

All 110 C16/+4 Reviews Compiled By Sixteen Plus

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You can purchase the complete DVD C=User scans and other great retro game/computer magazines from the Zzap64 site.

**regards,
Sixteen Plus**

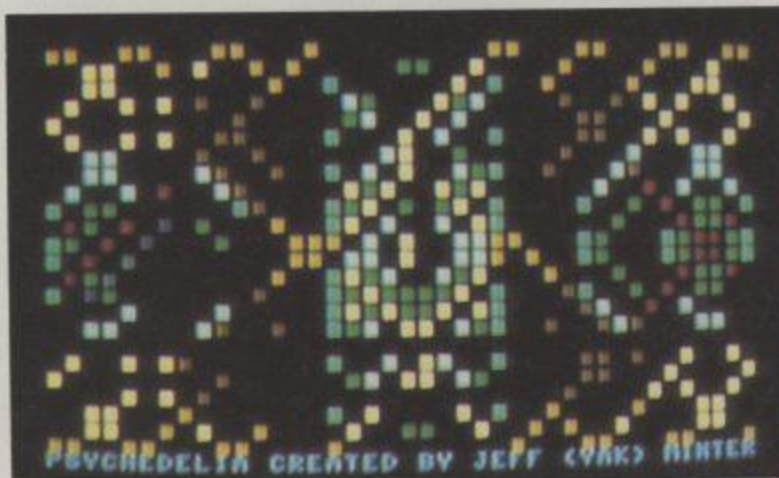
C16 SOFTWARE SUPPORT

by Mike Pattenden

When it was launched last summer as a replacement machine for the Vic 20, the Commodore 16 met with a mixed reception. Grumbles were heard about its limited memory, lack of sprites and poor sound capabilities. One of the main reservations was the lack of software support. Is it a dead duck? We asked software houses what they thought and compiled a list of what they had on offer.

Despite the apparent shortcomings of the Commodore 16 the machine has been selling well, even better perhaps than Commodore themselves had imagined it would. Sales they say, with customary reticence, have been "very substantial", and reportedly in six figures. Independent sources estimate the 16 user base slightly lower than this — approximately 90,000. However many have been sold one thing is pretty clear about this new computer — there aren't many games for it yet. If you are a C-16 owner you may be sitting there twiddling your thumbs and wondering whether you've bought a white elephant?

Well, rest assured, you haven't, though it may be a while before the market is as competitive and the quality is as good for the Vic and 64



Psychodelia: Jeff Minter's dazzling light-show.

as it is now. Though one or two C16s have been seen in the classified ad pages. Some people have clearly run out of patience with it already. One of the main reasons for this are the doubts the larger software houses are expressing in the machine. K-tel, US Gold, Activision and Virgin all

have no plans to release any C-16 software at the moment. They feel there are more pressing priorities, the Atari 800 for example.

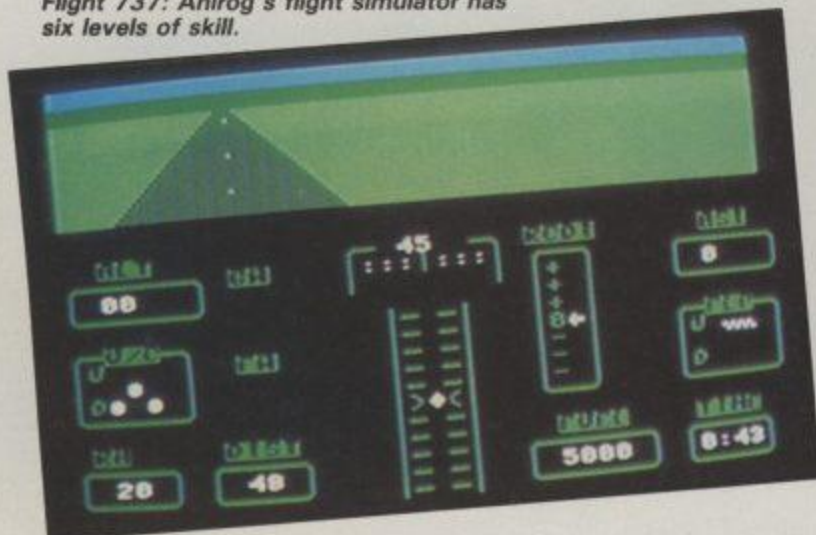
Expressing doubts

Gordon Reid, former software development manager and now

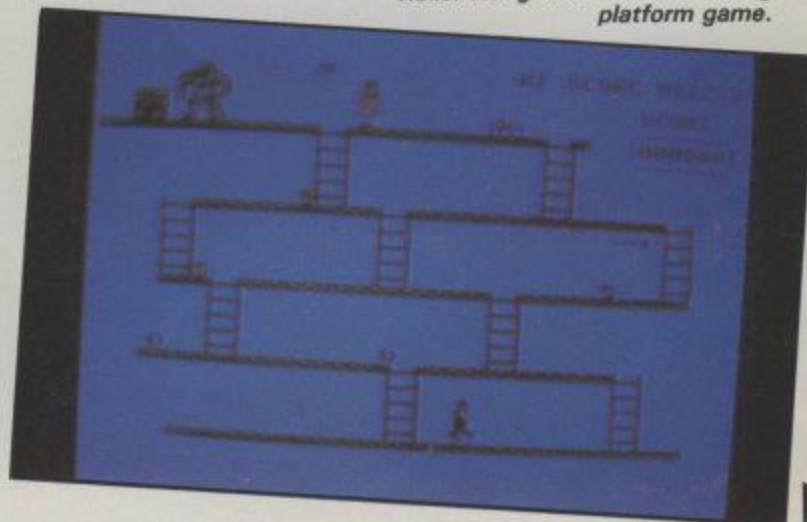
production manager with Creative Sparks, voiced some of their doubts: "A 16K machine in this day and age is a shame, it could have proved much more competitive". Having said that, his company are covering themselves with a couple of converted Vic titles. This seems to be the case with many other companies who have personal doubts about the machine. Micropower, for example, consider the machine "badly thought out", but are considering putting some titles out all the same.

Alan Hobbs, sales and marketing manager with Microdeal: "people are having to set their reservations to one side. The sales have made them think again. Even if sales don't last, there are enough owners out there to warrant

Flight 737: Anirog's flight simulator has six levels of skill.



Roller Kong: The 16's first Kong platform game.



attention." And it seems that the smaller software houses are in a better position to move rapidly — even if it's just to convert old 64 and Vic titles.

Melbourne House were one of the first major companies to put out anything for the Commodore 16 with their *Book of Games* and subsequently *Games Packs I and II*. Since then, according to Paula Byrne, their publicity manager, "we've been inundated with requests for more games."

"There's been an overwhelming demand from people who've bought the machine and found out there

wasn't much to play on it." So all of a sudden smaller software houses are writing fast and furiously to fill the vacuum. Doubts or no doubts.

Short on adventure

There are bound to be some who consider that the Commodore 16 doesn't warrant the sheer effort of software development. Marketing considerations aside, some are put off by its limited memory. This applies particularly to adventures which require larger memories. Level 9 cannot

convert its existing games and consequently has no plans for any new C-16 adventures. The same goes for Legend who consider the constraints of memory off-putting. Most adventures that are or will be available are of the text-only type.

The other main bugbear is the 16's lack of sprites. However, Solar Software consider that as a means of getting better character definition. Colin Courtney's programmers at Tynesoft were more than surprised at its capabilities. "The graphics are as good as the 64's, there's no sprites, but that can be compensated

for." He's so impressed with it as a beginner's computer that he's dropped all his other stuff to concentrate on the 16.

Commodore backing

These opinions more or less echo Commodore's own about the machine. They know its limitations, but equally well they know it has a market. Rae Potter, software marketing manager at Commodore, is adamant. "There is a huge market for a starter machine and it will be supported, the ball has started rolling. It would be ludicrous for even the big software companies to miss out."

One indication to the market for C-16 software sales is that Craig Communications' *Flight 015* has sold over 10,000 copies since it was released just before Christmas. Whether the Commodore 16 will prove to be as successful as the Vic remains to be seen. It's doubtful that it will, it's more of a temporary measure. However, its price and the items included (1531 cassette unit, Introduction to Basic, Picture builder, XZAP, Punchy and Starter Chess) make it very attractive to the first-time buyer. In fact, since the 16K Spectrum was withdrawn, it is the cheapest machine on the market.

Software houses are beginning to realise that there is a boat and if they don't move fast enough they're going to miss it. Even those who doubt the C-16's viability are putting a conversion or two out to test the market. As for quality, it's only fair to say that at the moment it's not that high. Only a few new and original programs are available: like Anirog's 'Out on a Limb' which was written for the 64 but diverted to the 16, and Jeff Minter's *Psychodelia* (though even that's released simultaneously on the 64 and Spectrum).

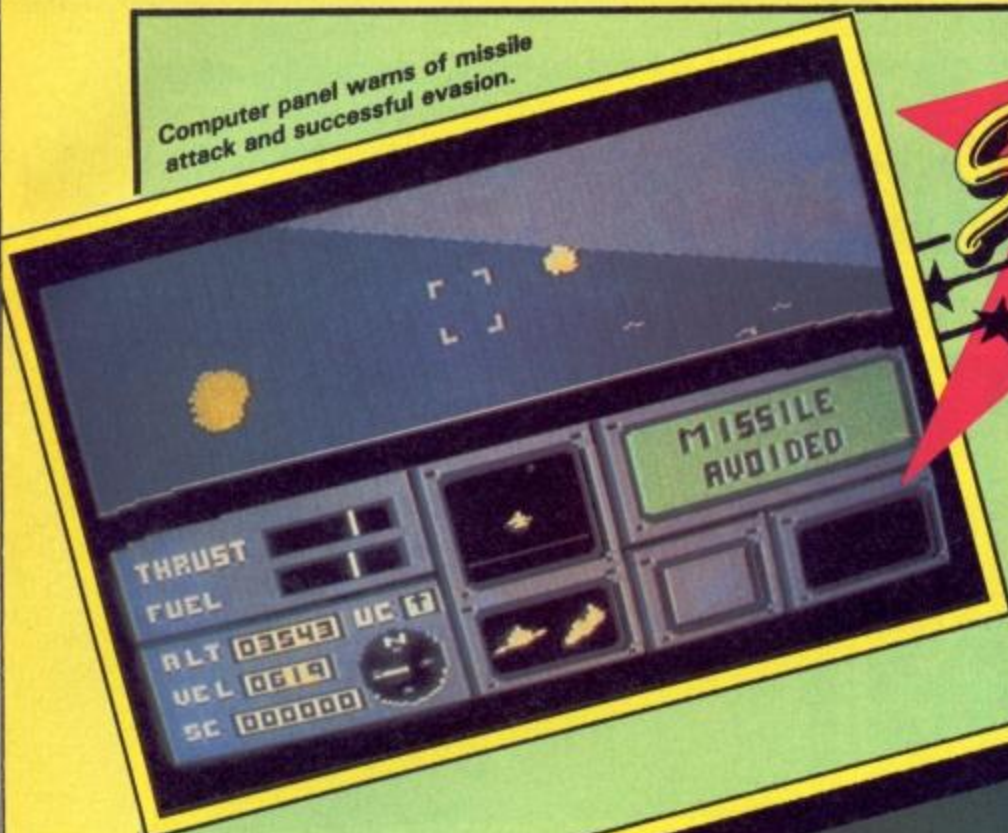
Those companies which have chosen to ignore the C-16 may find that they'll have to change their minds. So, if you bought a 16 over Christmas, don't worry, help is at hand. Meanwhile, a list of what's currently available follows whilst Screen Scene this month tests a few of the new titles out.

COMPANY	TITLE	TYPE	PRICE	AVAILABLE
Commodore	Mayhem	Arcade	£5.99	.
	Harbour Attack	Arcade	£5.99	.
	Stellar War/Blitz	Arcade	£5.99	.
	Crazy Golf	Simulation	£5.99	.
	UXB	Arcade	£5.99	.
	Space Sweep	Arcade	£5.99	.
	Jack Attack	Adventure	£14.99	.
	Pirate Adventure	Adventure	£11.99	.
	Atomic Mission	Adventure	£11.99	.
	Strange Odyssey	Adventure	£11.99	.
	Fire Ant	Arcade	£5.99	.
	Purple Turtles	Arcade	£5.99	.
	Exorcist	Arcade	£5.99	.
	Locomotion	Arcade	£5.99	.
Anirog	Galaxy	Arcade	£6.95	.
	Space Commander	Arcade	£6.95	.
	Out on a Limb	Arcade	£6.95	.
Bubble Bus	Hustler	Simulation	£6.99	.
	Cave Fighter	Arcade	£6.99	.
Citisoft	Slippery Sid	Arcade	£6.95	.
Craig Communications	Flight 015	Simulation	£5.95	.
Creative Sparks	Tower of Evil	Arcade	£5.95	11th March
CRL	Berks	Arcade	N/A	.
Gremlin Graphics	Zargon Wars	Arcade	£6.95	.
Llamasoft	Psychodelia	Entertainment	£6.00	.
Mastertronic	Jackpot	Simulation	£1.99	.
Microdeal	Mansion Adventure	Adventure	£3.99	.
	Williamsburg Adventure	Adventure	£3.99	.
	Cuthbert in Space	Arcade	£6.95	.
	Cuthbert Enters the Tombs of Doom	Arcade	£6.95	.
Melbourne House	Games Pack I	Various	£5.95	.
	Games Pack II	Various	£5.95	.
	Roller Kong	Arcade	£5.95	.
	Classic Adventure	Adventure	£5.95	.
	The Wizard and the Princess	Adventure	£5.95	.
Ocean	Hunchback II	Arcade	£6.95	1st March
	Daley Thompson	Simulation	£6.95	1st March
	Kong Strikes Back	Arcade	£6.95	1st March
Quicksilva	Purple Turtles	Arcade	£5.99	.
	Tornado	Arcade	£5.99	.
	Skyhawk	Arcade	£5.99	.
Romik	Pottit	Simulation	£6.99	.
	Blaze	Arcade	£6.99	.
Solar Software	Galaxians	Arcade	£6.95	.
	Monkey Magic Quest	Arcade	£6.95	.
Supersoft	Kaktus	Arcade	£3.95	.
	The Chip Factory	Arcade	£3.95	.
Tynesoft	Shoot-it/Climb-it/Munch-it/Hoppit (4-pack)	Arcade	£14.95	.
	Rig Attack	Arcade	£6.95	.
	Olympiad	Arcade	£6.95	.
	Lunar Docking	Arcade	£6.95	.
	Excalibur	Arcade	£6.95	.
	Zapem	Arcade	£6.95	.
				.
				.

* = available now

Screen Star

Computer panel warns of missile attack and successful evasion.



When the game is loaded, the menu screen presents you with a number of options: fly in summer, winter or at night, and a choice of five skill levels (the first is for training). You can opt for

either one or two player mode: in the latter, you get both pilot and weapons man, who operates the weapons using the keyboard.

An additional option is choosing a particular type of enemy — air, sea, ground or multi-role. Now to battle.

You wait patiently in your cockpit until you've gained enough speed. Then pull back, raise the undercarriage and you're away.

Look down and you'll see plenty of dials and panels. The plane's computer shows your altitude, speed and fuel. There are also side and front view indicators which show the angle of roll and pitch.

One nice touch is that the computer output panel warns of any dangers by actually speaking to you — sounds pretty good too. Underneath that, there's your rear-view camera and your weapons panel. There's also a radar screen with icons representing what's around you. You can also call up the computer's map to help you look around.

Learning how to fly ACE is certainly not easy but I'll guarantee you'll want to put in enough effort to master it. The toughest of the enemies, in my opinion, are the enemy planes. You deter their air missiles with your decoy flares — but hitting them is no small task.

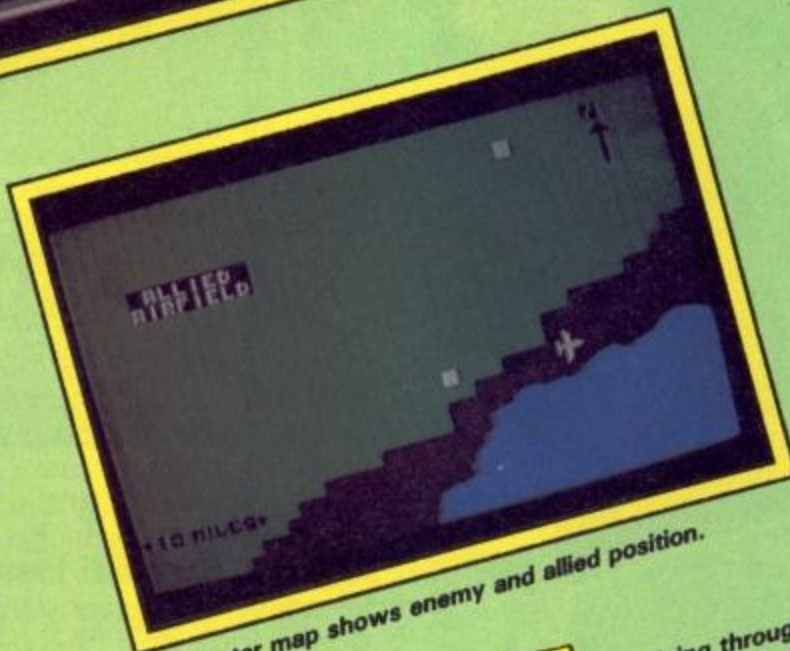
This is by far the best (certainly one of the only) dedicated Plus/4 games I've seen. If you've got one, go out and buy this. It's, er, ace.

Ferdy Hamilton

ACE Commodore Plus/4 Cascade Software Price: £10.95/cass

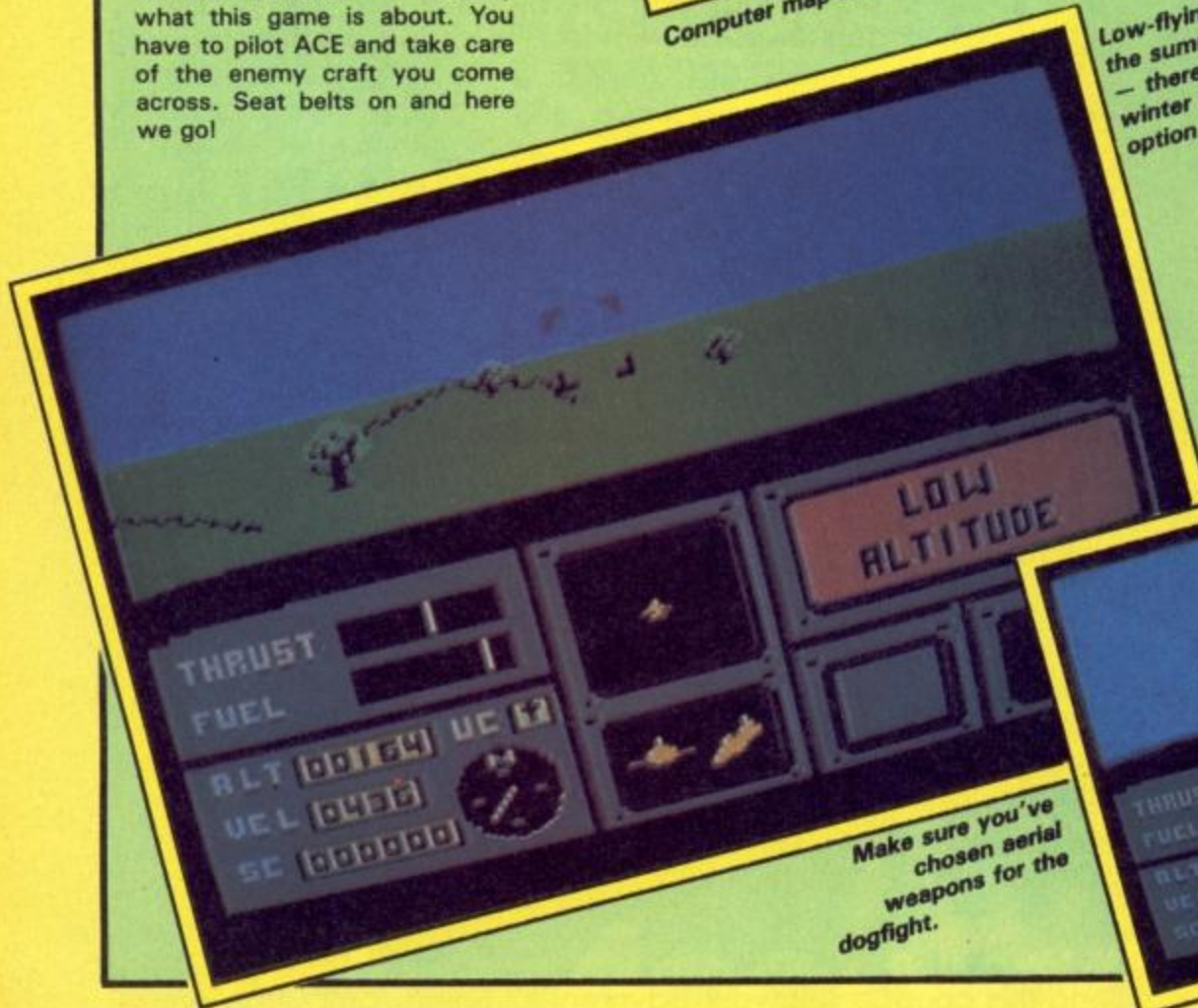
At long last, Plus/4 owners have a game that wasn't written for the 16 but actually takes advantage of the machine's full 64K.

ACE actually stands for Air Combat Emulator — exactly what this game is about. You have to pilot ACE and take care of the enemy craft you come across. Seat belts on and here we go!



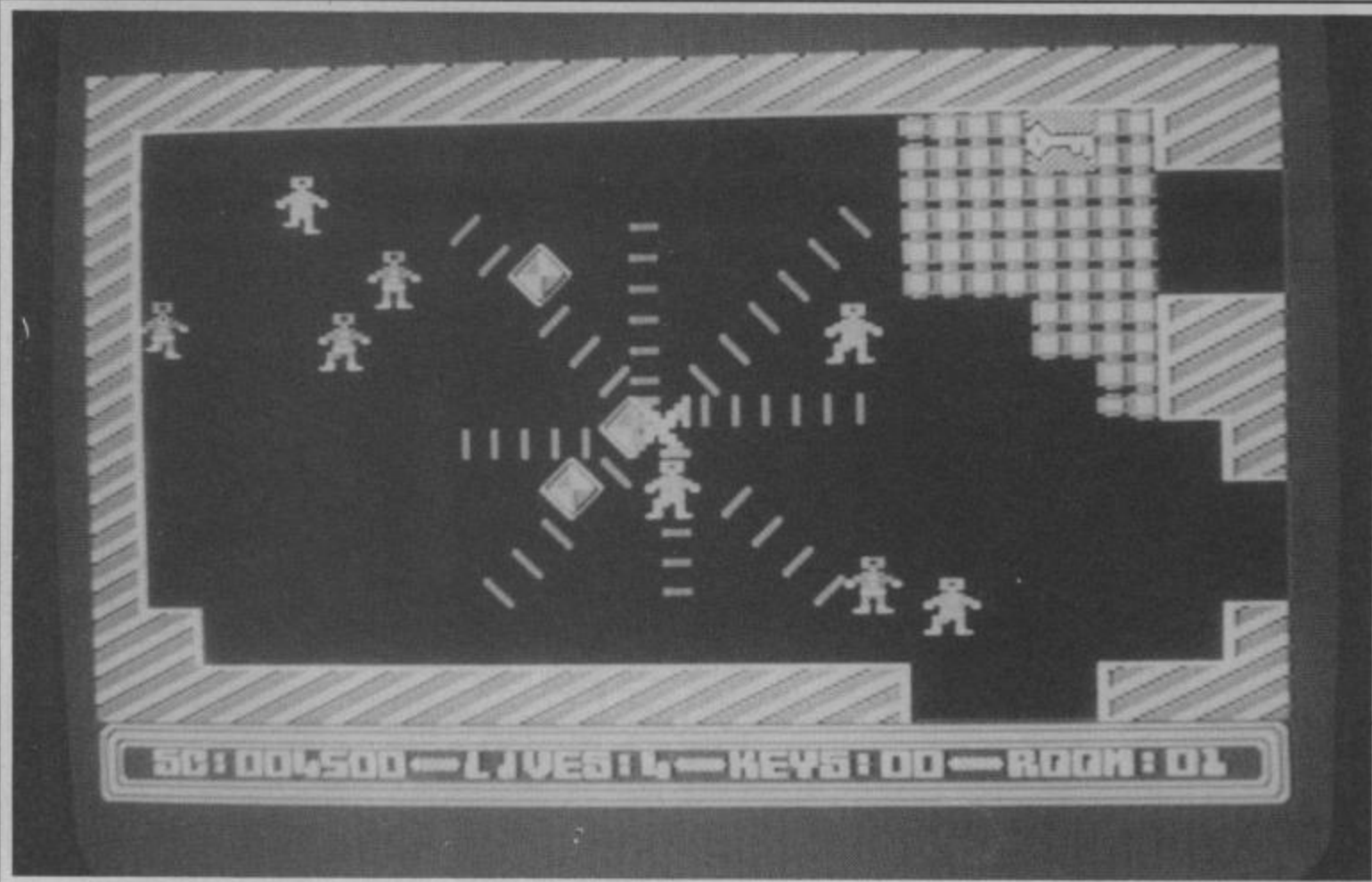
Computer map shows enemy and allied position.

Low-flying through the summer greenery — there's also a winter and night option.



Make sure you've chosen aerial weapons for the dogfight.

Graphics	★★★★
Sound	★★★★
Toughness	★★★★
Staying Power	★★★★
Value	★★★★



Berks III — more Berks for your bucks, probably the best of the three.

BERKS TRILOGY C16 and Plus/4 Price: £6.95/disk

The Berks games were first reviewed about a year ago in *Commodore User* when it wasn't trendy to review C16 games.

CRL were amongst the first to bring out half-decent games for the baby Commodore and now they have done it again by coming up with one of the first compilations.

Here is what our reviewer had to say about Berks I, II and III when they were first launched.

Berks I. "The Berks — robots to you and me — are infesting your monitor screen. Destroy them using your 'terror tank'. You have a major advantage in that the Berks can't fire back, or perhaps they are just too stupid.

They do have their faithful drones for protection though — that follow you around the screen trying to get you — one touch and you're dead. You can stun them by firing at them, but only temporarily. If you can exterminate them all before running out of energy or losing all five lives you go to the next screen which is just that bit harder. If

it's arcade action you're after you could do a lot worse than Berks."

Presentation	★★★
Skill level	★★★
Interest	★★★
Value	★★★

Berks II: "This is one of those games where you have to score points by painting blocks on a grid. Supercool bears, wearing shades and gold medallions try to thwart your efforts by repainting your work. Blast these with your 'fast action, high velocity, belt-mounted laser cannons'."

Talk about heavy on the arrangements. I must admit feeling a bit sorry for the supercool bears, up against that lot, with only a pair of Raybans to protect themselves.

The re-appearance of the hom-

ing drones from **Berks I** does little to enliven a basically lukewarm game."

Berks III. "Berks II is without doubt the best of the bunch.

