

Walk in and out of the transporter until you get to Metis. Pick up the transporter and take it with you to Metis 05.06. Inside is a table. When you walk up to it, a concealed door opens revealing Detonator 4, a wash-basin.

Re-enter the transporter, by dropping it and walking in. Come out at Hantzen's new house at Ur City, Gaea 07.01. Detonator 1 is here, disguised as a sideboard.

Leave the building (you have the Key already) and go to Ur City 09.02. In the basement is a piano (useless) and the NovaBomb.

The last Detonator (number 3) is for sale at Chaldea Metropolis 05.06. It's disguised as a Hi-Fi. Buy it and you have all you need to finish the game. If you don't have enough cash, there's a bar of gold in the vault at the Bank of Gaea, Chaldea 06.06. An empty trader buys it at 05.08.

Leave the planet by spaceship and head straight for Damocles. Land and dump the NovaBomb on the surface. Then fly to a safe distance, switch on all the detonators and watch Damocles become a dustcloud.

That's it. All done thanks to our saviour CRISPIN CROWLEY from Norwich. All done, that is, except for the other 80% of the game you haven't yet seen...!

SKATE TRIBE

Mandarin

On level two, "Race the Trojans," simply swerve into the centre of the track and the bombs fall harmlessly either side of you. Thanks to **Daniel "Hang Ten" Hartley** from Harrogate.

PROPHECY ONE – THE VIKING CHILD

Electronic Zoo

The four passwords are: DENIS<E> which transports you to the forest, BLIZ takes you to the landbridge, SHARKMAN takes you to the labyrinth, NYMHARSW takes you to the desert. Thanks to **Graham Oliver** from Caterham.

PIRATES

Microprose

Make sure you've got the map beside you in case you get lost. Go to a tavern and get a few men, about ten upwards should do. Capture as many boats as you can, the big ship is the best. Then when you've got about five large boats and a large crew, start the game proper.



Find a town or city which is loaded with gold, like Panama, Havanna, or St Kilts. If you attack by sea you only get a quarter of the gold so attack by land but make sure you have a large crew or you end up in prison.

Always fight against the Spanish because they have richer ports and better and bigger boats. Don't waste your time attacking the Dutch and the French.

Besides blowing up boats and cutting people's heads off try gaining some wealth and power by changing governors orders, you'll find this is useful once the game ends.

Marrying a good-looking woman gets you power.

Somewhere along the way, look for your long lost family. If you find your sister she gives you a treasure map worth £100,000.

The boats:

The Pinnace is very small, fast and manouverable but it only carries about 20 tons.

The Sloop has similar characteristics, but has space for 40 tons of cargo or men.

The Frigate carries 120 tons and is still fast and manouverable.

The Galleon is powerful, but they tend to go slowly just when you need some speed. Thanks to **Blackbeard's** cousin **Saul de Jorge** from Porthcawl.

EARN £500 IN TEN MINUTES!

All you have to do to enter the great *ST FORMAT* "Night of a Thousand Tips" draw is to send in a tip, a game cheat, an infinite lives poke, a short cut, an undocumented feature, a bug, a password – in short, anything at all you've found helps you get more from your ST. And if you're stuck at a particular point in a game, or you find a problem with a piece of software, that'll do as well.

At the end of September, we shall be putting all your entries into a great big sack and pulling out the name of a lucky winner – who receives a cheque for 500 big ones! So get going. You don't have to use our special form, but it helps us no end.

We shall be doing all this again, so don't worry if you miss out on September's draw.

Name _____

Address _____

_____ **Daytime 'phone** _____

My tip is: Games ☐ Desktop ☐ Music ☐ Graphics ☐ Cover Disk ☐ Other ☐

Brief description of tip _____

_____

Please complete this form and send it, with your tip, to: Night of 1,000 Tips, *ST FORMAT*, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW.

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TIME

Empire

This month we present the final part in our complete *Time* solution.

If you've read the last two parts in our series (and if you haven't, turn to page 102 to order *STF 12* and *13* now) you should be as far as the Leonardo time period.

Head straight for the time machine in location 26 – the code is 1820191O. This takes you to the Crimean battlefield. Move right and you find yourself in a Russian tent. Your only course of action is to hang around long enough so that you're locked in the stockade. There you meet a soldier who offers to get you out using a key made from the thigh bone of his dead friend. Take it and he shows you the way through the forest to the British lines. Before he leaves he gives you a secret treaty, found on a prisoner. If you take this to the Russians they call a cease fire – which isn't in your interests. However if you go to the English camp the army surgeon hands you battle plans which "shouldn't be allowed to get into the hands of the enemy." Take them straight to the Russian army and war rages again.

The objective of this time period is to reach Florence Nightingale so the answer is to get injured. Watch where the shells from the guns are falling on the battlefield and stand just to the side of them. You get hit and are taken to see Florence. If you stand in the wrong place and take a direct hit then you're mortally wounded and the game is over.

Once in with Florence she charges the globe and hands it back. Now head back to the space station.

When you've given the charged globe to the Protomek again, go on to the Caesar time machine (code 01010044). You find yourself on a beach with a native girl. Talk to her and she hands you a statue. Offer this to the guard outside the fort and he quickly packs you up and takes you off as a slave to Rome. When you get there you find that you're about to be fed to the lions so you need to get into the Circus Maximus and survive. This isn't easy.

The key to survival is to work out the movement patterns of the lions and then dodge them. If you get past you're congratulated and taken to Caesar who gives you your freedom and a ring as a present. Take the ring and head back to Britain by galley. Bribe your way into the fort by giving the ring to the guard and make sure the native girl follows you back to Rome. Take the girl to see Caesar and he assumes she's a present for him. You can now take the globe and return to discharge it with the Protomek. There's now just one more time machine left.

The control board for the last time machine is missing a chip, so you must go to the lab assistant and offer her a ring. This can be obtained from the receptionist or discovered in the corner of one of the labs. Remember to wash your hands with the soap in the gents because sweat harms the time chips. Now take the chip into the Confucius control panel and the final time machine works. In the galleries, there's been a mistake with the dates of Confucius. The correct information is in the library disks – code 05510478.

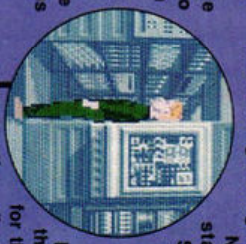
The time machine takes you to a paddy field. Head right to the store and collect herbs from the sack. Take the raft to the left of the paddy fields and into the village. Now visit the old hag in the hut. Roast the herbs (by walking over to the fire) and give them to her, she tells you of the philosophical twins and how to meet Confucius. Take the pearl she offers and catch the raft to the bog. Here you meet the twins. You must distinguish between one person who always tells the truth and one who always lies. If you can tell them apart you get out of the bog, but get it wrong and you drown. If right, it's over the bridge to meet Confucius. Chat and he charges the globe for you.

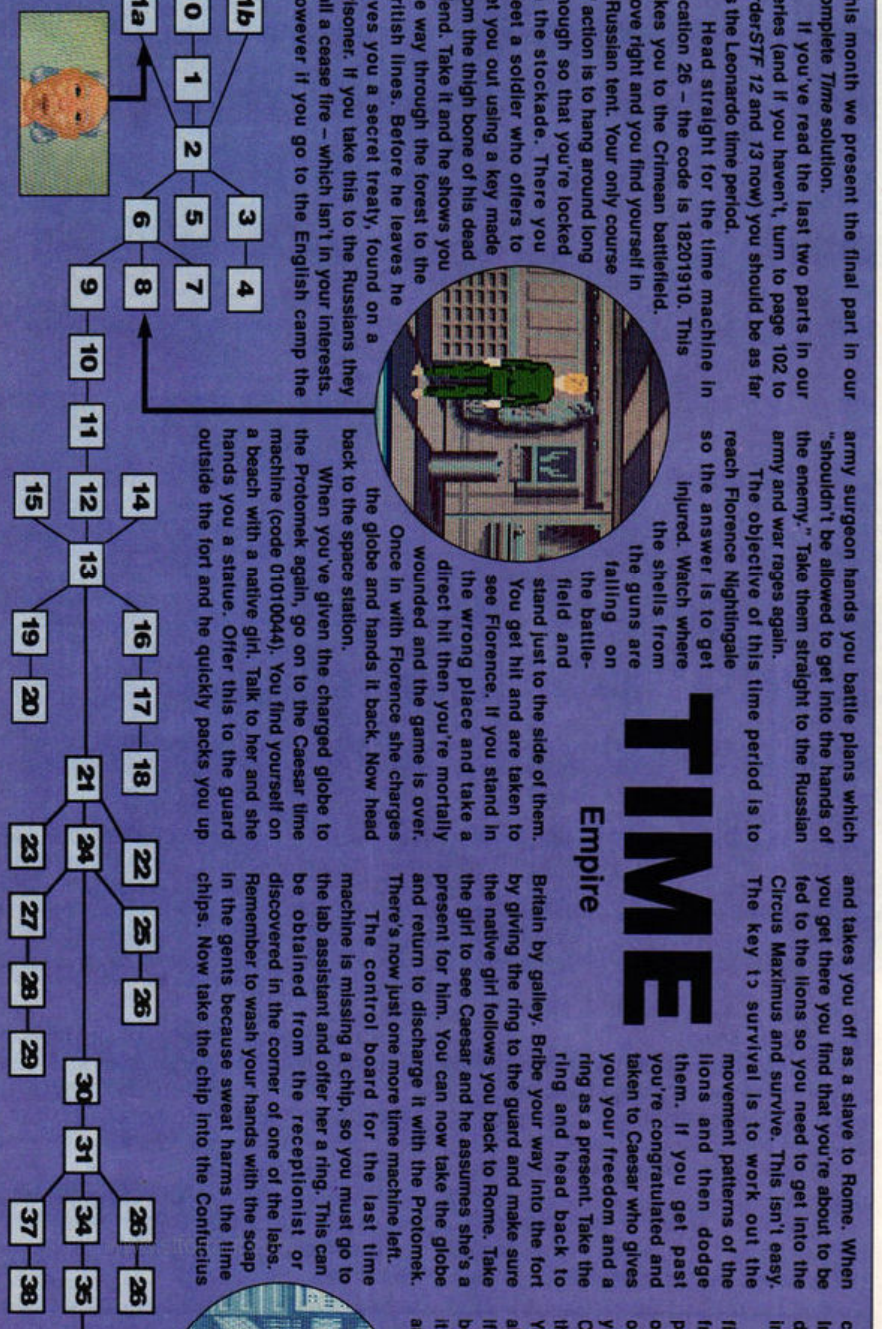
Now return to the space station where the Sekurimek is waiting. There's a chase and you must beat him to the protomek to win. To do this, eat a curry pill and you're taken to the gents loo. Now head for the protomek. If you get there first and fully charge the protomek with the globe, the challenge is over and you've won.

That's it folks. Worth it or what?

(Loud applause, bows gracefully and exits stage right pursued by a bear.)







0. Arm
1. Barrier
2. Desk
3. Foreman
4. Director
5. Changing
6. Foyer
7. Gents
8. Ladies
9. Viewport
10. Amusements
12. Diner
13. Info
14. Library 1
15. Library 2
16. Gallery 1
17. Gallery 2
18. Gallery 3
19. Gallery 4
20. Gallery 5
21. Corridor
22. Brig
23. Scrap
24. Videofair
25. Gallery 6
26. Gallery 7
27. Gallery 8
28. Gallery 9
29. Gallery 10
30. Corridor
31. Anteroom
32. Lab 1
33. Spares 1
34. Computer
35. Store 1
36. Store 2
37. Lab 1
38. Spares 2

CHAOS STRIKES BACK

Mirrorsoft

Lloyd Burley from Co Durham has discovered the secret of invincibility in Mirrorsoft's *Chaos Strikes Back*. Start the game as normal and find a dragon. Make your party stand in front of the beast and cast the spell MON ZO GOR SAR.

Pause the game by pressing ESC and, while holding down the ALT key, type in LORD LIBRASULUS SMITES THEE DOWN. Unpause the game and kill the dragon. If you enter the cheat correctly, he leaves behind the original firestaff. Pick it up and you're invincible.

TOTAL ECLIPSE

Incentive

Hold down 1 and 9 and press fire to see some real fireworks.



STARGOOSE

Logotron

Paul Wells from Cleveland advises you to press function keys F7, F8, F9 and F10 to get infinite shields.

ELIMINATOR

Hewson

Type in the following passwords to get to other levels: AMEOBA, BLOOD, CHEEKI, DOINOK, ENIGMA, FLIPME, GEEGEE, HANDEL, ICICLE, JAMMIN, KIKONG, LAPDOG. Another poke courtesy of **Paul Wells**.

PREDATOR

Ocean

Jeffrey Shave from Frinton on Sea knows a thing or two about reincarnation. Press F10 to regain all your lives.

FERNANDEZ MUST DIE

Mirrorsoft

Type in SPINYNORMAN and see what happens. All doctors' bills to **Simon Shanks** of Carrickfergus.

DRAGON SPIRIT

Domark

Pause the game, type in DRAGONHEAD and press F10. To skip between levels just press the corresponding number key.

RALLYCROSS CHALLENGE

Anco

If this rally is proving too much of a challenge, **Mark Hopkins** from Nuneaton has a neat little cheat. Drive your way to the locomotion stage and get to the section where the railway track crosses the road. Drive up the railway line until your car stops as if you have finished. You should now have a full complement of medals and money.

www.stformat.com

HARD DRIVIN'

Domark

The ever-so-descriptively named TURBO TIM and TONY SKINNER from Newbury have some tips for each of the tracks you encounter.

SPEED TRACK: rule number one: don't bother slowing down! To deal with the sharp corners, centre the mouse and jerk in the direction of the bend and back again to spin around the corner with no loss of speed.

STUNT TRACK: successfully negotiate the corner and you come to the bridge. Slow down to around 40-60 mph and stay as straight as you can. On the loop-the-loop move right once you're climbing and go as fast as you can. Once coming down go left as far as possible and then straight into the left lane at the bottom. On the tilted road slow down to around 10-30 mph, otherwise you fly off.

IN GENERAL: avoid skidding when straightening up by nudging the mouse very gently to the centre point. Allow the Phantom to take the lead at first to avoid crashing and then overtake when going past the barn. Now drive at top speed as normal. Only slow down at the tilted road. Then watch the action replay of yourself crossing the finishing line.

CHEAT: use a manual gearbox. Accelerate to whatever speed you want and put the car in neutral. You can now go as fast as you like without skidding. Easy-peasy!

DUNGEONS, AMETHYTS, ALCHEMISTS 'N' EVERYTHIN'

Atlantis

The *complete* solution in 70 moves: E, S, W, W, W, Take Key, E, E, E, N, N, E, Open Case, Take Vase, Throw Vase, Take Key, W, S, E, Take Sword, Open door, E, E, S, Hit Dragon.

Take Potion, Drink Potion, Drop Vial, Drop Sword, N, E, N, N, N, N, N, E, Take Whip, W, S, S, E, E, Give Whip, Take Wrench, W, W, S, S, W, W, Give Wrench, Drop Loincloth, Drop Key, Take Ladder.

E, N, N, W, Climb, Examine Pan, Take Amethyst, Climb, E, S, W, Turn Handle, W, Give Amethyst.





CONTINENTAL CIRCUS

Virgin/Mastertronic

For a super-fast start follow Brian Sharp's instructions.

- **When the red light flashes, press up on the joystick;**
- **when the 2nd red light comes on release the joystick, and**
- **when the green light flashes, push up again. Now *go, go, GO!***

BIO CHALLENGE

Delphine Software

If the going gets tough, the tough start cheating. Pause the game and press G to advance to the end-of-level guardian. Thanks to **Nathan Powell** from Beckenham.

THUNDERBIRDS

Grandslam

Stuart McAlease from Leeds and **Jonathan Welch** from Epsom offer these passwords:

Mission 2 password: Recovery
Mission 3 password: Aloysius
Mission 4 password: Anderson

ROADBLASTERS

US Gold

When the game has loaded type in LAVILLASTRANGIATO. Pressing numbers 1-4 now gives you various weapons, S finishes the current level, X spins the car, G ends the game and F gives you extra fuel. Thanks to *Roadblaster* fiend **Mark Simpson** from Morpeth. ***stf***



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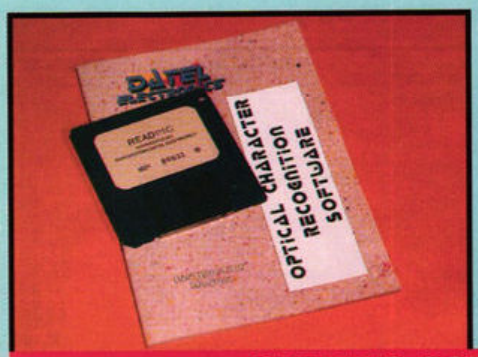




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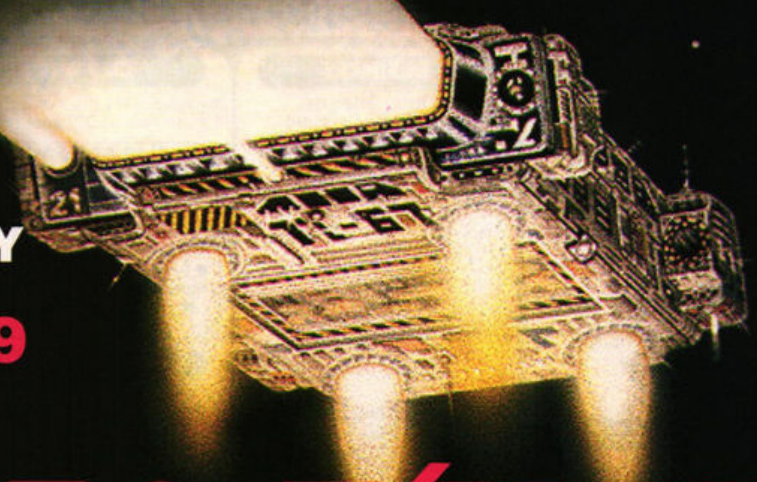
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fun and games in the modem world

The ultimate interactive adventure or just a damned good chinwag? Rob Steel explores the labyrinth of Micronet's multi-user games

Shades

MACHINE: STs with modems and Micronet subscriptions

PRICE: 8p per minute (peak)
2p per minute (cheap)

FROM: MICRONET

CONTACT: 0800 200700

The first time I entered *Shades* it was mid-afternoon. Nobody else was playing so I took a look around. I found the game area disappointingly small and interaction with objects, mobiles and locations limited due to a primary parser. I used the opportunity of playing alone to pick up a few treasures and drop them in the Mad King's room so I wouldn't be a complete virgin when I met other Shaders.

Shades has been on-line two years now and is the largest real-time, interactive game in the UK. It's a traditional Middle Earth style game featuring wizards, castles, forests and magic woods, but what places it head and shoulders above other adventures is its player-to-player interaction. Up to 120 Shaders can play simultaneously.

New players begin life by creating a character to role play. Remember that unless some high-level player gets his kicks from making mincemeat of wimpy newcomers – a habit frowned upon – you'll have your character for a long time. It's therefore recommended to choose a relatively sensible one. Joke names and attributes may be amusing to begin with, but they quickly become tedious.

