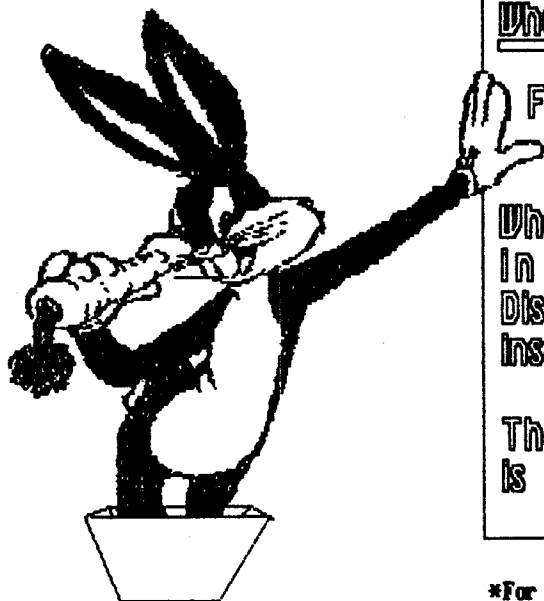


CAC

Sept/Oct
1993

Issue 1
Only 80p

UNDERCOVER



What's In, doc?

Find out why games
are so expensive

What's good and bad
in the PD world?
Discover the answers
inside

The superb coverdisc
is explained*

*For those who sent in a disc.



Create
superb
masterpieces
with our
tutorial.



Do you enjoy
serious
software?
You do? Good!
Look inside.



Reach the
chequered flag
with our
driving game
cheat special.



A football
round up is
about to
kick off
inside.

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Editor: David Crookes
Design: David Crookes

Printers: Catford Copy
Centre

Production Method:

The magazine is produced using Powerpage 128 - a great DTP program written by Richard Fairhurst. The pages are printed on the Star LC-100 and copied by the Catford Copy Centre.

Coverdisc

The main menu is written by the editor and is the copyright of David Crookes and The Pacific Group. However it can be copied freely as it is entered into the Public Domain.

All the programs are Public Domain and can be copied freely. CPC Undercover does not make any money from the coverdiscs.

Rebase 3: John Fairlie
Zap 't' Balls: Elmsoft
Croco Magneto: CPC News

All letters must be sent to the above address under the rule that any correspondence may be printed. However mark "NOT TO BE PUBLISHED" on your letter if you don't want it to be included. We cannot guarantee to answer every letter sent but we will try - honest, gov.

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Sept/ Oct

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Advertising Rates

Advertising rates in CPC Undercover are very cheap. We charge only 75p per quarter of a page, £1.50 for half a page and £3 for a full page. There are even sponsorship deals. You can sponsor a whole issue for £5 or just one column for a quid.

Next Issue

- We review Nigel Mansells World Championship.
- An exclusive interview with Debby Howard of adventuring fame.
- We ask "Is your CPC PC compatible?" with stunning results.
- And lots, lots more!

The Editorial

Welcome to this, the first issue of CPC Undercover. Hopefully you will find it an exciting read and enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed putting it together.

I won't go on too much about how good (or bad) the magazine is because that's up to you to decide but I hope that you will continue to buy the magazine and maybe even take up a subscription.

What a great year it has been so far. Manchester United won the Premier League, I finally finished my GCSE exams, CPC Undercover hit the letterboxes (Er... maybe the last bit isn't so great). Anyway you get the picture.

Taking of Manchester United and football, Alan Sugar has been in the news a lot recently with his court battle against Terry Venables. Poor Sugar, it seems as if the whole world and his dog is against him. I think the message is perfectly clear to him though - stick to what you know about and stop causing trouble.

Now for the bad news ("Oh dear" - John Major). MJC Supplies have closed down. Yes it's true. Turn to the News page to find out more. I don't want to go over the same ground twice but MJC were the best CPC company in terms of reliability. Their demise will have left

some people in the lurch.

This magazine is your magazine so if you have any articles you would like printing, then send them in. Any article which adorns these hollowed pages will earn the writer a free copy of the magazine. It doesn't matter what you write about as long as it is interesting and related to computers. If you can send the articles as Powerpage files with around 800 words then that would do just fine. Also all classified advertisements placed in the magazine are absolutely free and if you have any services to offer members then we will see about setting up a helpline service. Finally if you have any criticisms then write a letter and tell me about them. I will be putting a survey in the magazine very soon. Also coming soon are the "CPC UNDERCOVER AWARDS" - prestigious awards given to any organisation which comes up to scratch. Watch this space.