You must penetrate the Berks inner sanctum and steal the source of their power — hoards of treasure.

On the way keys must be collected from each room. A more difficult task than it sounds, as each key is surrounded by a barrier of protective blocks, through which a path must be blasted.

To add to your problems, hordes of Berks and their faithful homing drones are in hot pursuit. You start with a generous five lives and can gain an additional

four by collecting the various hearts dotted around the place.

A game of frantic action and certainly the most fun I've had with my C16 so far."

Presentation	★★★
Skill level	★★
Interest	★★
Value	★★

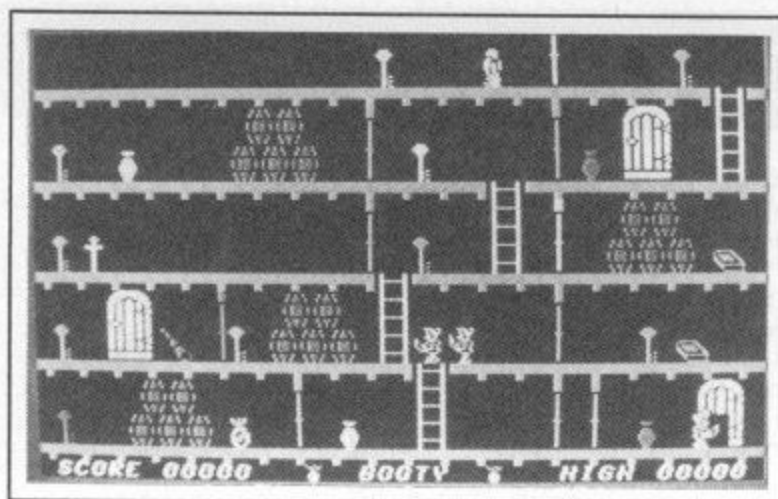
Conclusion.

Two excellent games, and one so-so one, all round a must for C16 and Plus/4 games nuts.

Presentation	★★★
Skill level	★★
Interest	★★
Value	★★



Berks mastermind John Williams blasting away in the CU office.



time and some keys are behind locked doors of a different colour. This is not a game for fools. Ending up in the wrong place with the wrong key can spell disaster.

As well as getting locked out, there are numerous other misfortunes that can befall young Jim. He can be cut down by a cutlass waving ghost

than a cabin boy, and some of the treasure is a bit difficult to make out. I saw the Eiffel Tower amongst other things, and I'd been well clear of the rum all night.

There is also that annoying sprite overlap problem, where everything around a moving character disappears momentarily. But that's hardly a criticism as nobody seems to have sorted it out yet.

None of this detracts from the game though, because the idea is a sound one and is fun to play. When the booty has been collected from all twenty screens you have 45 seconds

◀ The 'booty' litters the decks — gold, goblets, keys and cash.

● BOOTY ●

**C16 and Plus/4
FIREBIRD**

**Price:
£1.99/cass**

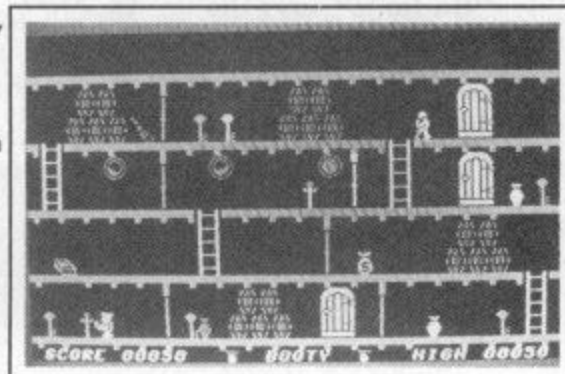
Booty was released some time ago for the 64 on which it received a rather lukewarm reception. Firebird have deemed it worthy of conversion for the Commodore 16 and surprisingly it's not half bad.

You are Jim the Cabin Boy (ahar). For some strange reason the ship has been deserted and you are the only one left on board (hoho). Cabin Boy's wages being what they are, you decide to search the Black Galleon's holds for the treasure which lies therein (hehe).

There's rather a lot of treasure lying around in the Black Galleon, but it's not that easy to get hold of. For a start there are locked doors all over the place. To pass through these you must first collect the appropriate key, each door is a different colour and has a key to match.

You can hold only one key at a

Look closely at the bottom of the screen and you can see that McMahon has only scored a pathetic 50.



pirate, pecked to death by a parrot, ravaged by rats — terrible things happen at sea.

The graphics are great and dreadful at the same time. How so! Well, some of them are brilliant, like the portholes with blue sea floating outside. Others are not so hot. Jim himself looks more like an astronaut

to locate the key which gives access the next level.

For those of you who like the personal details, *Booty* was written by Kevin Moughton, a name I've seen before on Firebird Software, possibly Shark. *Booty* is a much better effort, more of this please Kevin.

Ken McMahon

Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

8
Overall

COMMODORE 64/128K Bismarck

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COMING SOON

**C.U.
Screen
Star***

◀ **Pretty good graphics for the C16, eh?**

the ineptitude of many of the country's C16 programmers, why it couldn't be adequately converted. And bless me if Gremlin, who you have to consider as the best programmers on this machine, haven't gone and done the bizzo. It's just as good as the original.

◀ **... and you even get a welcoming message**



For those of you who haven't come across the game before let me explain. You control a bouncing ball and guide it up the screen whilst avoiding the many pitfalls that lie in wait for you. As you bounce along you make for the various tiles dotted around. Some, though, are unpassable or take you up unpassable routes. Others are singled out with question marks that may prove beneficial, but may just as often cause your undoing.

As you progress up the levels extra dangers appear in the form of exocet missiles, and although there's only five levels in this version, there's enough to keep you occupied with for a while. At the end of each level there's a bonus screen.

It all adds up to an excellent and entertaining game. And if that wasn't enough you get another one on the other side of the tape. *Planet Search* is in fact no less than an extremely fast and playable version of *Defender*. There have been plenty of other versions of this old classic, but none as good as this.

This is an excellent varied package and I strongly recommend you to get down the shop and buy it if you fancy some enduring arcade action.

Mike Pattenden

**C16/Plus/4
GREMLIN
GRAPHICS**

Price: £9.95/cass

**C.U.
Screen
Star***

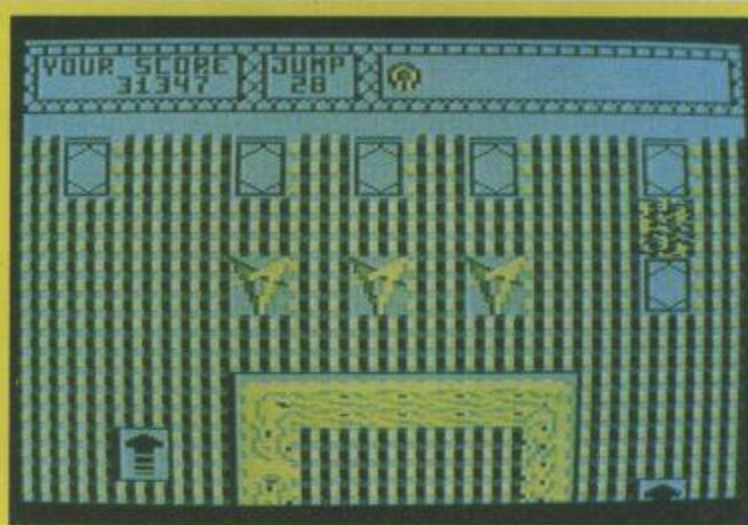
BOUNDER/PLANET SEARCH

If you're a C16 or Plus/4 owner your eyes must glisten with an anticipation and then cloud over with distrust when you hear of a conversion of one of the 64's top games. Far too many jobs have been botched, at least hurried out, on the smaller machine. *Commando*, *International Karate*, the list is large. *Bounder*, some of you may remember, scored instant success with its simple, novel gameplay when it was released about a year ago.

▶ **Graphics get better the further you reach**

Then the game asked little of the 64, except to animate hopscotch. It was gloriously simple, immensely playable, and furiously addictive. There's no real reason, apart from

▶ **You get a bonus screen after each level**



Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8
Overall

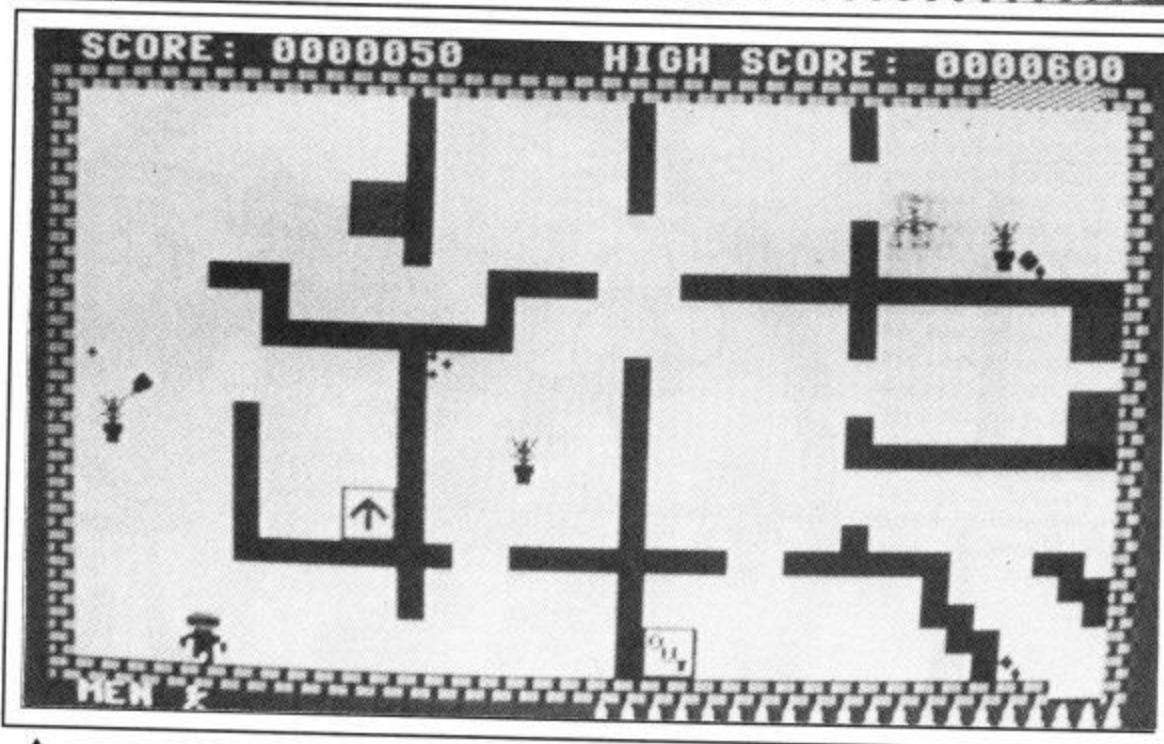
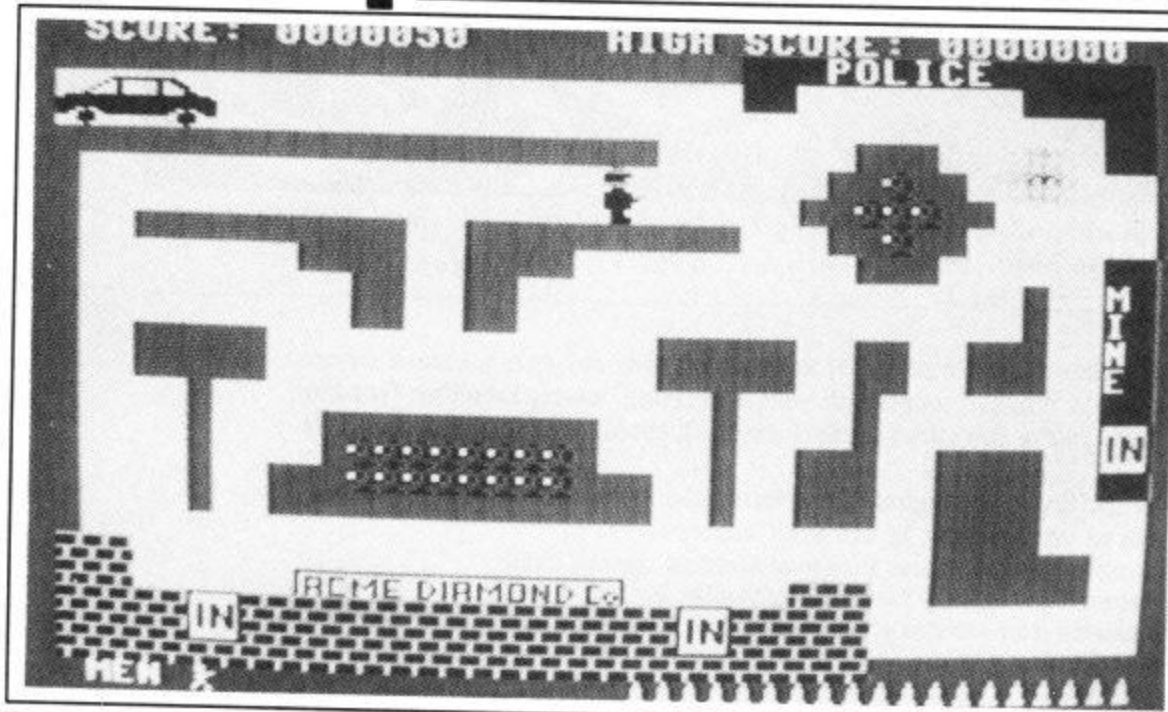
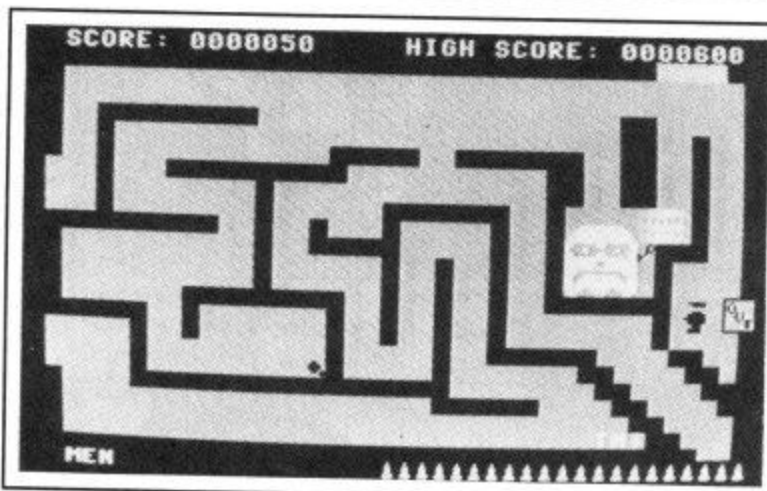
● COPS 'N' ROBBERS

**C16 and Plus/4
ATLANTIS**

Price: £2.95/cass

The cop is near the exit but it looks like the robber has already scarpered.

▼ Cops 'N' Robbers — "a glorified maze game very much on the average side of average".



▲ Watch out for those plant pots — they're deadly.

Cops 'n' Robbers could never be accused of being the most original game in the world, but if you condemned every game on that basis there wouldn't be an awful lot left to rave about. No one's passed a law against rip-offs yet, have they?

You'll be relieved to hear that you are on the wrong side of the law — cast as the blagger (sounds like a good title for a game). You must work your wicked way around several simple, maze screens collecting diamonds as you go.

The idea is to pick up as many diamonds as you can before making it back to the getaway car and dumping them in the boot. The Old Bill are constantly in hot pursuit, but in true to life fashion are pretty stupid and not too difficult to outwit.

If they become a nuisance you can always blast them to kingdom come with your trusty Magnum .45. The only problem is that your ammunition is in limited supply so you can't always waste as many as you might like to. The good news is that if you run out of bullets you get a new box when you return to the car to boot the loot, so to speak.

There are a few embellishments which take the game out of the mediocre league. Paths from the opening screen lead to the mines — populated by pacman-like ghosts — where you can find more diamonds and some TNT.

The remaining four screens comprise various floors of the ACME Diamond Company. On one floor is the safe, to which you must find the combination before making off with the big haul.

There are a few really annoying 'bugs'. On occasion, when moving from room to room, or leaving the lift you are instantly jumped upon by a cop, which I think is hardly fair. Speed and manoeuvrability are things I would place high on a list to move around. There's nothing more infuriating than not being able to get your villain through the door when the boys in blue are breathing down his neck and fingering his collar.

I have to say that I don't think this is worth three quid. I might be impressed if I'd found it in the listings at the back of CU, but it doesn't quite make the grade when you're paying for it.

Ken McMahon

Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

4
Overall

DIRTY DEN

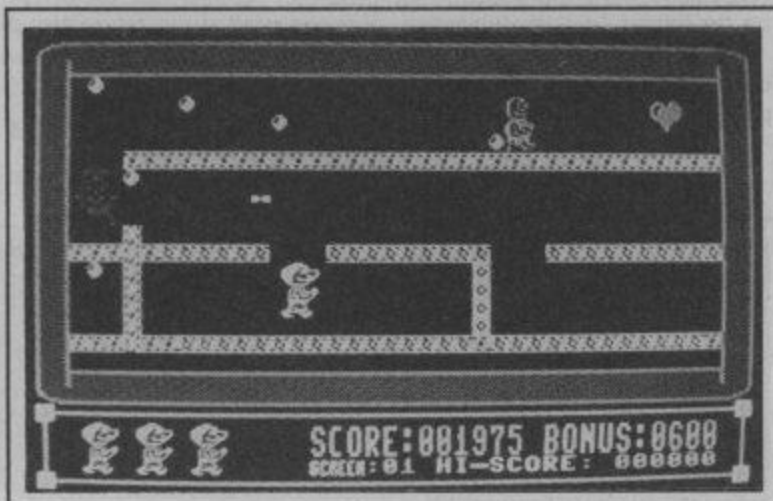
**COMMODORE
64/128
PROBE
SOFTWARE**

**Price:
6.95/cass**

Eastenders has taken the country's TV screens by storm since it began last year, and with characters like Denis Watts, the conniving landlord it's no wonder. He's in so many different places that it's no wonder

your way through some twenty or more screens of hectic platforms peopled by a variety of nasties until you reach the room where your lass is being held.

En route you'll have to collect the



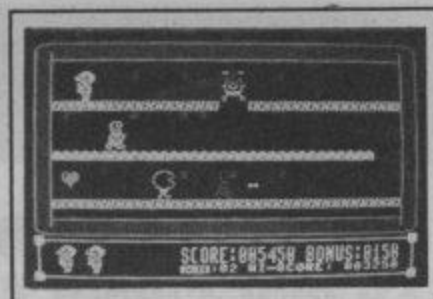
he should turn up in a computer game.

Actually *Dirty Den* just happens to have the same name as this very popular character. In this case, though, our Dennis is the complete antithesis of his TV namesake.

He's chivalrous — in fact a real gent. He's in hot pursuit of his loved one captured by a frustrated old wizard. He just has a bit of a body odour problem, o.k.?

The object of the game is to work

dozens of chocolates distributed all round the passageways. These you'll need to give to your greedy pig of a girlfriend when you find her. All



More chocolates and more nasties to avoid as DD progresses through the screens.

Just another platform game — jump to collect the chocolates before reaching the heart, and then next screen.

because the lady loves Milk Tray ... personally I'd rather have a Bourneville selection, but I'm spoilt.

Graphics are nice and colourful and the game plays quickly, with a fairly tough challenge that should keep you at the keyboard for a while.

Mike Pattenden



Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

6
Overall

Dirty Den Competition

We all know that Dirty Den the game has nothing to do with Dirty Den, the Eastenders dastardly double-dealing landlord Den Watts, which is why we thought we'd have an Eastenders competition.

Fergus McGovern of Probe Software has generously offered to put up thirty copies of the game plus an extra prize of a Seiko UC 1000 computerised watch. All you soap fans have to do is answer a few questions:



- 1) What's the name of Den's pub in Albert Square?
- 2) What's the name of his dog? (the poodle).
- 3) What is the name of Pauline and Arthur's son, now living in Southend?
- 4) What fictional London football team does Arthur support?

And now the tie-breaker, the one we love to set you. Right, we're going to ask you to be a bit nasty

here. Characters are always getting killed off in soap operas. So far everyone in Eastenders has escaped the grim reaper. So we want you to tell us which character you would most like to see get

the chop and why.

All answers to be in by July 15, 1986. The judge's (i.e. my) decision is absolutely final and nobody who has any dealings with the mag can enter, so there, Ken.

Answers

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)

Tie Breaker I would most like to see

written out, because

..... (twenty words max)

Name

Address

Send to: Dirty Den Competition, Commodore User,
30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AV.

THE EXPLOITS OF FINGERS MALONE

**C16 and
Plus/4
MASTER-
TRONIC**

**Price:
£1.99/cass**

After just reviewing *Street Olympics* I thought *Exploits of Fingers Malone* might just be as bad or worse.

Fortunately, I was proved wrong and Mastertronic have shown once more that they can produce good quality games at a fraction of the price of the big software houses. *Fingers Malone* is back to their normal standard. It is a fast and furious platform game that boasts fifteen levels of sheer thrill power.

The aim of the game is to collect the keys to the safe, and the money that is left lying around the place. You must also turn the links in the floor from black to white (instead of

points you receive money). This is done by walking over the links but be very careful that you don't miss a link.

Sounds easy I know but as with all good platform games there are the nasties. In this case Blinkey, Sparkey, Thingy and Wotsit are constantly trying to stop you from collecting the loot.

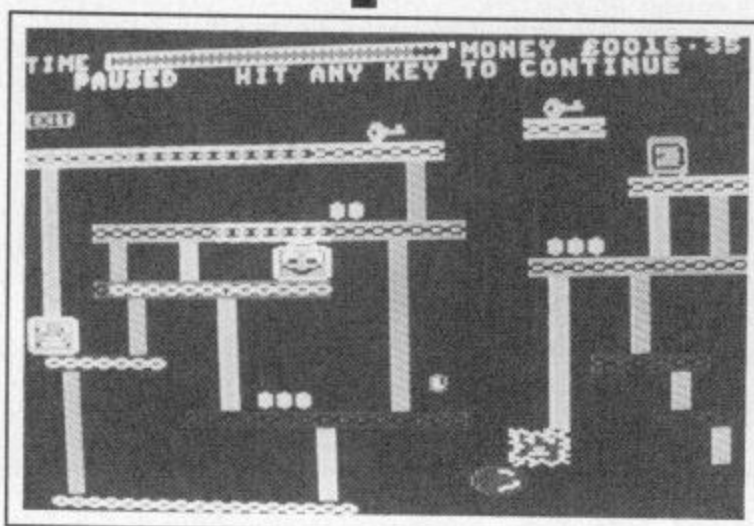
To make things more difficult than they already are, there are poles connecting each level. Some poles are for up and some are for down. If you are not careful you'll find yourself in a dead end, and at the mercy of nasties.

Also on some of the platforms there are conveyor belts which move in two directions, left or right. When being chased by a nasty it could mean the difference between life and death depending on which direction

the conveyor belt is moving. You need all your wits about you for this one. The old grey matter is working overtime just writing about it. But not to worry, help is on the way. To help you with your task they have installed lifts which you simply call by pressing a button. When travelling on a lift, it rings at each floor. Remember some platforms are impossible to reach without the lift.

If after all this you have managed to collect the money and keys, and turned every single link in the floor from black to white, the safe can then be unlocked. Then it is possible to make your way to the exit, which takes you to level two entitled Douccy in the Dog House. This is similar to level one entitled 'Easy Does It', but quicker and more complicated.

If your kind of game is one that requires skill and fast reflexes and you have the capability to deal with another platform game, then this is the one for you. **James Pickering**



◀ **Mastertronic avoid taking the wooden spoon this month with Fingers Malone.**

Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

7
Overall

BOMB JACK

**C16 and
Plus/4
ELITE**

**Price:
£9.95/cass**

This Tehkan coin-op has already done well for Elite on the 64 and the Spectrum. The 64 version is fine but, Oh boy, this version is just unplayable.

The Jack who stars in the game is a sort of super Mickey Mouse. Complete with cape and natty little red suit he flits around the different screens collecting piles of bombs left lying casually around.

But it's not just a case of collecting the bombs. One of them is

about to go off so you have to get this one first. Then another one will flash and so on. I found it nye on impossible to follow the sequence properly. You just don't have the control over Jack to get him safely onto the correct platform.

Needless to say there are several nasties in the game who try to stop you going about your business.

Jack flies through the air by pressing the fire button and pushing the stick forward. This will make a particularly big leap. But once his jump reaches its highest point he will start to sink down again so you have to move him right or left to land on the platform with the next bomb on it.

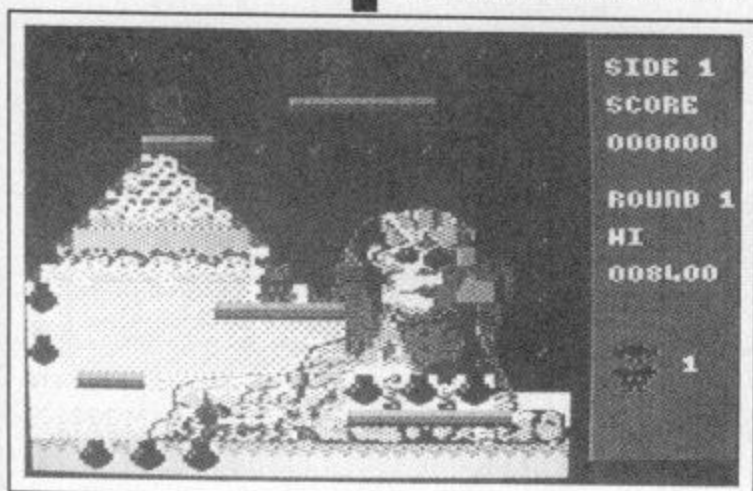
Pulling back on the joystick is supposed to make Jack fall back down at any point during a jump. At least that's what it says in the instructions and that's also what happens in the real coin-op. But in the C16 version — forget it.

There are also supposed to be floating coins that you can catch to freeze the nasties and enable you to earn bonus points as you charge around the screen unhindered.

I played the game for hours and didn't spot one bonus coin.

The game was converted to the C16 for Elite by a company called The Conversion Company. My advice to Elite is to convert to someone else quick. Avoid this one — there are better games to be had for much less of the folding stuff.

Eugene Lacey



◀ **Bomb Jack bombs out on the C16.**

Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

3
Overall

ENERGY	WEST HAM	SOUTHEND
MORALE	10	7
DEFENCE	10	4
MIDFIELD	12	10
ATTACK	13	10
PLAYERS PICKED= 11		
(<RETURN> TO CHANGE TEAM		
OR TYPE 99 TO CONTINUE		
? 99		
MATCH IN PROGRESS		
WEST HAM	1	SOUTHEND 0
WEST HAM	2	SOUTHEND 0
WEST HAM	3	SOUTHEND 0
WEST HAM	4	SOUTHEND 0
FINAL SCORE		
WEST HAM	4	SOUTHEND 0
GATE RECEIPTS	5000	
END 33 AUG 82		

Screen Scene

Looks like Southend are taking a drubbing at the hands of the Hammers.

exactly big names these days, and let's face it on a game as simple as this it's only a matter of a bit of editing.