If you invent too many idiosyncrasies for your character, you'll never remember them all. Three basic role-play elements such as who you are, what you're carrying or wearing and a habit (not too disgusting) should be enough to give your character some character!

The basic aim of *Shades* is to collect treasures and drop them in the Mad King's room to gain points and achieve levels, the ultimate level being Wizard or Witch (depending on whether you're male or female).

The most civilised way to approach the game is to cruise through it unconcerned about progressing or gaining points and check out the other players. Holding real-time conversations with fellow adventurers is, for me, the nub of *Shades*. Actual adventuring takes a back seat, although you always have the option to explore, solve puzzles and duff up other players if the urge grabs you.

Fighting other characters whether they be real or in-game mobiles plays a major part in *Shades* (especially if your character is particularly antagonistic) and can only really be avoided by choosing to play as a pacifist – an option that renders collectable treasures half their normal value, which serves you right for being such a wimp!

Later that night I entered *Shades* again, this time at the level of Explorer. It was no great shakes, but better than being a Novice. To my delight about ten other people were playing and for some reason they were all hanging around outside the pub.

Delight, however, soon faded as Nicky the Amazon (you know who you are) stole my crown and ran off saying "You have to be quick in this game." This disconcerting incident was quickly followed by another character, Alfa The Romeo, giving me a big hug! At this point I wondered if *Shades* was the game for me. I returned Alfa's hug, much to the amusement of those watching, and trudged off bemusedly for a spot of adventuring.

A stroll through magic woods, swamps and gardens, picking up the odd treasure and meeting other real-time players was a lot more fun than playing with myself as it were.



■ **Duff up strangers, hug Alfa Romeos and rabbit yourself hoarse in *Shades***

The third time I played there was another gang of players outside the pub. I listened to (or rather watched) their conversation, but these guys had obviously been playing for some time and knew each other well.

This is a drawback: I found it difficult to join in their conversation because they were too engrossed with each other, didn't know me and didn't really want to. Feeling a little rejected I went off to adventure, but got bored and went off-line quickly.

Every so often *Shades* resets, replacing all treasures in the game area. This is, at the moment, the only fair way of ensuring all players get to tackle certain puzzles and collect particular treasures. However, to me it meant nothing more than being able to wander around picking up treasures time and time again to build up a good score.

Two useful features are the "Shout" and "Who" options. Players who "Shout" sentences can be heard by all other players, which is useful if you're searching for a particular character. Too many players shouting at once clutters up the screen, so limiting Shouted messages is advised. The command "Who" provides you with a list of all current players.

An in-game football match is played every Wednesday night and there are quizzes on Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays. A "real life" meeting takes place in London every month where Shaders quaff ale and discuss life in the modem.

I was disappointed by the game's lack of size and puzzles, and its primary parser, but its selling point is definitely its ability to converse with other players and go adventuring with them. Good fun, if a little limited.

GRAPHICS	N/A
SOUNDTRACK	N/A
CREDIBILITY	8
LONG TERM INTEREST	8
OVERALL	**80%**

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Following the success of public information services such as *Ceefax* and *Oracle*, British Telecom introduced *Prestel*, an on-line information system accessible via microcomputers and the existing telephone network. *Micronet*, an area catering specifically for home computer enthusiasts, was launched in 1983. Seven years later it's grown to be the largest information provider on *Prestel* with some 30,000 pages.

Subscriptions cost £20 a quarter (£30 for businesses) and for this you can access features, reviews, hints, programming articles, chatlines, downloadable software and on-line games like *Shades* and *Trash*.

Both games are accessible 24 hours a day and cost 2p per minute (cheap rate) and 8p per minute (peak rate). For further information contact Micronet ☎ 0800 200700.

Non-users of Micronet or *Prestel* can sample the game via Callstream ☎ 0898 100 890 at the hefty charge of 25p per minute (cheap rate) and 38p per minute (peak rate).



■ **Neil Newell: gregarious author of interactive *Shades***

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Trash

MACHINE: STs with modems and Micronet subscriptions

PRICE: 8p per minute (peak)
2p per minute (cheap)

FROM: MICRONET

CONTACT: 0800 200700

Trash is a futuristic multi-user game with a humorous bent, the result of an exclusive contract between British Telecom and Third Millenium Systems, the creators of *Shades*.

Trash casts you in the role of dustman and it's your upwardly mobile task to progress, by collecting rubbish and burning it, from Slave to Pan-Dimensional Refuse Disposal Officer.

Eight worlds, connected by stepping disks, make up the Multiverse of *Trash*. These worlds are infinitely more wacky than the suburban landscape of the recent *Skidz (STF 13)* and include Shades Of A World (a parody of sister game, *Shades)*, the Heavy Citadel of Metal, the Starship Wontarise and the Realm Of Weavers.

Unlike *Shades'* basic collect-and-deposit method of progressing, *Trash* features a dual system of advancement: objects you find are sold for credits while solving puzzles increases promotional prospects. You're also paid for depositing rubbish in the great atomic furnace.

You can spend your dosh on refreshing your psionic powers or buying objects you need to solve puzzles. Psionic powers are akin to spell power in more traditional adventures and range from Pyrokinesis through Telecontrol (the ability to cripple or strike dumb other players) to Faith Healing. Attribute points are awarded for levels gained – the highest being Lord or Lady – which in turn can be spent on increasing psionic abilities.

Designed to appeal to a wide spectrum of players, *Trash* is not only for serious role-playing aficionados, but also for people who merely want to drop in for a chat. Up to 64 refuse collectors can play at the same time, all watched over by the games creator Matthew Ward, aka "Da Boss."

Supplying a name and password gets you into *Trash*. Decide what characteristics you want and mould your character as you progress. If you want to play a bad guy go for psionic powers like Pyrokinesis, good guys go for Faith Healing.

You enter *Trash* north of the first stepping disk and south of the Chatting Room. This is a design mistake because I found most of the players in this room were ignoring the game, content to stay there and talk. Again adventuring seemed a secondary activity to indulging in a good chinwag. I had a particularly interesting conversation with Namnib (Binman!) about radio controlled helicopters. If I hadn't had to review the game, I'd have stayed there gossiping all night.



■ **Micronet's latest multi-user game is *Trash (I mean brill!)* and it's littered with adventures!**

Eventually I stepped onto the transportation disk and weird things began to happen. My senses were pummelled with clichéd visual effects and eventually I arrived on Shades Of A World. This is a boring parody of *Shades*, too much like the real thing, and after a quick look around I yearned for a different scenario.

Eventually I got to Herddfielsud Town, which seemed to consist solely of shopping precincts. Here I found a locked trapdoor, a deserted bowling alley and a dented hub cap. Unfortunately I got arrested very quickly for unlawfully using the bus lane!

Trash has much more depth than *Shades* and the balance between game playing and conversing with other players is much better. Micronet are offering very good introductory deals at the moment, and with more multi-user games to come it's well worth the subscription... just keep the 'phone bill in mind! ***stf***

GRAPHICS	**N/A**
SOUNDTRACK	**N/A**
CREDIBILITY	**9**
LONG TERM INTEREST	**9**
OVERALL	**92%**

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Pdom PD Atari Public Domain & Shareware Software



Miscellaneous

L1 – 68000 Assembler, Xlisp, STlogo, Tiny basic.
L8 – Forth from Bradley Firmware. A fully functioning implementation of FORTH.
L9 – ST ICON v6.3, based on SNOBOL4. Complete manual.
L10 – Little Smalltalk. Incudes Smalltalk language, full manual, example progs. and editor.
L13 and L14 Modula–2 Development System v1.0 from ANA–systems.
L15 – Sozobon C Compiler. A complete implementation of the C language as defined by K&R. DSD.
M9 – Music Writer lets you create music on screen as good as Music Studio.
M15 – The Accompanist 16 Voice MIDI Sequencer. Fully working by Henry Cosh, does everthing!
M18 & M19 – Soundtracker player and SoundTracker modules converted by BOB from the Amiga.
M20 – Soundtracker player & modules from the Amiga. Also docs & source in 68000 and GFA basic on formats.



Games

Colour Screen Required.
MP22 – Games Pack – Fruit Machine, Monopoly, World of Eamon, Galaxtic Empire, Draughts, Battle Ships, Card Games, Tunnel Vision, Azarians, Farm Yard, Space Invaders, Bridge It!, Give Us A Break, Sprectral Sorcery, Monkeys and Balloon and Race Cars. 5 disks only £12.50.
B39G88 – Onyx by Robin Edwards. An excellent shoot 'em up with many varied and excellent sprites! All in 68000 machine code.
B40G89 – Dizzy Lizzy by The Happening Boiz. An excellent game, across between Pacman and Boulderdash.
B41G90 – Exodus by Chris Jeffery. Awesome shoot 'em up with fantastic graphics! Mega arcade game.
B44G92 – Exterminate by Chris Skellern. If it moves KILL IT! A massive mega shoot 'em up game.

We always have in stock the latest Budgie UK Games, the worlds largest ST games software house!



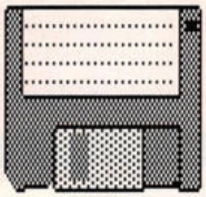
Graphics

GR3 – Master Painter is an excellent graphics program works in ALL resolutions fully featured.
GR6 – Degas disk – 155 fills, 10 brushes, 7 fonts, 24 printer drivers. Also a program to use Degas drivers to do a screen dumps.
GR7 & GR8 – AIM v2.31 of the Atari IMage processor DSD. 1MB.
GR14 – Public Painter v0.1 the great drawing program Now loads Degas fonts and pictures and also .IMG excellent! MMR.
GR17 – Picture convertors. To and from Print Master, Degas, NEO, Tiny, IFF, SPEC512, IMG, Postscript, GIF, Mac GIF stripper.
GR19 – FractaZoom V3.1 the most comprehensive fractal generation program available Upto 4 types of curve, zoom in on parts of the display, movie making, full screen or preview mode. Full documentation within the program. DSD.
GR20 – .IMG utilities. Convert any Degas, Tiny, NEO, MACPaint, Spectrum 512 to .IMG format. Also IMG viewers.
GR21 – ANI ST the amazing fully featured animation package.
GR22 – SPRITE MASTER by C Skellern A professional sprite editing package tailored to suit most programming languages. CSR.
GR24 – Pearle the 3–d ray tracing package. Amazing animations can be created using this excellent fully working ray tracing graphics package. CSR.



Application

A48 – Uniterm V2.0e. THE Comms package for the ST.
A96 – Sheet v2.0. powerful all features spreadsheet, .WKS compatible. 1280 rows by 280 columns. DSD.
A121 – POOLs– Expert Results Predictor v2.5 by Bay Computers. Excellent pools predictor.
W2 – STwriter Elite V3.6 full documentation and quick reference etc. on the disk, very good word processor.
W5 – Micro–Emacs v3.925 the text editor with disk manual and tutorial.
MP 21 – TEX the document processor and typesetting system. Includes its own programming language, handles graphics and equations with ease. 6 disk pack for £15.00. MMR. DSD.
A125 – Opus V2.10 of the spreadsheet and charting program: 255 columns by 999 rows, 80+ mathematical functions, excellent graphing, GDOS support etc.
A138 – Double Sentry V0.00 of the accounting program by Graham R Hutcheon. Does all aspects of accounts except VAT.
A166 – Personal/Business Address Book by Bay Computers excellent database system, lightning fast with label, mail merge and listing support excellent. Vanterm V3.71 excellent all features communications program does every thing except split baud rate. Relative Tree the geneology program on the ST includes printed output.



Utility

MP1: Starter pack for the new STer. STWriter, Datahandler and NEOchrome, loads of utilities.
A41 – Monochrome monitor emulator v5 NOTSTE.
A88 – DCFormat v3.03 THE ST disk formatter even MSDOS boot sector.
A91 – Virus Killer v2.01 excellent virus detector and killer.
STW 41 – FSelect v3/1989 by Martin Patzell the excellent alternative file selector.
A111 – Head Start v1.1 – auto–boot any type of program from your AUTO folder, including GEM programs.
A124 – ARChiver: ARC V5.21b, ARCShell V2.0 and V2.05 and a utility to switch back forth between LHARC and ARC.
A128 – Recover from disk lost data you specify sectors.
A134 – Boot Drive Select allows you to select a drive to boot from when you reset your ST.
A157 – Custom Format the best disk formattor available! Boot Sector Storage system store boot sectors from many disks as a file on 1 disk.
A163 – The Gemini desktop replacement. Smilar to NEODesk.
A167 – Big Colour Emulator for Monochrome screens. ARC v6.02 the latest version of the standard file archiver.
A168 – ARCGSH V2.1 a shell for any program, already setup for ARC, ZOO, SHAR. Disk Mechanic v1.0 disk analyser, copier, formattor, sector editor.



Demos

Colour Screen and Double Sided Disk Required. All Excellent Demos!
D162 – The Lord of The Disks 'Dragons Lair'.
D176 – The Care Bears 'So What Demo'.
BD3D177 – The Music of the ShapeShifters.
D178 – Paul Simones Spectrum 512 colour on screen slide show!
D183 – The Ultimate.
BD2D188 – Genesys Aenigmatica demo the 82 Track remix!
D189–SwedishNewYear2.
D191 – Mini Run by Radical Systemz AKA Police Chase from Amiga
D194 – Superior Demo by Dynamic Duo!
D197 – Space Ace–Don Bluth. Graphic animation demo of the game.
D207 – SNOWMAN demo the 1/2 MB RAM version. Better than the 1MB version!
D108 – Calamus product demo. Official demo from Signa. 1MB
D122 – The Union demo! This demo is brilliant and requires a joystick. NOTSTE.
D125 – The CareBears Cuddly demos. The best todate!
D128 – The Wattaheck demo. Great demos with excellent music.
D129 – The Swedish demo including SYNC and The CareBears.
D149 & D150 – Delerious Demo from The Alliance. 1MB. NOTSTE.
BD1 D157 – Mind Bomb the latest mega mega must have demo, by The Lost Boys. This demo is outstanding!
D158, D159, D160 – Batman The Movie.3 disk demo. NOTSTE.



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Abbreviations Used:
MMR–Mono Mononitor, CSR–Colour Screen. 1MB–1MB RAM, DSD–Double Sided Disk.

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RATINGS

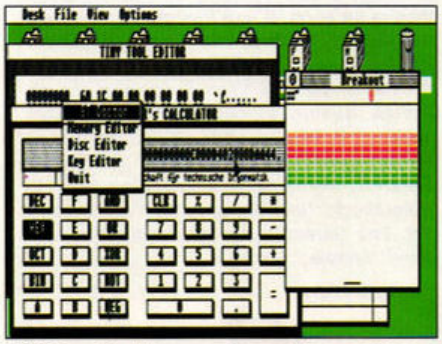
★★★★★ Beg, steal, borrow
★★★★ Beg
★★★ Steal
★★ Borrow
★ Burn

You need a mortgage to pay for some new programs: Richard Monteiro checks out alternatives in the public domain

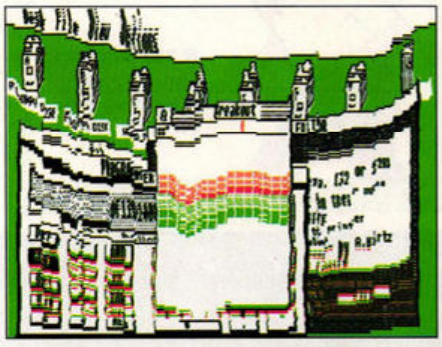
ACC 1,2,3&4

Elmsoft

Elmsoft's accessory compilation on two double-sided disks contains everything from the mundane to the magnificent. Along with old favourites like *Crabs*, *Melt* and *Mites*, you'll find things like *FormatII*, *Word Count* and *Tiny Tool*. There are an astounding 80 accessories in all! Games, Desktop hacks, utilities – the lot. An absolute must! ★★★★★



■ **With only six accessory slots available, it can be tough deciding which to install**



■ **Someone's been meddling with your accessory selection – *Melt* may be the cause**

WORD EXTRACT

Goodman GD427

This title has been doing the rounds for a long time, but has only recently been updated. In addition to being more user friendly, the latest release offers an anagram solving routine. If used with the 70,000-word dictionary disk (GD638), *Word Extract* can be extremely handy for puzzle fanatics. The dictionary on disk GD638 is in ASCII format; almost all word processors can use it. ★★★★

DB MASTER ONE

Alpha Computing Disk 18

Databases, like spreadsheets, don't come cheap. Unless, of course, you look to the public domain. *DB Master* is one PD database that's well worth the price of a disk.

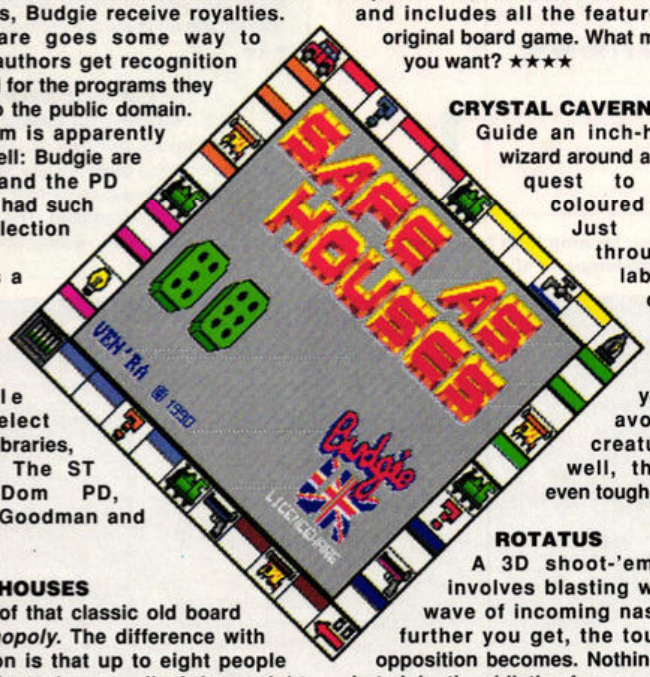
Before entering data, you must supply *DB Master* with an outline of what sort of data it can expect to receive. For instance, name, address, telephone number and so on. With data stored in the database, it's possible to search, sort and display information in a variety of useful ways. It's a powerful program yet easy to use. ★★★

BUDGIE GAMES BONANZA

Licenceware brings more games than ever into the public domain

12 months ago Budgie introduced the notion of licenceware. In exchange for allowing certain PD libraries to distribute their wares, Budgie receive royalties. Licenceware goes some way to ensuring authors get recognition and reward for the programs they submit into the public domain. The system is apparently working well: Budgie are booming and the PD has never had such a good selection of games.

Here's a few of the latest Budgie offerings available from a select group of libraries, including The ST Club, PDom PD, Softville, Goodman and Page 6.