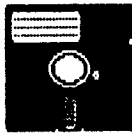
What now? Ah yes, the coverdisc. If you sent a disc you should now have a copy of the Zap 't' Balls demo, Rambase 3 and Croco Magneto. Three superb programs which I'm sure you'll agree are amazing. That's what I call tremendous value. For only a few pence you are getting three excellent pieces of software and a magazine. And don't worry, there will be more of the same each and every issue so cut out that subscription form now!

The Coverdisc

Zap 't' Balls

Setinel software's superb Peng clone has been lovingly written for the Amstrad.

You have to fire at an array of balls which fly around your head and once you have hit one, it splits into two. You then have to hit these and when you do they, again, split into two. The aim of the game is to hit them enough times so that they disappear altogether.



The controls are left and right (on your joystick) to move left and right and fire er... fires. There is also a facility for a two player game. It is very addictive and we are proud to have it on our coverdisc.

Rambase Three

This is a database which is very easy to use and is fully featured. I don't want to explain exactly what it does because you are most likely to already know. However if you don't, then write in and tell me your problem. Put simply it is a card index type of thing which is useful for addresses and recording your CD collection.



Croco Magneto
This is a superb game from France. You are a ball who has to collect small green boxes. Watch out for the magnetic field.

Bits and Pieces

MMM. That's good

OCP Advanced Art Studio is going to have some serious competition in the guise of Mel Mit Mir. Strange name aside, the package will have an overscan option as well as a sprite editor and loads more. Coming on two ROMS it will cost around £35 and will be distributed by New Age UK, Simon Warfords new company.

Talking of New Age Software, watch out

for some new hardware like, for instance, a conversion to turn your CPC into a CPC+, stereo speakers and a sound sampler.

Software wise, three new games are waiting for you - Megablasters, Wuzzle and Wyzaxx - and of a more serious note, there are loads of utilities for 3.5" disc drive owners. More news as we get it but the titles are Copy (copies 2 3.5" discs onto 1 3"), and DOS-COPY (PC-CPC).

selection of PD will be put on your disk.

As a guide, we would be looking for articles of around 800 words.

PD Library closes

Adventure PD will soon be closing down due to a heavy workload.

On the 31st September 1993, Debby Howard will officially close the library which was renowned for good service.

It seems a shame when the best adventure PD library (err.. the only adventure PD library) closes but its adventures can be found in other libraries such as Sheepsoft and Presto.

Stop Press

IFF-CONVERT will convert Amiga screens onto your Amstrad as long as they are of IFF type. It's PD.

Cheap GX-4000?

The search continues for good, cheap supplies of GX-4000 consoles. Quite why is anybody's guess because, after all, they are useless. The amount of games available for them is minimal and so there only real use is either as a door stopper or a new addition to your Star Wars collection.

Anyway, Bull Electronics (250 Portland Road, Hove, East Sussex, BN3 5QT) have got supplies of the console for only nine ponds. However, this doesn't include postage, packing or VAT which takes the price up to £14.10 which is around half again on top of the original price. Of course this still means you would be saving around £85 but there's something else you ought to know: the price doesn't include the game, Burning Rubber. The search continues...

Microdesign Two

The best commercial DTP program is getting better. M2 will be available soon from Campersoft and will be able to use PC clipart - from a PC disc. Watch this space.

Face Hugger has been approached by Campersoft so expect some great software.

Magazine needs writers

"Top" computer magazine, CPC Undercover, is looking for people to write articles and regular columns for inclusion in the magazine.

If you are interested then please send all articles as ASCII files or if you prefer as Powerpage files.

The magazine needs as many interesting features as possible and if you think you could do a regular column (Public Domain, Tutorials or anything technical) then feel free to contact the editor, David Crookes, at the address on page two.

The payment for articles printed is a free copy of the magazine and a

Picture yourself in this situation. You just can't get past a certain alien, you always die when you are confronted by the end of level guardian, you faint when after you've lost all your lives and have to "rewind to the beginning of tape 1." Well worry no more, pick yourself up and let David Crookes (again) show you how to cope.

Beat That Game!

Here's a massive array of cheats for those games which puzzle you. How would this do for starters? To become invulnerable in *Deliverance*, the excellent game from Hewson, you only have to type in *ILIKE* on the title screen and then nothing can destroy you. Not bad, eh?

So while those with

the game go off and try that out, I'll make a plea. If you have any cheats then feel free to send them in. A prize for the best each month.