Faced with a team like that you'll want to do a Spurs and buy as quickly as possible. Whether the

All this is displayed on screen, and, assuming your squad is strong enough you'll be able to make up for deficiencies by juggling players around. Skill ratings for each team member are displayed along with their energy rating (which depletes over the number of games they play) and their status (playing, injured or dropped). Quite why players' skill rating changed from one season to the next (Bryan Robson fluctuates from 1-5) defeats me though.

FOOTBALL MANAGER

C16 and Plus/4 ADDICTIVE GAMES

Price: £8.99/cass



Football Manager has done very, very well over just about every format possible (just how well you'll have to decide if you want to enter the competition that comes with this game).

They've finally got their act together with a version for the 16 now, and about time too. But is it up to scratch or are they likely to be seeking re-election in the lower

choice you'll get is any better I'm not sure. I was never offered anyone special en route to the Second

The seasons get longer as you progress up the leagues, but I was a bit disappointed to find out that not

(<P> IN TEAM, <I> INJURED)			
NAME	NO.	SKILL	ENERGY
MR. PARKES	1	10	11
MR. NEAL	2	10	11
MR. MARTIN	3	10	11
MR. SAISON	4	10	11
MR. OSMAN	5	10	11
MR. ROBSON	6	10	11
MR. GRAY	7	10	11
MR. HODDLE	8	10	11
MR. OWEN	9	10	11
MR. MCALL	10	10	11
MR. MORLEY	11	10	11
MR. HADDLE	12	10	11
PLAYERS PICKED= 11			
TYPE PLAYER NO. TO ADD TO TEAM			
OR TYPE 99 TO CONTINUE			
? 2			

Pattenden's top eleven (Wot no Bristol City players? — Ed).

Division, (that's as far as I've got). Naturally, it's all down to the money so the first temptation you're offered at the start of the season is an option for a loan. What happens if you end up like Swansea isn't clear to me so far though, because I've always been quite careful with my money. (You can say that again — Ed).

Add that to the fact I didn't get offered one player one season I was in the Fourth and you'll understand my miserliness.

Each game you play, you'll be confronted by a screen with information as to the strength of your team. The number of players playing, rating in defence, midfield and attack. Other important factors include energy and most importantly, morale. Morale counts for a lot believe me. If the lads do bad, then it's time for a misery rating, which seems to give teams with similar ratings elsewhere that edge over you.

only were the fixtures exactly the same, but that you played home and away consecutively against each side.

Another notable omission in the C16 version is the lack of any arcade representation of the games. Instead all you get is a bulletin message like Saturday's vidprinter and a sound every time a goal is scored like the kettle's boiling over.

For all these criticisms Football Manager is as good as it's other machine counterparts even if it's less polished. Nevertheless after what has been a very good run for the game after a few seasons in the first division I feel it could have been updated and improved without too much effort by Addictive (and we wouldn't want the software houses going to any trouble for us would we?).

Overall a fair conversion but let's face it, it's a game of two halves and I've got a feeling Gremlin's new footy game, might come through to steal a win. Back to the studio and the rest of the day's results.

Mike Pattenden

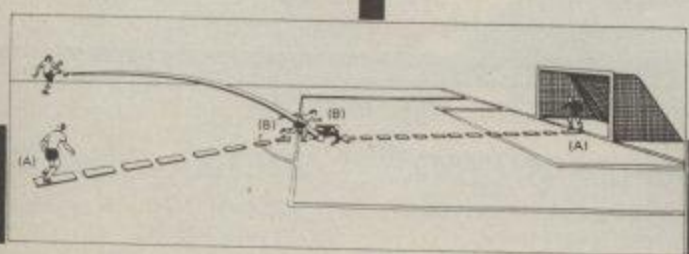


leagues of the Commodore market? My honest opinion is that they need to buy a few players now if they are to avoid a relegation struggle.

It doesn't matter who you are, Liverpool, Everton, Man. U. or Bristol City (yaay! Ed) you always start from scratch. If you couldn't bear to manage one of these clubs don't worry you can enter your own. I'll stick with the Hammers which is, rightly, one of the standing options.

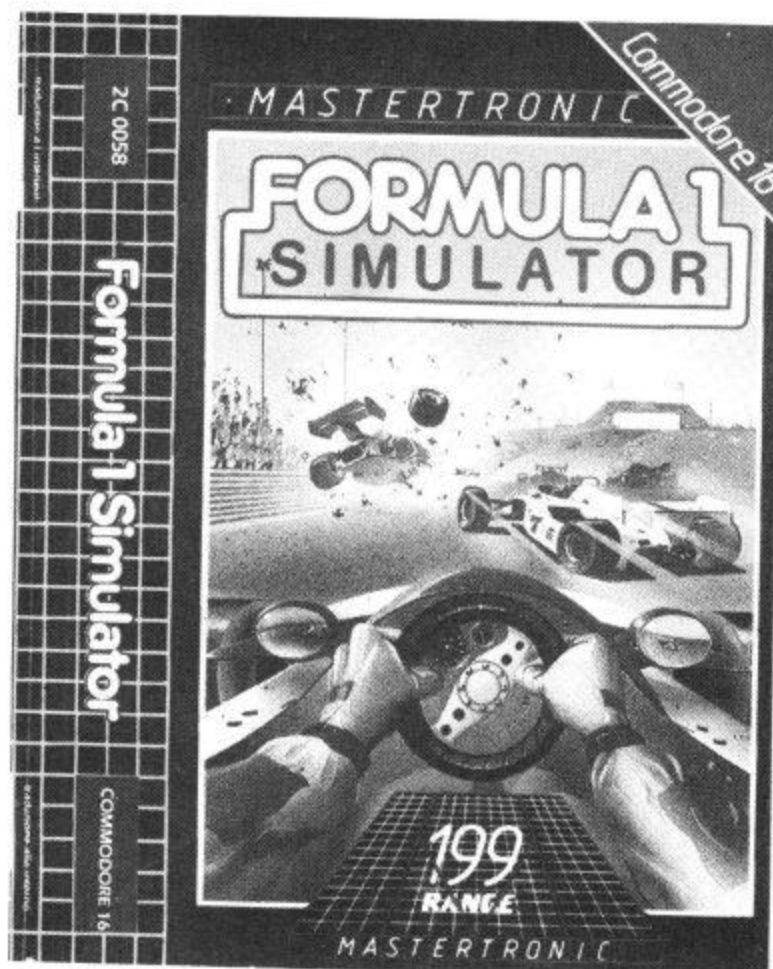
It's a shame though that you can't enter your own players. Believe me you're going to end up with some right donkeys I can tell you. Just take a look at some of the old men you end up with. Some of these guys are drawing their pension Thursday and turning out for you two days later. It's criminal. Anyone remember Trevor Cherry? He played for Leeds when they were a great club — that's how long ago he played.

No messing though, I felt that a little updating could have been done because some of your team aren't



Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound	N/A
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Overall	

6



Formula 1 Simulator Commodore 16 Mastertronic Price: £1.99/cass

Hard on the tail of *Death Race 16* which we reviewed last month comes Formula 1 Simulator by Mastertronic.

There's a basic difference of approach in Mastertronic's effort. Instead of buildings whizzing past your eyeballs at 200 mph, formula one keeps the scenery on the horizon. The track is marked out by little white stakes against a grassy green backdrop. The bottom half of the screen shows your instrument panel if you could fit that. In the centre is the steering wheel, this turns when you tweak the joystick or press the appropriate key, both options are included. Remaining time is shown on a countdown clock as is the time taken to complete the current lap. The bottom right-hand side of the screen shows your speed, gear, number of cars passed and of course your score.

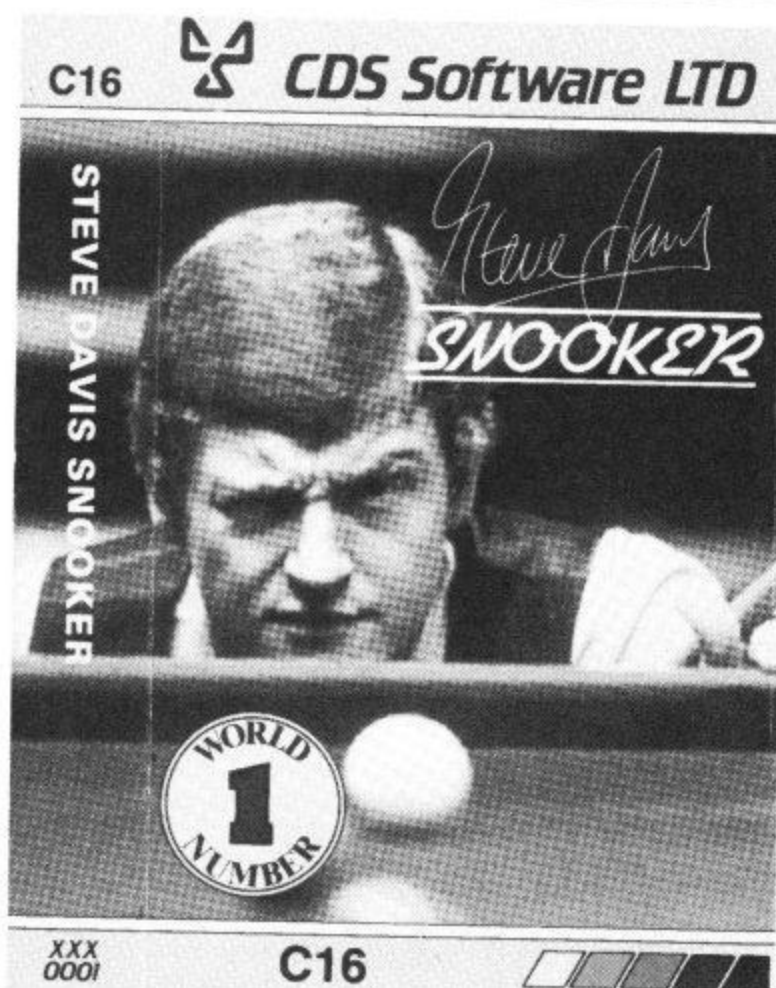
If I were to criticise something it would be the lack of challenge in the course. It doesn't exactly push you to the limits of your driving skills. The long straights which allow you to reach speeds

of 300-400 mph are terminated by either left or right-hand 45 degree bends. After a short while this becomes a bit predictable and therefore monotonous.

The other cars provide a tricky diversion. They don't go incredibly fast so the tendency is to race up behind them at breakneck speed. The only way to avoid a collision in these circumstances is to slam into low gear (there are only two). They can be passed quite easily, but it means losing a lot of time, especially if there are two or three in one spot. You are awarded bonus time on completion of each lap. To begin with, it takes longer to finish a lap than the time bonus you get for it. If this happens you will run out of time after two or three laps and points will be added to your score for any cars you passed. With a bit of practice it's possible to keep going for a lot longer.

Although Formula One is an easy game to master it has a continuity about it, you don't crash every five seconds. This makes it good fun, but it could have limited appeal.

Graphics	★★★★
Sound	★★★
Toughness	★★
Staying Power	★★
Value	★★★★



Steve Davis Snooker Commodore 16 CDS Software Price: £7.95/cass

Steve Davis Snooker was originally released on the Commodore 64 about six months ago. It was, and probably still is the best snooker game for the 64. Sadly, the only similarity between that and this C16 version is the picture of Steve on the inlay.

The first megadisappointment is that you can't play the computer. As playing yourself at snooker must rate as one of the most boring pastimes in the history of the world you'll have to find an opponent.

As anyone who has watched snooker on a black and white T.V. will tell you it's not always easy to follow what's going on. Because of the C16's colour limitations the same problem arises. The brown and pink are easily confused with the reds and I kept losing the cueball altogether. CRL have, at least, recognised the problem and have recorded two versions on the

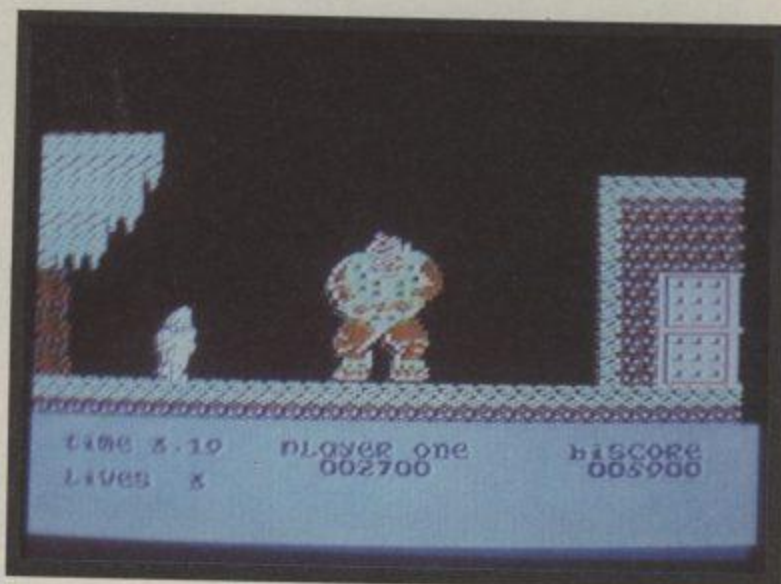
tape, one with a green table and the other black. I found the green clearer, but it may depend on your T.V.

Apart from that you have a pretty faithful rendition of the game. Each player takes it in turn to cue up with the cursor. Spin can be put on the ball, but unlike the 64 version you can't decide on how much, you've either got it or you ain't. Finally, you have to decide whether to smack it one or go for a gentle pot using the power meter at the bottom of the screen. The scoring is updated automatically and foul strokes are penalised according to the rules.

If you're a dedicated aficionado then Steve Davis will no doubt appeal to you. But I think that CRL have been too ambitious this time. In the transition to the smaller machine all the best bits of the game have had to be dropped.

Ken McMahon

Graphics	★★
Sound	★★
Toughness	★★★★
Staying Power	★★
Value	★★★★



▲ Ikaaku, the gatekeeper bars your progress to the next level. Don't think you can get away with using autofire either it's been disabled.

favourable. Having seen a lot of the 64 version through its development and in its completed form I had to force myself to have a severe amnesia attack so as to stop myself judging this by unfair standards. (Having twelve pints at lunchtime wasn't necessary though — Ed)

The immediate problem is with the characters. They look as if they're surrounded by a black cage. There's a large block around each one which is at its most noticeable as they move in front of any coloured background. As your knight climbs the ladder in the graveyard he looks like he's in a glass lift. The problem simply disappears of course against many of the darker backgrounds in the game.

The other problem the blocks throw up comes when your knight makes contact with the other

Whilst we're on minuses there are quite a few omissions in this game. Most upsetting of all you'll be dismayed to hear is that Elite only managed to get two levels in. Even separate loads would have been acceptable for at least one more level. Add to that a distinct lack of demons and venus fly traps and worst of all no dragon, and you'll understand my disappointment. I don't expect the C16 to look like the 64 or have the depth, but I know there are ways and means of getting round these things.

The lack of various nasties may explain why *Ghosts* is so niggly to complete. The gatekeeper at the end of the first level (there's two at the end of the second) is very hard to beat indeed. It's easy to get as far as them with so few obstacles but you'll have a job finishing them off.

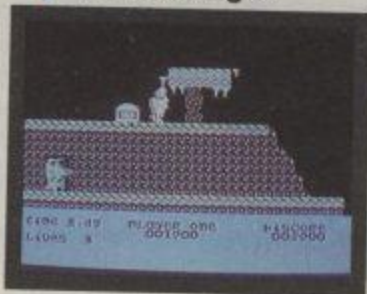
● GHOSTS 'N' GOBLINS

C16 and Plus/4 ELITE

Price: £7.95/cass

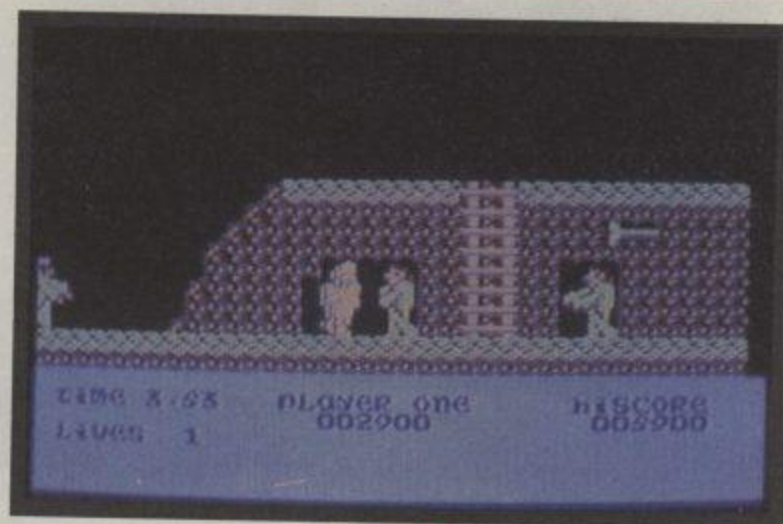
How excited all you sixteen and plus fourers must get at the prospect of loading up an arcade conversion onto your cruelly ignored machines — especially one which has already proved to be an enormous hit in its 64 format.

Take the route over the mound for simplicity's sake — but any route's easy at this stage.



I won't insult you all with the scenario of *Ghosts* I know you've been waiting for it in desperation. Just prepare to do battle left to right across your TV screens.

First impressions aren't too



See what I mean about those nasty looking blocks caging each character?

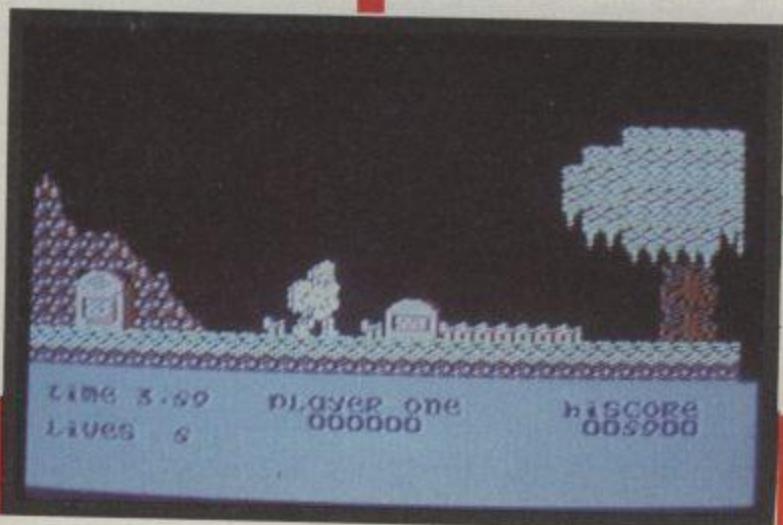
characters. What looks like a gap isn't one quite simply. Don't make the mistake of thinking you've still got time to kill a zombie if he's half a step away. Forget it, the blocks make contact and phut! A life gone.

There is a good reason for the blocks though and that's speed. For a C16 game *Ghosts* is very quick and quite smooth in its scrolling. Full characters would have slowed it down considerably. I know which I'd rather have, you get used to the blocks pretty quickly and the game is still playable.

There's no real sound to speak of and many other little holes I could pick in this game, but I think I've picked enough because the overall impression I get of *Ghosts* is that it's a lot better than its flaws suggests. For one more level I'd have given it a Screen Star as unreservedly as I gave the 64 version. You deserve more value though.

Mike Pattenden

◀ In the graveyard and not a zombie in sight — the game's only just begun.



Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

6
Overall

Hit And Miss Commodore 16 Venturegate Price £5.95/cass

What you might call an interesting little number, or might not, depending I suppose, on exactly where your interests lie. *Hit And Miss* is one of those 'mastermind' type games where you attempt to guess a computer generated number sequence.

You can play on your own or try and prove your intellectual superiority over an opponent, a younger brother or sister strikes me as a fairly safe bet.

To start with things are fairly simple. The C16 thinks up a two digit random number and you have several bashes at guessing what it is. To help you out you are given various useful clues like

what the digits in the secret number add up to. You are told how many digits you have guessed in their correct positions and their total value when added together.

This is more useful than it sounds as it enables you to determine which numbers you guessed correctly. Finally, you are told exactly how many of the digits in your guess are in the hidden number. By now you're undoubtedly thinking that only a complete and utter drongo would find such a task intellectually stimulating, and you'd be dead right. But things get more difficult. When you've guessed the two digit number you get a three digit one to fathom and so on up to ten digits.

After each correct guess you get a sort of progress report. This includes the total time taken, number of moves, your score



and intellect rating. I played in starter mode, but the more ambitious will probably move on to skilled or expert modes which offer less information on the validity of your guesses.

If I slag this off I'll probably be branded as a mindless moron whose idea of an intellectually

stimulating program is Crossroads. All the same I don't think it will have a wide appeal. **[K.M]**

Presentation: ■■■■■
Skill level: ■■■■■
Interest: ■■■■■
Value for money: ■■■■■

3D Gloopier Commodore 16 Audiogenic Price £4.95/cass

Remember Pacman? Well, *3D Gloopier* isn't anything like that. Actually it does bear a passing resemblance. Gloopier is a maze game in which you have to roam around picking up dots whilst at the same time avoiding the gloopers — little monsters out to munch you to death. There is the odd red dot lying around here and there and if you pick up one of these the gloopers become all weak and feeble for a short time enabling you to munch them.

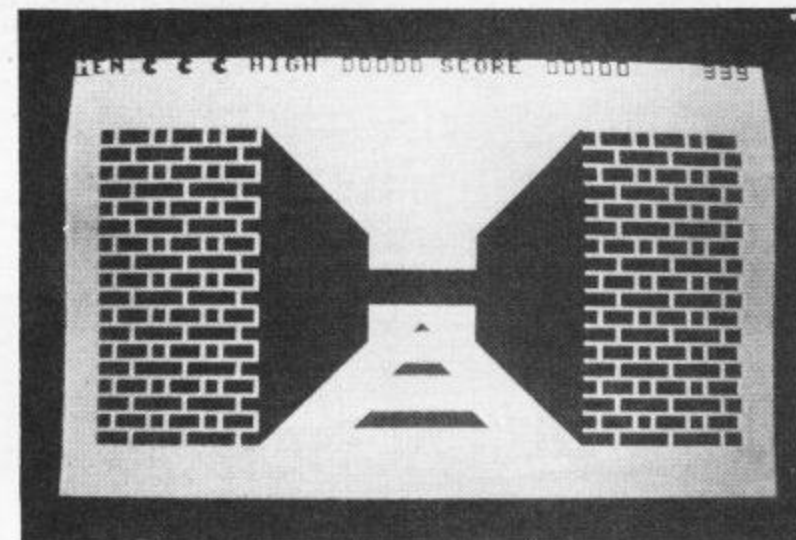
There the similarity with Pacman ends. What makes Gloopier

different is that it is 3D. Not much of a distinction you might think, but it does make it a lot more interesting. There are over three hundred dots to collect off the maze floor, I haven't managed it yet, but given another hour and a more cautious approach I'm sure it won't prove too difficult.

The radar makes things a bit easier. When the gloopers get too close for comfort a warning bleeper sounds off. Pressing F1 displays a sort of short range map showing what gloopers and dots are where in the immediate vicinity.

On the whole a hard game to criticise. The graphics are about par for the 16, 3D mazes always look a bit monotonous because they're program generated.

I was going to say don't bother



with Gloopier if you've already got a 3D maze job, but I can't recall having seen another one on the 16. **[K.M]**

Presentation: ■■■■■
Skill level: ■■■■■
Interest: ■■■■■
Value for money: ■■■■■

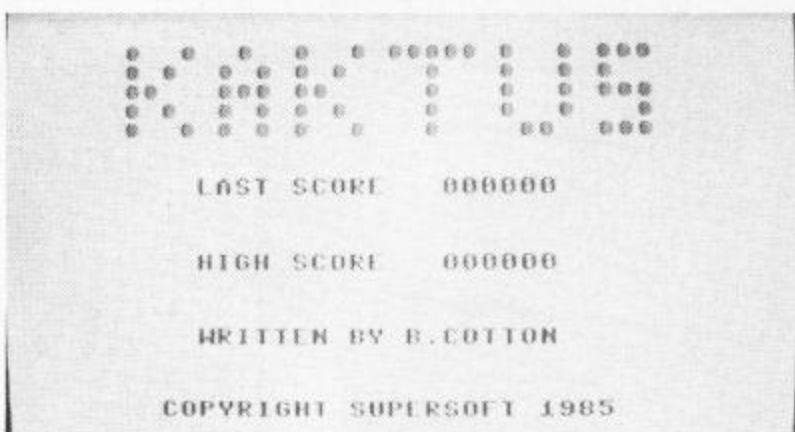
Kaktus Commodore 16 Audiogenic Price £4.95/cass

I'll be honest. There's a tendency when reviewing C16 games to make allowances for the software because of the machine's limitations. You find yourself saying 'what do you expect with only 16K and no hardware graphics support'. But then excellent games have been produced on the 16, the *Berks* trilogy for instance. *Kaktus* doesn't come into that category, though it's by no means bad either.

To describe it simply, there's a cactus (cactus ginormus to be precise) smack in the middle of

the screen. There are hordes of wasps and hornets bearing down on it aiming to munch it to bits. You, the budding cactophile, must save it by blasting the bugs out of the sky. Simple as that.

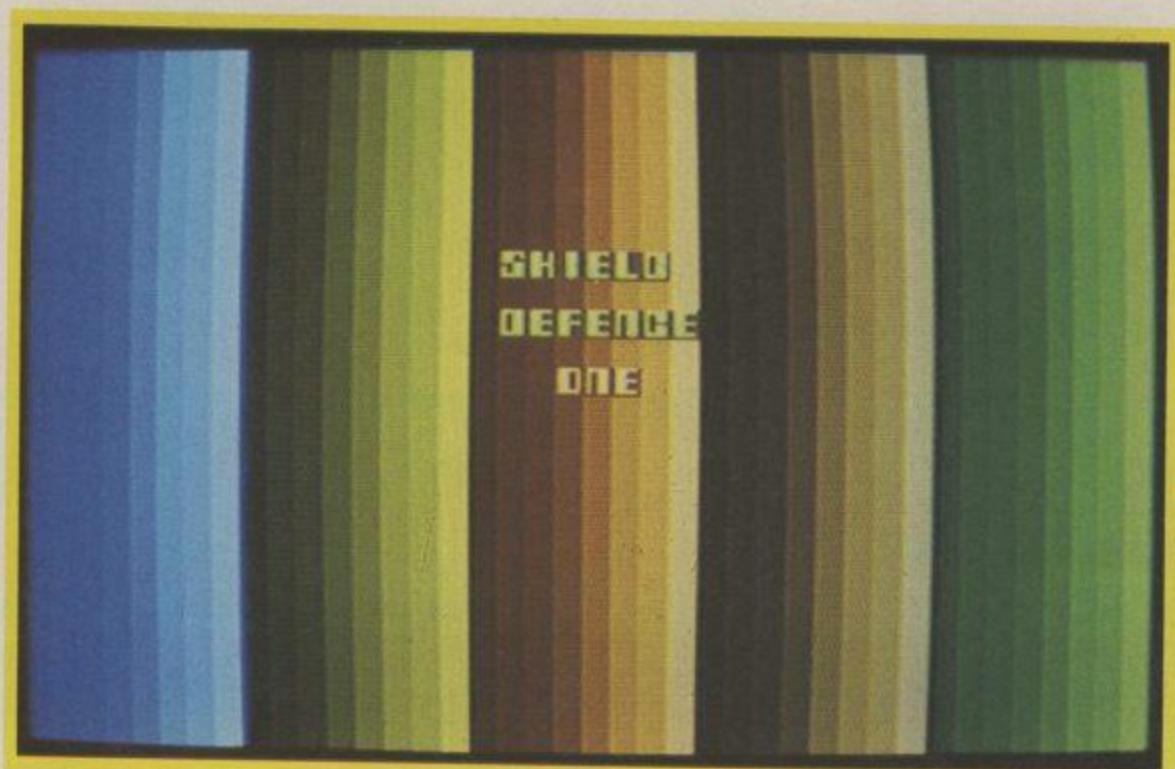
There are a few added problems. You must protect the cactus on both sides and you can only do this by going underground, no problem as you can easily re-emerge through a hole. Except there's a mole who keeps blocking them up. Also, the wasps drop stuff all over the place (I'll leave it to your imagination to guess what it is), contact with this is deadly. Not surprising when you see what it does to the ground. Oh, I almost forgot. After a while this buzzard appears and drops eggs on you, this has the same effect as the wasp do.