SAFE AS HOUSES

A version of that classic old board game *Monopoly*. The difference with this version is that up to eight people can participate (any or all of those eight can be computer controlled) and you have the choice of using English, Irish or American street names. The game is fast, simple to use, contains detailed graphics, and includes all the features of the original board game. What more could you want? ★★★★

CRYSTAL CAVERNS

Guide an inch-high blue wizard around a maze in a quest to recover coloured crystals. Just moving through the labyrinth of caverns is tricky enough, but when you have to avoid ugly creatures as well, things are even tougher. ★★★

ROTATUS

A 3D shoot-'em-up that involves blasting wave after wave of incoming nasties. The further you get, the tougher the opposition becomes. Nothing original, but violently addictive for anyone with an itchy trigger finger. ★★★

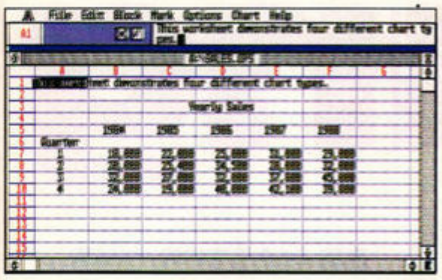
■ **Go directly to jail. Do not pass Go. Do not collect £200. Safe as Houses? Hah!**

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OPUS

HAL Computing

If you wince at the cost of commercial spreadsheets, but often find yourself in dire need of one, *Opus* has to be the answer. Fantastically easy to use, friendly GEM drop-down menus, phenomenally powerful, and of course free. Just two problems: GDOS is required if you wish to print charts and 1MByte of memory is necessary. ★★★★



■ **A slick spreadsheet for all your financial forecasting – and it won't break the bank!**

QUIZMASTER

Paradise Computers Disk 90

Are you bored of blasting aliens and saving the world? No? Well pretend you are for a moment and sit down with a friend (you have got one haven't you?) and *Quizmaster*.

Up to three people can participate in a battle of wisdom and wits. All you have to do is answer questions correctly and beat your opponents to the top of the scale. Unfortunately the scale dips every time you answer a question incorrectly.

While the game is undeniably fun, it lacks long term appeal because of a shortage of questions. The topics are varied enough – ranging from entertainment to sport – but with just over 100 questions it doesn't take long to learn all the answers. ★★



■ ***Quizmaster:*** **lacking long term appeal, but a real challenge for the first few rounds**

PD DEMO DOMAIN

Show off the foot stompin', gut wrenchin' abilities of your ST



■ ***Dragon's Lair,*** **the classic laser disk game, video digitised by the Bats Crew**

DRAGON'S LAIR DEMO

Floppyshop DEM414C

Not the demo of the *Dragon's Lair* game distributed by Entertainment International, but a Bats Crew production which includes scenes from the laser disk coin-op of the same name. The animated images look as though they've been sampled straight from the laser disk, but quite how the Bats Crew managed this is something of a mystery. No matter, the demo's a cracker and well worth getting. Unfortunately it only works on 1MByte machines. ★★★★

EDEM11

The Other PDL

A superb selection of 28 tunes. Double-click on the required track and the song plays in the background, leaving you to get on with other tasks. The famous *Fujiboink* demo (the one with a multicoloured bouncing Atari symbol) and an age-old speech synthesiser which has your computer talking like an early '80s arcade machine are included on the disk. ★★★

STE DEMOS

Goodman GD632

Two STE demos hot from Australia, one for the 1040 and the other for the 520. *Movie* is a superb stereo music track that shows off the STE's superior sound chip. The blitter is also used to good effect. *Boing* is an improved version of the Atari demo that appeared in 1985 when the ST was first launched. It demonstrates the speed at which the blitter can perform bit orientated memory moves. On PAL machines it runs at 50 frames per second. Compare that to about four frames a second doing the same operation using the 68000. Also included are some fantastic samples and over 400 colours on screen. ★★★★

STEW'S CDD

Page 6

Page 6 frequently put together a disk containing demos. So without further ado, a brief rundown of four of Stew's recent Compacted Demo Disks:

ST263: 12 demos adorn this disk. Three early *TEX* demos, *Fujiboink, Spheres, Grusel, Pro Engine, Grafik Und Sound, Stew 1, Globe, Flying Bird,* and *Molly.* A disk packed with classics.

ST264: *XXX International, Sine Scroller, Star Wars Rap (very silly), Big Scroller, Full Screen, Junk Demo, Success* and *Wizard 1* are all squeezed onto this disk.

ST265: only six demos on this disk, but they're all good. If you thought you'd heard the last of the *Star Wars Rap,* check out *Lonely Scroll.* This demo is even sillier! At the end of the malarky an image showing an Amiga games machine on a pedestal appears. A few seconds later a giant foot splats the machine. Wonderful!

ST266: seven demos, including *Sync 2, Colorshock, Tintin Intro, Sprite Construction Kit, The Games Intro, Humanoid Mix,* and *Synth Sample 2.* ★★★★★



■ **The intrepid Tintin heading for the moon on disk ST266**

WHERE TO GET IT

Here's a selection of PD libraries recommended by readers. Let us have your recommendations: get in touch with *ST FORMAT* PD Directory, Beauford Court, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2AP

Advent, PO Box 414, Norwich NR1 4NX
Alpha Computing, 32 Meadow Drive, Halifax, W Yorks HX3 5JZ
Atari Advantage, 56 Bath Road, Cheltenham GL53 7HJ ☎ 0242 224340
Awesomedemos, 3 Mason Road, Seaford, East Sussex BN25 3EE
B Soft, 33 Corsham Road, Calcot, Reading, Berks RG3 5ZH
Budgie UK, 5 Minster Close, Rayleigh, Essex SS6 8SF
Computer Connections, Ashlaw House, Euximoor Drive, Christchurch, Cambs PE14 9LS
Demo City, 15 The Wynd, Dunshalt, Cupar, Fife KY14 7HE
Demo Club, 23 Alma Place, Spilsby, Lincs PE23 5LB
Elmsoft, PO Box 17, Loughton, Essex IG10 2EE
Entertainment Soft, 11 Calbourne Drive, Calcot, Reading, Berks RG3 7DB
Floppyshop ST, 50 Stewart Crescent, Northfield, Aberdeen ☎ 0224 691824
Goodman PDL, 16 Conrad Close, Meir Hay Estate, Longton, Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire ST3 1SW
HAL Computing, 15 Regent Terrace, Leeds LS6 1NP ☎ 0532 435805
Kad-Soft, 2 Ebor Paddock, Calne, Wilts SN11 0JY ☎ 249 817174
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Littleton PDL, 3 Blacksmiths Close, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs WR11 5YG
MPH, 10 Chandlers Court, Eaton, Norwich NR4 6EX
M.T Software, Woodstock House, 14 Lanes End, Totland, I.O.W PO39 0AL ☎ 0983 756056
Page 6, PO Box 54, Stafford, ST16 1DR
Paradise Computers, 9 Westfield Crescent, Brighton BN1 8JB
PD Library, 68 Delancey St, London NW1 7RY
Pdom PD Atari, PO Box 801, Bishop's Stortford, Herts CM 23 3TZ ☎ 0279 757692
PDQ, Dept 6, PO Box 38, Eastleigh, Hants SO5 5HB
Riverdene PDL, 63 Wintringham Way, Purley on Thames, Berks RG8 8BH
Round Table PD, 7 St Andrews Rd, Warminster BA12 8EP
Senlac, 14 Oaklea Close, Old Roar Road, St Leonards On Sea, E.Sussex TN37 7HB ☎ 0424 753070
Softville PD, Unit 5, Stratfield Park, Waterlooville, Hants PO7 7XN ☎ 0705 266509
South West Software Library, PO Box 562, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 2YD
Sphinx Software, Erw Fynydd, Carmel, Llanelli SA 14 7SG
ST Club, 9 Sutton Place, 49 Stoney St, Nottingham NG1 1LX
ST UK, 1 Bartholemew Road, Bishops Stortford, Herts CM23 3TP
The Other PDL, 108 Kenmare Road, Wavertree, Liverpool L15 3HQ
Wizard PD, 178 Waverley Road, Reading, Berks RG3 2PZ

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ACC4 Epson printer controller, Address book
ACC24 ARC shell, Mono Emulator
ACC26 Easy to use DATABASE program -DS
ACC31 ST-Sheet, spreadsheet program
ACC57 DC-Formatter, StartGem, STDcat prg
ACC64 LC10 colour printer utility etc.
ACC69 Mouse pointer Editor, good! - MONO
ACC76 Opus200, the BEST spreadsheet - 1meg
ACC79 Quickdisk, the best utilties around

ART1 NEOCHROME, the BEST art package
ART4 Master Painter, all resolution package
ART9 Pearle, ray tracing package
ART25 ANI-ST, superb animation program

COM3 Uniterm, the BEST comms package
COM11 Worli-Mailbox for Radio Hams
COM16 Van-Term, brilliant program

DEM68 TEX AMIGA demo, the best Sound
DEM89 Lost boys POWER DEMO, 20 tunes
DEM111 JUNK DEMO by the Care Bears
DEM116 The UNION DEMO, simply the BEST
DEM155 CUDDLY DEMO, second Union demo
DEM164 WHATAHECK demo, the Care Bears NOT STE

GAME2 Chess, Monopoly (USA), Backgammon
GAME11 KIDGRAPH, KIDGRID, KIDNOTE2
GAME19 Pickpocket, Barnyard, Cribbage

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GAM63 KIDPUBLISHER, DTP for youngsters
GAM77 DDST, Dungeons & Dragons

LAN4 Adventure Writing System
LAN11 Smalltalk language
LAN12 ST-Icon language
LAN13 4XForth from the Dragon group
LAN27 Sozobon 'C' compiler - 3 disks £6.00
LAN35 Modula-2 development sys - 2 disk £5.00
LAN32 Pascal language system

MISC2 Orbit, object tracker - mono
MISC21 Planetarium, just what it says
MISC22 Double Sentry, small business accounts
MISC23 Pools predictor, win a fortune now!
MISC29 Dungeon Master cheat disk

MUS5 32 Track sequencer + patch generators
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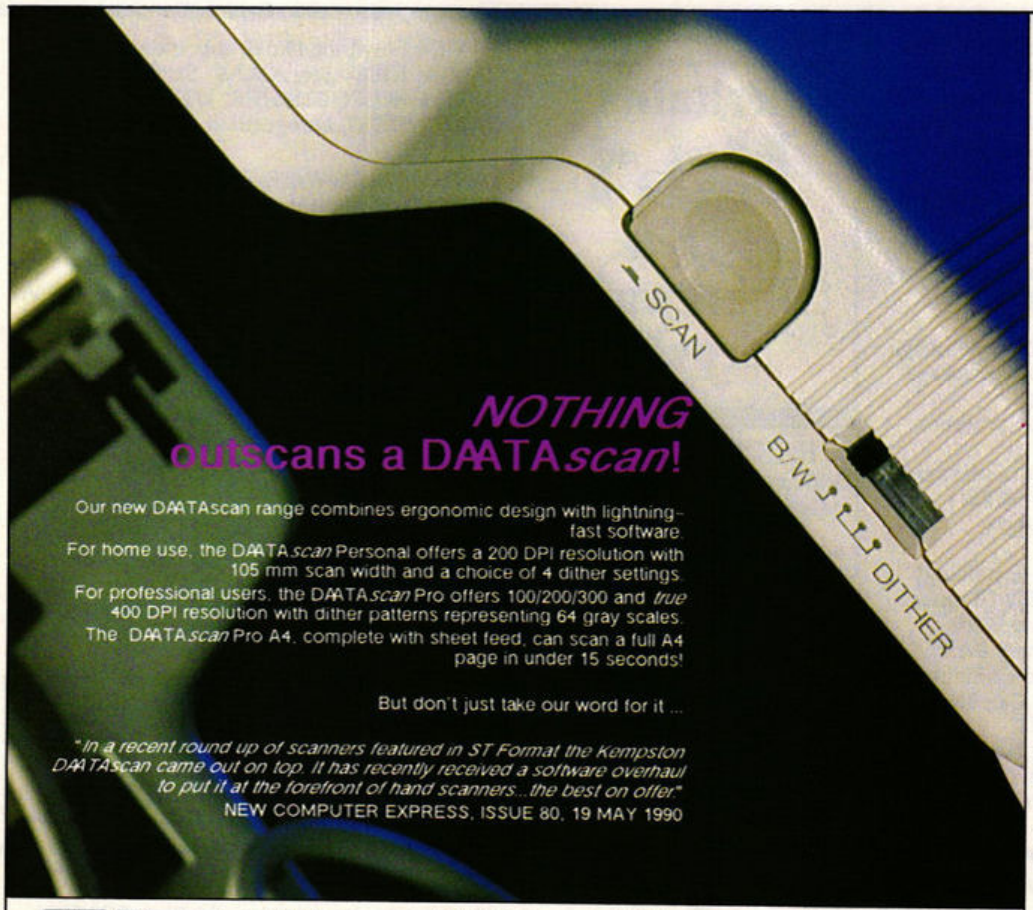
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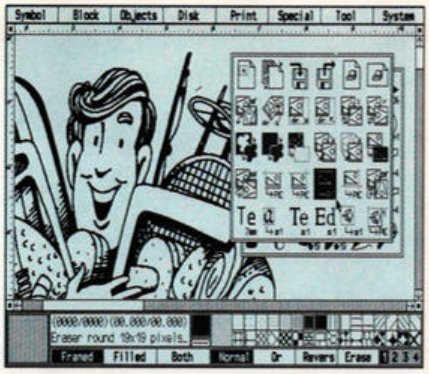


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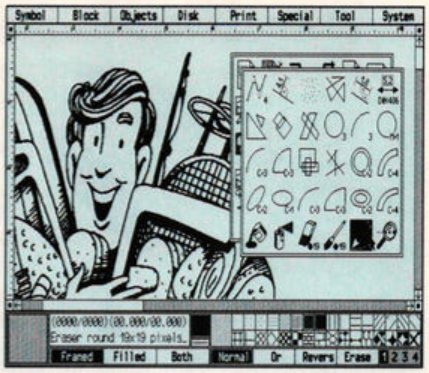
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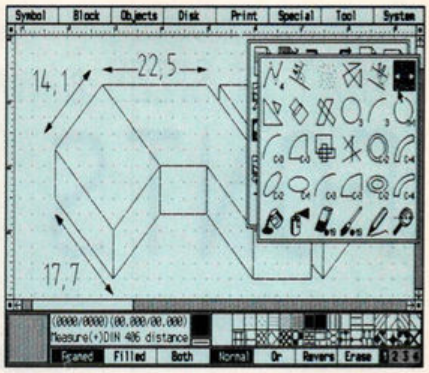
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■ ***Megapaint's*** **60 icon pop-up menu gives you instant access to features**



■ **One has file/print/screen modifications; and this one displays graphics functions**



■ **Automatic dimensions is just one of the impressive array of options**

pixel packin' powerhouse

MegaPaint II

MACHINE: 1MBYTE STs (minimum)
PRICE: £99.95
FROM: TOMMY SOFTWARE
CONTACT: SILICA SYSTEMS 081 308 0888

Most ST owners already have a paint program, so why on earth would anyone fork out a hundred big ones for another? Undaunted by its reputation, Mark Pickavance tackles the awesome new import from Germany

The original *MegaPaint* program was only launched in Germany, but *MegaPaint II* from Berlin-based Tommy Software is now available in the UK. Boasting an astounding array of features and claiming to be the ultimate in precision drawing, it threatens to turn the world of high resolution bitmap graphics on its head.

A comprehensive 250 page manual is supplied in a neat binder/box combination. If you're scared witless by initial contact, read the whole thing before proceeding. The *MegaPaint II* preface, written by programmer Ulrich Meyer, explains why the programming team directed *MegaPaint II* towards very high resolution technical drawing, using bit-image rather than the normal vectors.

The maximum graphic resolution available is 7680 x 7680, which is bigger than A2 at 300dpi! The only problem is that it requires over 7MBytes of memory, far beyond most ST owners' dreams. In fact anyone with less than 1MByte can forget *MegaPaint II*. The program needs 850K to run which means you need at least 2MBytes to use the Atari Laser.

It supports the blitter and a good range of printers. If your printer isn't included in the selection of nine and 24 pin drivers and Lasers then the printer driver editor supplied could solve the problem.

MegaPaint II's Desktop is daunting. Start inspecting the options on the eight pull-down menus and you begin to wonder just what you've let yourself in for. The manual directs you first to the System menu on the far right – the opposite side to the one you would expect – and from here you can configure *MegaPaint II* to your requirements. Four working resolutions and paper sizes are available.

The concept behind *MegaPaint II*'s interface is simple and effective. The screen is split vertically into two regions: the work area where all the painting is done and a control area containing information on cursor coordinates and drawing mode which enables you to change colour, pattern and line. The work area is bordered by a ruler and scroll bars.

A spotlight, essentially a mini zoom, which is operational at all times, enables you to position the cursor accurate to a single pixel point. This makes *MegaPaint II* easier to use than almost any other package.

A pop-up system, similar to the one in *Flair Paint*, accesses all graphic functions. The pop-up menus are split into two overlapping panels which swap position when the pointer is placed over the rear tablet. Each of these tablets contains 30 icons (yes,30!), giving 60 accessible functions from just clicking the right mouse button. Many of the features are duplicated on the pull-down menus, but once you're familiar with the functions of all the icons you'll want to use this faster method of access.

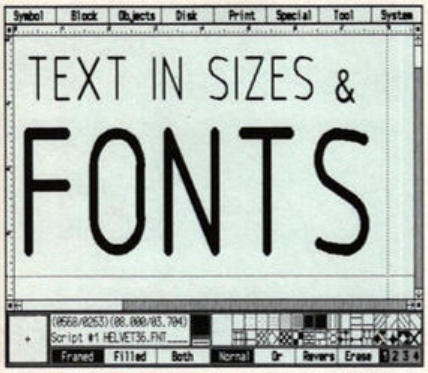
The number of alternative drawing methods is vast. These include several items which are repeated on the basis of drawing the same shape in different ways. The possible graphic objects are point, line, polyline, triangle, rectangle, rhomb, parallelogram, polyder, circle, circular arc, circular sector, circular ring, circular ring sector, ellipse, ellipse ring, ellipse sector, ellipse ring sector and Bezier curves. This is the most comprehensive set of drawing tools in any art package. As if these features weren't enough extra ones such as "append circular arc" and circle sectors with arrowheads are available through the Special menu.

When drawing you may want to create a line longer than the entire screen display. Start the line and use the scroll bar to scroll to another part of the picture. This feature works with all drawing functions so it's possible to make very large circles, ellipses and so on.

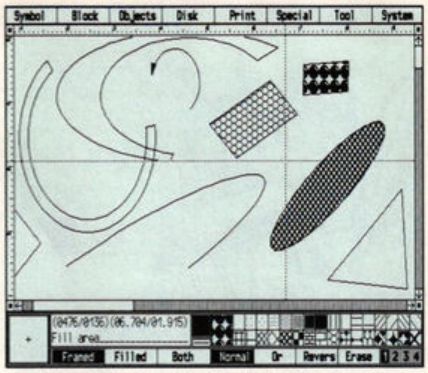
If you find it necessary to make fine modifications, an excellent magnify option lets you alter individual pixels with normal size "before" and "now" views below the editing area to remind you exactly what you set out to do!