Yogi can have infinite lives during his "Great Escape" if you redefine the keys to *ICE* and another cartoon character Hong Kong Phooey is happy if you hold down his friends name *Y.O.G.I* on the options "page".

leave out the first few boring levels or ignore the part that has been bothering you. For example if you have battled with an opponent for years and suddenly kill him, you can save the game there and so never have to go back there and kill him all over again the next time you wish to play it.

Another good feature is being able to use the *Multiface* pokes which appear in *Amstrad Action* and will soon appear in *CPC Undercover*. These are short pieces of code containing around six characters. They let you gain infinite lives and endless power. Whats more they are extremely easy to use.

So the *multiface* is an invaluable tool for gamers especially those with disk drives - the *multiface* enables you to save tapes to disc. 89%

Multiface 2

The *Multiface* is hyped as being the best thing there is for gamers. Is it true?

Certainly the *Multiface* has many features for a game freak to use.

Firstly there is a superb feature which enables you to save your game at any point enabling you to either

redefined the keys as *C.H.E.A.T.S.P.A.C.E* when the game loads.

Also when you start the race, push your joystick up when the light is red, then pull it down on amber before pushing it back up on green, you should race in at a high speed.

Turbo Kart Racer: Here's a quick one. To advance to the next track, press *[CONTROL]*.

Grand Prix Sim 2: Don't get knocked out in your races just change player 1's name to *INTEGRA*. This doesn't work on my copy but I'm assured that it does work.

Supercars: Once you've got a high score, enter *FASTEST* into the table and you'll go to class three.

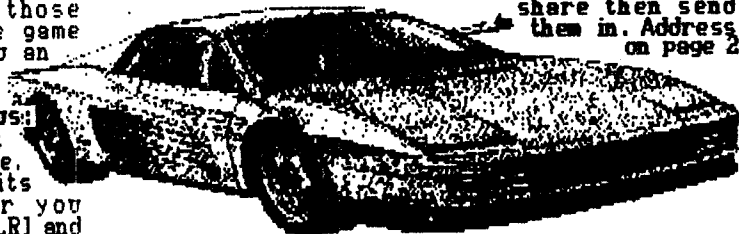
If you have any cheats you wish to share then send them in. Address on page 2.

Car Games

You must have one of these games so cheat away.

Chase HQ: When the game starts press *[ESC]*, redefine the keys as *S.H.O.C.K.E.D* and then once the game starts playing press 1 to restart the level, 2 to move to the next level, 3 to see the display normally reserved for those who finish the game and 4 gives you an extra life.

Continental Circus: A great cheat for a great game. For more credits press *C* after you have pressed *[CLR]* and



Star LC-100

EXCLUSIVE REVIEW

Written By D. Crookes

If anybody mentioned, in passing, that the LC-100 was the LC-20 with the addition of colour then they would be absolutely correct. This well-built, robust and reliable printer has all of the features of the LC-20 but with the colour facilities of the LC-200. This is not a bad thing though, as both of these machines are excellent and so, fortunately, is Stars' new offering.

As with the other two machines, fiddly dip switches have been replaced by a much easier alternative - Electronic Dip Switches (EDS). By using a combination of buttons on the control panel, which is situated on the front of the machine almost thousands of settings can be set easily without having to poke a pencil around the insides of the beast.

In fact, these four buttons also perform all manner of tasks such as paper parking and font and pitch lock which after selecting, prevents the fonts and pitch from being altered by your software. This is also the site where fonts can be changed, pitch can be altered, paper can be fed, on line can become offline. Actually, it is so convenient, there is a function which

folds your paper into little paper boats so that you can sail them.

So what other features has it got then? Well for a start you've got four fonts (Courier, Sanserif, Orator with small capital letters and Orator with lower case letters). Plus there's draft and all fonts can have italics giving another handfull of different letter



Move
away
from
these
old
methods
NOW!

styles. The printers nine pins can hammer out documents at a rate of 180cps in draft and 45cps in NLQ which is pretty fair going for a nine pin. Eleven print styles are also provided like for instance double strike and subscript. Add this to provisions for a quiet mode and a top quality printer starts to immerge.

Paper can be inserted through the top and at the rear of the printer and all paper from continuous to letter

headed paper can be used. Inserting the paper is not a problem and if you've got a stream of continuous paper in the machine and you need to insert a normal cut sheet of A4, then the paper can be parked while you place the cut sheet in the top of the printer. Once printed, the

continuous paper can be recalled, all without taking it out.