So there you are. It's a straight fight between you and the flatulent wasps for control of the Kaktus. At the end of each screen bonus points are awarded depending on how much of the prickly plant you've managed to salvage. A pretty elementary

game, but one that will appeal to the less experienced maybe. **[K.M]**

Presentation: ■■■■■
Skill level: ■■■■■
Interest: ■■■■■
Value for money: ■■■■■



Turn up the colour knob on your telly.

recommend to the inexperienced. Everything happens so quickly it takes a while just to work out what's going on. But once you do get the hang of it, the rewards are great. There aren't many experiences that compare with playing at three times light speed.

HYPERFORCE

C16 and Plus/4
ARIOLASOFT

Price:
£1.99/cass

Screen
Star

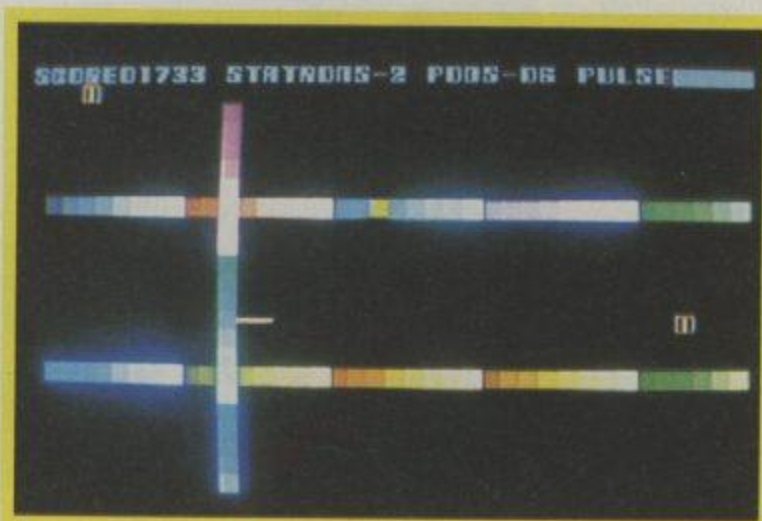
A game like this turns up about as often as Halley's Comet. Hyperforce is that rare thing, a totally original idea, superbly programmed with excellent sound and graphics.

No platforms, no ladders, no nasty beasts, no treasure. Who needs them? In fact, Hyperforce is so different, it's not easy to describe, nothing to compare it with you see.

But it does have a familiar look about it, Jeff Minter circa 1984 I'd say. Someone out there obviously likes his style, which is, for those of you who don't know, sort of, well, wierd.

Hyperforce is arcade action played at about three times the speed of light. You control the Startron, or at least half of it. The right half has been badly damaged so you must pick up pods with the operable left half.

Before your Startron pulse runs out you must retrieve a given number of pods, in the meantime the chamber walls are closing in on you. The walls absorb pods as they sweep over them, so you must hold them back, either by firing at them, or by dragging them back. The pods pop up all over the place though, so you have to be careful not to squash



Push back the walls whilst collecting the square pods.

them by dragging the walls back over them.

Each Startron has a limited lifespan or pulse in which to collect the required number of pods. On later screens the pulse can be extended by collecting tymers which slow down the pulse counter. You have to keep one eye on the sub tracts, however, which have the opposite effect. They speed up the pulse counter, giving you less time to collect pods.

This isn't a game I would

Did I mention the graphics? Not really graphics so much as bands of colour — all over the place, turn the colour knob right up to get the best effect, and the sound too. If you don't have a colour telly go and buy one, buy two and play them both at the same time.

Seriously though, this is a great game and if you don't buy it you're an utter utter utter utter (*spit it out* — Ed) Wally.

Ken McMahon

Second screen — the walls form a triangular shape.



Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

9
Overall

● INDOOR SOCCER

C16 and Plus/4 MAGNIFICENT 7

Price:
£4.99/cass

There are two teams and that's about the only resemblance this game bears to the real thing. You can either play against a friend — if you can interest one — otherwise the C16 is your opponent.

At kick off time you get a grandstand view of the pitch at the halfway line. As the play moves to either end, usually your own, the screen pans to take in the action. The ref blows his whistle (there isn't actually a referee, you have to pretend) and you're away — or rather the opposition is. It took me a good ten minutes to work out exactly what was going on and that was after I'd realised the instructions

had told me to put the joystick in the wrong port.

During the course of play the player nearest the ball is the active one, or at least should be. He is the one who will respond to your joystick or keyboard controls. In practice the active players seem to change quite arbitrarily and you always get lumbered with the one who's in the least useful position.

Taking possession is simple you just walk up to the ball and it's yours, unless of course the opposition have it, in which case a bit of cynical fouling is on the cards. You can kick the ball using the fire button, strength being determined by the length of time you hold it down. I reckon many hours practice would be required to produce anything like accurate passing.

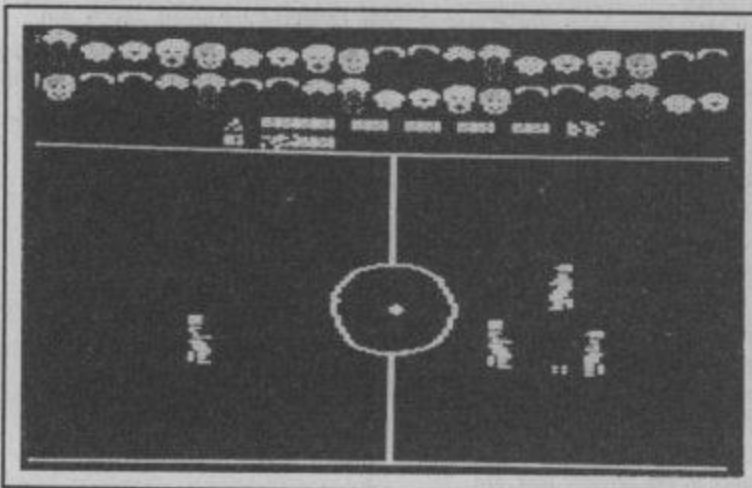
If you actually manage to score the crowd goes wild, pulling funny faces and clapping. It's a pity there's no sound here as it might have gone some way to improving things.

So what's wrong with it? Well for a start there is little resemblance between this and football. Fouls go unpunished — despite what it says in the blurb about a penalty kick (from the centre spot!). Virtually everytime I managed to gain possession I had the legs chopped from under me, dirty isn't the word. This wouldn't have been so bad had the promised fight developed — for which you are awarded a penalty — but they just wouldn't be goaded.

This was very definitely not a game of two halves. When we were supposed to change ends the score reset and a new game was started, just when I was poised for a 9-0 comeback.

On top of all this the graphics are pretty poor. The players look like poorly drawn matchstick men, are very flickery and at times bits of them disappear completely. Magnificent 7 won't score with this one.

Ken McMahon



Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

2
Overall

● THE RETURN OF ROCKMAN

C16 and Plus/4 MASTERTRONIC

Price:
£1.99/cass

You must guide Rockman, or Boris, depending on whether you read the inlay or the screen, through ten caverns in the hunt for precious diamonds. No prizes for guessing you are playing a Boulderdash rip-off.

The caverns are made up of hundreds of boulders perched precariously on top of one another and the diamonds are to be found nestling in between.

After what seems like an age, but is probably about five seconds, the pink square transforms itself into Rockman proper. And what a sorry sight he is.

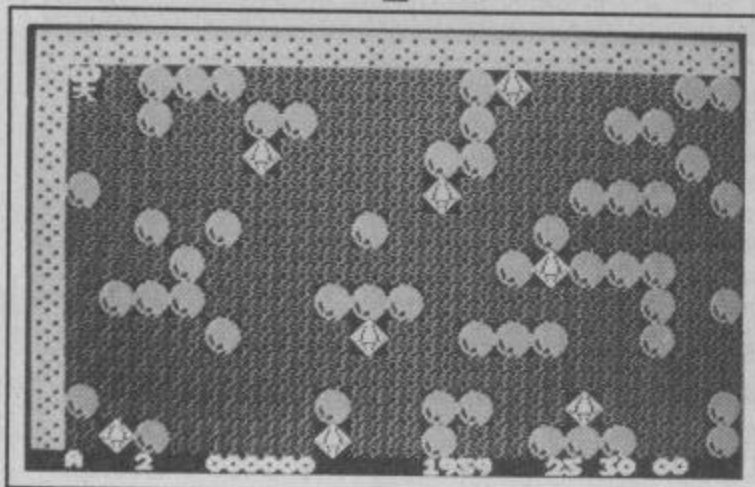
There is a very slight delay between moving the joystick and Rockman actually going anywhere. This can be crucial when the slightest wrong move can result in an avalanche of boulders falling on your head. There's nothing more frustrating than losing lives because of someone's bad programming rather than your own lack of skill.

While we're on the subject of poor programming there's another thing. Most maze games that feature scrollerama — i.e. the scenery scrolling behind as you move around

— keep your man in the middle of the screen so that you can see what's going on all around. Not so Rockman. He moves up to within about half an inch or so of the screen edge, then things start to scroll. This is completely and utterly hopeless. Unless you progress one tediously slow step at a time you don't know what's about to come at you from the edges of the screen.

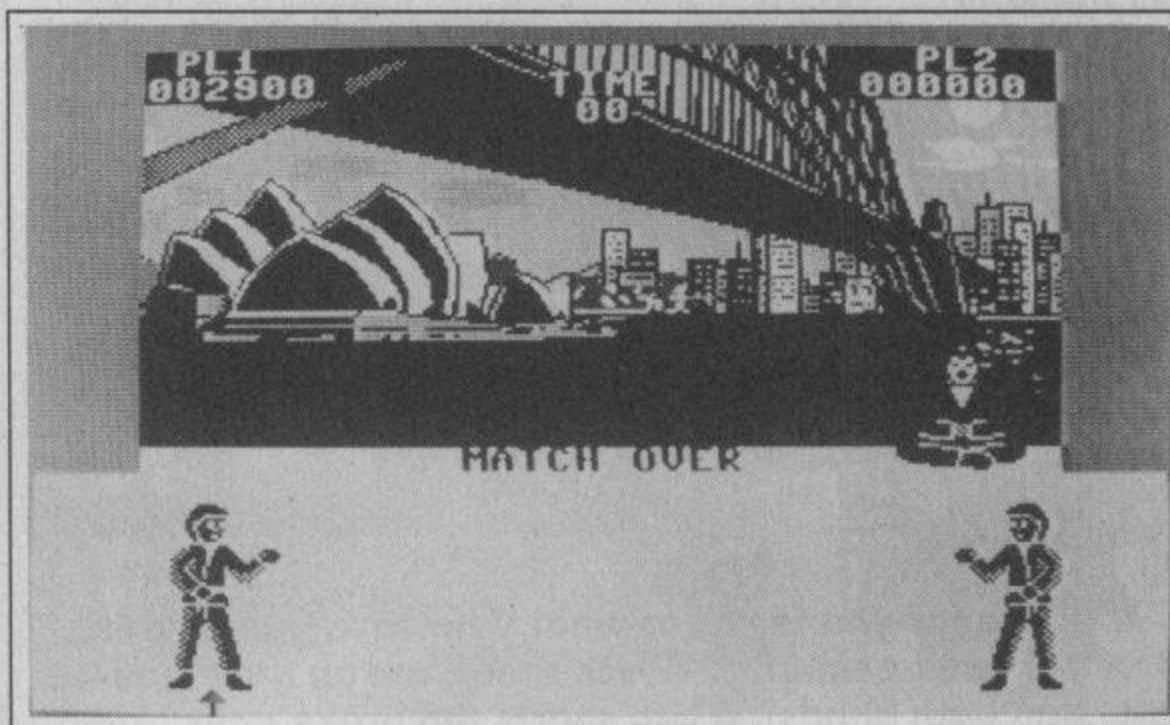
Quite honestly I didn't discover any of this because the game proved so boring and frustrating on level one I couldn't bring myself to go any further. This game has so many other drawbacks that I find it hard to see it being well liked by anyone.

Ken McMahon



Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

2
Overall



▲ Karate at the Opera House — tell Sidney.

loaded separately. This seemed to be a waste of time since each opponent looked like the last one. Was it worth the bother? Just about, if only to see the best backgrounds yet on the C16. Once I had beaten the 'kid' on screen three, (I've yet to see a C16/Plus4 karate game that uses men) I was waiting for something spectacular to happen. Nothing. Match Over was the result, which is pretty infuriating, when you've wasted valuable gaming time getting there.

If you have read the review of the C64 *Ninja Master* in August you may remember unfavourable remarks about wooden dolls. Well the two 'kids' in this have animation which looks very much like wooden puppets, with tangled strings.

What about that flying kick, you cry? Well pathetic would be putting it lightly. It's a puny few centimetres off the ground, which your kid then

INTERNATIONAL KARATE

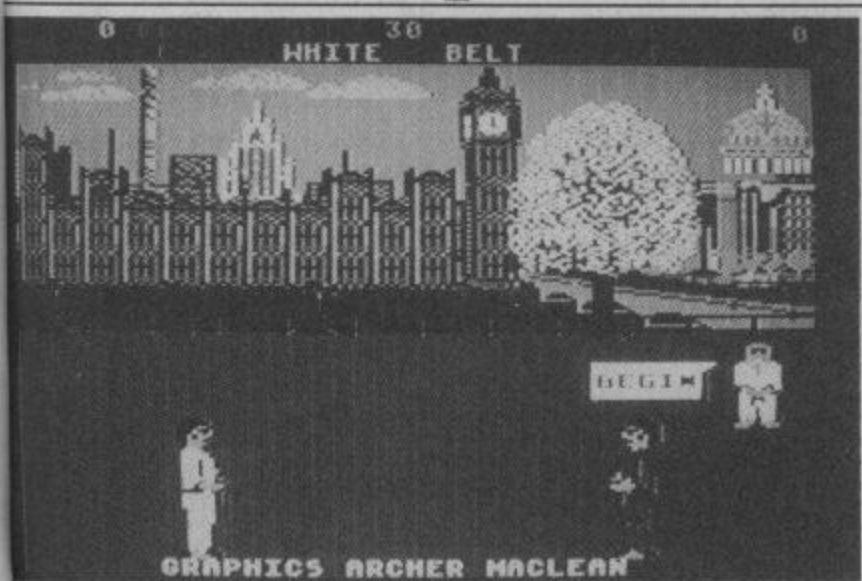
C16 and Plus/4 Endurance

Price: £6.95/cass

I bet the last thing you expected to appear on your cruelly mocked little machines was America's number one game, but you better believe that the fastest head-to-head karate game in the world is available for your mini micros.

Pessimists among you will be wondering how many moves may have been dropped because of the excellent graphics and the limited memory of your micro. Surprisingly you have access to sixteen different moves that are more than adequate

jabs into the air and follows it up by sticking his leg out. All the same it's still very effective, as far as its impact on unsuspecting opponents goes. One major drawback which is very noticeable, is the lack of some reasonable sound. Yes it has sound,



▲ Screenshot from the 64 version. Pretty similar, eh?

▼ One of sixteen more, they're all equally wooden.



First impressions are very favourable, excellent background screens which look just like the package shots. The only difference was that instead of one black and one red figure both fighters are black. Another minor error will become apparent as soon as you start to play. You are player two not player one as the instructions tell you. This is a bit daft since the computer had the arrows pointing beneath the wrong figure.



▲ Excellent graphics but the game just doesn't deliver.

to dispose of your opponent. All of the favourite moves are there: somersaults, roundhouse, the painful crouch punch but there's a rather pathetic flying kick.

You both bow before each bout and have thirty seconds to beat the living daylights out of each other. The first man up is very easy and quickly despatched in a few moves. Incidentally the judge in the background doesn't do anything at all, he's just a part of the scenery, that or he's a zombie.

The other backgrounds have to be

but it's so poor as to be worthless.

The major problem was I couldn't get anyone with enough courage to face up to a good thrashing. Maybe the Ed. will be a better opponent than the wallies the computer throws up at you. I really do suggest you don't bother to play against the computer, *International Karate* is best seen as a two player game, if you do want more from a martial arts game, I suggest you wait for *Exploding Fist* or Anco's *Karate King* and then decide.

Fikret Citci

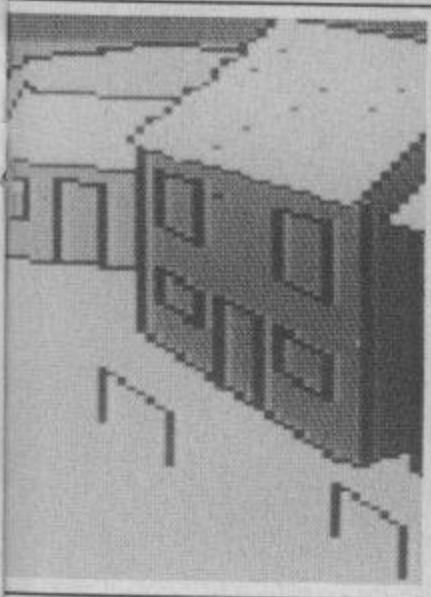
Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

3
Overall

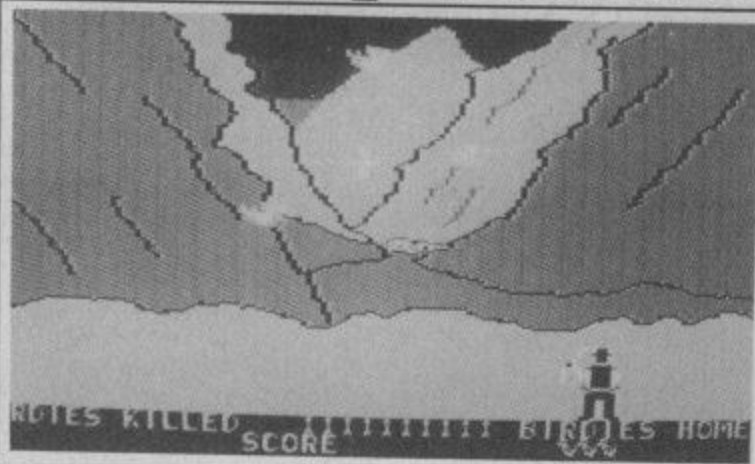
KANE

**C16 and Plus/4
MASTERTRONIC**

Price: £1.99/cass



What's this cowboy doing with a bow and arrow?



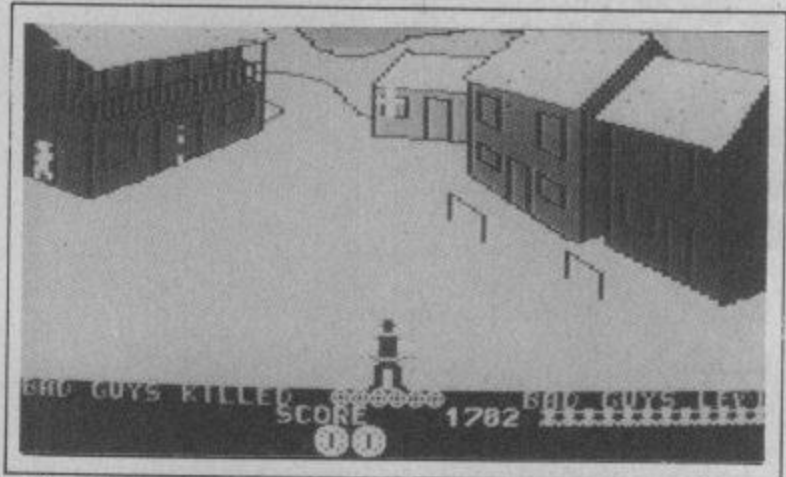
The title screen to *Kane* must be the worst around. I've seen much better in basic. It had the title written down with a score line beneath it, the score was nothing — I couldn't agree more.

A press of the fire button on the joystick (in port 1) started a horrible noise, which, if I remember right, is the theme tune of 'The Lone Ranger'. As my hand reached over to turn it down, it stopped. Luckily it only lasts the length of time it takes for your cowboy to walk from left to right on the screen.

Your cowboy stands around the right of the screen with a bow in his hands. A cross is provided for you to aim where you want your arrows to fly and hopefully bring down one of the many ducks. Timing is very important, your arrows are very slow, the idea is to estimate when your arrow will pass through the birds' flight path.

The graphics here are very nice, the colours used are very effective and give a sense of realism, even though the sound was a let down. I particularly liked the way the birds were hit and the way they fell onto another bird bringing that down as well.

For every five birds you shoot down you get a coin, which isn't



Kane can't get to the saloon for a pint as the cowboys keep taking pot shots at him.

surprising, considering all those comen around in those days. So, if you manage to collect six coins, by shooting down thirty birds or let them go past if you're part of the Animal Liberation Front, you go to town.

In the town there are a whole load of ruffians, bandits and all round bad guys. You nip off to the local gun shop and buy yourself six bullets per coin. There are twelve badies lying in wait, so if you want any chance you should have at least three coins. Once you've got some ammunition you can get ready to dispose of the baddies. The graphics here were just as impressive as the first screen, but with the added advantage of more action. At least your cowboy now moves about the base of the screen. A press of the fire button quickly makes him draw and fire. Sound effects are simple yet effective.

To make things a little more difficult the baddies shoot back and hide unsportingly behind doors and windows. The only way to take them out was to shoot them between the eyes.

Once you've filled up the baddies killed-o-meter, guess what happens? Yes, you start all over again (aww). The problem is that it doesn't get any more difficult, thus killing off what could have been a really ace game.

I can't believe that the programmer has used all of the 16K in this program, what happened to the bit where the cowboy does a spot of horse riding?

Even though it has good graphic design and competent sound, I found it a bit too easy.

This isn't one of Mastertronic's best releases.
Fikret Ciftci

Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

6
Overall

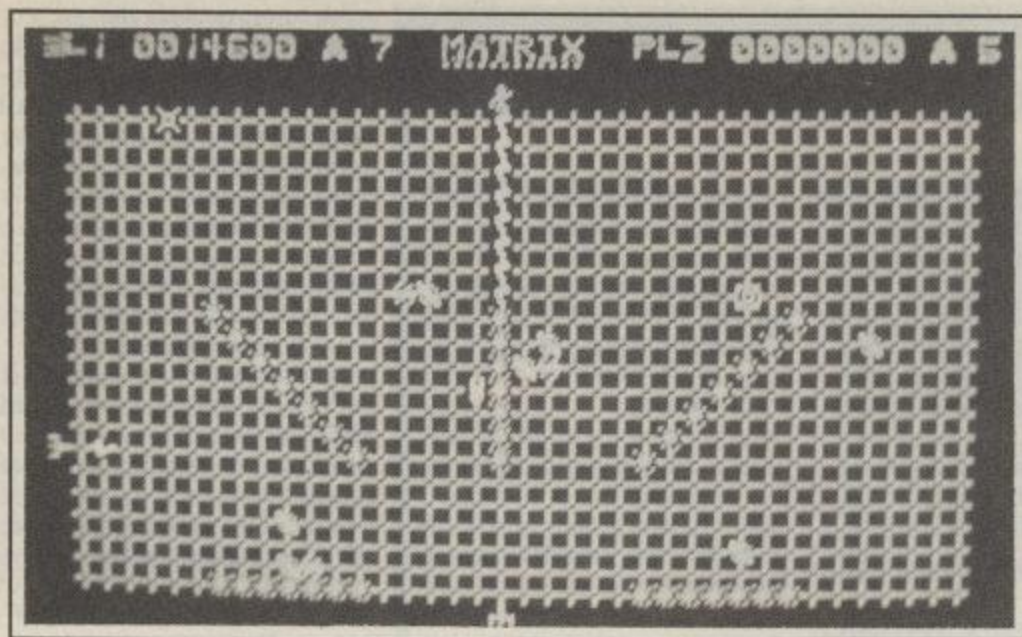
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Manic blasting in Matrix — this is the easy screen.

appearance on some of the screens. *Matrix* is still one of my favourite C64 megablasts and the C16 version is every bit as enjoyable. The only noticeable difference is that the sound and graphics are a bit woolly and not so clearly defined, but that doesn't detract one bit from the game.

Laserzone like *Matrix*, is an arcade shoot 'em up in the classic Minter mould. The difference is that this one requires you to think before you blast. No room here for the quick reflex, blast everything approach, you'll only end up shooting yourself in the foot.

Here's the plot. Terran Federation — goodies, Zyzaxian Warfiends — baddies. The Terrans have constructed lazerzones upon which

MATRIX/LASERZONE

**C16 and PLUS/4
ARIOLASOFT**

**Price:
£6.99/cass**

Matrix and *Laserzone* are two of the all time arcade classics released first on the Vic 20 and then about two years ago for the C64 by Llamasoft. Both of them have now been translated to the C16 by one Aaron Liddiment (can this person really exist?) and are being sold under the Ariolasoft label for the extremely reasonable price of seven quid.

time bombs which eventually hatch out and drop on you. They can be destroyed with some saturation shooting but it takes time — one thing you don't have an abundance of.

If all this sounds merely difficult, don't worry, there's more. X and Y zappers patrol their respective axes delivering deadly death rays along

two computer controlled plasma cannons blast the evil hordes to oblivion while you enjoy a nice cup of tea.

But, guess what kids, the computer has broken down and you must take control and repel the Zyzaxian invaders. On a simple level *Laserzone* it a bit like playing *Space Invaders* on two axes at once, but it can be more complicated.

When the nasty creatures reach the bottom, or side of the screen, they start to creep up on your plasma cannon. The only means of blasting them at this stage is to shoot diagonally from the vertical cannon onto the horizontal plane, or vice versa. Get what I mean?