If you want to do technical drawings you're going to need two things: dimensions and symbols. *Megapaint II* has both these and even sup- ➢

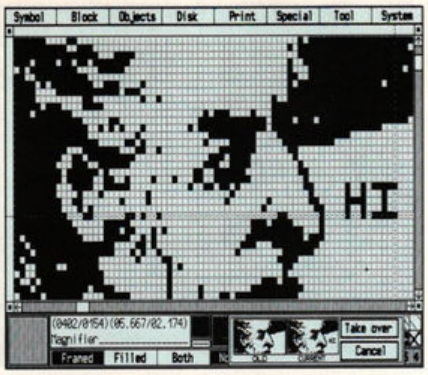
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■ **The DIN drawing standards call for some very big fonts**



■ **You can draw shapes you don't even know the names of with *MegaPaint II***



■ **Use the excellent Magnify option for detailed work at pixel level**

ports the DIN technical drawing standard. To place a dimension, you're first asked to create a line to be measured. This is usually placed in parallel with the line you want to show the size of. Once the line is in place you're presented with the scale value which you can then paste into position. It couldn't be simpler.

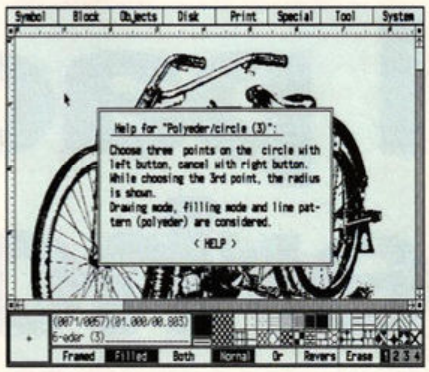
The handling of the symbol system is equally impressive. Symbols are loaded in libraries, up to eight libraries at a time. Each library can be a maximum of 352K, and have up to 128 symbols in it. Exactly how many symbols you have in a library depends on the size of the symbols in it. Each symbol can be a different size from 16 x 16 right up to 1024 x 1024 pixels.

You can create your own libraries by reading part of the screen image into the symbol library and then saving it. To show what can be achieved, an example file demonstrating electrical symbols is supplied.

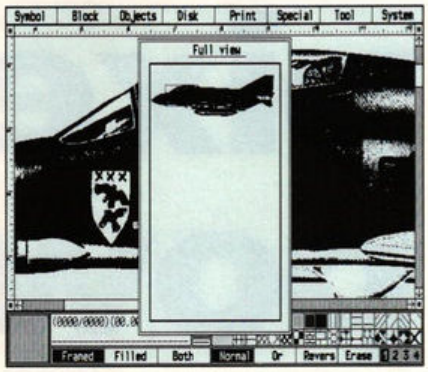
As well as being able to define your own symbol libraries, you can define your own font. Any portion of the picture may be read as a font element and associated with a particular letter. This is useful if you think of some of the fonts you have and the formats they are in. All you need is a saved *Degas* screen showing the characters of that font and you could turn it into a *MegaPaint* font. To get you started a size range of rather boring Helvetica fonts is supplied. These fonts have the .FNT extension but are not GEM fonts.

MegaPaint II has its own picture format but also loads *Degas*, Stad, any 32K block and GEM Image format (for some unfathomable reason it saves in all but the Stad format). This broad range of formats makes it ideal for use with DTP packages such as *Calamus*. Unfortunately no colour conversion is available so all images are strictly black and white.

MegaPaint neatly gets around the problem of storing 1.2 MByte pictures on 720K disks by allowing the picture to be split over two disks.



■ **If you're stuck, context sensitive help is just a help key away**



■ **The Full View option lets you see the whole magnificent drawing**

When reloading you start with disk one and then *MegaPaint* asks for the second disk.

You can print multiple copies in portrait (upright) or landscape (horizontal) and on some dot matrix printers you can even set the number of passes the print head makes per dot. The snap and scale draws certain shapes with precise dimensions.

MegaPaint II comes on a single disk branded with a product code and serial number printed on the label. For the sake of copy protection, you must "brand" your copy with the serial number before it can be used.

For monochrome bitmap editing *MegaPaint II* has few rivals. The range of functions makes it highly suitable for editing scanned images and producing detailed drawings. It has a solid design which is easy for new users to assimilate once they've recovered from the initial shock of the program's scope. Features are comprehensive and bug free.

The software has been written in a modular format which enables users to gradually extend facilities. Three modules are already available supporting large screen displays (such as the Matrix display) , networking and the TT.

On the negative side, better use of the keyboard could have solved annoying problems. You can't just toggle the snap on and off, it has to be set in both x and y to either a value or off. The filling of some shapes with patterns doesn't work as anticipated and though the DIN features are good, a bitmap system can't re-dimension a drawing once it's created. This is a shame, but without resorting to vectors you can't get around this problem.

No art package offers such a vast range of features. *Flair Paint* doesn't have anything like the same scope and *Hyperpaint* is too slow for practical use. Signa are soon launching the much-vaunted *Arabesque*, which is rumoured to be both a bitmap and vector system in one. Until then, at least, *MegaPaint II* is definitely in the driving seat. ***stf***

YOU SCAN SEE CLEARLY NOW

It's possible to scan images directly onto the picture area if you possess one of the two currently supported scanners. These are the Hawk CP 14 (also known as the PrintTechnik Universal Scanner) and PrintTechnik Professional 2. Those people with other scanners who wish to use *MegaPaint* for scanned image editing have to resort to loading the pictures in image format after saving them with their existing software.

If you do have either of the currently supported scanners then *MegaPaint II* is a must because scanning control is total. All scanning factors such as resolution, contrast and intensity are changeable from within the program. This means you can make best use of the hardware you have, which on the Professional 2 scanner translates as 600dpi scanned images! Other scanners are expected to be supported soon.

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Ease of Use **88%**
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Incomparable

FORMAT VALUE **93%**
A high price, but then it's the best package around

The Competition
No competition. Look out for Signa's soon-to-be-released *Arabesque*

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HARLEKIN

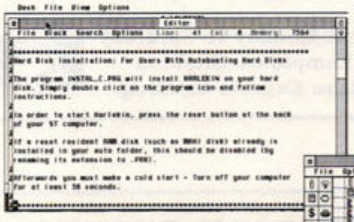
- the program of possibilities

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Harlekin is actually 18 different programs in one and, since it is RAM-resident, it is always there when you need it

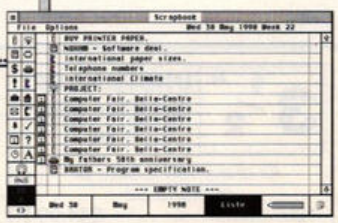
Harlekin comprises a Wordprocessor, a Scrapbook, a Disk editor, a Terminal program, a Calendar, ASCII table, RAMdisk, Printer Spooler and much, much more

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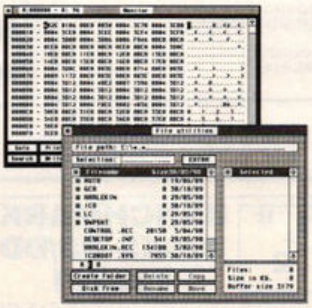


There's a powerful editor ...

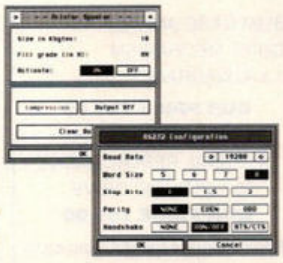
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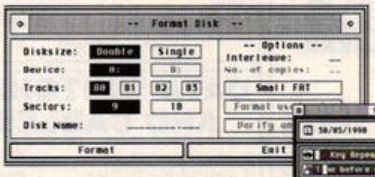


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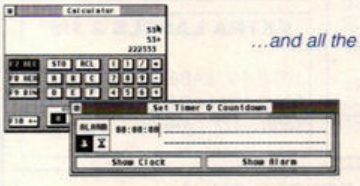
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ERROR CHECKING

For no reason whatsoever your favourite public domain program crashes. An alert box opens up telling you simply "TOS ERROR" and a mysterious, irritating number. *What the hell does it mean? And what the hell can you do about it?*

Without knowing what the number means it's going to be tough to trouble-shoot. Atari's informative and helpful manual *(eh?)* doesn't carry information on these magic bits of ol' TOS, so where do you start? Here, of course!

The TOS ERROR codes are usually not meant to be seen by users and are supposed to be detected by programmers, who may either deal with the problem in the course of the program's operation, or report a more helpful alert back to the user. They may even provide a "second chance" so you can fix the problem or at least save your work – before the program dies a horrible death.

But often, PD programs are early attempts by programmers to master their art. Things like "fool-proofing" programs get left until last. The program's main function is the most important and (usually) gets written first. So occasionally, you'll freak the program (and the programmer) by doing something unexpected. Sometimes just having a different version of TOS is enough. The result... TOS ERROR.

There are three types of these little-known gremlins. These are:

- Basic Input/Output Operating System (BIOS) Errors;
- Graphics Environment Manager Disk Operating System (GEMDOS) Errors;
- Miscellaneous errors (weird ones!).

BIOS errors are generated if something goes wrong when the ST tries to work the disk drive. The BIOS, which handles things like keyboard reading and disk drive operation, is often accessed by GEMDOS, which then manipulates this information into more ordered filing systems and generates its own errors if things don't make sense.

The miscellaneous errors are the ones generated by both systems, which don't fall into any specific category. Overall, the picture is pretty confusing, but knowing the magic numbers will give you a small clue as to the cause (and possible solution) of the problem.

WHICH BASIC BOOK?

Simon from Hawarden in North Wales is having problems with ST Basic and wants to know of any good ST Basic programming books. There ➢

BIOS ERRORS

Code	Function	Comments
–0	OK	Nothing went wrong, function worked
–1	Error	Error doesn't fall into any other category
–2	Drive not ready	Disk drive not connected, busy or not ready
–3	Unknown command	Disk drive can't do the function requested
–4	CRC error	Disk sector checksum is wrong: disk fault
–5	Bad request	Function won't work: bad info passed to it
–6	Seek error	Drive couldn't find the track looked for
–7	Unknown media	Boot sector of disk is unreadable: disk fault
–8	Sector not found	Drive couldn't find the sector looked for
–9	No paper	Not a disk drive error! Printer empty
–10	Write error	Something went wrong while writing to disk
–11	Read error	Something went wrong while reading from disk
–12	General error	A rare one, a bit like error –1
–13	Write-protected	Can't write to disk because the tab's open
–14	Media change	Disk was swapped- system wasn't ready for it
–15	Unknown device	Drive device number not recognised by system
–16	Bad sectors	Formatting disk showed some damaged sectors
–17	Insert disk	Tried to read drive: it's empty. Put disk in!

GEMDOS ERRORS

–32	Invalid function	Bad GEMDOS call: function doesn't exist
–33	File not found	Couldn't match the filename given
–34	Pathname not found	Couldn't match the directory given
–35	Too many files open	No GEM file handles left*
–36	Access impossible	General problem using GEM function
–37$	Invalid handle	GEM doesn't know that file number*
–38	Wrong Screen Rez	Program only works in medium/high resolution
–39	Not enough memory	No space left in RAM for function to work in
–40$	Invalid memory block	GEM can't recognise the address given
–41	Disk full	No space left on disk
–42	Not enough memory	See GEM error –39
–43	Not documented	Unknown, unspecified gremlin
–44	Not documented	See GEM error –43
–45	Not documented	See GEM error –43
–46	Invalid drive	GEM thinks the drive selected doesn't exist
–47	Invalid operation	GEM can't work the function: bad data maybe?
–48	Not documented	See GEM error –43
–49	No more files	GEM has run out of files to open

$ These errors aren't actually supported on the ST, and form part of the original Operating System from which GEM was derived.

*GEM uses numbers to denote files when working on them. These numbers, called handles, are allocated once GEM opens the files. This is so GEM doesn't have to use whole filenames, directories and drivenames internally, just when talking to the user.

MISCELLANEOUS ERRORS

–64	Range Error	Number is too big to be stored correctly
–65	Internal Error	General Operating System problem
–66	Invalid prog format	Program loaded isn't in standard GEM format
–67	Setblock failure	GEM can't make space for the program

The missing numbers (–18 to –31, –50 to –63) aren't supported by the ST and are not documented (yet...). However, they may be used by later versions of TOS. They can also be used by programmers for their own private error codes in certain programs.

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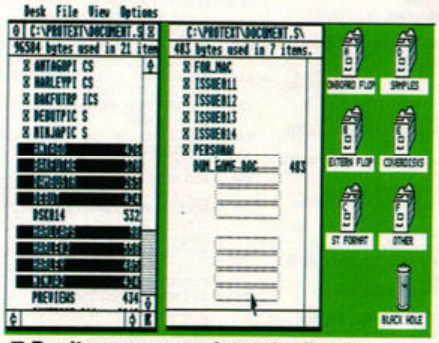
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➢ are a number of books which tackle the subject such as Abacus Software's *The Atari ST for Beginners* (£14.95: ISBN 0-916439-55-0). Your problem, however, seems to have more to do with the appalling Atari Basic than your lack of knowledge on the subject. *DESKTOP* recommends that you save the money and purchase a decent Basic. Two popular types are *HiSoft Basic*, currently at version 1.30 which sells for £79.95 and *Computer Concepts Fast Basic* which is available on ROM for £73.50 and disk for £37.95. Both of these come with weighty but readable manuals which more than compensate for the cost.

TRASH IN BULK



■ **Don't mess around, trash all your unwanted text files in bulk!**

If the prospect of dragging files singularly to the trash or to another folder leaves you in a cold sweat, then fear not. In *STF 12* we said that you could drag a window around a set of icons and drag the lot to their destination. **C R Carroll** of Kingston-upon-Hull points out that you can do exactly the same thing with text file names instead of icon file names. Point the mouse slightly to the left of the first file and drag down to the last file. They should all be highlighted and can now be uniformly dragged to their destination. If you don't want a whole block of files selected, you can use the SHIFT key in conjunction with the mouse to select files which are in different places in the list.

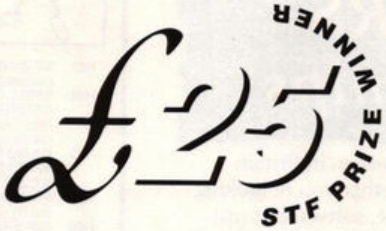
TELLERS YOUR NUMBER

Alert readers will have noticed a couple of trendy, happenin' programs on the Cover Disk this month. No, not the games. We're talking *Private Eye* and *Teller*. These two give you all you need to know on the subject of TOS version numbers, system setups and the like.

Running *Private Eye* shows you info on the current configuration of the mouse speed, free memory, GEM version number and a host of other useful technical data. It may help to shed light on some of those weird TOS/GEM/GDOS-type version squabbles and incompatabilities you've been hearing about.

The most useful one (as far as *DESKTOP* is concerned) is *Teller*, because it gives you definitive information on the version of TOS that is busy beavering away inside your machine. As *DESKTOP* has said before, we want to know your number! If you've got problems with a bit of software or hardware and you're thinking of writing to *DESKTOP*, please, please, please include your TOS version number. Your problem may then be immediately solveable and we can help other similar-TOS users too.

HOW TO GET COLOUR TELEVISION REPEATS



Back in *STF 11*, *DESKTOP* showed you how to modify your STE to make it work with Philips portable tellies by adding a small capacitor. A few readers have found this tip a bit difficult to put into operation, due to the confusing array of components lurking inside the STE.

Denis Hawkes and his mate Derek have come to the rescue. The place to put your 150pF capacitor is across resistor number R471. This should be marked on the circuit board, but in case it isn't, it's the 3rd resistor on the right-hand side of the MC1377 video chip (when viewed from above with the STE in its normal working position). DJ recommends a high tolerance, silver mica capacitor to prevent rising temperature from causing signal drifting.

WARNING: Don't attempt this unless you know what you're doing. You could (at best) invalidate your STE's guarantee, or (at worst) cremate your beloved STE. Please take care. If in doubt, get a qualified plumber, gas board official or veterinary surgeon to do it for you *(shome mishtake shurely?)*.

DAISY OR LASER?

Matthew Gough of Thornton Heath, Surrey owns a 520 STE and would like to know if he can get the same quality using a hi-res monitor and a laser printer as he can with a daisy wheel printer and a DTP package.

Undoubtedly the best quality output you can get is from a laser printer. This produces high resolution images which look exactly like they did on the monitor. Daisy wheel printers produce high quality print by using a mechanical type-head, similar to the hammers on a typewriter. The problem is that they can only produce text characters and then only of one size.

But laser printers are not cheap. They range in price from about £1,100 to over £5,000. If your budget can stretch to a laser printer then get the Atari SLM804 which costs £1,115 (Atari ☎ 0753 33344).

Alternatively, any Epson-compatible 24-pin or 9-pin printer will do a very reasonable job. The quality of a 24-pin printer is superior to a 9-pin and they don't cost that much more. *Desktop* recommends the Panasonic KXP1124 which is very good value at £255 (☎ 0753 73181) or the Star LC10 Colour costing £219 (☎ 081 8400 1800).

THE OTHER SIDE

Mr Tembers of Worthing in Sussex is a little confused by his disk drive. He says that he has a double-sided drive but doesn't know how to copy to side B. The answer in this case is simple: you probably already are using side B!

If your drive is double-sided you have the option to format double-sided as part of the normal formatting process. After formatting, the message "726016 bytes free" should appear. This is the total disk space available on sides A and B because most formatters (Atari's included) make no distinction between the two sides and treats the disk as one surface.

Our Cover Disk is specially formatted to enable single-sided drive owners access to as much information as possible. For that reason the disk is treated as two separate sides.

If you're using a third party formatter from a PD library then you may be able to format both sides individually, but the Desktop Formatter on your ST is usually adequate. ***stf***



■ **The ST's formatter treats both sides of the disk as a single continuous surface**

THE WHOLE TRUTH ABOUT EPROM BURNERS



JAMES DUNCAN of London wanted to know how to burn software onto EPROM (Erasable Programmable Read Only Memory chips) for use on his 520STE. With the right equipment, EPROMs can have information electrically stored (or "burned") into them. These tiny charges can then be read like any normal memory chip, except that they retain all their data after switching off the power.

In order to burn the software on, you need an EPROM programmer. One of these devices is the Unison EPROM programmer from TJP Electronics ☎ 0723 378837 which costs £250. This enables you to program chips ranging from 32K to a stonking 512K in size. You can put any program of a suitable size onto an EPROM and then use it (via the EPROM programmer hardware) as a cartridge.

Once you're bored with the EPROM's program, or if you notice a bug in it, you can erase it by shining Ultra-Violet light onto the small window in the top. It can then be re-burned with a new program, re-erased, and so on.

A common misconception is that you can make your STE into an STFM by replacing the TOS with a home-grown EPROM version of the STFM TOS. Although you can burn STFM TOS onto an EPROM, you cannot expect it to work inside the STE. The redesign of the STE's main circuit board makes this impossible (sniff, sniff).

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In relentless pursuit of perfection, DESKTOP pokes its nose into the world of graphics. Mark Pickavance solves nasty problems that Picasso and Van Gogh and all those other arty smocks never had to deal with in...

studio workshop

SPEEDING UP SCREENS

If you're using Vidi ST to do animation, you may have noticed that the screen save function is *incredibly* slow. This may be because the program keeps a small disk buffer in order to save space for lots of screen data.

The best way to get the images onto disk is to use a "snapshot" program. Various versions of this well-known accessory are available in the public domain (Disk ACC25 from SoftVille PD ☎ 0705 266509 has one, along with loads of other useful accessories). With some versions of the program you don't even have to enter file names because they are automatically named SCREEN00, SCREEN01 and so on.