Print quality is superb. The fonts are crisp and can be used for any correspondence you wish without causing you any embarrassment. Colour printing of pictures require additional software such as MJC's Colourdump 3 but the extra cost is worth it because the output is very good.

This printer has been plugged into the back of my computer for around seven months now and has always performed very well. Everything that has been printed has been of a high standard and you could do far worse than purchasing it. My only quibble is that the manual, though quite clearly written, tends to refer to PC's. The LC-100 comes complete with a colour ribbon and a lead but don't forget that Amstrad uses a non-standard edge connector so an additional lead would have to be purchased. The ribbons are available all over the place especially

If anybody out there knows a lot about printers and would like to do a column then please write to the address on page two. Thanks....



as the printer uses the same ribbons as the LC-10.

And now to the completely irrelevant bit: the price. Well you'd be surprised that such a wonderful piece of kit such as this only retails at around £220 but it can be bought for around thirty pounds less from a mail order supplier. It really is worth splashing out the extra cash for colour because then at least you have the facility if, and when, you ever need it.

Colour printers are getting cheaper all the time and soon black and white machines will become a thing of the past. It's like colour TV's as opposed to black and white models. Colour took its time to introduce itself properly but now it is the most common TV type in the world.

The Star LC-100 gives you a chance to delve into another use for your computer and it opens up all manner of possibilities. It therefore should not be ruled out of consideration especially as it is so good.

Now it may sound as if I've just written an advertisement for Star but I haven't; I'm just so impressed.

Fact File

Price: £220
No. of pins: 9
Colour: Yes
Speed (Draft): 180cps
Speed (NLQ): 45cps
No. of fonts: 4
Compatibility: Epson and IBM

Know Your Rights

Buying from mail order firms can be pretty dodgy unless you know exactly what you are doing. What happens if it develops a fault? What do you do when you don't receive your goods? Know your rights!

The current situation means that at one time or another you are, inevitably, going to order from a mail order firm. If it seems logical that if there aren't many shops stocking CPC related goods then you can only go one way - by post.

However people are very wary of such suppliers and they, unfortunately, do sometimes get a bad reaction from Joe Public. On the other hand, some people are very satisfied indeed with the service they get although mail order services do not run like your local high street shops.

Mail order suppliers buy in bulk and deal with people in bulk. They are not really that interested in the individual customer and not many firms can give advice so you need to know specifically what you want but if you want to come out of mail ordering looking very cheerful then follow these points.

1. Always read the small print. Is postage and packing included or is it extra. What is the waiting time (remember that by law nobody should be kept waiting for longer than twenty eight days)?

2. Never send cash, only

postal orders and cheques and don't forget to keep the counterfoils as proof of payment.

3. When you get an invoice, keep it; it is just like a receipt.

4. Keep a copy of the advert just in case you need to get in contact with them again.

5. If you find a good mail order firm keep with it, that way you will be assured of good service and if you know a firm is bad (WAVE are very unreliable) then don't use them. Obviously.

6. If you have to sign for your goods when you receive them, always write "not examines yet" which shows you haven't checked the goods for faults.

7. When something gets lost in the post, the Royal Mail should be contacted and you could get compensation. Ask for details.

8. When returning goods send by recorded delivery.

It may seem a bit of a drain but mail order firms offer discounts and, usually, quick delivery.

Useful Information



It is wise to 'phone a company before sending any money.



DTP: A rough guide

Batten down the hatches, board up the windows, lock the doors, stock up with food and don your army costume because here comes an invasion of a DTP tutorial, lead by David Crookes.

Err.. what is DTP?

All those who already know what it is should really skip this part and go on to the next section but those who haven't the foggiest idea what it is, then read on. DTP stands for Desk Top Publishing and it is, basically, a program which enables you to create whole pages of text and drawings together. Take a look at the pages in this magazine and any other magazine around - they are all created on a computer. Of course the leading newsstand magazines are not likely to have been created on a CPC but it doesn't necessarily mean that it isn't capable of it. CPC Undercover is written using Powerpage 128 on an Amstrad CPC 6128.

You could use a word processor but they don't allow you to have drawings on the same page and neither do they let you have large fonts (letters) or any variety of fonts, and an art package doesn't give you the same power with words. So for publishing you use a DTP package. Now lets join the rest.

Layout

One rather essential

thing to do before even putting a single word on the page is to study some of the leading magazines around and get a feel of the layout and fonts they use. Note down useful things such as the use of only one font throughout the magazine.