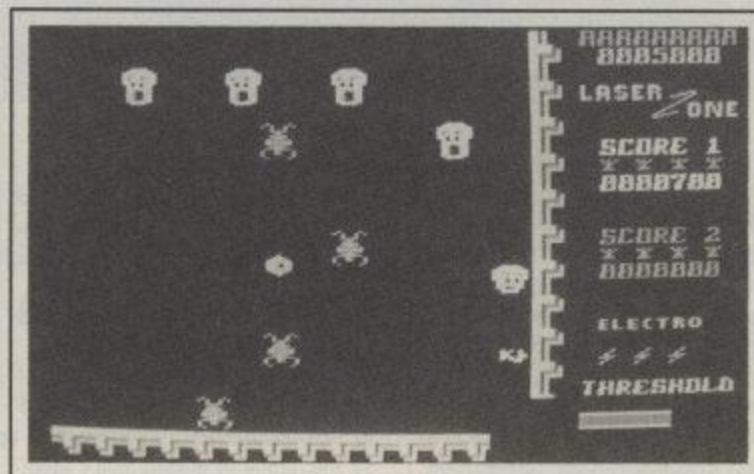
The danger here is, of course, that in your zeal to destroy the encroaching fiends you can easily vapourise one of your own cannons. If things really get out of hand you have the option of using the Electro — a space bar activated panic button that destroys everything in sight.

There are a number of options for those who don't fancy solo blasting, one allows two players to compete using only one joystick, another lets you get some practise before attempting the real thing.

Like *Matrix*, *Laserzone* is an excellent version of the original. No self respecting arcade addict should be without this twin pack.

Ken McMahon

Your two cannons move horizontally and vertically.



Matrix has to be one of the most manic shoot 'em ups ever devised, it is sheer mayhem. As the story goes, it is ten years on from the Grid Wars and veteran Gridrunner pilots (i.e. you) have once again been summoned to repel an attack by the deadly droids. (*Gridrunner* was another piece of Minter magic — forerunner of *Matrix*.)

Combat takes place on the power matrix, your ship is free to manoeuvre over the entire surface. Droids appear in attack waves, centipede style. This is where the fun starts — sheer, non-stop panic blasting. The first zone is manageable as there is only one string of droids, but from then on it gets pretty hectic.

When shot, the droids turn into

randomly selected grid lines. At higher zones the Snitch, a loathsome little humanoid, walks along the top of the matrix and gives away your position to the X/Y zappers.

The later zones have some other interesting diversions. Deflexors cause your missiles to ricochet at unpredictable angles, often straight back at you — use them with caution. Minter's trademark, the ubiquitous camel, puts in its usual

Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

9
Overall

MR PUNIVERSE
Commodore C16 and
Plus/4
Mastertronic
Price: £1.99/cass

Mr Puniverse is Mastertronic's answer to Arnold Schwarzenegger. Mr Puniverse is the weediest, most pathetic example (and hence leader) of a new breed of men — wimps — whose destiny is to have sand kicked in their faces. Mr Puniverse is so weak and undernourished he must spend all his time in search of the vitamin pills which keep him alive, barely.

Design wise, *Mr Puniverse* is similar to Gremlin's *Monty on the Run*. By which I mean no more than that it's a platform game and a very good one at that. Mr P must work his way around the 25 screens and pick up his life-restoring pills from each one.

What makes it more of a challenge than your average platform pastime is that a certain amount of thought is required to retrieve the pills from the less accessible locations.

Laser beams make certain routes impassable, but can be switched off if you find the right lever. The problem is that switching off the beams allows the cannon to fire missiles at you. A few well calculated decisions have to be made as to which obstacle will be the easiest to overcome.

Sometimes it's simply a case of near impenetrable defences, like the room of half a dozen pulverisers. Pulverisers are like huge steel pillars which descend on you from a great height, it's a good idea not to be standing underneath them when they do.

In this room you have to run underneath the lot of them whilst at the same time jumping over the missiles fired from a cannon at the far end. This is difficult, but not impossible, I did it. Get-

ting back out on the other hand is a different question.

There are a few things about the game I don't like. If you're not careful you can fall into dead ends which are impossible to jump out of. When this happened for the first time I concluded that the only thing to be done was turn the machine off and reload.

Then, using the 'press everything in desperation technique' I discovered that the D key causes you to commit punicide. Considering you have eight lives a minor price to pay really.

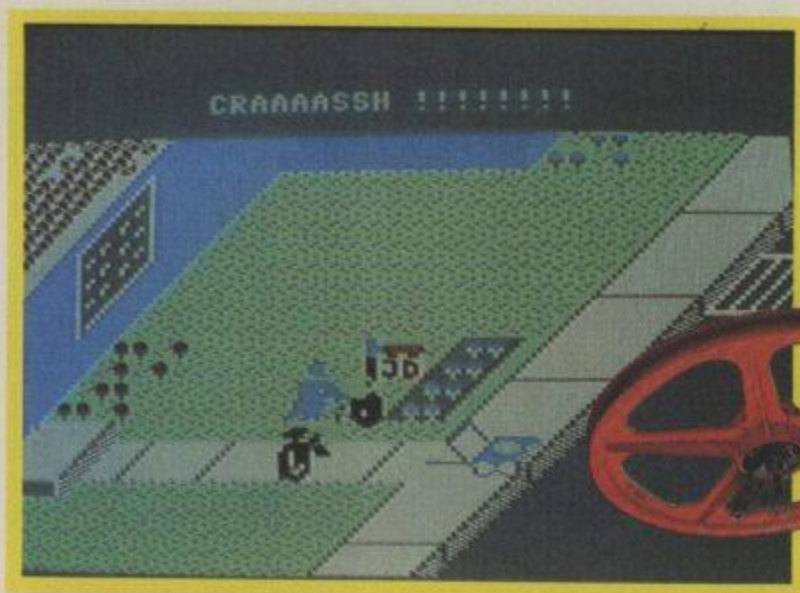
Much more annoying was when I headed blindly into a new screen straight under a pulveriser. That I could take, but watching my remaining seven Puniverses suffer the same grizzly fate without being able to do anything about it was just too much.

That aside, *Mr Puniverse* is an excellent game and well worth the usual two quid price-tag.

Ken McMahon

Graphics	★★★★
Sound	★★★
Toughness	★★★★
Staying Power	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★





Delivery boy McMahon looks as if he's lost his, er, bottom.



The only thing that really impressed me about this version was the graphics. The programmer, Joerg Dierks of Kingsoft, has done a good job with the diagonally smooth-scrolling screen, but you still get a box around the sprites — a common fault in C16 games which only Gremlin seem to have overcome.

PAPERBOY

**C16 and Plus/4
ELITE**
Price: £6.95/cass

If you haven't heard of *Paperboy* you must have had your head down the toilet for the past six months, in which case I'd wash your hair before reading this.

Paperboy was a huge megahype game for Atari in the arcades and pubs before Elite snapped it up to produce it for Spectrum, C64 and now C16 owners all over the world. It is rumoured that profits from sales of the game have topped the gross domestic product of Finland and the CU Editor's salary put together.

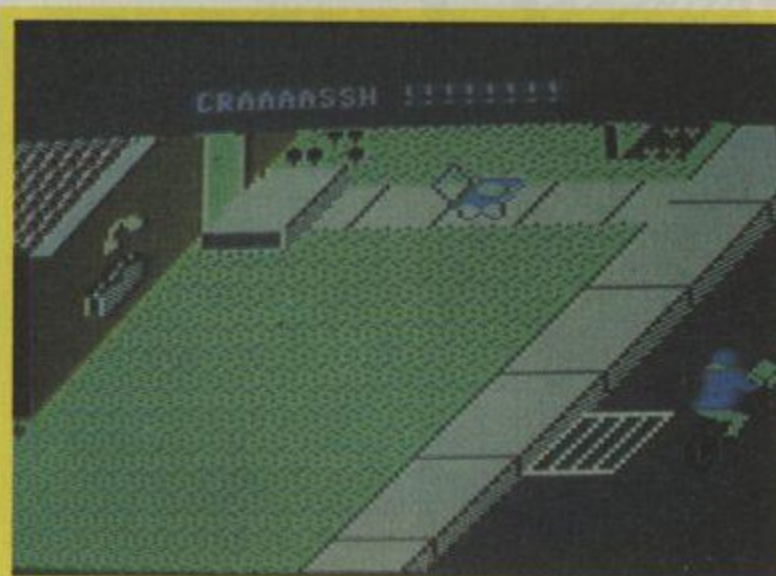
The object of *Paperboy* is to ride your BMX through the streets of suburbia flinging the dailies at the doors like they do in the USA. They'd never stand for it in North Malden.

Before you get pedalling you are provided with a map which tells you which householders like to find their copy of the *The Daily Blarg* blowing across the garden; and who would rather walk to the newsagents.

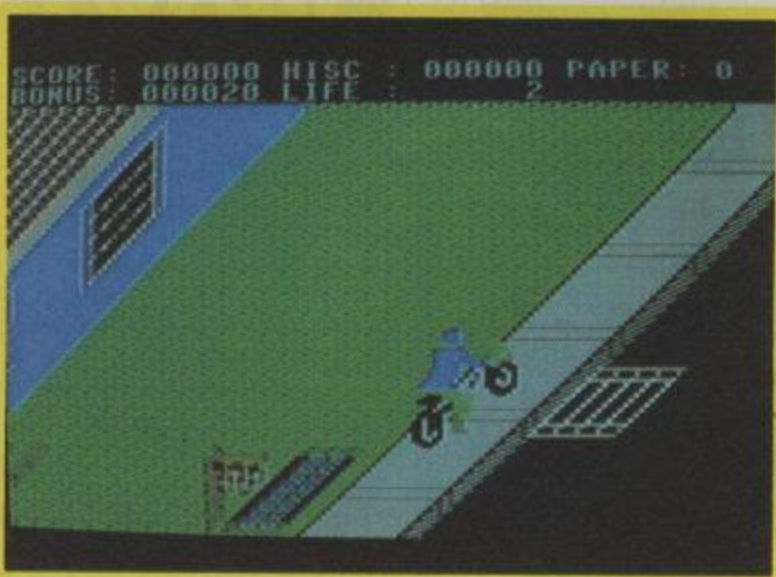
Then it's just a question of chucking the rags so as they hit the doors, for which you get 250 points. You miss, you get nothing. What's more you have to watch out for balls, parcels, supermarket trolleys and raving loonies who get in your way. If you hit one of these you lose one of your three lives.

The looney is worth losing a life over for the sheer satisfaction of running him down. Elite say the supermarket trolley is supposed to be a Sinclair C5, to me it looks like a supermarket trolley.

The one overriding snag is that it's all a bit too easy. Getting the papers to hit the doors is tricky at first, but avoiding the obstacles is a piece of cake. If the game is going to work it either needs more obstacles or they will have to be more awkward to avoid.



Onto the road where more perils are waiting.



Paperboy — big licence, average game.

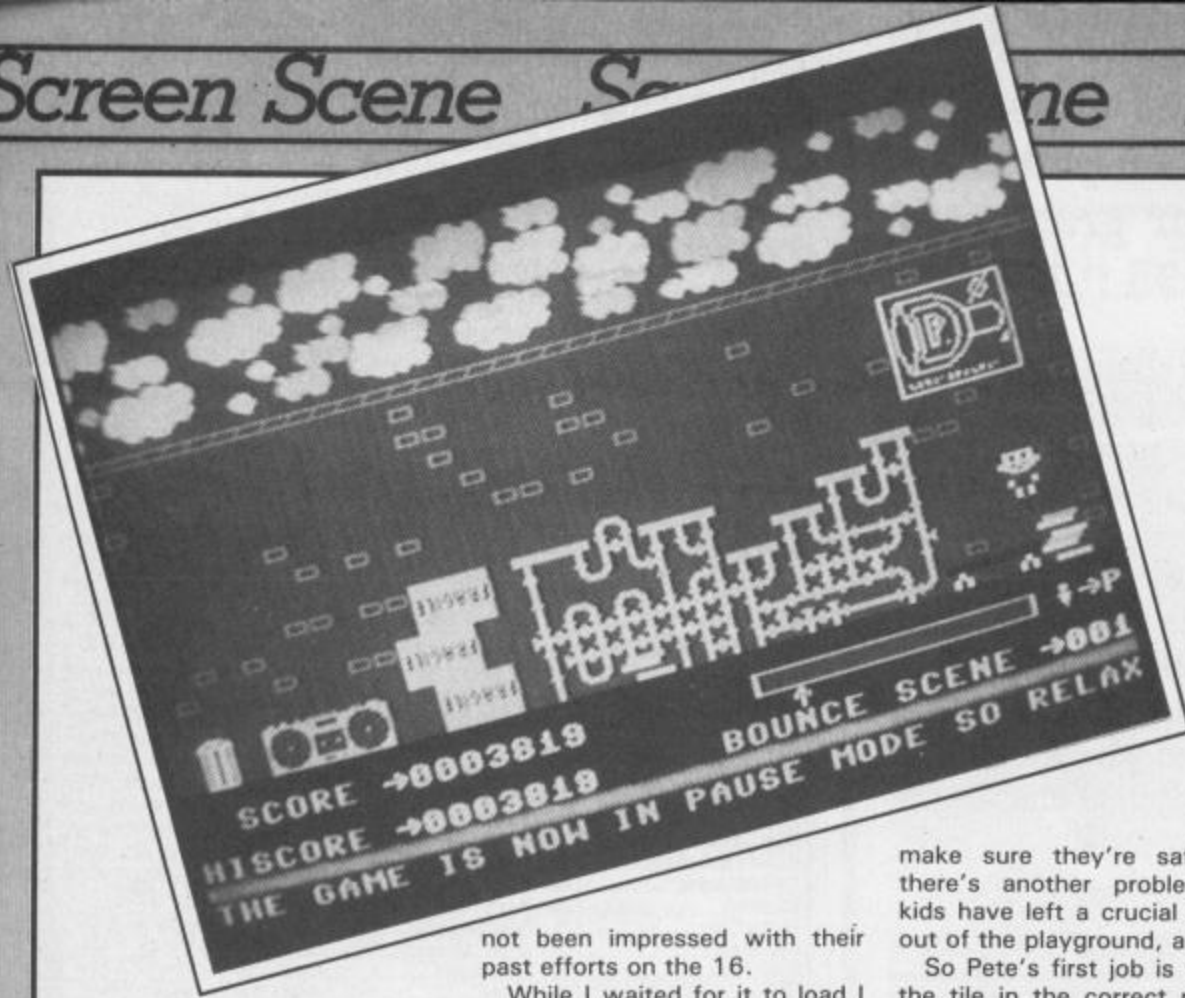
If Elite can improve on the toughness and sort out the other shortcomings though, *Paperboy*

promises to be well worth another look.

Ken McMahon

Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

6
Overall



POGO PETE Commodore 16 and Plus/4 Tynesoft Price: £6.95/disk

Tynesoft do for me what Kryptonite does for Superman. I have

not been impressed with their past efforts on the 16.

While I waited for it to load I turned to my usual source of inspiration, the inlay. 'You control a young boy, on a pogo stick, named Pogo Pete.' Funny name for a pogo stick, I wonder what the kid's called.

Anyway, the local kids have built an adventure playground in the street. Pete has to bounce around over all the obstacles to

make sure they're safe. And there's another problem. The kids have left a crucial element out of the playground, a tile.

So Pete's first job is to place the tile in the correct position. When he's done this Pete does a 'big bounce for joy', that's so as you know you've got the tile in the right place — possibly the easiest and least interesting part of the game. You just dump tiles all over the shop until you hit the right place.

It gets more interesting when Pete goes into 'daredevil mode'

and must bounce from one side of the screen to the other without touching the ground. If you succeed in accomplishing this fairly tricky feat, you get to have a bash at the next screen. If you don't, then it's back to square one, but not before poor old Pete's face goes all out of shape, making him look like a particularly ugly potato.

I've made it sound a lot easier than it is. There is, after all, the bounce meter to take account of. This goes down every time you make a move i.e. left, right, or upwards. Now to get onto some obstacles you have to build up a fair bit of height, trampoline style, by bouncing a lot. Trouble is, if the bounce meter goes off the scale, it's ugly potato time for Pete.

All of this combines to make a really enjoyable game with a fair degree of difficulty. There are 24 screens in all. The graphics on the four I saw were excellent as was the sound. An original and fun game. Come back Tynesoft, all is forgiven.

Ken McMahon

Graphics	★★★★
Sound	★★★★
Toughness	★★★★
Staying Power	★★★★
Value	★★★★

BEACH-HEAD Commodore 16 and Plus/4 US Gold/Access Price: £5.95/disk

All you C16 and Plus/4 owners out there must be licking your lips at the prospect of getting your hands on this the daddy of shoot 'em ups.

The question though is how do you convert a game like Beach-Head — which is itself four smaller games in one — to fit into 16K? This was the poser that US Gold set Anirog when they asked them to do the job. Sadly Anirog couldn't work it out.

The problem is that the game just won't function properly. It would be foolhardy to expect it to measure up to the 64 version, but to be any good at all it should have at least kept the fire button fun of the original.

Thus when you come to shoot the planes down in the air attack scenario the gun fails to operate at any elevation below 30°C. It is impossible also to traverse on the line of the plane, because you cannot shoot and manoeuvre at the same time. This

means you get one shot at each aircraft.

I found the only way to score at all was to leave the gun in a fixed position in the centre of the screen and just wait for them to fly into my line of fire. Not much fun there.

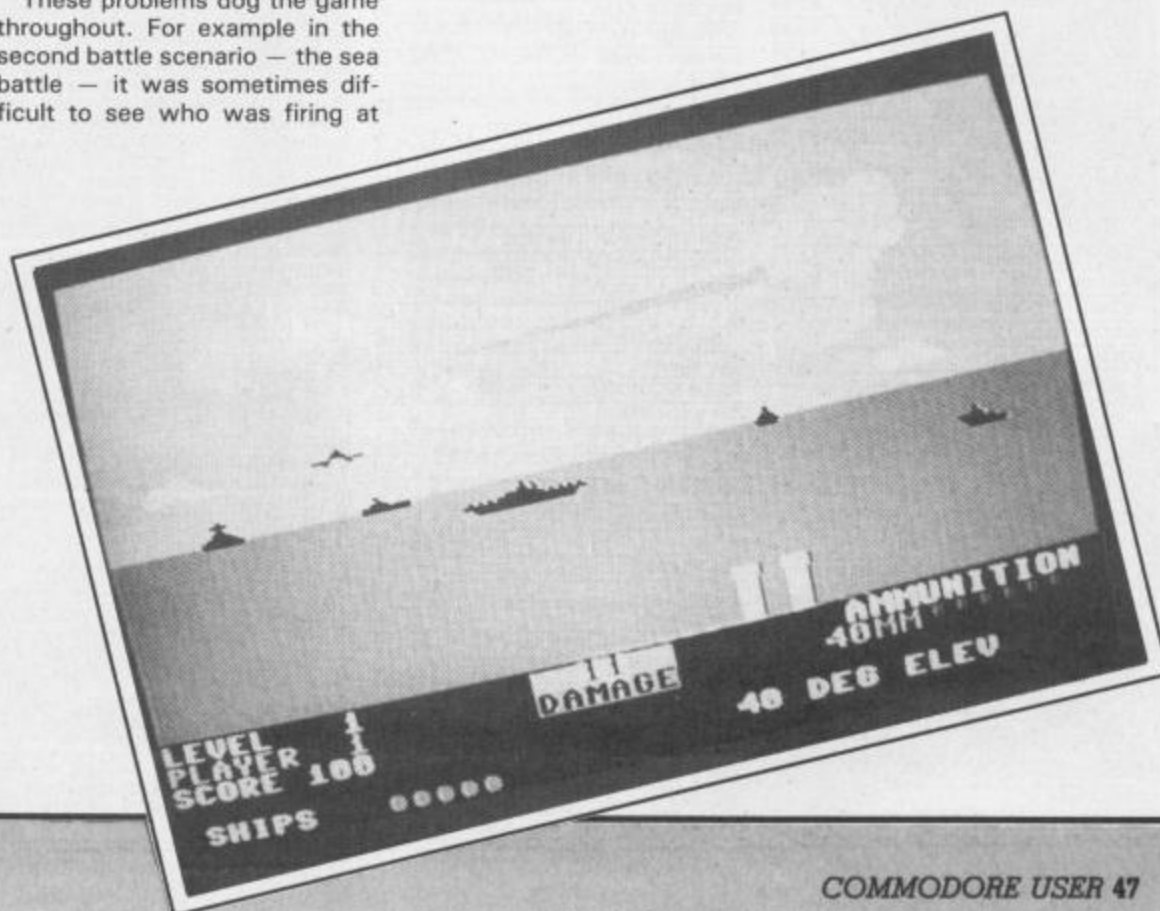
These problems dog the game throughout. For example in the second battle scenario — the sea battle — it was sometimes difficult to see who was firing at

you. Safe to say I struggled on the donkey level.

A great shame all of this because the graphics are fine. It looks great but just won't play. Anirog have tried to squeeze the proverbial quart into a pint pot.

Mike Pattenden

Graphics	★★★★
Sound	★★★
Toughness	★★★★★
Staying Power	★
Value	★



REACH FOR THE SKY C16 and Plus/4 Gremlin Graphics Price: £6.95/cass

I had high hopes for this game. Chocks away, bandits at four O'clock, cabbage crates over the briney, all that sort of thing. But if you're looking for a WW11 air combat simulation I think you'll be more than a little disappointed with this.

Reach For The Sky can be played either with a joystick or the keyboard. As my joystick was broken I had no option than to try the second method. This made things considerably more difficult, but alas no more interesting.

To begin with you are given a status rating, which for novices is *robin*. Then you're thrown unceremoniously into the 'combat zone'. Your plane, presumably a Spitfire, is positioned at the bottom of the screen. It can be manoeuvred left and right across the screen, or up and down a couple of centimetres. This is all very well if you have a joystick. But if you're using the keys then you'll probably have to limit yourself to left, right and fire. Anything more gets confusing, not to mention very tiring.

In case you hadn't guessed by now hordes of enemy fighters

appear at the top of the screen and make their way, shooting, towards the bottom. You have to shoot back while at the same time dodging out of the way of the bullets as well as the enemy planes you missed.

You get ten points for every aviator put out of business as well as bonus points for shooting down the blue squadron. The blue squadron — a dozen or so planes flying in formation — appears on each level to liven things up a little. When I shot them down on level one I was

rewarded with extra guns. The increased opportunity for creating mayhem made the game a little more exciting.

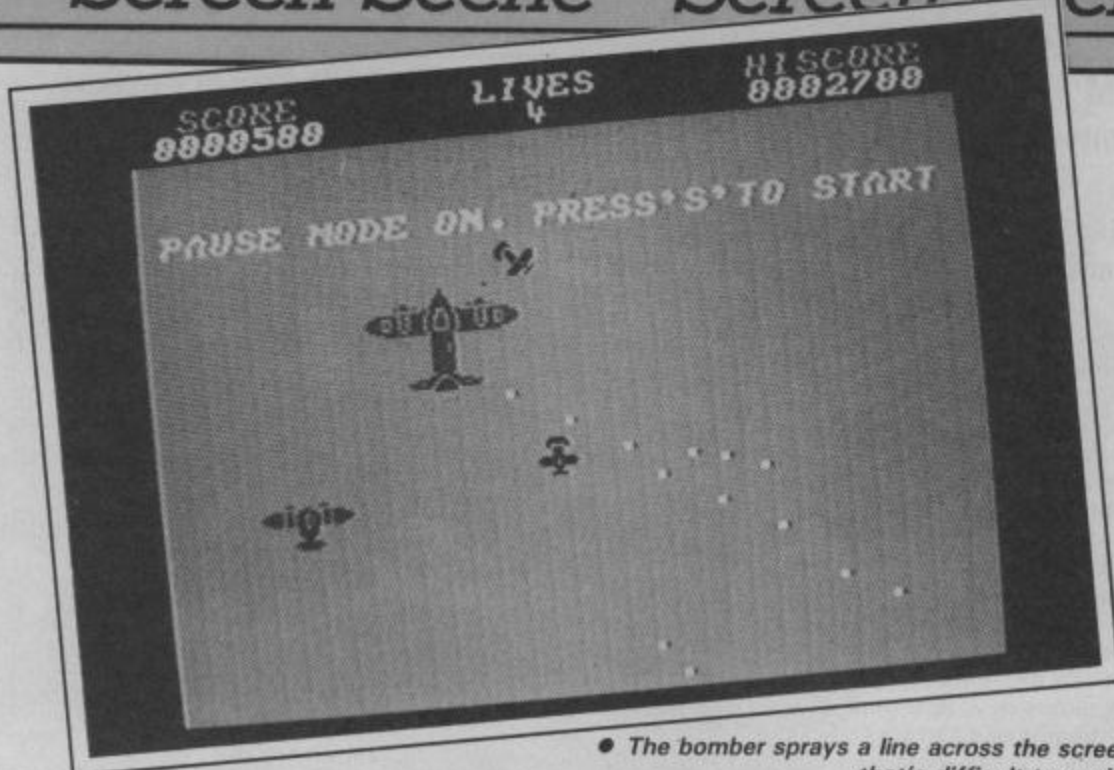
Other diversions which liven things up are the bombers which appear from the bottom of the screen i.e. going in the opposite direction to everything else. You have to let rip with a hefty barrage to bring them down and in the meantime their tailgunners return your fire. The enemy fighters are still pouring down on you while all this is going on so holding on to your four lives can

at times be extremely difficult.

Survive for long enough and you graduate from *robin* to *buzzard* status. If you can maintain interest there are another six levels to follow. I must admit to becoming bored very quickly with the virtually prehistoric 'shoot 'em up' format.

Ken McMahon

Graphics	★★★
Sound	★★
Toughness	★★★
Staying Power	★★
Value	★★



● The bomber sprays a line across the screen that's difficult to avoid.

GHOST TOWN Commodore C16 and Plus/4 Anco Software Price: £6.95/disk

What's the connection between this game and the last single by The Specials? Well, I'm sorry to disappoint you, but there isn't one. The Specials record featured better sound and sold in far greater numbers than this

game ever will. It was also cheaper. Does the game have any good points? Surprisingly, yes.

The blurb, in the usual fashion, tells you that long ago Belegro the Wizard cast a spell that turned a prosperous little town into a ghost town. Before leaving to take up his new job with the British Government, he took everything of value and stored it in one room.

You must work your way through the game's nineteen rooms to find Belegro and the

treasure. Now n-n-n-nineteen rooms isn't the kind of number that makes you break out into a sweat at the prospect of cracking it. When combined with the general lack of complexity you'd expect that to be a serious drawback, but I enjoyed it nonetheless.

Your computer counterpart is a sprite man whose limbs and features remain totally static even when he's moving. Each screen is a simple maze made up of bricks with the odd bush dotted here and there. Clues must be solved and objects collected from each screen in order to progress.

For example, in the first screen there is a flower on a bush which must be picked. Before you can do this you must have a pair of secateurs. The secateurs are hanging from another bush though, and unless you use a ladder to reach them you'll be prickled to death in the attempt (*point taken. Ed*). The ladder is in a locked shed and the key is hidden on another screen.

If it all sounds dreadfully complicated the only reassurance I can offer is that it isn't. The above takes about five minutes

to work out and the same goes for the other problems in the game.