To use the program, place it on the root directory of your back-up Vidi ST disk and it's waiting in the Desk menu when you need it.

CALAMUS FONT DESIGN

The grid on which *Calamus* fonts are defined is 16K x 16K units in size. If you're attempting to copy an existing font try the following procedure: photocopy the font with enlargement until each character almost fills an A4 sheet. Try to make sure the characters are not greater than 16cm x 16 cm. In the final copy use one centimetre graph paper in the copier. The character is printed on the grid enabling you to take exact coordinates from it.

CALAMUS CALAMITIES

Are you having problems loading your IMG format artwork into *Calamus?* For some unknown reason *Calamus* sometimes displays a message saying "Unknown format" when you try to load an IMG file into a bit-image frame. Now try re-sizing the frame and it should be OK.

COLOUR CLIPPING

If you've ever tried to take an extract from a complicated colour image, you'll know this can be a real pain. If the part is in a range of colours that are different from the background you can use *Flair Paint* which does a selective colour copy. Alternatively you can use *Degas* and select each colour in turn and erase it using CHANGE.

DESIGN IN THE DARK

If you're thinking of creating some artwork for use in a commercial game, avoid using an Atari colour monitor to plan your colour scheme. The screen display is far too dark and it won't give a true idea of how the picture looks on a telly. On an Atari monitor, for example, the colours 000,111,222 are virtually indistinguishable. Instead, use a Philips-type monitor to get a better impression of the colours.

CYBER PAINT SQUEEZE

Do you keep running out of memory using *Cyber Paint* with digitized images? Simply load in the first image and then make all frames into copies of this image. If your animated digi-sequences are 30 frames long, create 30 copies of the first image. Then load each image into its frame number.

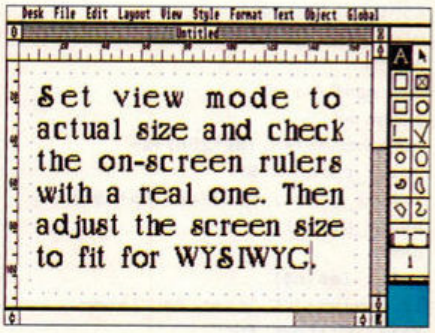
Having any blank or vastly different frames at the end of your animation always uses up memory. This is because the system works on storing changes between screens, rather than storing each screen in full. If two sequential screens are totally different then all the second screen is stored as a change of 32K.

DTP ON MONOCHROME

If you have the old SM125 you can alter the screen size with the knobs on the outside of the casing. Run your DTP program and switch on the program's rulers. Select "Actual" or 100% size. Then put a real ruler against the screen and alter the size until they look the same. Now you have *real* WYSIWYG. ***stf***



■ ***Cyber Paint*** **stores changes between screens rather than screens themselves**



■ **Use the rulers in your DTP program to set up the screen to the required size**

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All you have to do to enter the great *ST FORMAT* "Night of a Thousand Tips" draw is to send in a *Desktop* tip, a short cut, an undocumented feature, a bug, a password, a game cheat – in short, anything at all you've found helps you get more from your ST. And if you're stuck at a particular point in a game, or you find a problem with a piece of software, that'll do as well.

At the end of September, we shall be putting all your entries into a great big sack and pulling out the name of a lucky winner – who receives a cheque for 500 big ones! So get going. You don't have to use our special form, but it helps us no end.

We shall be doing all this again, so don't worry if you miss out on September's draw.

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My tip is: Games ☐ Desktop ☐ Music ☐ Graphics ☐ Cover Disk ☐ Other ☐

Brief description of tip _____

_____

Please complete this form and send it, with your tip, to: Night of 1,000 Tips, *ST FORMAT*, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW.

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Continuing a fine tradition of altruism and self-help, DESKTOP brings you more hints and tips for Harlekin, the multi-talented accessory. Andreas Ramos, multi-talented author of Harlekin's manual, offers more...

harlekin help

FONTS FOR HARLEKIN

Roger Derry, a *Harlekin* user from Machen, Gwent has sent in a short program for use with *HiSoft Basic*. It converts screen fonts created with *FontKit* into *Harlekin* screen fonts. This gives you access to an unlimited amount of screen fonts because *Fontkit* can make use of almost anything. The program is as follows:

```
DEFINT a-z
split_point=238
open "A:\1_fonts\a1_newfa.fon" for
input as 1
z&=lof(1)
printz&
a$=input$(z&,#1)
closea$=right$(a$,4096)
n$=""
for a&=0 to 15
print a&;
n$=n$+mid$(a$,(a&*256)+1+
split_point,256
-split_point)+mid$(a$,(a&*256)+1,
split_point)
next
print len(n$)
if fexists("C:\test.fnt")then
kill "C:\test.fnt"
BSAVE "C:\test.fnt",sadd(n$),4096
end
```

If you can't wait to get started with a bit of font-foolery, then look no further than this month's CoverDisk. In the Harly_Fonts folder you'll find no less than 18 fonts which can all be used with *Harlekin*. Just click on the System Icon (shaped like a keyboard and monitor) of *Harlekin* and select Load Font. Bung in the Cover Disk and choose a font to load up. There's a document on the Cover Disk which lists the fonts and what they look like. Check 'em out and customize your *Desktop*.

MULTIPLE RETURNS

Some word processors cause problems when you try to read their output files in *Harlekin* because they place a carriage return at the end of every line. Many READ.ME files from PD programs and *First Word Plus* suffer from this. The resulting display in *Harlekin* is messy and cannot be reformatted without a large amount of work. Or so it seems.

Harlekin gets its text scrolling speed and its automatic reformatting speed by not using carriage returns, except at the end of paragraphs. Hence it can't find and replace carriage returns (which are ASCII code 13). Instead *Harlekin* uses a blank space at the end of a line, followed by a vertical bar (ASCII code 124).

To reformat an offending file, load it into the Text Editor as normal and notice the small reversed "L"s in the left-hand border. These denote the end of a paragraph or a return on that line.

Go to the OPTIONS menu and change to ASCII mode. Move the cursor to the first line, press SHIFT and right arrow together (to go to the right-hand end of the line) and then press the Space bar once. This particular line will now be okay.

If you repeat this operation for each line you can then return to the OPTIONS menu, select Text mode and reformat the file as you would normally. But this could take forever if you had to do each line by hand. The easiest thing to do is to create a macro to do a line or group of lines (say ten) and use this whenever you are confronted with the problem again.

LIST SORTING

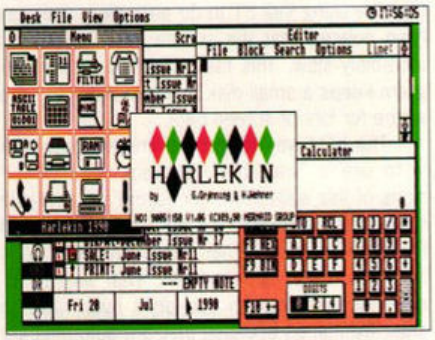
If you own a database program which produces a text file containing a list of addresses, telephone numbers or other info you can use *Harlekin* to sort it in any way you choose. For example, suppose the start of your list looked like this:

John Johnson,
11 Poets Way,
Sutton
ST1 1ST
Tel: 80808

Dave Davis,
21 Laura St.,
Oxford
OX1 3DD
Tel: 10100

The list could contain several thousand entries like this. What can you do to sort them in order of street name, or telephone number?

First, clean up the list by removing any blank lines from the file and resaving it (You can use the *Harlekin* Text Editor to do this). Call it something obvious like LIST.TXT so you don't overwrite your original (just in case).



■ ***Harlekin* is absolutely crammed full of features. *DESKTOP* brings you inside info to help you get the most from your ST**

Load the tidied file into the Text Editor and place the cursor at the start of the first line. Start the Macro Processor running. Press the right arrow to move the cursor onto the first letter of the postcode on that line. Hit RETURN and the remainder of the line moves down one. Press CONTROL and B together to define the start of a block and then move the cursor to the first letter of "Tel." Hit RETURN again and then press CONTROL and E together to define the end of the block.

You should now have the postcode on a line by itself with the first and last parts of the original line above and below. Move the cursor up two lines, to the name entry and press CONTROL and C together to copy the postcode block there. Then press CONTROL and D to delete the old block. Move the cursor to the right-hand end of the line by pressing SHIFT and right arrow together and then hit delete. This brings the name line up to the postcode line. Use SHIFT and right arrow to go to the end of the name, and then press DELETE again to bring the telephone number up. Finally switch off the Macro Processor.

You now have a macro to move the postcode to the start of the line, which you can use repeatedly to change each line's format within the file. This technique could also have been used to do the same thing with the telephone number, the street name and so on.

Once you've rearranged the file with the important bit of data at the start of each line, go to the top of the file (with CONTROL and T). Now select SORT from the BLOCK menu. This sorts the whole file alphabetically by the first character in each line (ie the postcode in this example). You can now have an address file indexed by any item you fancy. ***stf***

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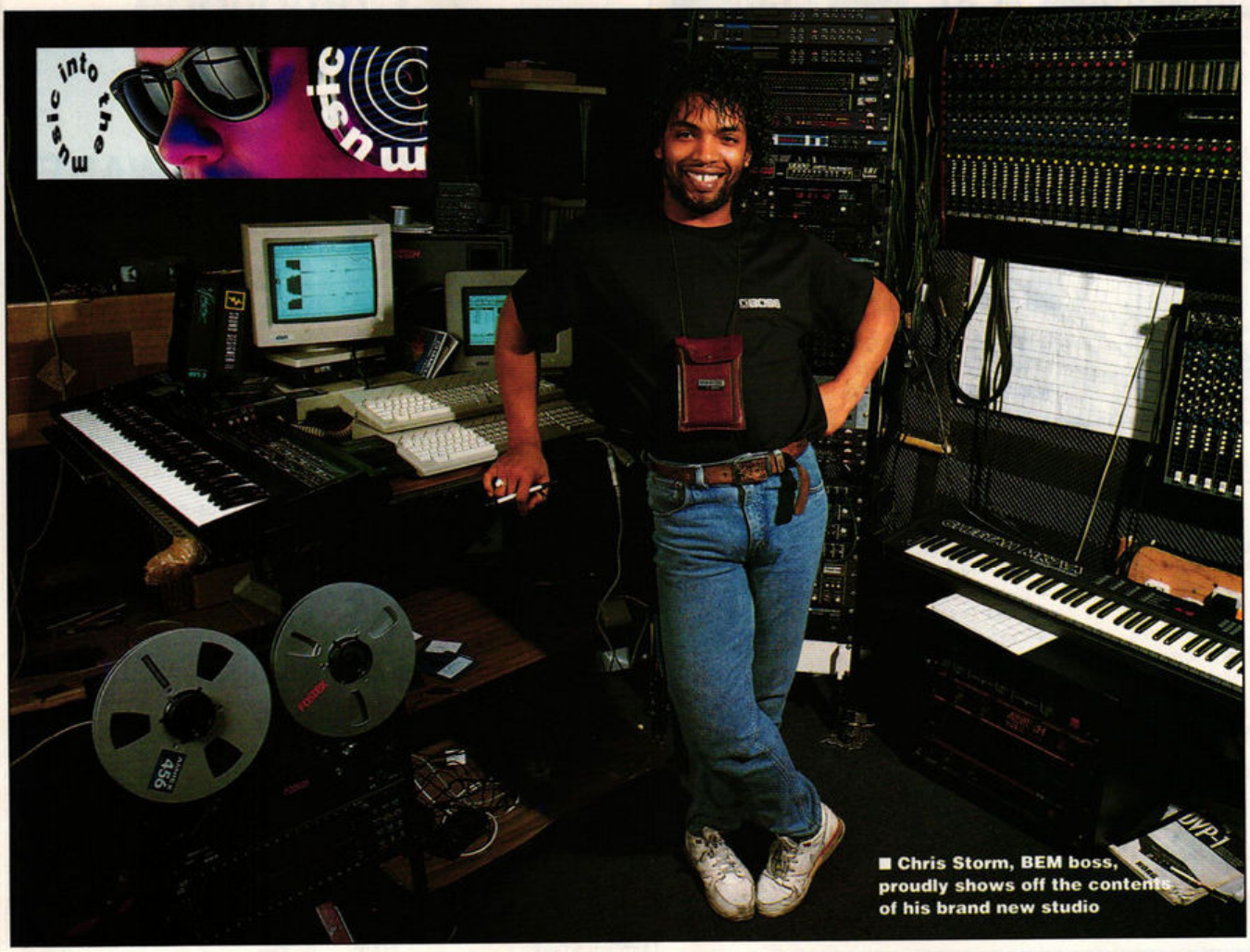
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■ Chris Storm, BEM boss, proudly shows off the contents of his brand new studio

Steve Carey reports from the most happening place in the western hemisphere on Sound Tools, the most happening piece of hardware to hit the ST music scene in years

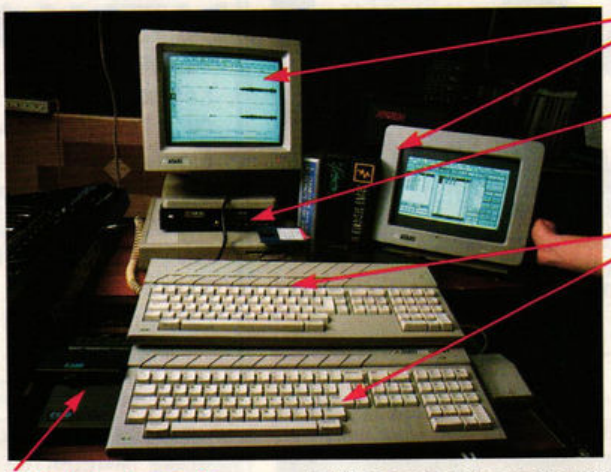
sounds

It all began with *STF 12* and a cover feature on the vexed subject of piracy. The problem was, four people – representing God knows how many more – wrote to ask why we'd chosen to use a black person to illustrate the cover.

One person phoned to ask, in admirable good humour: "Why is it, the only time you guys use a black person on your cover is to illustrate a feature on law-breaking? And why don't you come and visit us and explain it to us in person?" That was Chris Storm, a quite uninterruptible black guy who runs BEM, right in the heart of Brixton.

Not only that, but BEM Music Studio, a project we'd been following with interest for some time, was now up and running. *And* it included the latest and most exciting development in ST music hardware since old Jack Tramiel had the wit to make sure his new Atari home computer had built-in MIDI in and out ports. Three compelling reasons, then, to jump into the office tin machine and whizz down to Brixton.

Brixton Exchange Mart – or BEM, as they prefer to be known, since the full title conjures images of dark, dusty shops with three broken guitars and a few tatty paperbacks (and nothing could be further from the truth) – began life a decade ago as a small stall run by Frank Adams at the Camden Market. Now it's become one of the best stocked music hardware stores in London, known for particular expertise in helping ST musicians get tooled up with the real McCoy.



■ The heart of the matter: Digidesign Sound Tools and C-Lab, up, running and talking to each together

www.stformat.com

# of Brixton



■ **Chris demonstrates the C-Lab "play with yourself in a day" method**

These days the real McCoy is the remarkable Digidesign Sound Tools AT, a hardware-cum-software solution that enables direct, non-destructive and affordable direct recording of CD quality to hard disk.

You need to have some historical perspective to appreciate fully the significance of this latest development, because to most of us £2,000 just sounds like a lot of dosh. But in musical terms it's no more than a couple of Kylies ago that all studio recording and editing required miles and miles of tape and a good supply of Gillettes.

Now it's suddenly possible, with only an ST, a sequencer and a decent sized hard disk to record digitally. (Actually, if Chris' experience is anything to go by, two STs is probably better: one to run C-Lab, the other to run Sound Tools.) Result: endless editing, experimenting and playback with absolutely no deterioration in quality and no searching through miles of tape for that elusive sound.

"The day of the musician without the aid of this marvellous technology is over," enthuses manager Chris Storm, with the earnestness of one who has Seen The Light, about MIDI on the ST in general and Sound Tools in particular. But what about the standard argument against Sound Tools, and indeed the whole principle of direct recording to hard disk: "If you do your work right with C-Lab or indeed any other sequencing package, why should you have to go back to Sound Tools?" "That's a reasonable argument," Christ concedes, "except the market might dictate that after you've done your track, you might have to do something simple and quirky to it, to make it up to date."

> **"It's the most exciting development in ST music since Jack Tramiel had the wit to make sure the Atari had built-in MIDI ports"**

"So why go back and put your disk in, find all your patches again and so on? You've got it on a DAT disk, so put it back into the hard disk drive, chop it up, back to DAT and out! Mustard, absolutely! It's got to be the best affordable thing since, since... since going to somebody else who's got the equipment and having to pay lots of money!"

The brand new BEM Music Studio is not the only nor indeed the first establishment to offer recording with Sound Tools. But it is perhaps unique in its expertise and experience, its access over the road to a vast shop chock-a-block with all the latest gear and its determination not to get sucked into the traditional mainstream record company politics. It's unique too in having a man like the aptly surnamed Chris Storm in charge. With Chris you don't conduct an interview, much less a conversation. Instead, you try and insert the first few words of a question when he pauses for breath. It's a little like trying to steer a runaway horse while drawing a map of its progress.

So what is BEM Music Studio *for*? "Basically it's to get rid of the old politics," says Chris. "We work outside of the politics that other studios, independent or majors, usually follow, which impedes work rate and things like that.

"If the customer comes to us we can tailor-make any situation. There's not many other studios that have shops as part of their setup, I don't think, at least in the London area. And shops are the best A&R (Artists and Repertoire – talent-seeking) departments that record companies can find, and they haven't really held onto that sort of place."

Unlike the attitude of most studios to newcomers, BEM aren't into making demos: "As a director of this company I'm not into demos, I'm into final mixes. All too often people end up with very good music on demos which are pressable, and then fart-arse with some major company, with their producers and their studios, and then they want to spend money as well and suddenly you're in the situation of having to try and recoup an awful lot of money."

The ST isn't used merely in the music-making aspects of running a music studio. Apart from what Chris claims is an "enormous" collection of games – all legitimately acquired, he hastens to add – he uses *K-Word 2* to write up contracts: "As I say, the Atari has been absolutely there for us simply because we were able to edit other people's signed contracts, contracts that actually went through, so you knew that was safe paperwork, a very solid contract checked and signed by at least three or four people."

Chris has also set up a *Superbase Professional* 1,000 entry database of musicians, again using one of the STs. "Realistically it's the only way you could have this information and keep it up to date. Without the ST this is just out of the question."

Booking an eight hour day at BEM Music Studio is still going to set you back some £200 ("absolutely negotiable," insists Chris), though if you're buying equipment at the same time you could get yourself a considerably better deal.

> **"The day of the musician working without this marvellous technology is over"**

No doubt to the unitiated it still sounds an awful lot, but if, like all serious musicians, you have an ST and a decent sequencer package like Steinberg or C-Lab and, better still, a DAT machine, you can get your work into a well advanced state before you even go into a studio. Anyone who's spent unproductive hours fretting in a studio that's costing tens or hundreds of pounds an hour knows what a blessing that can be. Besides, you might just save enough money to get your own Sound Tools! ***stf***

THE ULTIMATE KIT

Digidesign Sound Tools AT costs £2,294.25, on top of which you'll need a decent sized hard disk drive – 100 MBytes, *minimum* – and perhaps some of the other bits and pieces, such as DAT I/O, a £1,148.85 bi-directional digital interface; and Sound Designer, waveform editing software £343.85. For more information, contact Sound Technology ☎ 0462 480000.