Fonts are probably the letdown of most people who use a Desk Top Publishing system because they feel that with around fifty fonts at their disposal it would seem such a waste if you never used them all. But stop! If you ignore everything that is mentioned in this tutorial don't ignore this piece of advice. The golden rule of publishing is keep it simple. Don't be tempted to use more than two fonts for the main body text and one font for the headlines. As you can see from CPC Undercover we use the same body font with only a slight variation in the introductory paragraphs - we use a bold font which is the same as the body text only thicker - and the same headline font is used throughout. If you start to mix up futuristic looking fonts with Roman type ones as well as a Times font then all you will succeed in doing is making the reader dizzy and turning your publication, be it a fanzine, poster or advertisement, into a very amateurish publication. Each and every one of us would only read something which looks good and has good presentation so this should be at the front of your mind while

designing pages.

But I can't draw..

If you can't draw for toffee then don't worry because neither can most people, me included. Thankfully some people can and what's more being the generous souls they are they have donated their artwork into the public domain under the name clip art.



These are small drawings which can be bought cheaply for around twenty pence a disc side and are ready to use in your DTP package. The quality of these pictures are also very good (the camera on this page is an example of clip art). However you may want something a bit different and there are alternatives. Firstly you could take the photographs yourself and then glue them onto the page. Unfortunately photocopies are not very good and when you photocopy the photograph you are very likely to end up with a sheet of paper containing a bad image made up of a few shades of grey. A better method is to have the photo's screened at a shop will do it for you or else digitally scan the photo so that you



Digitisers

This is an example of a digitised picture. It's extremely easy to do but quite expensive. Watch out for a series soon.

can create and use your own clip art.

Digitisers are quite expensive and vary in quality. There are three digitisers for the Amstrad - two are not available any more and one you have to build yourself. The Vidi digitiser takes images from a video and turns it into screens which your CPC can understand and use while the Dart Scanner fits onto your Amstrad DMP printer and scans paper images. The final one from the book "Easy add on projects for the Amstrad CPC 6128" lists details on how to build your own, but the results are reportedly not very good. Still if you are interested then get a copy of the book (WACCI loan the book out to its members for only forty eight pennies).

Now for some good news on digitisers - you don't, in a way, need one because a superb service is given by M.J. Jones of Scantek. He will digitise sixteen screens for only two pounds.

Getting back to the DTP guide (we went astray there), always try to keep any clip art you use as relevant as you can - there's nothing worse than seeing a picture

of a cow in a review of, say, Prince of Persia. So if you're designing a poster for a car boot sale use pictures of cars. I know this probably seems patronising but you would be amazed at the amount of people who do this.

Break it up, lads

Dig out that magazine again and take a look once more at what it has. Notice the subheadings? These are worth including if you are doing a fanzine since it enables you to break up what would otherwise be a huge chunk of writing. It gives the page that bit more balance and makes it become more eye-catching and less of a chore to read. Don't put subheadings in the same style as the body text. This doesn't mean put the subheading in some truly strange

Gothic font, it merely states that you should use a bold version of the body font because otherwise the sub-heading wouldn't be noticed at all and thus would turn into one huge chunk of writing - not advisable.

And finally...

You now know about drawings, fonts and sub-headings but what about other things such as boxes, lines and columns? Well these are very good for abstracting information to make it more clearer. Maybe you would like to highlight an address or make a diagram stand out that little bit more. Whatever your use, a box is invaluable and most DTP packages let you reverse what is in the box (so white becomes black and vice versa) and this makes things even clearer, although at the expense of ink.

Columns too are vital, more so in fanzines, but this will be dealt with in the next issue along with leading and the advantages of autoflow. So watch this space.

How long does it take then?

To design a good page with good layout and the odd picture or two should only take you around an hour - it all depends on how much effort you put in and how many words you place on the page. As a guide, the pages in CPCU take around an hour and ten minutes.

However if you have never used a DTP package before then expect it to take up around three hours of your time because DTP packages do need time to get used to, but persevere because once you have got past the teething troubles using DTP software can be quite fun and rewarding not to mention more professional than a word processor. (N.B. The time it takes also depends on the speed of your typing.)





Publically Speaking



THE COLUMN WORTH A THOUSAND PENNIES

Welcome to "CPC UNDERCOVER's" public domain and fazine section.

Every two months we will bring you all the best from the PD scene and news and gossip from the underground world.