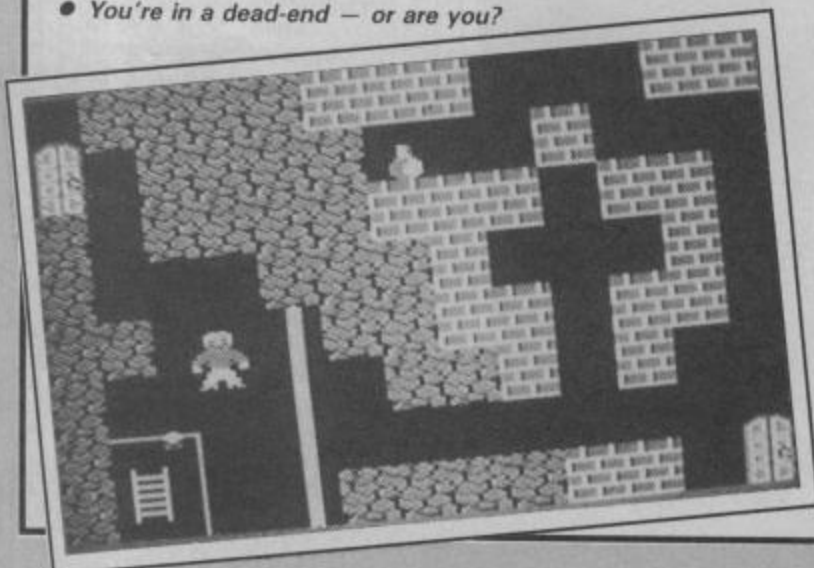
Some rely on sheer good luck, like the room with four doors at the end, three of which lead to a snake pit. Once you've worked this out you don't make the same mistake again.

There are one or two screens that rely on quick reflexes rather than mental agility. A pulsating laser beam to dodge past and even the spider from Tomb Thumb puts in a guest appearance.

Looking at the hard evidence, Ghost Town doesn't have a lot going for it. The graphics and plot are simple, inane even, but for some strange reason I found playing it quite enjoyable (*but you're weird — Ed*). For experienced gamers the fun is bound to be short lived. I completed over a dozen screens inside a couple of hours.

Ken McMahon

Graphics	★★
Sound	★★★★
Toughness	★★
Staying Power	★★★★
Value	★★



● You're in a dead-end — or are you?

SHARK

**C16 and Plus/4
FIREBIRD
(SILVER RANGE)**

**Price:
£1.99/cass**

Just when you thought it was safe to go back in the water. Well, I had to say it somewhere, might as well get it out of the way now.

I can't make up my mind about *Shark*. When I first set eyes on it I thought oh, groan, not another duffer from Firebird. When I'd played it for a while though, it went up ever so slightly in my estimation.

You are the intrepid diver, out to rid the waters of deadly man eaters. The Great White (it's always a Great White) swims back and forth across the surface while you lurk in the murky depths.

This particular breed of Great White shark, very conveniently (or stupidly) has a target placed half way up its back. One well aimed shot from the trusty harpoon hits the target, and it's goodbye sharkey.

There are a few bits of piping lying around the place to provide some cover to the poor animal. All the

same, it's not too difficult at this level and you can usually make it first shot, ensuring a hefty bonus for your remaining air supply. Level two adds more of a challenge to the proceedings. Anaemic looking eels swim up and down, making it even more difficult, or rather, less easy, to get a shot in. Still plenty of air left by the time I managed it though.

Level three has you avoiding a killer goldfish which swims up and down erratically and kills on contact, slightly tricky, not, by any means, impossible.

On the next level you are dive bombed by something that could either be a squid, or a jellyfish.

Wait a second, here are the jellyfish on level five. You can tell the difference because squid, jellyfish and eels, get the picture? It's

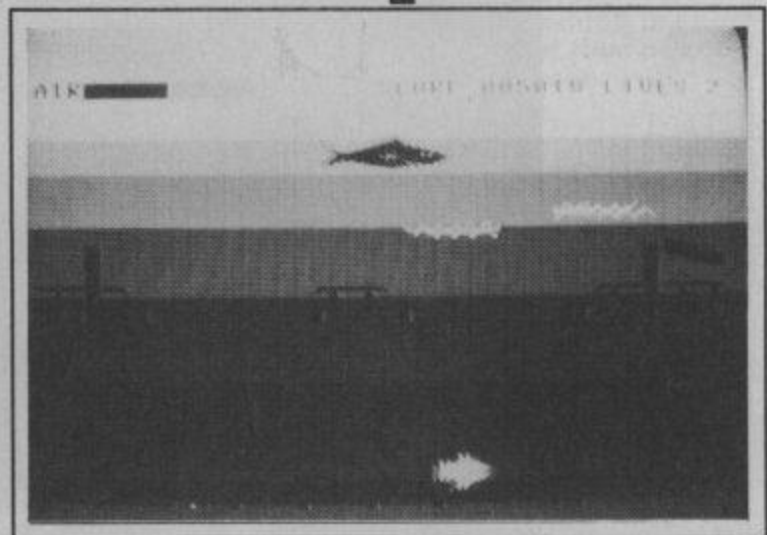
The shark very obligingly wears a target on its side.

seafood salad time.

Maybe I expect too much from cheapo games. But the gap between this and some of the more expensive stuff is far wider than you find on, say, Commodore 64 games.

If you're fairly new to gaming *Shark* will undoubtedly give you a few hours cheap entertainment. Firebird will have to do better than this, though, if they're going to match companies like Mastertronic.

Ken McMahon



Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

3
Overall

RUNNER

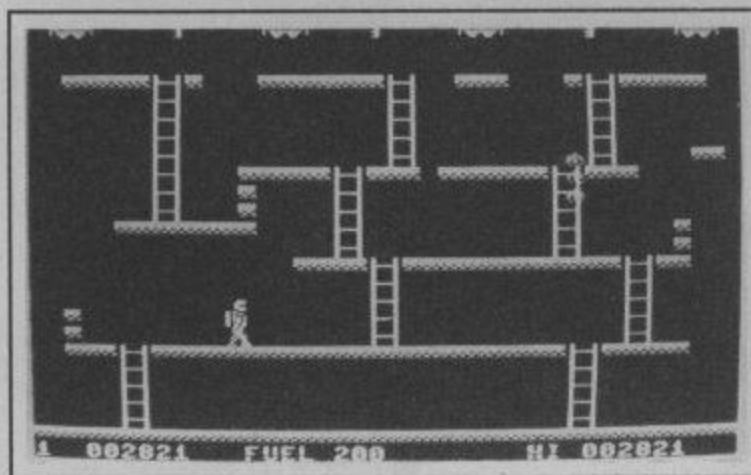
**C16 and Plus/4
FIREBIRD
(SILVER RANGE)**

**Price:
£1.99/cass**

If you find yourself in the unfortunate position of having to actually consider this, take a look at the screen shots on the cassette pack. No one can accuse Firebird of being misleading, it's all there. Sparse screens with boring looking yellow platforms connected by ladders, my my, how original. And there in the centre of this minimalist landscape, our hero.

At the top of the screen there are three keys and three vents. The vents occasionally chuck out a boulder or a 'mutant pod' — not that I could spot the difference. The pods, or boulders whizz down the platforms and you lose a life should one hit you. You must make your way to the top of the screen and collect the three keys, before losing all your lives to the cascading boulders.

To help you in this moderately difficult task you have the faithful old jetpack. A burst on the joystick button sends you a giddy centimetre into the air. You have limited fuel so it's a good idea not to get carried away with your new toy.



When you've collected all three keys, you get a bonus and a crack at the next screen — wow. There are three basic problems with the game. First, it's too simple, second the graphics are boring, third, there's not a single original thing about it.

It's hard to imagine how a £2 game could be so poor as to be not worth the money, but this kind of thing truly depresses me. Kevin Moughtin, the author obviously has the programming skills to produce

something reasonably good, but *Runner* has about as much originality as a Bernard Manning joke, and is as much fun.

Ken McMahon

Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

2
Overall

Risk terminal boredom by collecting the keys at the top of the screen.

SPEED KING

**C16 and Plus/4
MASTERTRONIC**

**Price:
£1.99/cass**

Speed King is a motorcycle Grand Prix simulation. It is, in most respects, pretty similar to the four wheeled counterparts like *Formula One Simulator* that have been around on the C16 for a while. It is in fact a 64 conversion. The major difference is, of course, that instead of a racing car you are presented with an up the exhaust pipe view of a motorcycle.

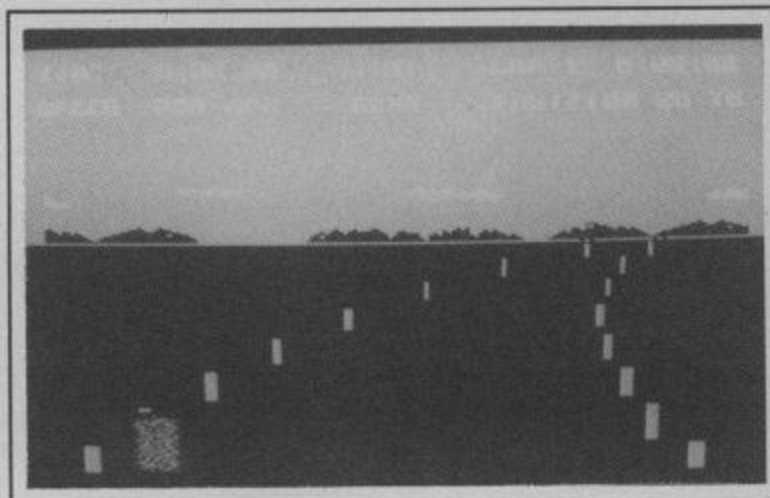
The game also owes a debt of gratitude to the arcade game *Hang On* — the precursor of all home computer motor cycle race games.

There are three things to look for in a race game, be it on two wheels or four; there are, in order of importance, the degree of realism, the quality of the background scenery and graphics in general, and the extent of user definable options (different circuits etc.) — which ties in with the first criterion.

Taking those things in no particular order, on graphics *Speed King* doesn't rate brilliantly. Though the graphics are by no means poor. I would describe them as spartan. The course itself is marked out in the grass with tent pegs. Mountains and clouds on the horizon give the whole thing perspective, but there are no outstanding features.

There are four Grand Prix circuits to choose from; Monza, Paul Ricard, Hockenheim and Silverstone. The Grand Prix scoreboard gives lap records for each circuit as well as the time taken to complete the race — five laps. This is all fairly functional and the only criticism I would make is that in practice, the course didn't seem to be the same shape as the map.

Which brings us on to reality. The screen shows your bike from a rear position. Speed, gear, position and other statistical information is placed at the top of the screen. Controlling your speed is simply a matter of selecting the right gear, the only



Our rider explodes into a ball of flames after taking a bend too fast.

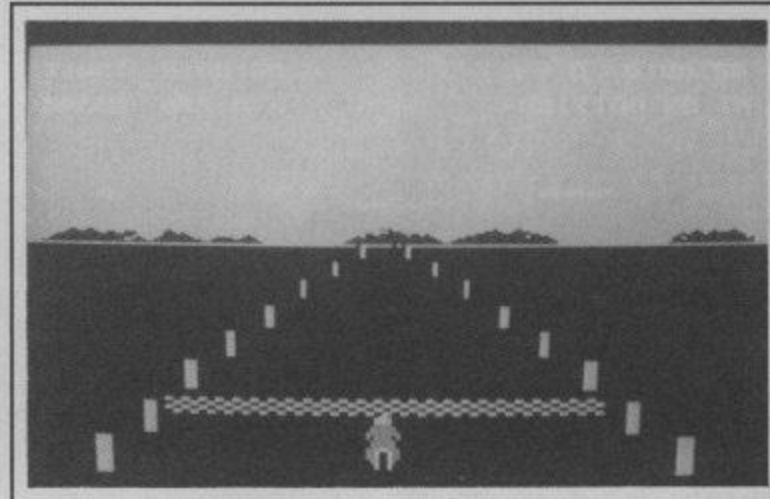
other thing to be taken care of is the steering.

The race itself is quite thrilling, cornering at 250mph is quite a laugh, especially with three other

The chequered line at the start of the race.

acceleration.

The biggest drawback of all is that after fifteen minutes play you are able to reach the front of the field of twenty, then it's just a question of staying there until the five laps are up. Even L drivers will find they can master the game in no time at all. If you're looking for a racing simulator with a difference it might



bikes on the road. The bikes lean realistically into the turns and make all the right noises as you shift through the gears. If you so much as tap another rider or one of the tent pegs an explosion ensues, but another bike appears miraculously and you continue without a scratch. (*The work of the Mysterons maybe? — Ed*)

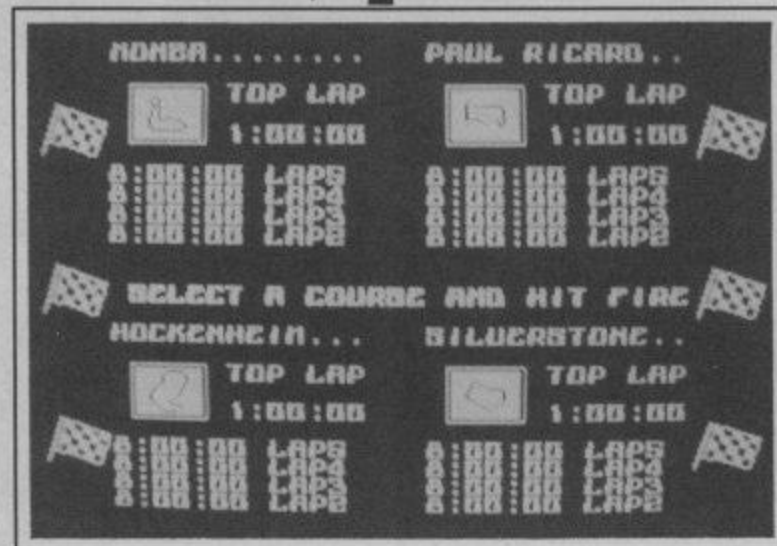
The sound was reasonably impressive — a good distinct change in tone for changes in gears and graduated increase in noise for

be worth considering otherwise I'd go for something with a bit more of a challenge.

One of the few gaps still gaping in the C16 games stakes is for a really good racing game — something along the lines of *Pitstop* for the 64. Don't throw your hands up in horror software houses reading this — if Anco can put together something like *Winter Events* on the C16 I don't see why we can't have a decent formula one racing game.

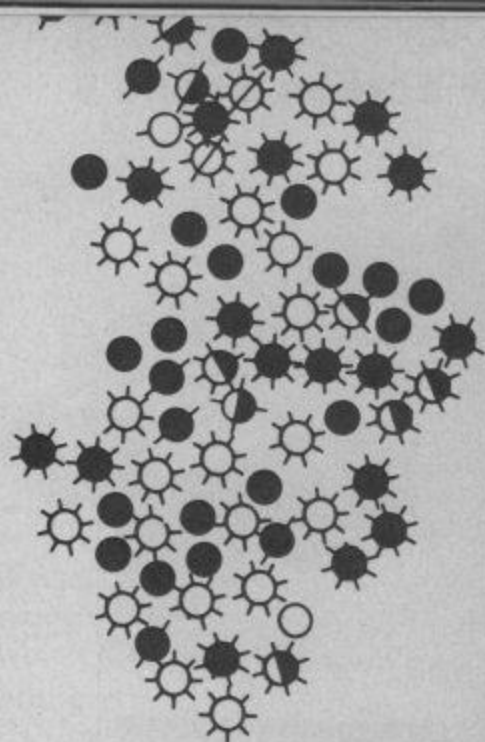
Ken McMahon

Option screen shows your four different courses and number of laps — the authenticity of these courses in the actual game has been questioned.

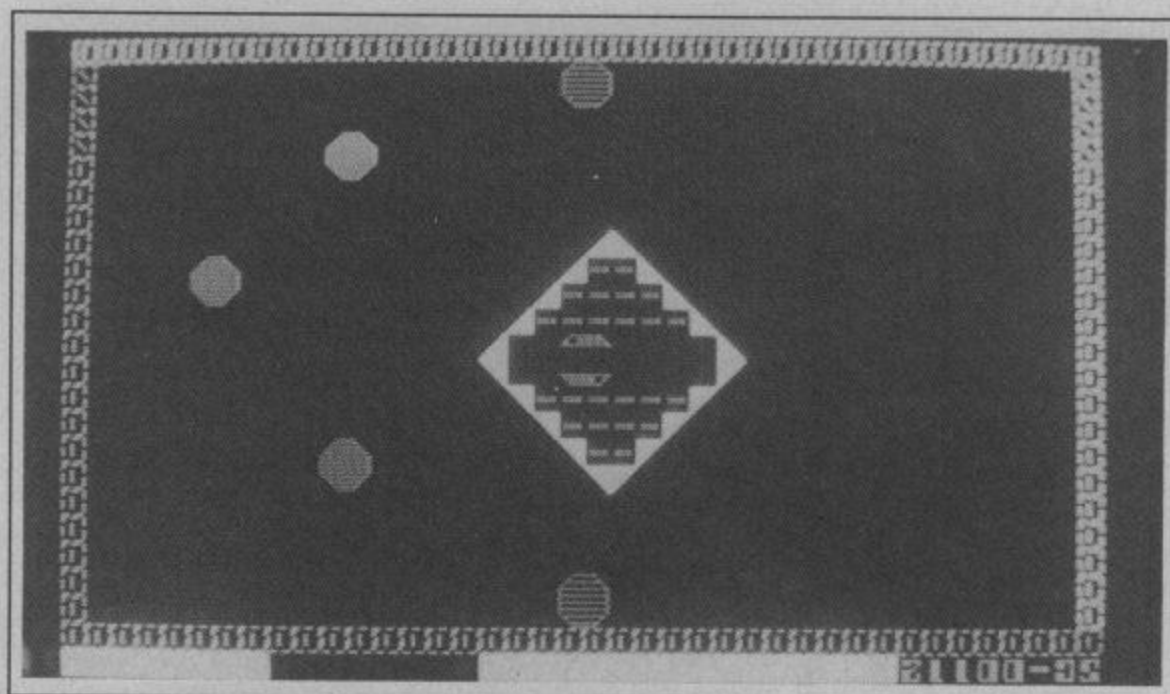


Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

4
Overall



Blast the top and bottom 'home slots' and your ship turns into a bat.

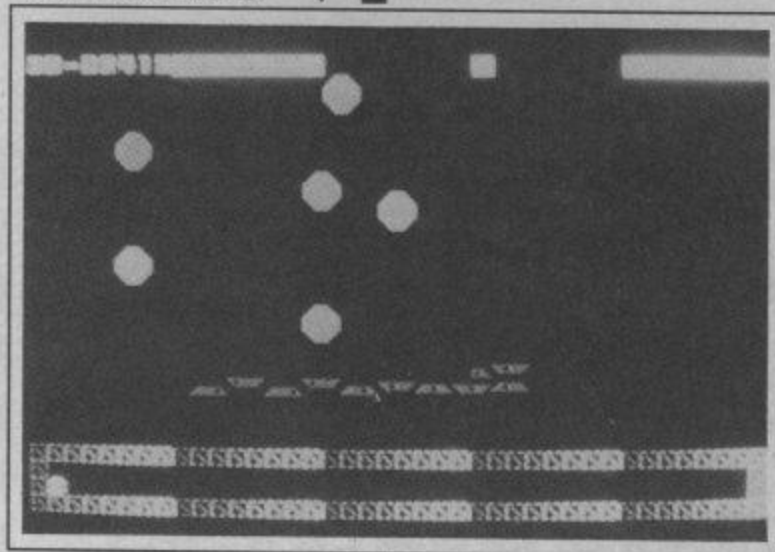


STARBURST

ARIOLASOFT
C16 and PLUS/4
Price: £2.99/cass



You now have a bat
— and lots of balls.

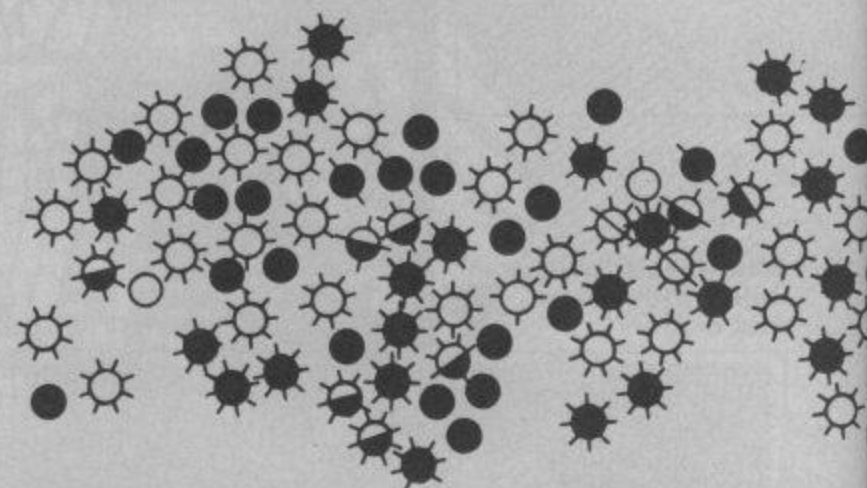


Those incorrigible miscreants who reads this stuff regularly and actually take note of what's said will have rushed out to buy *Hyperforce* the instant they read my loony rave review in September. Well, *Starburst* is by the same bloke — Tony Takoushi.

The game is not the kind of thing that makes me go totally ape crazy bananas and dig out the Superscript file with words like superb, stunning, sensational and dead good. On the other hand it's good enough to justify original, different, colourful, and fun.

It's one of those abstract efforts that has balls and squiggly things instead of little sprite people and the like. Here's a taste of the blurb: "They called themselves scientists. They were fools."

Good, eh? Want some more? "To them it had been a simple



experiment to discover what made their planet's core active and it had all gone badly wrong. The planet Systasis", (sounds like a nasty infection) "had exploded and only the mutant evil Plastron boulders remained".

As blurb goes, I reckon that's not half bad. The game itself has three stages. Stage one involves you blasting away at red and yellow 'home slots' at the top and bottom of the screen. After a while they start to pulse and your corastron ship turns into a bat. You must then, in a limited amount of time, bat a yellow and green plastron boulder into the home slot in a sort of Breakout fashion.

There are complications. A grey plastron boulder screws things up by hitting your yellow and red ones out of their home slots. But, your slots

can be protected with the bat and, if you manage to destroy all four core pods you get to play the bonus round, followed by stage two.

Stage two involves blasting plastron boulders on a grid with your wormer. The object is to destroy the grid by hitting the boulders, but the nearer you get to your objective, the more boulders appear. Stage three is a sort of plastron boulder sheep farmer special — you have to round 'em up the easy way — by shooting them, only it's not that easy.

Starburst is really three games in one, pretty good value at a quid each. Fans of the strategic ball game (a phrase I've just invented which means games like *Breakout*, *Marble Madness* and *Trailblazer*) will love it. Oh I nearly forgot to mention that the sound is pretty wild.

Ken McMahon

Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

7
Overall



Warrior who is pretty anxious to have her back. Storm and his mate, Agravain the Undead, must hunt around the various screens looking

M'tronic's Gauntlet clone hits the shops.

for Mrs Storm.

Where is Una Cum while all this is going on? Looking for a box called The Fear, that's where. Don't worry about it, it doesn't make any sense to me either.

open the door to the lair, there is a lot more to do.

For one thing monsters appear and chase you all over the place, sapping your vital energy. These, however, can be dealt with by shooting them or casting a bit of mask magic.

Amulets and scrolls are also very useful in that respect. If you find your energy is getting a bit on the low side, food and energy bottles can be consumed to restore it.

I would say Storm is the kind of

STORM

**C16 and Plus/4
MASTERTRONIC**

Price: £1.99/cass



If you read the Commodore User review of Gauntlet then you'll have a pretty good idea of what Storm is all about. Storm is a close copy of the C64 and arcade original, Gauntlet.

Mastertronic have also released Storm on the C64 and it will be no surprise to you that these two games bear an even greater resemblance. What is surprising is that the C16 version is almost identical to the C64 one.

Aside from its resemblance to more expensive games for more expensive computers, the most exciting thing about Storm is that it's a simultaneous two-player game. Using two joysticks, two players can play at the same time each controlling a different character. The two of you work together to collect what must be collected and kill what deserves to be killed.

I always like to say a little about the background to the game because the software companies spend an

M'tronics best C16'er for yonks.

inordinate amount of effort writing what appears to be the same thing on every inlay. This one has some well whacky names though.

Una Cum for instance is the villain of the piece. He has a laboratory lair in which he holds captive Corrine (only sensible name in the whole game). Corrine is wife of Storm the



Keys are essential as in all Gauntlet rip-offs.



Don't forget to get the food.

So the two of you, or just you if you can't find another joystick or player, go in search of Una Cum's lab lair.

But Storm is more than a simple game of hide and seek in a maze. Although the primary objective is to collect three snake brooches and

game that definitely needs to be played by two people to get the most out of it. Having said that, as a one player game it still has a lot to offer. One big factor is that it's only £1.99. It has to be a winner at that price.

Ken McMahon



Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

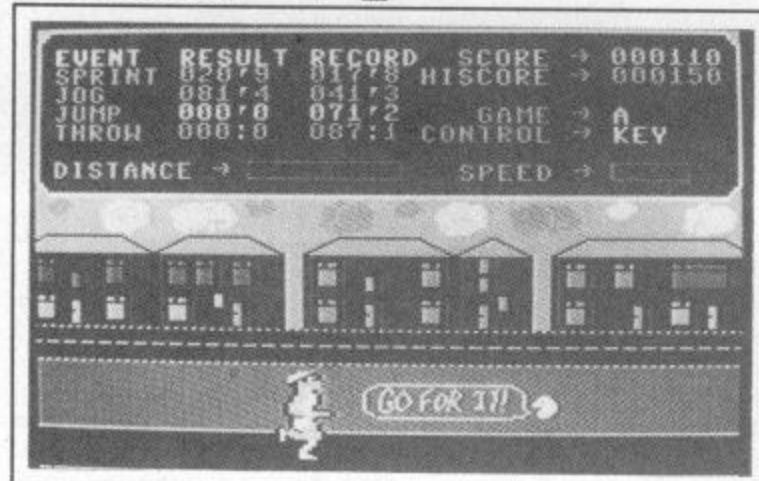
8
Overall

STREET OLYMPICS

C16 and Plus/4 MASTERTRONIC

Price:
£1.99/cass

"Go for it" says the
Pacman-like thingy.
"No thanks,
Mastertronic" says
James Pickering.



No doubt you will have noticed that Mastertronic are making a killing with C16 and Plus/4 software, but I think they have gone off target a bit with this one.

Mastertronic describe this game as a gruelling sports simulation that will use every ounce of your stamina and strength. Where they get that idea from I haven't a clue. Perhaps the person testing the game was a reject from Noel Edmond's Mr. Puniverse contest. I would describe the game as tedious and boring.

They also go on to say 'In the first three events — sprinting, jogging and

jumping — you race against the clock (surprise, surprise) and in the fourth event — throwing — the record is the longest distance. Amazing.

The aim of the game, like any sport simulation is to compete in all the different events. Let me take you through all four of them. First there's the 200 metre sprint — continually running for 200 metres. That's followed by the 800 metres job — exactly the same as 200 metre sprint but obviously longer and called jogging. Thirdly, there's the long distance — a sort of steeplechase. In this event you must, whilst running, jump brick walls instead of hurdles. Last is throwing — instead of throwing a javelin or shotput, you must throw a brick (I wonder what Daley Thompson would think about that, pretend he is a football hooligan perhaps).