To book time at BEM Music Studio or simply to discuss your MIDI hardware requirements, call Chris Storm ☎ 071 733 6821 and be prepared to interrupt.

For those without the resources to partake in this musical feast, you'll be pleased to know that the very good Henry Cosh Sequencer costs only £2.50 from Goodman PDL ☎ 0782 335650

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The real experts join the fray as Vic Lennard from the UK MIDI Association teams up with Jon Bates in a series dedicated to helping you get the most from your ST

MIDI helpfile

■ My MIDI messages are scrambled and sequences don't play back like they should. Help!

One reason could be that your MIDI cables are running too close to large magnetic fields such as your monitor or maybe the hi-fi speakers. Try moving cables around before you ditch your synth/software into the skip.

■ Using my ST for music at home is a pain. Apart from my neighbours taking a bulk delivery of pickaxe handles and starving their Rottweiller ever since I bought a 100 watt monitor system, I keep suffering from minor aggravations like mains clicks.

I know, I know... Halfway through your best mix the fridge splutters into life and the resulting clicks ruin the recording. Other favourites for this phenomenon are central heating pumps, filter coffee machines, immersion heaters, washing machines and that oaf with the CB radio. Don't despair, you can do something about it.

What you need is a line suppressor which puts three capacitors between live, neutral and earth. Most electronic shops and decent computer shops should be able to supply these. They should be fitted to the appliance that is causing the problem and not, as I have heard recommended, to the computer or associated equipment.

■ I own a Yamaha PF80. Over the past few months the velocity response across the keyboard has got progressively worse on certain notes. Why, and what can I do?

This is a common problem and can affect any velocity-sensitive keyboard. Each note on keyboards like this operates a switch which has three contacts – two outer (higher/lower) and one central. When the note is not being played, the central contact rests against the higher one. When the note is pressed, the central contact moves away from the higher contact and towards the lower one. For a period of time, the central contact is between the two outer contacts. This amount of time is related to the velocity – the harder you hit the key, the quicker the movement between the higher and lower contacts and vice versa.

In time, the spacing between the contacts could alter, though this shouldn't really happen on a well-made keyboard. However, the contact may get dirty and if this happens the time taken for a good contact to be made is added to the time for movement. Because timbres change with MIDI note velocity (high velocity usually producing a bright sound) slowing down the contact time leads to a low velocity figure and makes the sound duller.

Cleaning the contacts with switch cleaner usually solves the problem. You could do this yourself, but I wouldn't recommend it – this is one job best left to a service department.

■ I can never seem to get my MIDI connections correct. Could you please explain the difference between the MIDI In, Out and Thru sockets?

Think of MIDI as a swinging door system. You enter under an "In" sign and exit under an "Out" sign. MIDI information always enters a device via the MIDI In socket. Within any simple MIDI system at any time, one device is the master and sends out MIDI information. Other devices are slaves and receive that information.

Take the situation of a MIDI keyboard connected to a MIDI sound module. When you press a note on the keyboard, a MIDI note message is transmitted via the MIDI Out socket. This has to be received by the module at the MIDI In. So you need a MIDI cable to connect the MIDI Out from the keyboard to the MIDI In of the module. The same is true not only for notes, but also for all other MIDI data – for example, pitch bend wheel.

A MIDI Thru socket provides a direct copy of the MIDI information being received at the MIDI In. This enables you to send it on to another MIDI device. You may have a system with one keyboard and two sound modules. The MIDI Out from the keyboard is connected to the MIDI In of the first module. The MIDI Thru from this module then connects to the MIDI In of the second module.

There is a limit to the number of devices which can be connected in this daisy-chain fashion. Generally, if you're using more than three devices you should invest in a MIDI Thru box which provides multiple Thru's from a single MIDI In. ***stf***

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My tip is: Games ☐ Desktop ☐ Music ☐ Graphics ☐ Cover Disk ☐ Other ☐

Brief description of tip _____

_____

_____

Please complete this form and send it, with your tip, to: Night of 1,000 Tips, *ST FORMAT*, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW.

THOSE MIDI BLUES

If you have any problems with MIDI equipment write to MIDI Helpfile, *ST FORMAT*, 30 Monmouth ST, Bath BA1 2BW. Don't forget to give us all of the necessary information including serial numbers and a diagram of your system. Quite often manufacturers change the ROMs and are aware of the problems on specific ROM versions. This information is not usually available to the public, but through our associations with the manufacturers, we can often pinpoint problems.

UKMA (United Kingdom MIDI Association) publishes a monthly newsletter called *MIDI Monitor* which is free to members as is advice on all MIDI matters. If you're interested in the full UKMA service, call Vic Lennard on 081-368 3667 for a membership form.

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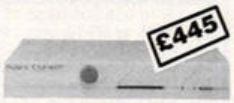
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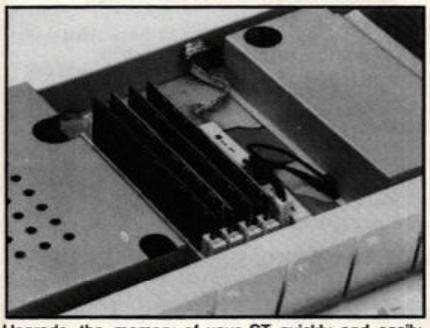
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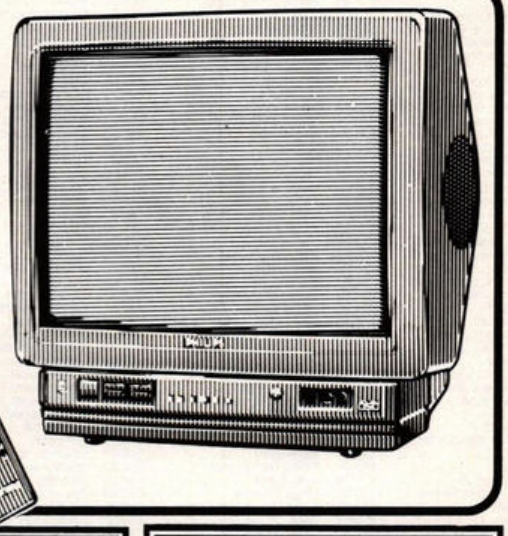
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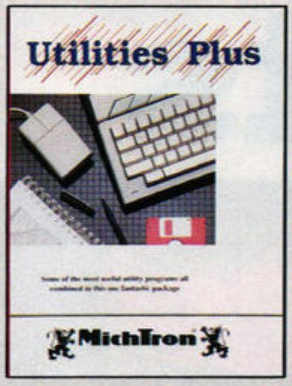
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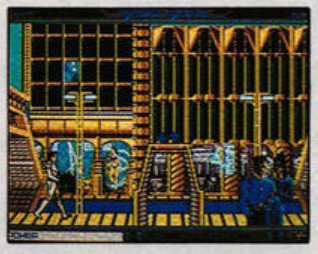
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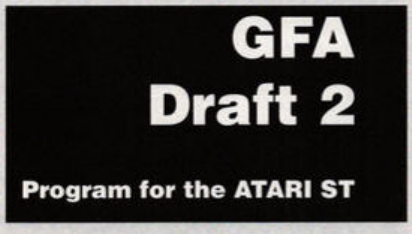
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shoot-'em-up the charts



Over 80% of the records in the pop charts involve the Atari ST at some stage and just about every recording studio has one. If you own an ST, says Big George Webley, you're well prepared for musical success

If you're completely untrained in music, have never played an instrument before and don't know a crochet from a crescendo, you have a very good chance of making a worldwide smash on your first attempt at a song. But a few handy tips on starting your hit record still might not go astray.

There are two ways to make your own music. The first, traditional method is to find people who play exactly what you want, book a dingy rehearsal room, wait endless hours for the band to turn up and then hope they bring their own gear. The alternative is to sequence it using the most cost effective computer in the world, the Atari ST.

There are other sequencers with more flexibility, but the only one that springs to mind is the £750,000 Synclavier, which wouldn't be such a bad deal if it could run shoot-'em-ups and word processors.

If you're an absolute beginner, there's no reason to be daunted by music software, everything is logical and clearly labelled. It takes a lot less time to feel comfortable with a sequencer than it does to get into level two of an adventure game. In no time at all you'll be pumping up the volume and whizzing round the sequencer doing half a dozen things at once.

> "There's no reason to be daunted by music software. It takes a lot less time to feel comfortable with a sequencer than it does to get into level two of an adventure game"

The ST's musical lifelines are the two MIDI ports on the side. It uses 16 channels, which is quite enough to start with, but that can be multiplied by five with more hardware connected to the modem port and/or the cartridge port.

You assign one MIDI channel per instrument: drum box for channel one, for example, synthesizer for channel two, expander channel three and so on. It sounds expensive, but external units come in all shapes, sizes and ages and are surprisingly user friendly.

You'll also need a sequencer, prices for which start at the cost of a PD disk, and go up to £400 and above. £250 buys you a high power, incredibly flexible, easy to use package. Names to look out for are C-Lab's *Notator*, ➢

WHO'S THAT MAN?

Regular readers of *ST FORMAT* need no introduction to Big George Webley, star of our massive music issue *STF 12* and cult hero in the *FORMAT* office for his numskull philosophy ("There are thousands of little geezers inside the ST rushing around doing unbelievable things. There's a little man underneath the T key, and he rushes up and does that...").

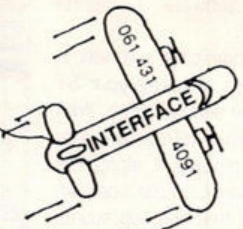
Big George is less well-known as musical director of Sky TV's *Jameson Tonight*. He's also worked on *The Tube* and *Whistle Test* and has played with acts such as Elvis Costello, Lisa Stansfield and Madness. In May this year he was musical director for the very successful LWT Telethon.



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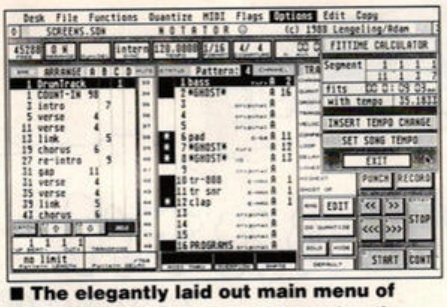
But what exactly *is* sequencing and how is it done? There are two ways of telling your ST how a song goes, step time and real time. With *step time* you tell the ST what note or drum to hit and when to hit it by plotting it along the length of the song. This can be a time consuming way of doing something that ends up sounding nothing like you wanted it to.

Real time writing means you play along with a click generated by the computer as a "beep" on the beat. This comes through the monitor or can be set to trigger off a sound from one of the external sound units. These beeps can be set slowly when you're putting things down and sped up later to make you sound like a real speed demon.

Plug a MIDI lead into the MIDI Out port on the keyboard and into the MIDI In port on the ST and you're ready to program in real time. The screen of a sequencer is similar to a tape machine, displaying between 12-32 separate tracks depending on what sequencer you use.

The ST holds the information you give it in a track. There are three very important buttons to master by mouse and key command. These are: Record which tells the ST to write what you play onto the track, Play which plays it back to you, and Stop for when you've had enough of the horrendous racket!

Why not start by putting a bass drum on beat one and a snare drum on beat two and then loop them so they play continuously? You immediately have the rhythm to the biggest selling tracks in the 70s and 80s. To add a bit of colour put a hi-hat on the first two beats and beat 11/2 & 21/2 and loop those as well. Now you're off, so let the music begin!



■ **The elegantly laid out main menu of C-Lab's *Notator* showing 16 tracks, the Stop, Start and Record functions and the range of drop-down menus**

An easy and effective way to create sensational bass lines and melodies is to use only the black notes (you'd be surprised to know who does just that, but only bribery on a grand scale could make me tell).

To do all this real time business requires a keyboard with a MIDI out connector. These can be picked up for as little as £40 secondhand, but can cost over a £1,000 for a top of the range model.

If you do produce a horrendous racket that has the tomcats in the alley screeching and your neighbours dog howling in pain, never fear. It's not that you're completely untalented, it's probably because you haven't fathomed specific tasking, patch editing, sample looping, sound creating and the rest of it. Don't worry – it's a hell of a lot of fun learning! ***stf***

DETAILS

■ **C-Lab's** *Creator* £299, *Unitor* £349, *Notator* £499. Sound Technology ☎ 0462 480000.

■ **Passport's** *Master Tracks Pro* £285, *Master Tracks Junior* £115. MCM ☎ 071 724 4104

■ **Steinberg's** *Cubase* £550, *Cubeat* £285, *Master Score* £325. Evenlode Soundworks ☎ 0993 892281

■ *The Henry Cosh Sequencer* £2.50 Goodman PDL ☎ 0782 335650

VENI VIDI MIDI

If you're interested in making music on your Atari ST give someone who specialises in music software a call, they'll give you lots of ideas on what's available. But beware of the sales pitch. At the beginning you really don't need a pitch to MIDI converter, no matter how good the offer is!

Two companies that are highly recommended are Square Dance Audio ☎ 0332 385021 and Thatched Cottage Audio ☎ 0223 207979, but keep an eye out for secondhand bargains on keyboards and expanders (see *STF 13)* in your local paper and the music press.

Always buy a sequencer new to benefit from the excellent back up service offered by the manufacturers. If you're really desperate for help, drop *ST FORMAT* a line or check out the new MIDI Helpfile (see page 116).

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the sweet smell of success

Would you believe an ST assisting in a project to identify people by their smell? Research scientist Barbara Sommerville has a nose for a bizarre tale of a dog, an ST and the mysteries of human odour

If sniffer dogs can identify people by scent, it follows that each human body must have a unique smell. The problem is, although one can achieve a modest level of communication with a dog, it isn't enough to get a description of a person. But what if a sniffer machine that could smell as well as a dog was designed, which could be programmed to communicate its findings? That was the thinking that led to a line of research at the Clinical Science Department of St James' Hospital, Leeds.

"Even identical twins can't fool a bloodhound. A dog can always link sweat samples from the same person – even when they're collected months apart"

Unfortunately this is not where the ST rolls in, connected to a swaying vacuum cleaner hose and with a printer trundling along behind spewing a plume of printout. Scientific reseach is a slow and laborious business. First we must prove that dogs really can identify different people by, say, underarm sweat (a notoriously good source of BO). What chemical compounds is the dog recognising? Could it be a scent cocktail of soap and deodorant? Perhaps the supper of garlic bread and vindaloo makes a contribution too. In truth, none of these is relevant. We know this because a dog can always link sweat samples from the same person, even when they're collected months apart.

The clue seems to depend upon each person's genetic identity. Even identical twins can't fool a bloodhound. It takes a dog 10 seconds of careful sniffing to make the correct link between a cloth bearing the scent of twin A and separate samples from twin A and twin B placed under upturned flowerpots. If the pots cover scent from unrelated people, a dog can select the matching scent without hesitation.

When we analysed the potentially smelly component of human sweat, we were stag- ➢

WHY DOES A SCIENTIST PREFER A £300 ST TO A MAINFRAME?

Data recording and analysis, *writes Alan Bleasby (author of the ST programs Barbara has been using)*, was until recently the domain of dedicated machinery and mainframe computers. The advent of the first commercial microcomputers, having at least 16K of memory and a floppy or two hung on the back, made recording cheap and easy – at least for small amounts of data. But the recording of complex signals remained a problem. If the computer is bombarded with more data than it has the capacity to store it has to employ some sort of dynamic filtering algorithm to make a decision about which bits to save. The ST, with its large memory, obviates the need for such heuristic methods. It makes a wonderful data recorder once the obvious problems are sorted out.

The first problem is one of time. The system clock works at a resolution of two seconds, not fast enough for most scientific applications. Using a mono monitor and adding a simple VBL interrupt routine made it possible to capture one bit of data every 1/70th of a second.

The second problem is how to record an infinitely variable signal, for the ST (unlike the STE) has no built-in ADC converter. This problem was solved by the STADC8 ADC unit from Glasgow Computer Centre: the device plugs into the cartridge socket and provides 8-bit resolution over a range of 5 volts.

With the ST the analysis of complex data became possible on the lab bench. The large memory of the ST enables programs to be written in a structured high-level language. Both of my programs which Barbara has used, *Sweat* and *Pattern*, were written entirely in C and are therefore highly portable to minis or mainframes.

The ST scores over the mainframe, however, in its graphics capabilities. Firstly the alignment of two patterns can be done visually: you just point with the mouse at any similar areas and click a button. The speed of the line-A routines makes the interactive graphical display possible. Second, there's no doubt that the WIMP environment is conceptually easier than pages of scrolling text.

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■ **The long underarm of the law: testing human sweat samples to identify suspects**

gered to find 200 or 300 compounds. So before we could begin to design our mechanical dog we had to establish which were essential to a dog's sense of discrimination. The approach we chose was to capture the scent and force it through a long hair-fine glass tube.

The interaction between the inside of the tube and the compounds impeded the progress of the large charged compounds more than the small neutral ones. This meant that each issued from the end of the column separately, enabling us to recapture them in short sequences (fractions). All we needed to do was to present the dog with series of fractions and find out which ones it used to discriminate between people.

So far so good. We had a sequence of 30 compounds, but what we didn't yet know was whether everyone has the same 30 chemicals in different proportions or whether the range of compounds differ. Other questions remained: how does the dog's brain analyse the pattern and remember it? Which of the 30 compounds are the most important?

Enter the Atari ST! Alan Bleasby, a computing molecular biologist based in the main university campus, had previously been involved with a similar computational problem. He agreed to write an integrator program which collects all the information from the detector that records the size of each "peak" generated by a compound leaving the end of the column. Each sweat sample was reconstituted on the monitor to resemble a range of precipitous mountains (called a chromatogram). These traces could then be stored on disk.

Alan followed this up with a pattern recognition program which takes two traces and compares them to provide a precise measure of how similar (or dissimilar) they are in terms of four fit parameters: peak alignment, profile, Euclidian distance and box car distance.

"The ST could be a very valuable tool in the building of a robot K-9. It's quite unsurpassable for versatility and user friendliness, and it doesn't jump on your leg!"

The first is the number of peaks which coincide out of the total number; the second, how similar the general shape is, and the last two are the sum of the differences in height of each peak, but using a different weighting equation.

Carrying out the pattern matching is not quite as easy as it sounds because, to get the best results, the raw traces have to be tailored to eliminate accidental variations. Having a larger amount of one sample, or the rate at which they were each pushed through the column, could cause irregular results. The pattern program allowed all these corrections to be made, so it only remained to run the fit parameters and see whether the ST actually agreed with the dog.

This was one of those crucial, nailbiting moments in research when you find out either that your hunch was right – or, more commonly. that the last tiring month's work is up the spout and you might as well have been on holiday. The grand name for it is "Hypothesis Testing," and it's the sort of thing one tries to think of good reasons for putting off until tomorrow.

I loaded *Pattern* and compared six pairs of traces from unrelated people and six pairs from identical twins. I couldn't help thinking that the two sets of figures covered slightly different ranges, but this had to be proved by carrying out statistical tests. Thankfully, using only the sequence of compounds with which the dog distinguished unrelated people but not twins, there was a significant difference in the results and the twin pairs were more similar than the unrelated pairs!