First up this month is a vast review of Presto PD's serious disk number six, three shorter reviews and a varied look at clip art. Plus (aren't we good to you? No? Well suit yourself, then), a look at top computer fazine Artificial

Intelligence.

Now for a plea, If anybody would like to take over this column and feel they could do as good a job as I can (which, lets face it, isn't too hard) then write to :

CPC UNDERCOVER
PUBLICALLY SPEAKING
37 TRIMINGHAM DRIVE
BRANDLESOLME
BURY
GREATER MANCHESTER
BL8 1JW

together with a stamped SAE.

fazine spotlight

Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence is a truly superb fazine with nice, clearly written reviews and a good (read as warped) sense of humour.

The editor, Tim Blackburn, fan of Metallica and "The Attack Of The Killer Tomatoes", and the staff writer, Rob Smith, hold the whole thing together well, and despite the magazine having one of the worst timekeeping records in the entire universe and maybe even beyond that (it has only ever arrived on time once) they make no

secret of it, so it can be disregarded because at least they tell you.

The magazine is a great example of what can be done DTP wise with a trusty CPC although the front and back of the magazine is now drawn up on a PC.

As already mentioned, the magazine packs a lot into it's 32 pages and every issue just seems to leave the previous one standing as it continuously gets better. So even though it has been given a massive 92%, the next issue would probably be worth 100.

AMGRAPH



Amgraph, a great way of getting good results!

Amgraph is one of the most user-friendliest graph packages I have seen. The main screen is menu driven and the actual inputting of the data is so simple, you could almost do it with your eyes shut. In fact

if you find inputting the y co-ordinate difficult then it's advisable to shelve Amgraph and carry on playing Croco Magneto.

A whole host of graphs can be chosen: bar graphs, line graphs, 3D graphs and pie charts and with a print option to boot, you've got a

marvelous package to play with and use to your hearts content. And to prove that this program is indeed top-notch, I'm giving it a very worthwhile 87%.

Clip Art

Clip Art is an ideal way of brightening up a page created with a Desktop Publishing system. Take a look at the clip art in this box



and the pictures in the rest of the magazine and you'll see what I mean. Just take your pick, theres loads of it.





Serious Disc 6

Fact Box Memory needed: 128k
Amount of sides: 1



A super
disc,
worthy
of the
top award

CATEDIT

I came across this program by accident. I really wanted this disc for the spellchecker and didn't even even load up this program until two weeks after I got it. And what a mistake that was.



■ **Catedit** :
a disc
management
program

Although the name is offputting to say the least, it is a superb piece of programming. What is it, I hear you yell? This is -wait for it-a disc management system. That isn't new, there are a load of them in the public domain, you say. It's true, but this has a glow of professionalism about it.

Once it's loaded, you are presented with a nice opening screen, together with a scrolling message along the bottom giving you small bits of information. Press any key and you're

transported into the main program. There, you're presented with a catalogue of your disc with a list of options. The standard ones are present such as recover deleted files, format, erase and rename but other less standard items such as setting the disc to read only and read/write are all there as is a file copier and file info which err... gives you information about your files.

One thing you'll notice is that it's fast unlike some managers and it uses a great routine of utilising the screen memory, creating a large buffer.

So fine, there are disc managers with features like this but not many are as professionally done.

ISPELL

"Doctor, I can't spell!"
"Sit down over here, please and tell me all about it."
"Well it happened all of a sudden. I was typing out a document with my word processor and I suddenly realised I had spelt everything wrong."
"Everything? Well, there is a cure. It is called ISpell and it's a spell checker. What it does is simple. It

checks your spelling and tells you if a word is right or wrong. You then look in a dictionary for the correct spelling. It's as simple as that. Take it once after each boot on the word processor and you'll feel fine. Ok perhaps it's a little slow and it has a limited dictionary but besides that you should have no more spelling problems. Oh, and it costs only 25p from Presto. Give it a whirl man."

SPACE FROGGY

This is a prime example of what can be done with Glenco's 'Sprites Alive' package.

The aim of the game is to wander around many beautifully drawn screens in the hope of finding nine 6128 ROM chips. The wandering around is done by you, a little frog like creature, who has to overcome a few puzzles on it's way to fame and fortune. Almost!

With plenty of instructions, easy controls and a great game to boot, this game is better than many budget releases which are filling up the CPC shelves. Worth a whopping 95%. Totally excellent.

GPAINT



Put your hard earned cash away and instead of purchasing 'Advanced Art Studio' get this. GPaint is without a doubt the best art package 20p can buy.