There are also two game variations: Game A and Game B. If you choose Game A you have to

compete in all four of the events, but if you choose Game B then you have the opportunity to choose an individual event to practise.

The most disappointing aspect of Street Olympics is that you can't use a joystick. The games does have joystick facilities but when you try to move it from left to right to gather speed you are disqualified. I've tried the joystick in both sports but was still disqualified. This meant that I was forced to use the keyboard, pressing Shift to gather speed and Return to jump. If there is one thing that really annoys me it's having to play games on the keyboard, and I think that goes for the majority of us.

Worst of all the events are just plain dull. Run, run a bit further, run even further still and chuck a brick. If you are looking for a good sport simulation don't look at *Street Olympics*.

James Pickering

Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

3
Overall

DROID ONE

C16 and Plus/4 BUG-BYTE

Price:
£4.95/cass

There's not a lot one can say about this game. At £4.95, it's bad news. The graphics and game-play are similar to Anirog's Cybertron; collect the humans while mindlessly zapping the robots. The action takes place on the planet Vragus IV, searching for the elusive Di-Planium ore (so elusive there isn't any).

As you enter level one, robots appear from nowhere to attack your

ship. There are many different types of robots and they all behave in different ways. Some follow you around, others explode, showering you with shrapnel. You defend yourself with no more than rapid-fire lasers and your wits.

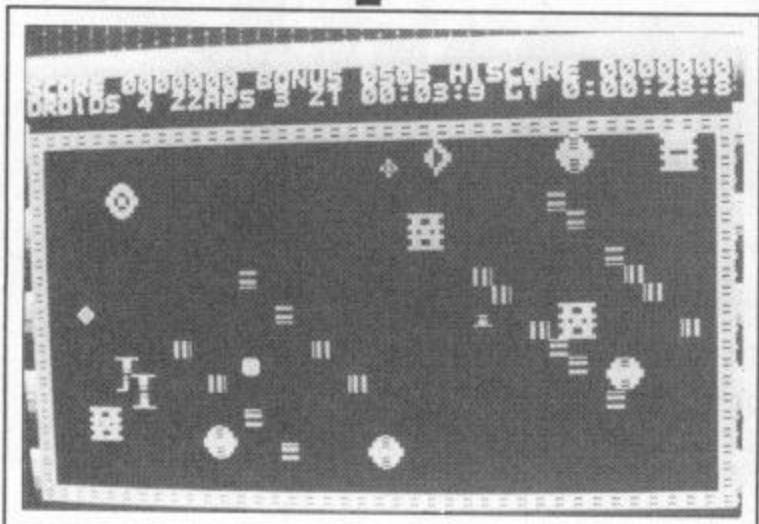
Should things get really hairy, a tap on the spacebar activates a 'smart' bomb (I don't care what it looks like) that will destroy all the robots currently on the screen. Use them wisely, though, you only get three of them — suppose that's why they're called smart bombs.

Your ship is highly manouverable and can move from one side of the screen to the other in just under three seconds. Not that that will help much, some of the robots move in for the kill just as swiftly.

Death brings no relief, the sound effects you get while another ship is shoved onto the screen are dreadful and prolonged, it's almost a relief to get back into the game again!

I've no doubt there are many people out there who will love mindless games like this, but, in my opinion, it's the pits. Although the graphics are reasonably well constructed and smoothly animated, the game-play is dreadful. Save yourself a fiver, and try one of our free type-ins!

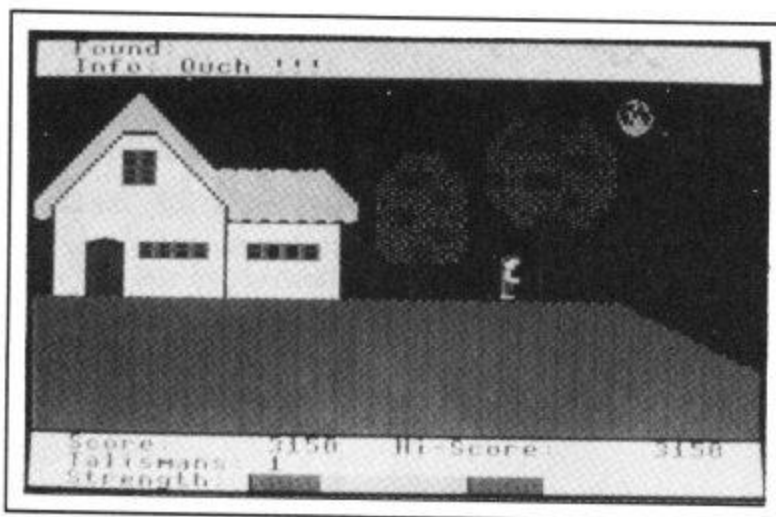
Fred Reid



Move, shoot, dodge,
yawn, score points,
fall asleep. Don't
buy it.

Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

3
Overall



statue. Why is it that software houses assume all computer gamers are greedy avaricious treasure hunters?

The first thing that strikes you is the quality of the graphics. Each screen appears against a night sky backdrop filled with twinkling stars. There are 48 screens in all and you move from one to another by moving

mention it. (Daley Thompson does — Ed) There is also the odd picnic lunch which goes down well if you're feeling a bit run down.

The general idea is that you run around in search of the statue, keeping your energy up with the odd ploughmans and bottle of potion. There are seven talismans which must be collected before you reach the final screen and there is the occasional adventure type puzzle to be solved. To enter the cottage and the church you must first find the

◀ You've collected one talisman, still six to go.

● THE MAGICIAN'S CURSE

**C16 and Plus/4
GREMLIN
GRAPHICS**
Price: £6.95/cass

It seems that Gremlin Graphics can't put a foot wrong these days. Everything they produce has a quality about it that is somehow lacking in most of the other stuff.

The Magician's Curse is no exception. Although the idea has been around for a while, the quality of the game is so good that if Gremlin released *Space Invaders* you could almost believe it would be a hit.

As the very old and much used legend has it, many years ago The

ubiquitous little man to the left or right hand edge of the screen. The animation is excellent. There is no flicker and you don't get that square box around the sprites that I've noticed on most other C16 games.

Your energy meter at the bottom of the screen depletes with every passing second. There are additional energy depleting hazards. Apples fall from trees and, if you're not careful, give you a nasty knock on the head. Some screens are inhabited by vampire bats which have serious consequences for your energy meter should you come into contact with one. That's not all, by far the biggest hazards are the poisonous lakes — use the stepping stones, and the force fields — pick your moment.

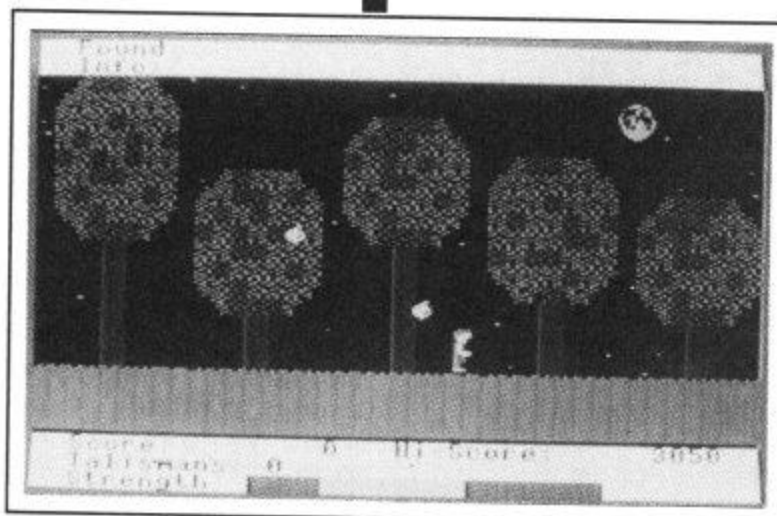
There are two ways to replenish your energy, neither of which, you'll be relieved to know, involve drinking Lucozade. Potions are left conveniently lying around the place — could be Lucozade I suppose — no I don't get a tenner every time I

key. There is a poisonous potion for which an antidote exists if you can find it quickly enough. Don't bother going into the caverns unless you have the candle.

If you manage to find the statue, or you fancy yourself a bit with the joystick, there are seven higher levels with more bats and falling apples. I wouldn't bother with level eight though. You can't see for the bats and the apples come out of the trees like they're jet propelled.

I managed to get through most of the game in a couple of hours, so experienced players might find the fun a bit short lived. Even so, I'd say it was an hour or two and seven quid well spent.

Ken McMahon



◀ Watch out for the apples falling on your head.

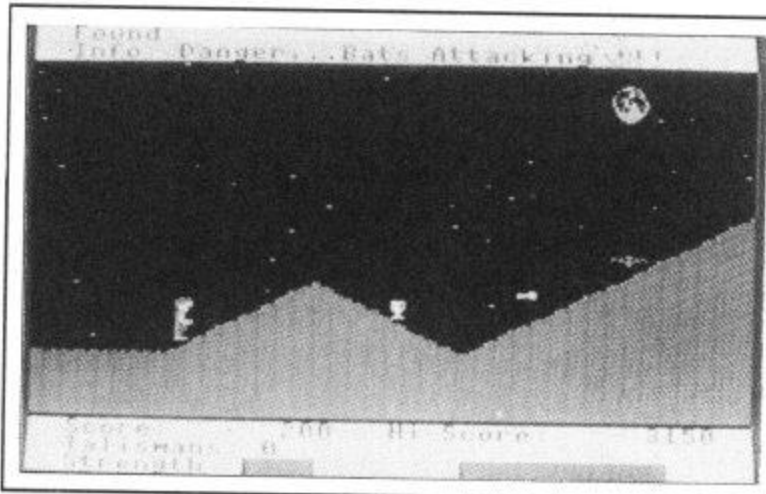


Land was inhabited by an evil magician. There has to have been an evil magician you see, otherwise how would you account for all the evil thingies that inhabit The Land?

It's possible I suppose that he was really quite a benevolent bloke, just incredibly incompetent with the old spell book. Still, for the time being I think we'll stick with the Gremlin version of events.

Anyhow, none of this would concern us were it not for the fact that, hidden deep within the land there is an incredibly valuable golden

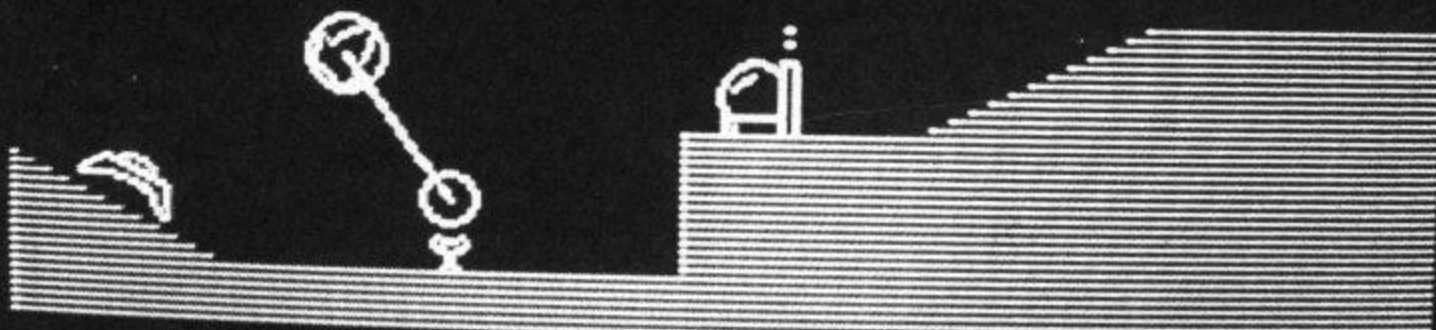
◀ Twinkle, twinkle little stars — where the hell's that statue.



Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

7
Overall

THRUST



▲ Gotcha! The energy pod is nabbed, now scarper.

**C16/Plus 4
Firebird
Price: £1.99**

THRUST

Thrust is living proof that you don't need one of the new mega-fantastic all singing all dancing 16-bit machines to make a good computer game.

Don't get me wrong — I'm not putting down the technological break-throughs that are going to revolutionise our hobby in the next few years. It's just that *Thrust* is a timely reminder of the cardinal rule of good game making — make sure the idea is a good one before you start programming. If the game does not contain a basic addictive element then the best graphics in the world are not going to get you coming back for more.

So what's so special about *Thrust*? Pure addiction — simple as that.

You pilot a triangular, line-drawn ship that has to scoop up a fuel pod from the planets' surface, destroy a nuclear reactor, and scarper before

the core blows and the planet is destroyed. If that sounds easy believe me it is anything but.

What gives the game its challenge is the method of controlling the space ship. It has a momentum produced by the planets gravitational pull. When you pin the ship to the right it drifts in that direction — left and vice versa. A slight push of the thrust button and the ship surges forward in the direction that the triangular ship is facing.

It is this 'thrust' orientated ship control that gives the game its uniqueness and its name.

Manoeuvring the ship is a challenge in itself — but once you start picking up the fuel pods, spinning the ship to take out the guns that are strafing you and blasting the nuclear reactors the real fun begins.

Grabbing the fuel pod makes life more difficult still. The pod is attached to your ship by a long wire — ball and chain-fashion — which swings around as you attempt to thrust pulling your ship in all sorts of directions.

Things soon get tough if you successfully complete the first mission. On level 12 the pod is hidden in a cave that you have to negotiate — taking out the guns that

guard it. Both fuel and time are limited — so you need to become a real master of the controls if you are to be successful. The key to *Thrust* is to keep your 'thrusts' to a minimum as each stab on the key uses up valuable fuel. It is infuriating when you have almost completed a mission and are about to make good your escape to fall to the ground, thrusting furiously, only to discover you have run out of fuel. Thump space for another go.

Thrust was an enormous hit on the 64 last year — one of the best selling budget games of 1986.

Its graphic simplicity should have made for a successful conversion and in fairness the basic quality of the game is here. The regrettable thing about C16 *Thrust* is the flicker particularly on the harder levels. I won't hark on this too much though as I still found it difficult to put down.

The sound effects are competent — nice quick fire sounds as you pummel the nuclear reactors and good retro rocket type noises as the ship powers forward.

Thrust will infuriate and entertain you. I thoroughly recommend it. At £1.99 it contains many hours of gaming fun for a wet English Summer.

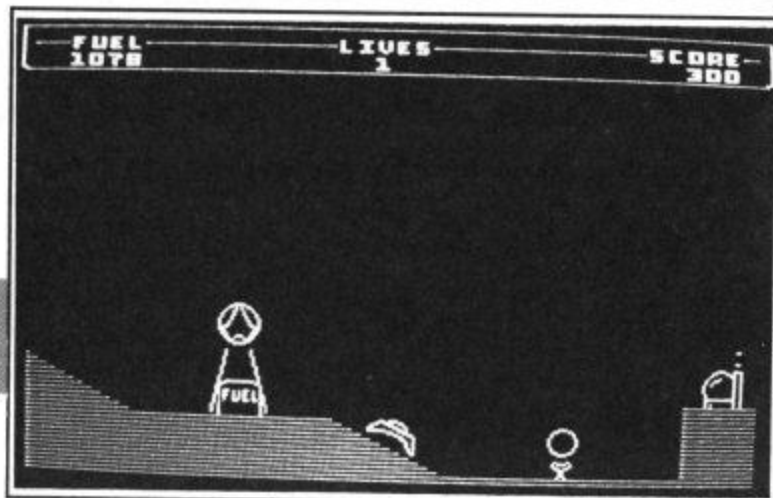
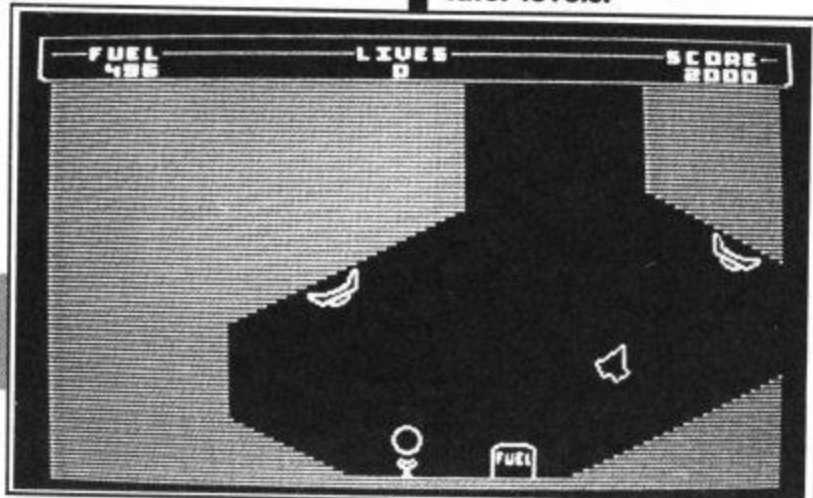
Eugene Lacey

Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

8
Overall

▼ Level II — those two guns will have to go for a start.

Beaming up the fuel — fairly essential stuff it is too on the later levels.



TOM THUMB Commodore 16 and Plus 4

Anirog Software
Price: £6.95/disk

As I recall it the story goes something like this. Once upon a time there lived in the middle of a big forest a lonely old couple. They were very sad because all their lives they had wanted a little boy but, for one reason or another he never showed up. There could have been a medical problem I suppose, but test tubes didn't exist in those days. And to make matters worse, there were no gooseberry bushes in the forest.

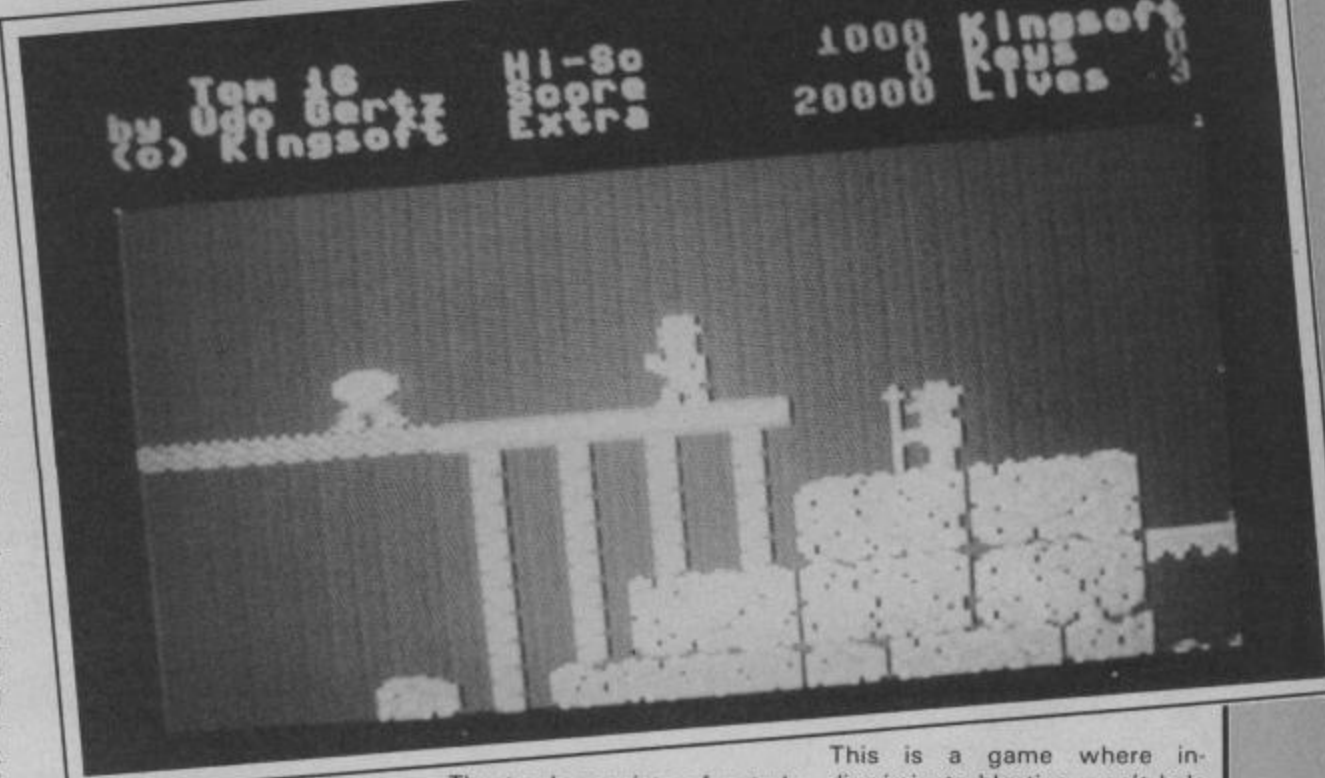
Then, one day, as if to answer their dreams Mrs Thumb found a little boy. On returning from her weekly trip to the supermarket on the edge of the forest, she was unpacking the shopping and there he was, wedged in between the toilet rolls and the cat food. "We'll call him Tom" said Mr Thumb, "because if we call him Tiddles it'll confuse the cat".

Anyway, to cut a long story short (*not that short, Ed.*), the years passed and everybody got a lot older. Then, one evening, during a dull bit in Dallas, Mrs Thumb turned from the television and said to her husband "Have you noticed anything strange about Tom?"

"Well, I don't know many other fifteen year olds that are three inches tall, but apart from that he seems to be a fairly normal lad".

"I think we should sell him to a software house. They can put

Jump over the man with the nasty stick and walk across the bridge.



him in a computer game and we'll make lots of money". "All right then", said Mr Thumb shrewdly.

And that's how Tom Thumb came to feature in a C16 game.

The game itself is fun to play as well as providing quite a challenge even to highly skilled players such as myself. Tom has entered the tomb of Pharaoh Manilo (sounds more like a Philipino dictator than an Egyptian ruler) to try and lay his hands on the Pharaoh's fabulous wealth. And who can blame him, after being sold down the river by his parents like that?

The tomb consists of a truly amazing 178 screens of pretty impressive hi-res graphics. I didn't get a look at everyone, so I suppose we'll just have to take Anirog's word for it that they all exist.

As Tom is moved around the detail scrolls away behind him. This gives the impression that you really are in a large maze and is preferable to the kind of game where the whole screen is redrawn when you reach the edge.

Each section of the maze has it's bunch of monsters to be dealt with as well as a few environmental hazards like crumbling walkways and laser beams.

This is a game where indiscriminate blasting won't help — in fact there's no shooting involved at all.

The secret is to manoeuvre your way around the obstacles. This is just as well because the monsters are so cute I don't think I would have felt comfortable blasting them into oblivion.

There's something peculiarly unthreatening about an egg on legs, a pea with a hat on and huge boggle eyes, and a devil with a cheeky smile.

Once you have the knack of squeezing past them, you can pick up a key which opens a door on other parts of the maze and eventually to the treasure. On the way there are little treasure chests to collect which give you points and an incentive to reach the final goal.

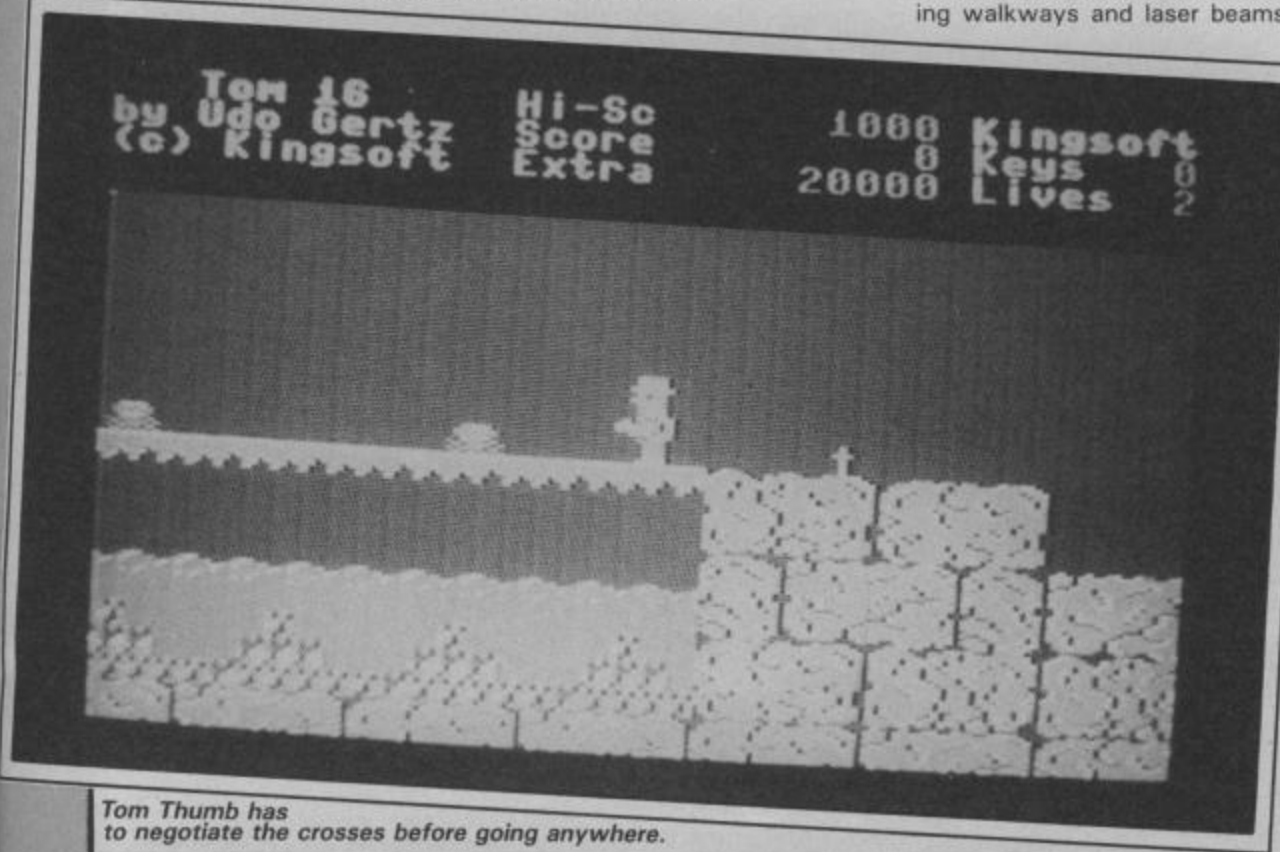
Tom Thumb is a game it's hard not to like. The idea is good and it's been very well put together, the graphics and sound are both excellent.

Ken McMahon

Graphics	★★★★
Sound	★★★★
Toughness	★★★★
Staying Power	★★★★★
Value	★★★★

Anirog are really beginning to make the running in the C16 games.

Stop Press. If you thought Tom Thumb was good just wait till you see Winter Events. Perhaps the month of June is not the best time to launch a winter sports game — but don't let that put you off this one. It really does look like a smash. Catch a full review in next month's CU.



Tom Thumb has to negotiate the crosses before going anywhere.



bombers. Force fields, extra lives, platforms, bombs, photon torpedoes, lasers, — none of that. Instead, there is a ball.

It doesn't sound too thrilling I'll admit, but bear with me. This ball

◀ **Graphics rival the 64 version.**

travels along on a sort of cosmic causeway. What you have to imagine is a starscape, not unlike the kind of thing Captain Kirk stares out at from

snail would be embarrassed at. Cyan squares are the biggest horror of all. They reverse the controls: left sends you right, right sends you down a hole. There is some good news, though. Blue squares bounce your ball into the air and are handy for jumping over holes and gaps. And green squares make your ball go like it's got a rocket up its bum.