Incredibly gratifying as this was, there's still a long haul ahead as we begin to work through a new clutch of questions. Which of the peaks that our pattern program looks at are the ones the dog is using? What compounds do they represent? Are these the important ones, or is the dog smelling some which are there in such small amounts that we haven't even noticed them?

This last possibility is a very real one and has daunted – one might almost say dogged – many people working on the smell messages animals receive. Animal noses are extraordinarily sensitive to the smells that interest them, while hardly noticing some of the compounds which man-made machines detect easily.

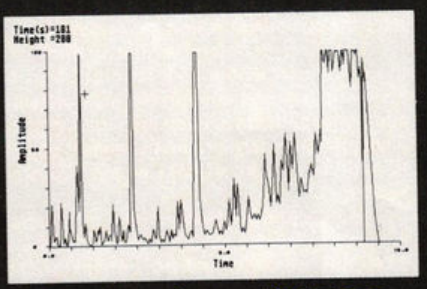
All these questions must be answered before we can begin to build our mechanical dog. We must also replicate each part of a dog's sniffing capacity and develop sensors that can detect each important compound even when present in minute quantities. And we need a pattern recognition system to monitor output as well as a memory so that old smells may be compared with new ones.

The ST could be a very valuable tool in the building of our robot K-9. Strangely enough, although the ST has a high profile as a scientific computer in Germany, it's still unusual to find one in a British laboratory. But in my experience, the ST is unsurpassable for versatility and user friendliness. ***stf***

THE CASE OF THE PATTERN DETECTIVE AND COLONEL BOGEY

Pattern recognition is no trivial problem: the brain is a superb subjective pattern matcher, but science demands absolute objectivity. So how do you quantify similarity in complex patterns? Needless to say the mathematics is complex because so many parameters are involved.

As a simple example, take an orchestra playing a tune, say, *Colonel Bogey*. If they played it in a different volume, or a different time signature, or a different key, or with a different emphasis, or even with a different arrangement, it is still undeniably the same tune. Anybody can recognise *Colonel Bogey* no matter how it is played. A successful pattern recognition program needs to emulate the brain by balancing similarities in shape (the tune) with smaller scale dissimilarities (the interpretation). *Pattern* provides both assessments and gives a numeric summary of its findings. It also allows human eyeball "tailoring" of the data before any similarities and differences are quantified.



■ **A sweat sample reconstituted as a chromatogram, ready to store on disk**

The algorithms used in *Pattern* are appropriate to many areas of analysis. Examples are bird song and speech recognition, drug detection, monitoring of exhaust from chimneys and exhausts, analysis of protein and DNA structure and screening of blood samples with disease discriminators – to name but a few.

Finally, on user-friendliness I really have to disagree with Barbara's conclusions. One of the ST's most endearing qualities is that it has no desire to jump off the table and attach itself to your leg! ***Alan Bleasby***

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program in C #8

In the penultimate tutorial, Warwick Grigg guides you through the intricate world of compilers and interpreters and shows you how to get the most from programming in C

COMPILER v INTERPRETER

The C language is designed to be compiled, not interpreted, but if you're having difficulty getting used to a compiler and learning a new language at the same time, HiSoft's *C Interpreter* (£49.95) could be just what the doctor ordered (see *STF 1*). HiSoft ☎ 0525 718181.

Compiled C is much faster than interpreted C. A C compiler translates a C program into raw instructions that the processor can execute directly. The raw instructions (called machine code) are stored in a disk file with a .TOS .TTP or .PRG suffix, which can then be run without any more help from the C compiler. A C interpreter translates the program into machine code each time the program is run. Repeated translation slows C interpreters down.

C compilers are trickier: instead of typing instructions directly into the interpreter, you enter them into a .C file using a text editor, then run the compiler program to create the .PRG file from your .C file and execute the .PRG file.

Some compilers come close to combining the best of both worlds. Next month I'll be comparing some of the best available for the ST.

A LITTLE BIT ON IN AND OUT

The standard C library functions for file input and output are, as you might guess, not part of the C language itself. They are, however, bundled together with other useful functions as part of any respectable C compiler package. For the *Sozobon C* compiler package, the standard input and output functions are fully documented in the file DLIBS.DOC.

All file operations are performed via a handle, instead of a file name. A handle can be thought of as shorthand for the file name. When you specify the file name to the "fopen" function, you're returned the value of the handle, which you should specify for all future operations on that file.

Standard C input and output functions control devices in the same way. Opening the file named "PRN:" on the ST opens the printer port, "CON:" refers to the console, and "AUX:" refers to the serial port.

Some file handles are already open for you before your program even starts: normally on the ST the special handles "stdin," "stdout," "stderr," "stdaux," and "stdprn" refer respectively to the keyboard, the screen, the error channel (normally the screen), the serial port and the printer port.

The program PRINTFIL.C (left) illustrates some input/output function call variants.

PRINTFIL.C – INPUT/OUTPUT FUNCTION CALL VARIANTS

```
#include <stdio.h>

main()
{
    char fname[60];
    int c;
    FILE *f, *p; /* file handle and printer handle */

    p = fopen("PRN:", "w"); /* open printer for writing */
    if (p==NULL) {
         fprintf(stderr, "I can't open the printer device\n");
         exit(1);
    }
    fprintf(stdout, "Please enter file name : ");
    fgets(&fname[0], 60, stdin);
    fname[strlen(&fname[0])-1] = '\0';
    fprintf(stdout, "\n");
    f = fopen(&fname[0], "r"); /* open file for reading */
    if (f==NULL) {
         fprintf(stderr, "I can't open the file you specified\n");
         exit(2);
    }
    c = fgetc(f);          /* get first character from file */
    while (c!=EOF) {       /* while not end of file */
    fputc(c, p);           /* print character */
    c = fgetc(f);          /* get next character from file */
    }
    exit(0);
}
```

TRICKY DESK ACCESSORIES

You can create a desk accessory in C, but be careful: don't use any standard C library functions, use BIOS, XBIOS, GEMDOS, VDI and AES calls instead. In addition, make sure you don't exit from your program, and remember to call menu_register to appear on the menu.

You must also compile your program in a special way. For example, to compile a desk accessory called DATEST.ACC using the *Sozobon C* compiler you should issue the following commands:

```
cc -O -c datest.c

ld dastart.o datest.o
a:\sozobon\lib\vdifast.a
a:\sozobon\lib\aesfast.a -o
datest.acc
```

Then copy DATEST.ACC to the top level folder on your boot disk and reboot.

The standard *Sozobon C* compiler issue doesn't provide the dastart.o desk accessory ➤

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initialisation code, but because we think of everything at *ST FORMAT*, you'll find this code on the Cover Disk. In addition there's a very small desk accessory demonstration program called DATEST.C:

```
#include <osbind.h>
#include <gemfast.h>

main()
{
    int msg[8];
    int appid = appl_init();
    int menuid =
    menu_register(appid, " Hello ");

    while (1) {
        evnt_mesag(msg);
        if (msg[0]==AC_OPEN &&
        msg[4]==menuid) {
                form_alert(1,
                "[0][I've|woken
                up][OK]");
        }
    }
}
```

DEBUGGING PROGRAMS

If your C program bombs for no apparent reason what do you do? Apart from giving it a formal introduction to your pickaxe, one alternative is to embed printf statements in your program, but if you have a symbolic machine code monitor or debugger (for example, *MONST* from the Cover Disk on *STF 4*), you can trace through your program at the assembly language level.

Even if you have only a limited knowledge of 68000 assembly language this is a useful technique. The disassembly listing is easier to understand if you instruct the program to include all labels in the program file's symbol table. Taking the PRINTFIL.C example on the previous page, compile the program with the *Sozobon C* compiler as follows:

```
cc -O -S printfil.c
jas -L2 printfil.s
cc -t printfil.o -o printfi2.prg
```

If you run *MONST* on PRINTFI2.PRG the function "main" shows up as the label "_main" and calls to "fprintf" show up as "JSR _fprintf."

UPDATES AND QUERIES

As usual the Cover Disk is stuffed full of goodies and contains, among other things, updates for the public domain *Sozobon C* compiler. See the READ.ME file for the description. It also has an incredibly helpful questions and answers file for any readers suffering soul-destroying technical problems. ***stf***

■ **Next month is the final part of the C programming tutorial, and we round the series off with a look at some of the best C compilers available for the ST.**

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The first disk is ready to use straightaway. The second contains the documentation and compiler source code. See the special offer on page 142.



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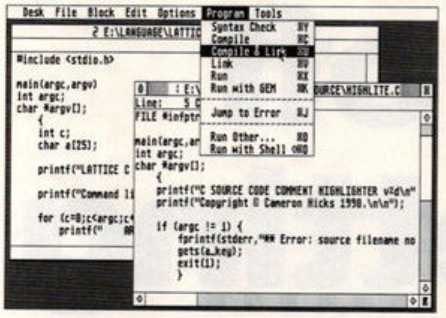
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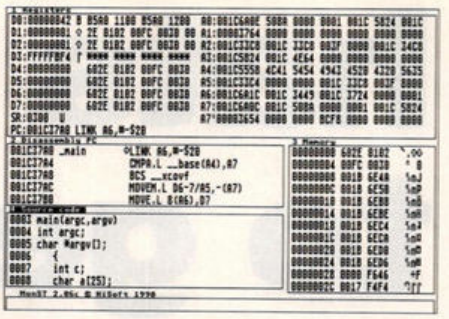
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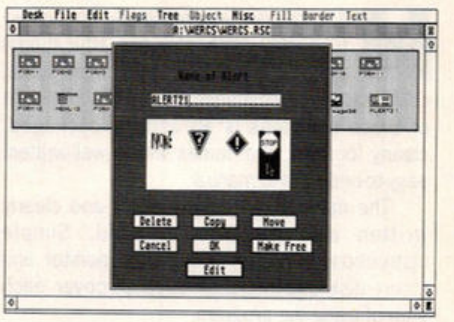
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■ **Edit, compile, link and run your C programs from within a single program – what could possibly be simpler?**



■ **Looks familiar doesn't it? The *Lattice C 5* debugger is actually a modified version of the classic *MonST2* debugger**



■ **WERCS resource editor in action. Designing your own pretty user interfaces has never been easier!**

coder's comfort

After dominating the ST BASIC and Assembler markets for so long, HiSoft have finally turned their attention to ST C programmers. Jason Holborn checks out their long awaited C system

Lattice C 5

MACHINE: ALL STs (1MByte recommended)

PRICE: £99.95

FROM: HISOFT

CONTACT: 0525 718181

ST C compilers have never really been much to write home about. With the advent of powerful Basics and other alternative languages, few manufacturers have seen the point of investing valuable time and effort to develop C compilers for what is undoubtedly a limited audience. All that could change with the arrival of HiSoft's *Lattice C 5*.

Although Lattice certainly aren't new to the ST C compiler scene, HiSoft have gone to great lengths to stress that this version 5 is not an upgrade of a previous version, but a completely new system written from scratch to obtain the highest possible performance. Most software producers would have been happy just to bundle a compiler, linker and text editor and then leave you to source the rest, but HiSoft have stuffed just about everything you can think of into what must surely be the most complete ST C compiler environment available.

With *Lattice C 5* you also get a powerful symbolic debugger, full-featured assembler, object module disassembler and the excellent WERCS GEM resource editor (which would have previously set you back £50 on its own!). All this is backed up by three massive ring bound manuals that contain some 1,100 pages of valuable information between them.

Integration is the key to this C compiler. All the major components of the development system can be called from one central program, the Lattice text editor. Just like HiSoft's *Devpac* assembler your program can be edited, compiled, linked, debugged and executed all from within the same program. Such integration makes program development considerably faster and easier.

Unlike previous HiSoft text editors, this latest offering is a posh multi-window affair that enables you to work on multiple source files simultaneously. All the standard editor tools are there, such as block cutting and pasting and full search and replace.

The compiler is reasonably fast and produces both compact and fast executables. The compiler operates in two phases, the first performs pre-processing and parsing of your C code into an intermediate format. The second phase then produces the object code that must finally be linked to produce a useable program. Thankfully, the entire compilation process can be carried out by simply selecting a single menu option from within the Lattice text editor.

For most programmers, bugs are an accepted fact of life. To make the debugging process as painless as possible, *Lattice C 5* includes a symbolic debugger called *MonST2C* – an adapted version of the tried and tested *Devpac 2* debugger, *MonST2*. Although not a full source level debugger (HiSoft are working on that now), *MonST2C* enables you to view your program as both C source and assembler.

The last major element of the Lattice development system is the WERCS resource editor. This very useful program enables you to produce sophisticated GEM-based user interfaces with ease. Just design the look of your program and WERCS outputs this in a form that can be called from within your C programs.

Lattice C 5 is a phenomenal piece of software. It's polished, simple to use, and sold at an incredibly cheap price. If HiSoft doubled the price, it would still be worth every penny! ***stf***

■ **Don't miss next month's final C tutorial when Warwick Grigg rounds up the best C compilers available for the ST**

IS YOUR MEMORY BIG ENOUGH?

If you've got 1MByte or more everything is sweet and rosy using *Lattice C 5*, but for 520 owners the situation is somewhat different. For starters, you can kiss goodbye to that nice integrated working environment – such things take memory, which the basic 520 just doesn't have enough of. Instead, both the compiler and linker have to be invoked separately from the text editor, therefore forcing you to save your source code to disk and then exit back to the Desktop.

HiSoft also recommend either a second drive or, preferably, a hard disk with at least 5MBytes of storage. Although neither are a neccessity, they do make for a considerably more efficient working environment. If you can afford either, then do yourself a big favour and splash out.

FORMAT RATINGS

LATTICE C 5/£99.95/HiSoft 0252 718181

Features 94%
This bumper package includes everything you'll ever need to write C programs on your ST

Speed 87%
Compilation speed is impressive. However, larger C programs still take a while to both compile and link

Ease of Use 82%
If you've got 1MByte, using this package is an absolute doddle. Not so easy for 520 owners

Results 93%
Code execution speed is some of the fastest yet seen from an ST C compiler

FORMAT VALUE 96%
Seven double-sided disks crammed with programming tools and three thick manual for under a £100? Unbelievable! No other C compiler offers so much for so little

The Competition
Until Borland import the ST version of *Turbo C*, *Lattice C 5* has no competitiion

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hats off to getting ahead

The HAT range is put to the test as David Jones dons his mortarboard and assesses one of the ST's top edsoft producers

HAT Software are resolutely committed to quality. With only five educational programs on the market, their output could hardly be described as prolific, but each of those programs is attractively packaged, clearly focused, and comes with a well-written, easy-to-understand manual.

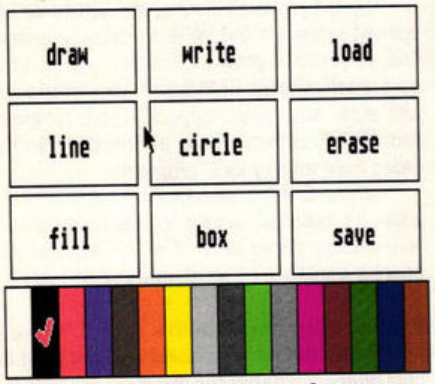
The manuals are user-friendly and clearly written with children in mind. Simple instructions such as, "switch on monitor and insert disk into the disk drive..." cover each step of using the program.

HAT Software have released two introductory art packages (*First Paint* and *Stage II*), two programs aimed at improving keyboard skills (*First Type* and *Learn to Type*) and a spelling program called *Jigspell* (see *STF* 10).

First Paint

AGE RANGE: 5+
MACHINE: ALL COLOUR STs
PRICE: £12.95
FROM: HAT SOFTWARE
CONTACT: 0743 231763

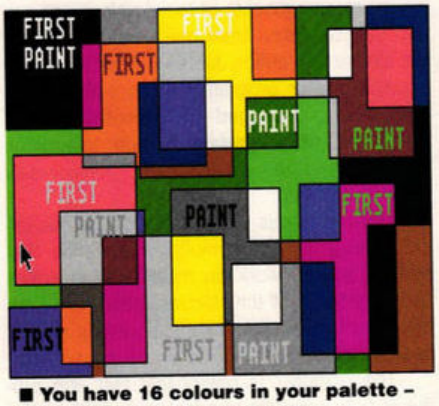
First Paint is an exceptionally simple, mouse-driven art program aimed at children five years old and over. The menu is bold and easy to read with boxes for seven drawing functions, load and save options, and a palette bar offering 16 colours.



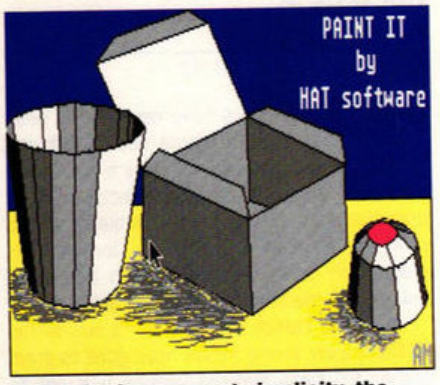
■ ***First Paint's*** **bold, idiot-proof, mouse-driven menu makes it a delight to use**

The main drawing options (freehand, lines, boxes, circle and in-fil) are straightforward functions. Letters can be entered onto the work screen by selecting WRITE, and there's a large square eraser for deleting mistakes. Keyboard commands include UNDO for deleting the last drawing and ESC which clears the work screen.

First Paint is *Degas* compatible so pictures can be imported, manipulated and printed out as standard ST screen dumps. This is extremely useful because young children may find "altering" a pre-existing picture as stimulating as



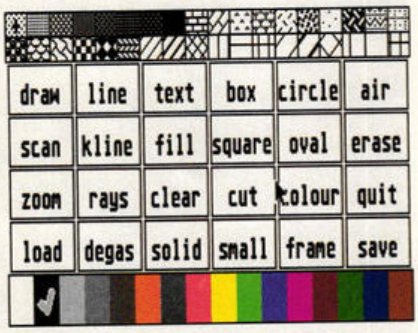
■ **You have 16 colours in your palette – plenty of choice for a novice**



■ **Despite its apparent simplicity, the final result can be quite superb**

Stage II

AGE RANGE: 8+
MACHINE: ALL COLOUR STs
PRICE: £14.95
FROM: HAT SOFTWARE
CONTACT: 0743 231763



■ ***Stage II's*** **menu offers an amazing array of features, but is laid out in a somewhat illogical manner**

Stage II is a vastly more complex package and an obvious stepping stone between *First Paint* and professional programs. It boasts 20 functions, offers the full range of the ST's colour palette, and has 32 different fill styles to choose from. It contains a number of advanced drawing functions such as K-lines and rays, offers cut and paste facilities, and allows detailed pixel by pixel work using the Zoom function.

Stage II is also *Degas* compatible, so pictures can be imported from other sources and manipulated in any way you wish. Once drawn, pictures can be used in most DTP packages.

It also enables the direct input of images scanned via a VIDI ST Digitiser which means children can produce digitised video images without having to learn the complexities of another piece of software.

One moan: the menu contains 24 commands (rather a lot for a child) arranged in an illogical fashion. Each time a function is required, you have to search for it.

Stage II is an excellent intermediary art package that offers many of the functions found in professional art programs, but without resorting to the usual complexities of operation. Highly recommended!