Although it is cheap it certainly isn't nasty and offers a fast, userfriendly, icon driven system which will suit your every whim. The fill routine is very fast indeed and good solid features like rotation, enlarge and reduce are easy to use and make the package that little more complete. This package is so good that it has been given a commendable 91%. Hooray!

Computer games seem very expensive at the moment, but why? David Crookes has been doing some investigating.

When was the last time you walked into a computer shop with a bit of cash in your pocket and noticed that it wasn't enough

executives out there smoking fat cigars and drowning themselves in champagne at the sound of more and more green bits of paper floating towards them. But then consider all the things they pay for.

Firstly, the software companies have to make people aware of their

could be a complete flop and so all the money they have spent could be wasted completely, leaving them well in the red.

Even though the profit levels are low it doesn't necessarily suggest that the companies are not getting rich because

It's a rip-off, or is it ?

to be able to buy a game? Computer games are becoming increasingly more expensive as each day passes by. Software houses will stop at nothing to make you part with your hard earned cash. Huge amounts of money are spent on massive advertisements in all the leading computer and console publications and thousands of pounds are used up trying to discover the latest buying trends in order for them to make a killing out of the unsuspecting public. When the game hits the streets they nearly always carry a large price tag so the software companies must be making an absolute fortune. There must be quite a few

game so they spend some money on advertisements. This could be a couple of quid or a lot more; it depends on how they pushed the game. Then the shops get a share - a very large share - and this usually amounts to around forty percent. Next up is the dreaded takman who enjoys the benefit of seventeen and a half percent. Perhaps this is a little unfair as the government doesn't even do anything to earn this money but rules are rules.

It doesn't stop there either. Duplication costs, disks and cassettes, packaging, paying the team who made the game and, if the game is a license, then some money goes to them too. So the software house could end up with only a few pounds per game and the treat of failure as the game

they are, otherwise how would they be able to afford to pay enormous sums of money for licences and advertising and, more to the point, if they weren't making money they would go



bankrupt.

Living proof of the fact that software houses make a "small" fortune is Codemasters. Recently they took console giants, Nintendo, to court over allegations that Codemaster's

Why are 8-bit games so numbingly cheap?

There are quite a few reasons why machines such as the CPC have games costing considerably less than their 16-bit counterparts. One significant reason is that of advertising costs. A lot of it has already been paid for. Take Streetfighter II

for instance. Nintendo advertised this game on national television meaning a very large

... companies concentrate only on 16-bit machines, reaping in the profits.

now know about the game. So when it makes its appearance on the Amstrad, US Gold

wouldn't have to advertise it too much.

Secondly, most eight-bit conversions are usually second rate and are released only to make a quick buck. After all, why spend time on a game if people would buy it anyway, using their

creation, the "Game Genie", was in breach of copyright. Codemasters won and were awarded a large amount of money. Of course Richard and David Darling were already rich in the beginning and so this extra sum was just a bonus but it was enough for the men to start to think about buying an aeroplane. So fine, they got this money through a court settlement and not by selling any equipment but they, which has been mentioned before, were not exactly living in cardboard boxes. And this was from a budget software house so just think about how much the larger companies make. Maybe they could afford to bring the prices down or maybe they'll find a suitable excuse to say otherwise.

PRICE LIST

CINEMA £2.50
For approx. 2 hours

TENPIN BOWLING £3
For approx 2 hours

MAGAZINES £1-£3
For approx. 1.5 hours

COMPUTER GAMES £15
For approx. 2 months

This shows that games give long lasting fun

judgement from what they have seen on the 16-bits.

So companies concentrate only on sixteen bit machines, reking in the profits before going ahead and taking up any extra cash that seems to be hanging around from the eight bits. It's sad but true.

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Kicking off

A ROUND UP of
football games for
the Amstrad

Football games are very popular. So much so, software houses released millions of them (well a few dozen, anyway). Flippin' eck, which are the best, which are the worst and above all which should you not be without? With his "Manchester United are champions" scarf on, David Crookes plays his way through. Kick off looms....

Emlyn Hughes International Soccer

It's best to start as we mean to go on with a brilliant game from Audiogenic. The game says it is "Bursting with high-speed action" and being quite sceptical about such adverts, it is pleasing to find a game which lives up to its billing.

The build up is great. You have the options to play any one of eight teams from England to Italy, but there is a facility to change all the team names and players so you could create your own Premier League with relative ease.

Taking control of your favourite team, you can then play a game which can last as long as you want. You can view computer against computer if you wish but it isn't necessary neither is playing extra time.

The game itself is very atmospheric what with a bustling crowd cheering (even though their chants are always the same - it can get tedious) and the speed of the game. Everything is fast and furious, especially on the higher skill levels. This game was

obtained after Matchday Two so the speed was noticed straight away.

Practise makes perfect as they say and so the writers of the game have included a practice facility. It really is useful for trying out that spectacular Mark Hughes type volley straight into the back of the net or even experimenting with two touch passing and the like. More importantly it gives the player a chance to get the feel of the game without any worries of the ball being taken away from them.

It is safe to recommend this game due to its simplicity of use. The controls are easy and you'll soon be hooked, wont you, Emlyn? "Sneak, sneak, sneak." See? It's worth, oh, 89%.

Matchday Two

It's three o'clock, the whistle blows and the crowd chant. The players kick off and run towards goal - very slowly.

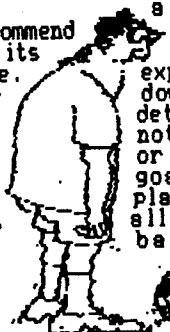
It's a quarter past three and the players have reached the goal mouth, a shot is thundered towards the

net. The goalkeeper dives and gathers the ball slowly.

The time is half past three and the ball is kicked out. The players amble around this large pitch - probably one of the biggest in the Software League - and seem tired - lethargic even.

Half time passes and it's soon full time. The opposition winning by a few goals to nil. It's time to weigh up the options. Will you play in the Matchday Cup or maybe the Matchday League? Will you play in two player mode and maybe give yourself or your partner a goal advantage?

The manager walks in and quietly mentions the kickometer. He explains that holding down the fire button determines whether or not you belt the ball or tap it nicely into goal. He informs the players that they are allowed to head the ball and that they should play matchday



Two because despite it being slow it is fun, the goalkeepers are good and the options are mainly standard but have some good extras like giving a team a goal advantage. The ball reacts realistically too, thanks to the DDS system. The manager

then proceeds to say that if Matchday Two were a football team it would finish about sixth and so is worth a healthy 70%.

Kick Off

If a games merits were decided on its graphics then this game would surely fail completely. Basically.

The graphics are completely rubbish and are not acceptable at all. If Anco would have spent a bit more time on it, the gameplay would have benefited and the staying power would have had a longer life.

Having said that, Kick Off is addictive, not as much as Emlyn Hughes but addictive nonetheless. The controls, once mastered, are quite easy to use, and notice the word "quite". It does take a few attempts to get it right but persevere and don't do what a certain reviewer did and shelve it for ages because it is a fun game. For only £3.99 you could do a lot worse, but then you could do a lot better. As far as percentages

go, an award of 67% would suffice.

Italy 1990

As a close contender to Emlyn Hughes, this game must be good. However the only problem is which one is better? Everybody differs on this and the easiest option is to give it the same percentage as Emlyn but I'll try not to.

Anyway, the game. Emlyn Hughes' falling point is graphics which although good, are no where near as good as Italy 1990's. Solid almost perfect graphics make this game the best looking one but to add a cliché, good graphics maketh not a good game.

Sonics haven't had the same attention as graphics and so this is the one thing which knocks US Gold's game away so the situation is as follows: It's all square, really.

Action is what this game is full of. Fast? You bet! In fact this game has enough speed to be able to break the sound barrier. It really does add to the game. On the other hand the game can get too easy - it all depends on what team you pick. Choosing

England is not recommended if you want to have some sort of a challenge. Neither is picking any top team because the computer is set up to think that these teams are good enough to win without any interaction from the game player. Taking control of the UAE is much more advised as then you will soon have a challenge on your hands.

Options are good. As you can see from above, you can take control of any team which competed in the world cup in 1990. You can even make tactical decisions. Obviously with this being a world cup game you have to play in the world cup but maybe you can go one better than England and reach the final. Pretend it's the 1994 World Cup in America and make yourself believe we qualified.

So it's time to choose the game which you shouldn't be without and I think that Italy 1990 just has the edge because of the superb graphics and great gameplay, which is also fast. Erm.. that makes it 90% for Italy 90.



It's a funny of game

So Italy 1990 won. But what about all the other games around? Well there is also Man. Utd Europe which is good but not great and would only get 75%, and then there's Gazza's super soccer which is the definition of rubbish (2% for effort). Gazza 2 isn't much better. So there you have it.

Clip Art Mania

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