■ ***Stage II*** **enables you to import pictures using a VIDI ST digitiser**



■ **Overlay the digitised image to produce (garish?) abstract results**

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drawing their own. Whichever method they adopt, sampling or producing original drawings, *First Paint* is a good introductory art package that gives young children a feel for computer drawing. Its features may be basic and its operation incredibly simple, but the results produced are superb and children will be proud of them.

FORMAT RATINGS

FIRST PAINT/STAGE II/£12.95-£14.95
HAT SOFTWARE/0743 231763

Features 82%
First Paint is exceptionally simple – but then it was designed to be that way; *Stage II* has advanced drawing functions and direct digitiser input

Speed 91%
Fast and efficient

Ease of Use 95%
No frills and absolutely no problems, apart from *Stage II*'s messy menu

Results 87%
First Paint is highly limited, but intentionally so; *Stage II* produces excellent results

FORMAT VALUE 89%
No-nonsense, easy-to-use introductory and intermediary packages at just the right price

The Competition
Kidpublisher Professional contains an art program similar to *First Paint*. Future Publishing ☎ 0458 74011 £29.99

First Type

AGE RANGE: 6+
MACHINE: ALL COLOUR STs
PRICE: £12.95
FROM: HAT SOFTWARE
CONTACT: 0743 231763

First Type acts as an introductory word processor and converts the ST into a typewriter. It's the simplest of HAT's programs, useful for young children or anyone tackling word processing on the ST for the first time.

The work screen consists of a typing area headed by a ruler. At the bottom of the screen are the column numbers, the printer installation and the uses of each of the function keys.

A printer must be on-line to use the program. *First Type* is set up to output to EPSON compatible printers, but if your printer doesn't fall into this category additional printer drivers can be obtained from HAT.

A typed line of text can be corrected using the arrow, delete and backspace keys. When return is pressed the line is dumped to the printer. Although it remains on-screen, it's not possible to return to a line of typing after pressing return, so in this respect, it turns the ST into a bog-standard typewriter.

Six word processing facilities are selected with the function keys: bold, underlined, italicised, condensed, extended and near letter quality. Most of these functions can be used simultaneously, as in a word processor.

First Type proves most effective for young novice typists, providing a good, but limited, introduction to text input on the ST. By providing instant screen dumps without resorting to complex functions, it encourages confidence before users progress to a fully-fledged word processor. ***stf***

FORMAT RATINGS

FIRST TYPE/LEARNING TO TYPE
£12.95-£14.95/HAT Software
0743 231763

Features 87%
First Type is a simple typewriter simulator; *Learning to Type* includes a typing tutor, word editor and game

Speed 82%
Printing each line using *First Type* can be slow; *Learning to Type* offers fully adjustable speeds

Ease of Use 92%
Well documented, simple, and easy to use

Results 94%
Develops keyboard skills, excellent printer dumps

FORMAT VALUE 93%
First Type is a useful beginner's utility; *Learning to Type* is excellent value and a substantial package

The Competition
The STOS Typing Tutor (£2) from the STOS PD Library ☎ 0942 217044. *Invasion* (£3.99) a typing game with word editor from Microdeal ☎ 0726 68020

Learning to Type

AGE RANGE: 10+
MACHINE: ALL COLOUR STs
PRICE: £14.95
FROM: HAT SOFTWARE
CONTACT: 0743 231763

Before attempting to use a keyboard it may be wise at least to learn where some of the keys are. This is where *Learning to Type* can help. It's a substantial package consisting of a typing tutor, word editor, game, and 12 page manual.

Learning to Type doesn't claim to take you from 0 to 120 wpm in two hours, but it does help to introduce keyboard skills in a captivating way. Although it's aimed at children, it benefits anyone wishing to become acquainted with the layout of a keyboard.

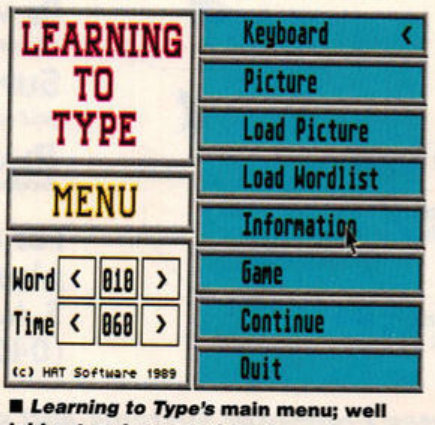
The first half of the package is a straightforward typing tutor. Load a word list, (either from those supplied with the package or produced using the word list editor) and set the number of words involved in an exercise and the time limit for completion.

Clicking on Continue presents you with an information screen. This colour and number codes the letters on the keyboard to the fingers on two hands. In this way, the position taken by each finger relative to the keyboard can be easily located. Start the typing exercise by clicking Continue again.

The words to be typed appear across the top of the screen. Each letter is colour-coded (relative to each finger) and as the words are typed in, a picture is revealed. When either time or words have run out, your accuracy and speed statistics are displayed.

The second part of the package is a game. Words can once again be loaded from a pre-formed list or one produced using the editor. The screen is split between the type display and the keyboard. Between these a word appears in a box headed "Missile Ident Code." As the game proceeds, missiles travel across the screen. At any time, one is highlighted with a white box and its identification code is shown. To destroy the missile the identification code (a word from the loaded word list) must be typed in before it reaches the other side of the screen. It's possible to move between craft, and hence words, by using the space bar. Fast, accurate typing enables the game to proceed. If you're a two-fingered pecker you won't stop many aliens and your planet will be destroyed!

The word editor is extra useful because it enables teachers, parents or even pupils to enter their own word lists relevant to any keyboard position currently being learnt.

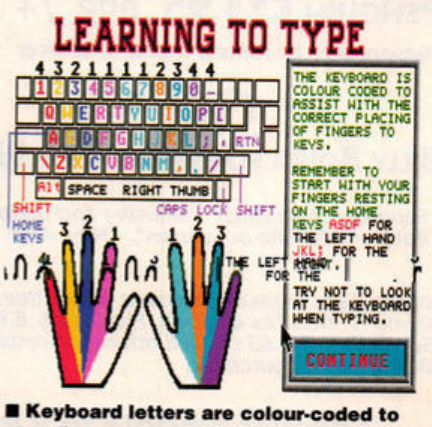


■ ***Learning to Type's*** **main menu; well laid out and easy to follow**

Learning to Type is an innovative package that encourages the development of keyboard skills. It's productive, great fun to use, and children and adults just can't help returning to it again and again.



■ **You never know what skills might save the world; zap aliens as you learn to type**



■ **Keyboard letters are colour-coded to your fingers – spread those hands!**

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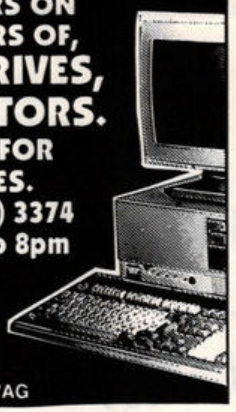
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feedback

FORMAT editor Steve Carey replies to another batch of your letters

What is the ST *for?*

What's happened to *ST FORMAT?* I really used to look forward to getting my copy from the newsagent and taking about a week to fully read through all the material I found interesting. That now takes about ten minutes, since about 75% is taken up by games.

I understand that most of your readers want to see games in the magazine, but I feel that the programmers among us are being seriously neglected to the point where I wonder if it's worth my while buying it at all.

Computers are for programming, that's why they have keyboards. If the ST was a games machine it would be sold with no keyboard and four joysticks. But it isn't.

G Shields
Glasgow

stf *I'm sorry you don't find us as interesting as you used to. I'd take issue with your estimate that about 75% is taken up by games: it's actually very near to being 50%. We aim to cover all the things you can do with your ST: games, graphics, music, programming, PD, education, business.*

And to say that computers are "for" programming, as if playing games on them is somehow to misuse them, is really just a little odd. The ST is a bloody good games machine and a bloody good programming machine too. It's not "just" one or the other – isn't that the whole point?

Megalomaniac

I'm the proud owner of a 520 STFM with a double-sided disk drive, and I also own an Atari mono monitor (SM124). Do you know of any companies that do "trade-ins" so I can swap my ST for a Mega (plus, of course, a bit of money – well lots actually!)? I'd like a keyboard and computer/disk drive separate, because I have limited desk space and would be able to put the computer/disk drive under my monitor as a monitor stand to save room.

Is there, by the way, an STE version of the Mega range of STs?

Mike Porter
Rochdale, Greater Manchester

stf *While you're quite right about the Mega – the keyboard is far superior to that of the "ordinary" ST – it does seem a little extravagant to have to buy a whole new machine. Wouldn't it be easier to buy a bigger desk? If you're determined, you'd do better to sell your ST secondhand and then buy a new Mega.*

As for the STE version of the Mega, it would certainly appear to be a good idea. There have been no official announcements yet, but it must surely come. The only question is, when?

Addressless ad

In *STF 7* there was an ad for *The Gamemaker's Manual.* I filled out the order form and managed to pull together the money for it, but when the time came to mail it, I couldn't find an address! I'd really appreciate it if you could tell me the address or the telephone number where I could purchase this product. In the meantime, keep up the superb work!

Marc Mavaddat
Ontario, Canada

stf *Yes, I can see that might present a bit of a problem! In fact you can contact Sigma Press at 1 South Oak Lane, Wilmslow SK9 6AR. And the phone number – more for the benefit of people in this country, I guess – is 0625 531035. The book costs £11.95.*

By the way, the ST FORMAT team is currently working on a couple of books, too. One is called ST Now, which is a complete guide to everything you ever wanted to know about your ST; the other, as yet unnamed (any suggestions?) is a games players guide, packed with hundreds of playing guides, cheats and hints for just about every game worth playing on the ST. More details soon!

Back in the US of A

I read in *STF 11* that you're looking for info on Atari User Groups. I'm the President of the ST User group here in Sacramento, California, which is a year old and has over 90 members. Our current mailing address is: Sacramento ST User Group (SST), PO Box 876, Carmichael, California 95609 0876.

Mark Warner
Sacramento, California

Unsolicited testimonial

I bought my 2MByte STE for £449 from Best Prices from an advertisement in *ST FORMAT* and received the computer the next very day. I feel this was an excellent service and they had the best prices around.

Dean Rance
Hatfield, Herts

stf *Impressive stuff from Best Price. We welcome readers' reports on good – and bad! – service. Write to: Service Report,* ST FORMAT, *30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW.*

Taking sides

The selfishness of the double-sided ST disk owner knows no bounds – and your comments on Martin Warren's letter didn't help either!

Buying a 16-bit machine is no mean task, in fact it's a helluva lot of pocket money for some of us. Having moved up from the popular and traditional 8-bit one doesn't expect to throw the expensive new machine on the scrapheap because it only takes single-sided disks. The argument for all double-sided disks is tactless and insensitive.

The main point is there are lots of single-sided disk drive owners around. Had we not forked out our hard-earned cash in the early days of the ST to make it the success it is today there may not have been a double-sided ST or STE around. Witness the number of 8-bit machines which went to the wall because of lack of sales! And don't assume we can afford to go out and replace our ST just because of improvements to the machine.

Finally, your argument is not with the software companies but with Atari who changed the machine. If you are so keen we should all be equal – support us for a cheap upgrade.

Ken Ashberry
Heald Green, Cheadle

STUNT CAR: ANY CHANCE OF A SEQUEL?

I recently bought a copy of the highly acclaimed *Stunt Car Racer* for my ST, and have found it a great buy, containing everything you might want from a game: speed, playability, addictiveness, the lot. I feel it is one of the best car games around, not to mention the datalink option.

So far I have reached Division Four in the Super League and have raced on all four of the tracks. Are Geoff Crammond and the Micro Style team planning any expansion disks for the game, because I feel they would make a big improvement to an already brilliant game? If so, have you any up to date information on them?

Richard Powell
Maltby
South Yorkshire

stf *We spoke to Microprose, the company that published the excellent* Stunt Car Racer, *and they told us there were no plans for Geoff to do any expansion disks or a sequel for* Stunt Car, *but his next game would come as no disappointment to fans of that game, nudge nudge wink wink.*

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■ I've just bought my first and last computer, an Atari 520FM. Now to my horror I find that everyone is talking about phasing out the single-sided disk drive, or if not the drive itself the software for them. If this is the case I have just spent £345 on a computer whose days are numbered.

Three possible alternatives exist:

1) See if it is at all possible to upgrade the machine with a double-sided disk drive.

2) Try to sell, but as Paul Dixon from Huddersfield points out it's worth, and I quote, "Bugger all."

3) Trash it and turn my back on computing and more importantly £345 forever.

I turn to *ST FORMAT* for guidance.

Ian Brown
Broomhill, Bristol

stf *I'll deal with Ian's letter first: if you've just bought a new ST, it's a double-sided drive machine: Atari haven't made any other kind for a couple of years now. (Note: the easy way to find out what kind of drive you have is to insert a back-up copy of a new ST FORMAT Cover Disk and click on the Side B folder. If it opens, you have a double-sided drive. It if doesn't, you most definitely don't.)*

More generally, single-sided drives are not going to go away just yet. There are still many thousands of them in use, so software houses are going to continue to produce programs for them. But sooner or later, single-sided drives are going to disappear, just as 8-bit machines are disappearing now. The alternative would be for STs to be held back forever, and we don't want that, do we?

It's misleading to say that single-sided drives can be "phased out." They exist, and they represent a significant proportion of the total number of STs. Very few programs demand a double-sided drive, so why get all hot and bothered? If you want a double-sided drive, why not buy one of the many upgrade kits? Evesham Micros (☎ 0386 765500) sell internal double-sided drives for as little as £54.95. They're very easy to fit yourself. Just take out the old drive and attach the relevant connector leads to the right place.

For those people with single-sided drives and a small budget, take solace in the fact that at least you can access the B-side of the ST FORMAT Cover Disk by taking advantage of the offer on page 32. ***stf***

THE HIGHEST COMPLIMENT OF ALL



Just writing to say how popular HiSoft products must be: I bought *Your 2nd Manual* and had it nicked from my car within half an hour of buying it!

It looked a very good book too, especially as I've just bought an Atari STE 520 (my first computer) and was having a bit of trouble getting things to work.

R Stenhouse
Mirfield, West Yorkshire

stf Well, here's a cheque for £25. Try again, and better luck with your second 2nd Manual!

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last word plus

Another stonking issue of ST FORMAT comes to a close, but before you let out a satisfied sigh, just check out what's on the menu for October – hot news, exclusive reviews and even more competitions!

Captain insensible

One pleasant by-product of the recent excellent Atari 90s show was the opportunity to meet, greet and have a pint with Captain Sensible, erstwhile Damned guitarist, ST games addict, avid *ST FORMAT* reader and beret wearer to the gentry. "Game reviews?" he berated the long-suffering editor: "Anyone could do them! No probs!"

He may have had cause to regret this dismissive attitude when Virgin's excellent *Monty Python*, programmed by those smart boys at Core (see page 26), dropped onto his doormat. Read how the irrepressible Captain got on with his first ever game review on page 41.

■ **Check out next month's celebrity guest – Patti Hearst reviews *International Soccer Challenge!***

Next month's issue

Blimey, the October issue of *ST FORMAT* promises to be a real cracker! We have the full, definitive and totally exclusive review of the extraordinary *DeluxePaint* from Electronic Arts (see news story, page 7). Barring any last minute hitches, we also hope to have the full, definitive and totally exclusive review of the Bullfrogs' *Powermonger*, previewed in last month's issue – no promises, mind: this games programming lark is a tricky business! We also review what looks like becoming the standard ST word processor and in a fit of generosity shall be giving away the superb Yamaha SY22, a beautiful and incredibly sexy £800 vector digital synthesiser.

So form an orderly queue outside your newsagent's on the morning of Thursday, September 13th and rehearse these lines: "Good morrow to you, kind sir/madam! Please may I have a copy of that excellent journal for the Atari ST, known as *ST FORMAT*."

Alternatively, if you're the shy type, simply fill in and hand over the form (below). If you're completely agoraphobic, or just know a good deal when you see one, turn to page 103 for our unbelievably generous subscriptions offer.

Finally, you can buy a copy from the Future Publishing stand at the CES Show at Earls Court on the weekend of 15-16th September (see page 7 for more details and a special offer). Come along and say hello! We'll be the ones with the big grins.

THOSE LUCKY ROLAND WINNERS

Two issues ago in our music special issue *(STF12)* we ran a competition to give away a £469 Roland Desktop Music System, a £175 PC200 keyboard and four copies of the £99 *CMPanion* sound development system. We had over 1,900 entries (we made that nice Julia Packer who was with us for a week on work experience count 'em all – sorry Julia!). The answers were, as we said, as easy as ABC: (a), (b) and, astonishingly, (c).

The persistence of one **Edward Brady** of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, paid off, though he didn't scoop the big one. Edward sent in an amazing 120 entries! He nets himself a copy of *CMPanion*, as did **Richard Powell** of Bristol, the mysteriously Christian-nameless **NP Vaughan** of RAF Wildenrath and **Carl Ingham** (no relation to our publisher) of Burnley. Well done people. Enjoy *CMPanion*.

But the winner of the big one is... **Paul Nuttall** of Exeter! Well done Paul, and we look forward to seeing you on *TOTP* soon.

Micromagic winners

We had a huge response to our Micromagic competition offering the chance to win one of five introductory Micromagic MIDI courses. The four weekend breakers: **Joel Hughes** of Cwmbran, Gwent ("written on a number 24 bus," he explained!); **Simon Young** of Colliers Wood, London; the mysteriously Christian-nameless **ML Bennett** of Coventry; and **Moira Lucas** from London N8.

The full week long course goes to **Kamla Thaper** of Crosshill in Glasgow. Hurrah!

By the way, everyone who entered will be receiving a voucher entitling them to 10% off any of Micromagic's courses. ***stf***

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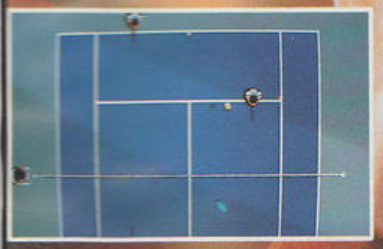
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Pin 'em to the baseline, ***attack the net and volley the winner!*** You might have taken this match but that was on grass - can you play as well on clay or on the indoor courts?... with ***TIE-BREAK*** you'll soon find out! And the play selection doesn't end there - play singles or doubles, select to play in all the major tournaments such as Wimbledon, Davis Cup, French Open and many more. You can then make a racquet selection -and that could win you the match!

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POWER UP OR PULL OUT!

MIDNIGHT RESISTANCE

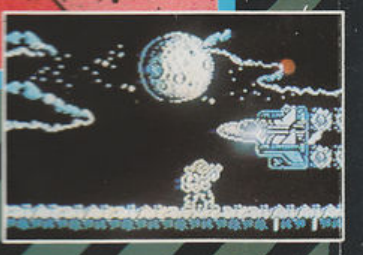
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CRASH Smash

"Graphics are very impressive...all sprites and backgrounds are beautifully detailed...more playable than its arcade parent. Brilliant!"





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Ocean Software Limited · 6 Central Street
Manchester · M2 5NS · Tel: 061 832 6633
Telex: 669977 OCEANS G · Fax: 061 834 0650