◀ **The black and white squares appear at the end of the first level.**

C16 and Plus/4 GREMLIN GRAPHICS

Price: £6.95/cass

Watch out for the
gaping chasms
between levels.



● TRAILBLAZER

Trailblazer is also available on the C64, Spectrum, Amstrad, Atari and MSX machines. But don't let anybody tell you it's yet another game that's been converted for the C16. The game was actually written on the C16 and converted for all others. The game is not only the best thing to appear on the C16 this year, unless I'm a complete drongo it's destined to go down in the annals as the game of '86.

As with all completely brilliant games, Trailblazer's success lies in the originality and style of the gameplay. There are no aliens, there is no dying planet, there are no heroes, sole survivors of a once proud civilisation and there are no multi-role, X-wing, combat fighter



the bridge every Thursday night when he can't think of anything to put in his log.

Down the middle stretches a computerised version of the yellow brick road, made up of hundreds of different coloured tiles. Push the joystick forward and the ball shoots off into the screen and the yellow brick road scrolls underneath at something approaching warp factor six.

Just when you're beginning to enjoy yourself, disaster strikes. The road is full of holes and sometimes whole sections are missing. End up down one of them and you are confined to cosmic limbo for about three seconds. So what's wrong with being in cosmic limbo for three seconds? Absolutely everything, because the cosmic causeway has an end, and you have to reach it before your time runs out.

It gets worse. As well as the holes, certain coloured squares have a particular significance. Red squares slow your ball down to a pace a

In addition, you get five jumps, activated by pressing the fire button.

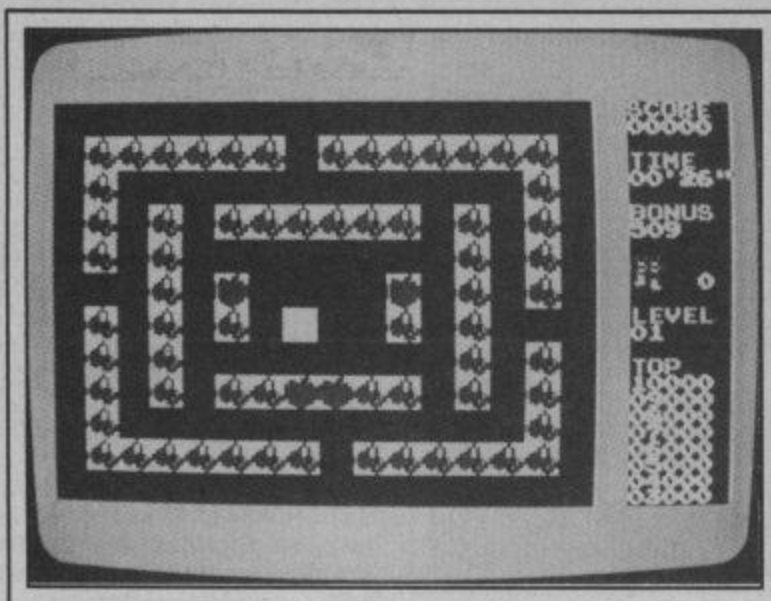
There are sixteen levels, each has a different and slightly more difficult course. On completion of each level you get bonus points for remaining time, unused jumps and for not falling down the holes. You also get a password which you can type in at the beginning of the game to jump straight to that level.

Teeny weeny criticisms. The holes in the road are a different colour (black) to the backdrop (grey) which slightly spoils the illusion of space, as does the slight screen flicker. Apart from that, Trailblazer is absolutely amazing colourful and extremely fast scrolling. The only thing that comes remotely close is driving down the motorway on a pogo stick at a hundred miles an hour while they're repairing it. And I've only ever done that once.

Ken McMahon

Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

9
Overall



A very fruity maze game from Mastertronic.

Tutti Frutti
Commodore 16
Mastertronic
Price: £1.99/cass

Why, why, why, can nobody ever get it right? How many times have you bought a game

that told you to use a joystick in port two when it should be in port one? Mastertronic have surpassed themselves this time. Joystick in port 0 it says. Perhaps I'm nit picking (*you're nit picking — Ed.*), but is it too much to ask for correct instructions?

Fortunately that's about the only thing wrong with this game.

It's not the most original game I've ever seen — it reminds me of about four or five others all mixed together, but it is very well done.

You are Super Strawberry. It's getting round to the time of year for picking cherries and, as everybody knows, cherry picking is the kind of job strawberries were born for. Out to stop you, for reasons best known to themselves are the Acid Apple Gang.

Tutti Frutti is a bit like a cross between Pacman and Jack Attack. On the opening level it's simply a case of munching, sorry, picking the cherries as fast as you can without getting caught by the rotten apples. If things get tough you can drop strawberries on their heads by munching the maze immediately underneath them (the strawberries that is, life gets confusing with all this fruit around.)

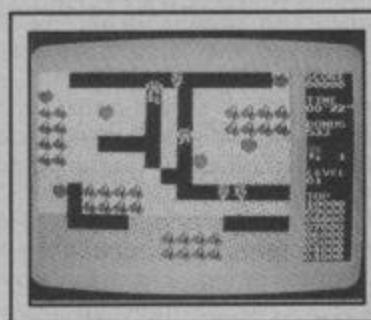
On level 2 you have to munch the maze walls as well as the cherries. The walls look like they're made from strawberry jam so this shouldn't prove too unpleasant. Level 3 has you squashing the bad apples by

pushing blocks off the wall. From there on up it's variations on the same fruity theme.

As I said, not the most original game in the world, but good fun all the same. As well as good, clean graphics, the author's managed to squeeze a respectable tune out of the C16's TED chip. Definitely worth buying if you missed out on a munch man derivative last Christmas.

Ken McMahon

Graphics	★★★
Sound	★★★★
Toughness	★★★
Staying Power	★★★
Value	★★★★



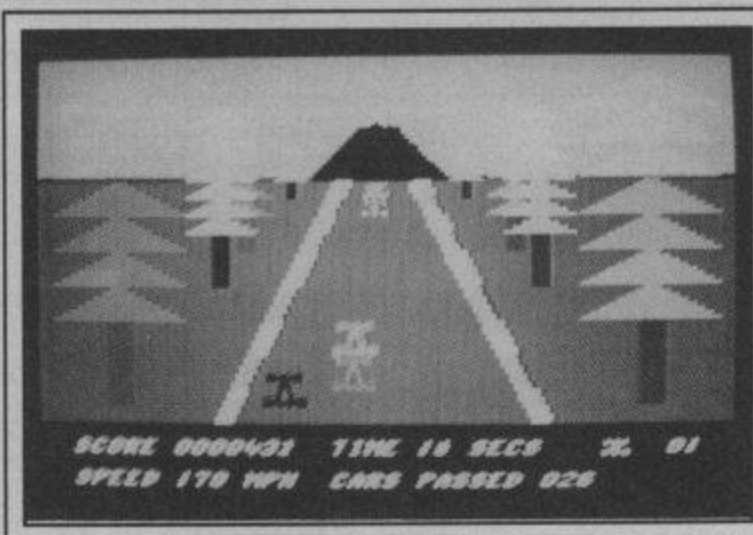
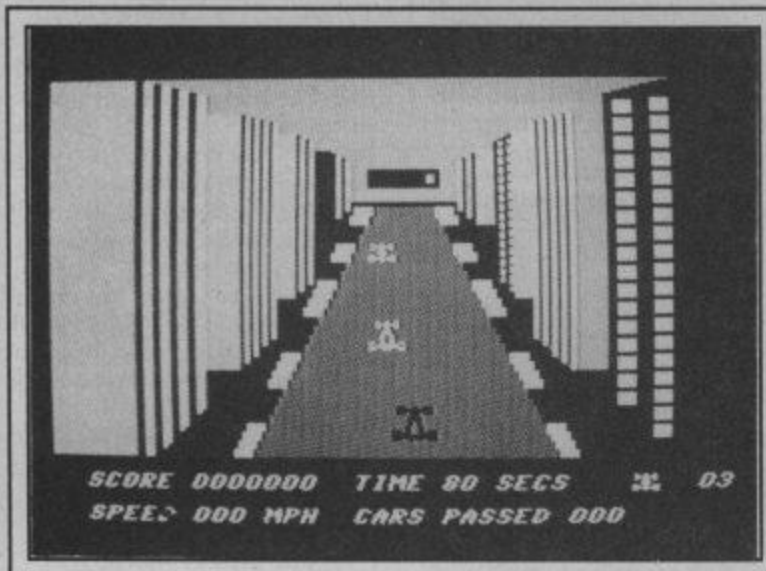
Death Race 16
Commodore 64
Atlantis
Price: £2.99/cass

It doesn't take a brain surgeon to work out that *Death Race 16* is a racing simulation. Probably the most brilliant and best known race game ever is Atari's Pole Position and consequently it's the standard by which everything else is compared. Surprisingly enough, *Death Race 16* doesn't come out too badly.

You start off, as is usual in motor racing, on the grid. The problem is your car has stalled and everyone else has left you behind in a cloud of smoke and gravel. You must come from behind, and overtake everything on the road at speeds of up to 300 mph. You don't have to go that fast, but if you didn't then you wouldn't get many points and the spectators would think you weren't much cop as a racing driver. You'd never be able to look yourself in the wingmirror again.

Now, a number of criticisms. You have to push the spacebar to

Compares very well to the super duper 64 offerings.



Death Race takes you through ever-changing landscapes.

start each new game which is a bit of a pain if you're using a joystick, a minor point, I know, but one which could easily have been put right. Next, the action is a bit jumpy, not really smooth flowing enough. Given the hardware limitations this is inevitable, but it's murder on your eyes particularly at the skyscraper stage.

Probably part of the same problem is the other cars on the road. There is no real illusion of gaining on them, then overtaking them at speed. It's more like they approach you, space invaders fashion from the top of the screen. They're also very dif-

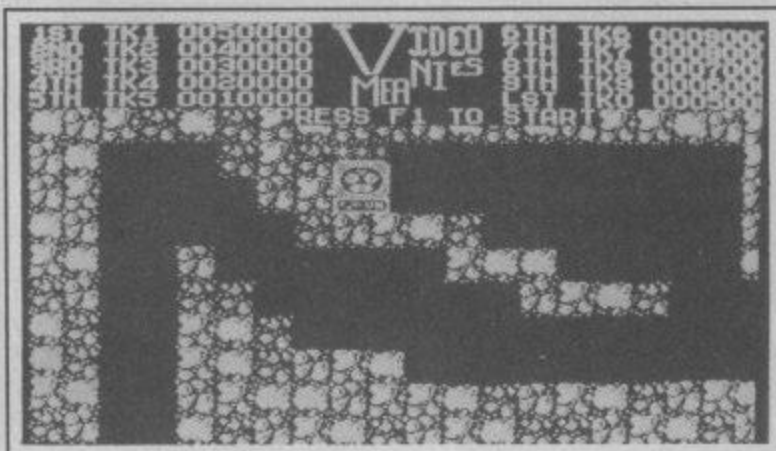
ficult to avoid as you don't know which way they're going until they've smashed right into you.

Don't be put off by all this though. My overall impression is that *Death Race* is a pretty good simulation, the various track sections, city streets, mountain roads, night driving, are superbly done. Certainly the best game of its kind for the C16. In fact, the only one, I think.

Ken McMahon

Graphics	★★★★★
Sound	★★★★
Toughness	★★★
Staying Power	★★★
Value	★★★★

VIDEO MEANIES



C16/Plus/4 MASTER- TRONIC

Price: £1.99/cass

You can be forgiven for being confused about the title of this game — its called *Video Meanies* on the inlay but the screen shots state clearly 'Video Nasties'.

All of this is forgiven when you read the name of the author. Yip, yip, yippee its Tony Kelly — author of the excellent *Mr Puniverse*, *Big Mac* and *Squirm*.

That's one thing I like about Mastertronic — they always tell you who the game is by — an invaluable pointer as to its quality.

Tony's latest offering is set in a millionaire, video tycoon's castle. The place is overrun with nasties and with video's bleeping away in every room. Your job is to get inside and turn them all off (the videos not the nasties).

You have six droids to send in on your behalf. Well — you wouldn't expect Granada's maintenance man to risk his own neck with all those creatures about, would you?

The game started with a jolly tune. A stab at the F1 key and I find myself in one of the castle rooms. After blasting one of the meanies I started to shoot down a wall of bricks (it was just an automatic reaction). I was just getting into this demolition when a meanie appears — taking the place of the one I'd destroyed — and blasts me. One

Video shop down my street doesn't look like this.

droid dead — only five left.

Next time round I was ready for the second 'Meanie', and turned off my first video. The loud 'Meeowwing' noise ceases when you turn off a video — a nice little acknowledgement of your skill.

It gets more difficult to silence the videos as the game progresses. You need to get keys just to get into the areas where they are located and many of them are guarded by pulsating lasers.

The whole point of turning these videos off is to spell out — letter by letter — the title of the game. Each time you turn one off you are given a letter which appears in the box at the top of the screen.

Its a tough game. I have to confess that after four days solid play I still had four letters to get. Some of the Meanies are incredibly fast and there is the added difficulty of your energy running out.

The game features twenty four screens of action. They are well animated with some neat touches — like the way your droid bobs up and down. There are just a couple of moans though. The whole thing appeared a bit jerky — smoother scrolling would have improved it tremendously.

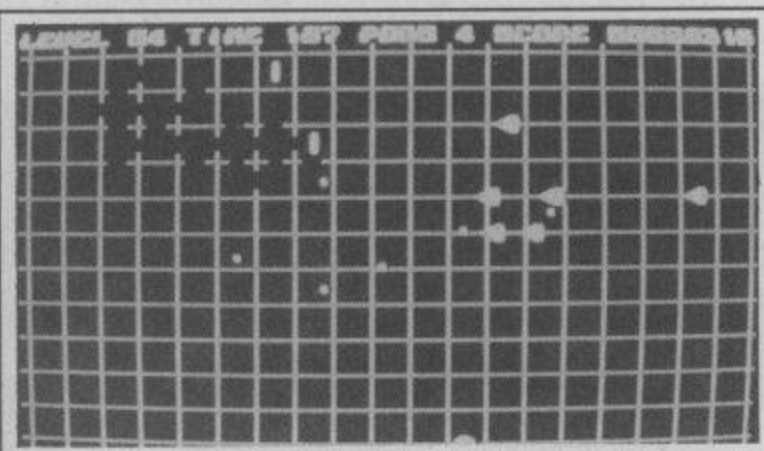
The sound effects and music were up to the high standards set in Tony Kelly's previous titles. Overall the game plays like an improved version of *Berks III*.

I enjoyed it — and its the first Mastertronic game that I haven't managed to crack in under a week. Well worth two quid.

Fikret Ciftci

Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

7
Overall



Looks like a Minter to me. No, it's probably a fake.

P.O.D.

C16/Plus/4 MASTER- TRONIC

Price: £1.99/cass

P.O.D. has no pretentious storyline and no mega-reality to justify its existence. It's just a very addictive shoot-'em-up with sixteen levels — increasing in difficulty as you blast.

The instructions are the most sensible I've ever come across. How about this for incoherent drivel: "You control POD (who else?) around the screen, don't stay in the corners (unless you're dumb). This is a rough one, in the unlikely event of you achieving a good score, the high score table will record it for you".

I've also noticed that Mastertronic have changed their game packaging, it's quite an improvement. Luckily they still use the fast and reliable Novaload loading system. Pity there was no loading screen to gaze at though.

In about one minute flat a highscore table popped up with a catchy tune plinking away in the background at high speed. I thought about the insult in the instructions as I got ready to start play. I don't want no game with a name like POD showing me up.

A matrix-like grid appeared, but the lines were more spaced out. A few aliens zoomed across the top of the grid in a line, they bumped into the side and descended one grid line. I let rip with the fire-button, only to find out later that POD has auto fire

built in — good job an' all — my thumb was feeling it.

Phew! That was fast. My hand started to sweat as I was awarded a bonus and an extra POD (up to a maximum of 5). The next screen was similar, but a few more different types of aliens joined in. This didn't help my POD's any, it can only fire four rounds at a time and only up the grid.

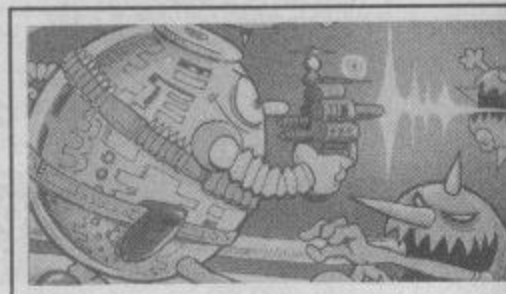
On later screens the game speeds up. The aliens become more suicidal and begin to shoot more accurately.

The kamikaze aliens made me get greedy, the more they rained down the more they bit the space dust. I never let go of the fire-button, well there are about 20 odd bullets to dodge and later on the aliens start playing kiss chase (POD ain't that handsome surely — Ed.)

Because of POD's incredible speed the aliens are only one character in size. The big shock comes when you notice how smooth the game plays, especially at top whack.

This is Mastertronic's answer to all of those Minteresque 'grid' games that are appearing at full price. For two pounds it's not half bad.

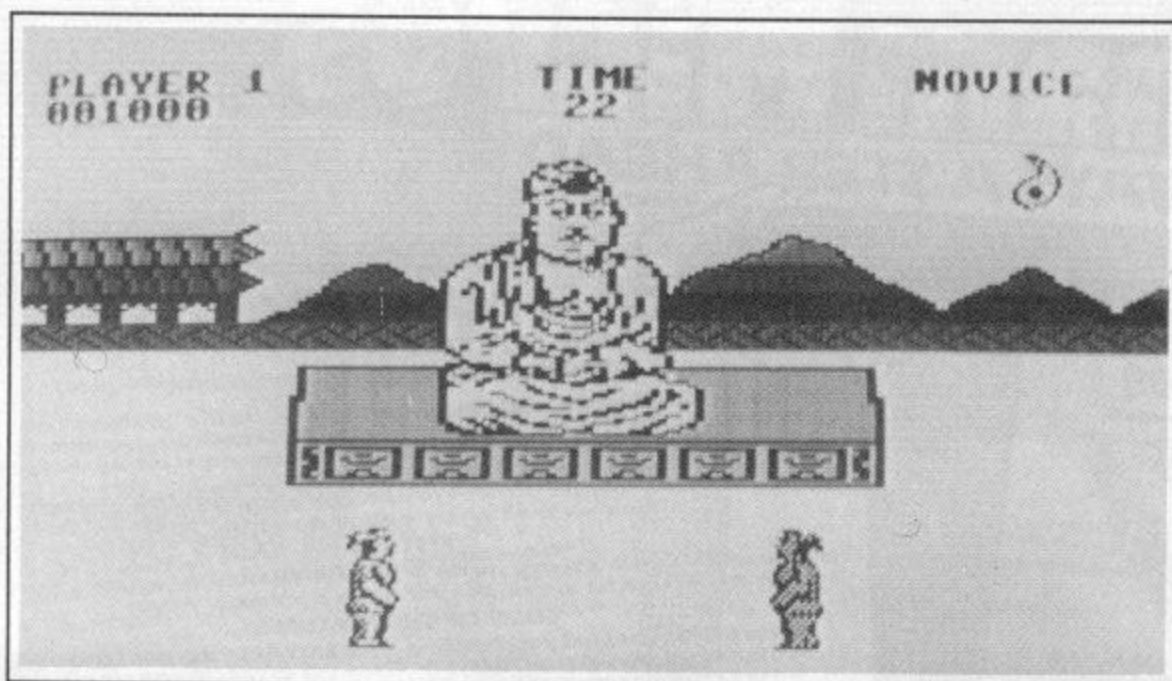
Fikret Ciftci



Don't be fooled by the insert, minimal graphics inside.

Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

5
Overall



Each time you score a hit you are credited with a little semi circular flag (don't know the proper name for it, but there probably is one). Once you have four of these your opponent gracefully retires, or you do, if he's the one with the pennants. A particularly juicy hit gets you two flags at once.

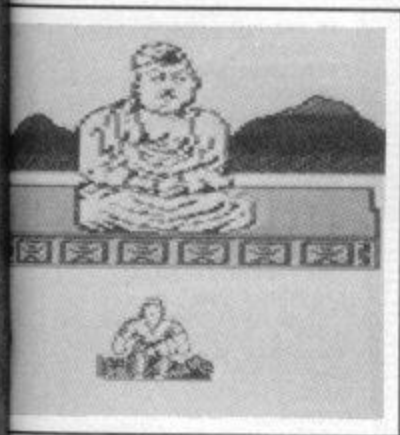
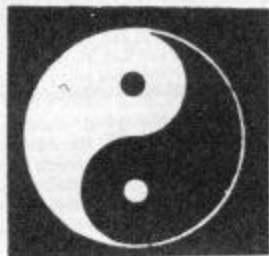
With both novices out of the way it was time for the First Dan to come on. Someone a bit more practised I thought, better watch my step. Not so, he got, and took the same treatment as the novice. Another First Dan and two Second Dans came and went the same way.

◀ **No wages for you McMahon, the Buddha looks nothing like me — Ed**

● WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST

**C16 and Plus/4
MELBOURNE
HOUSE**

Price: £8.95/cass



**Lots of good moves
but not enough
competition** ▲

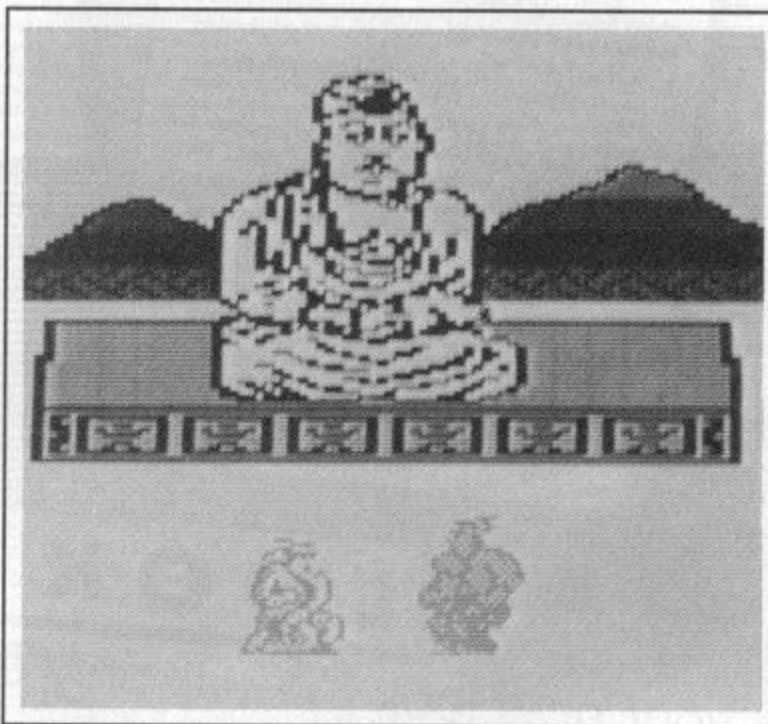
If you rushed out to buy *International Karate* before Christmas and are now too skint to spend your money on a decent combat game, don't worry, *Way of the Exploding Fist* isn't it. C16 owners have waited long and hard for something that approached the quality of punches and kicks available on the 64, but the C16 conversions just aren't coming up with the goods.

At first sight, the game looks pretty good. The two combatants appear on the screen against a fairly impressive backdrop. There are green mountains in the distance, yellow sand in the foreground, a pagoda and a statue of Buddha which looks a bit like the Editor in a bath towel — the things people will do for a bit of publicity.

The first opponent the computer throws at you is a novice. This is an excellent idea as it gives you the chance to discover what cunning blows your master of the art has up his sleeve, or under his belt as the case may be.

And they're pretty extensive too. There are sixteen altogether, including the old favourites like the roundhouse and the crouch kick (the one that gets them in the ankles). Try as I might, though, I couldn't get my man to perform a somersault or a flying kick. As it happened, none of this fancy footwork was needed, since the novice was easily despatched with a couple of straight punches. Oh well what do you expect from a novice?

After the first novice came a second who was similarly dealt with.



▲ **Novices or Dans, they all get the same treatment**

Third Dan Opposition was a bit craftier, but it was still just like any other day at the abbatoir. Fourth Dan came and went just like the rest. I could go on, but I'm sure you can all count.

If I'd thought all this was leading anywhere I might have continued with it, but I got the distinct impression that I'd have been sitting there at midnight with only Mr 127 Dan for company, a prospect I did not relish.

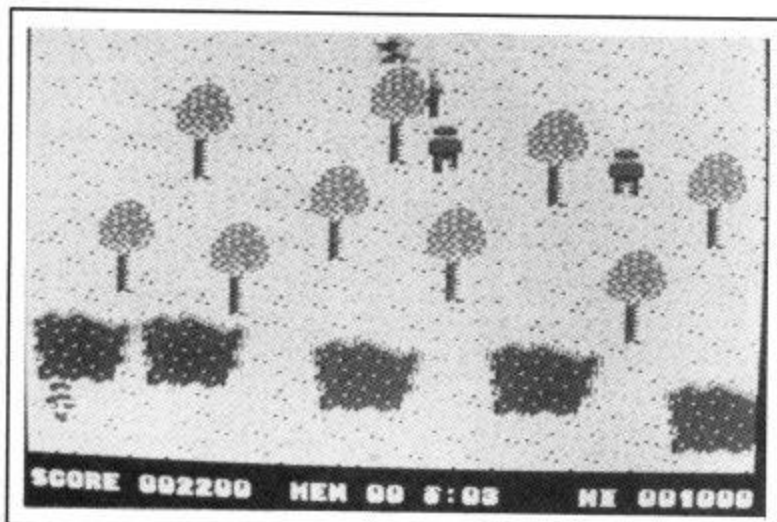
Like I said, it's a shame. In every other respect *Fist* is great. The characters are really well drawn and animated and all the moves are there, but what's the point if you don't get the chance to use them?

Ninja Master, which was a heap of rhinoceros dung, at least had some variety. The crying shame is that *Fist* is in a different class altogether, or could be but for the weedy opposition.

Ken McMahon

Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

5
Overall



▲ Don't hide behind the ditch, go out and blast 'em.

the forces, is to hide behind a tree until an unsuspecting gook comes within range, then let him have it with the old AK47. Firing is accompanied by a very satisfying dull boom which sounds more like distant artillery.

Alternatively, you could try what they do in real life. Keep your head down, run around like a complete nutter, and shoot at everything that moves — and some things that don't. I found this second approach less than efficient, but it was pretty good fun all the same.

As well as shooting people to death, you can blow their arms and legs off with hand grenades. You have five to start with, but can pick



● WHO DARES WINS II

**C16 and Plus/4
TYNESOFT**

Price: £8.95/cass



But what of Who Dares Wins 1, I hear you cry? Well, if the truth be known there wasn't one. The reason being that Alligata, the publishers of Who Dares 1 got into a spot of bother with the law on account of said game bearing a remarkable resemblance to someone else's. Enough said.

Who Dares Wins II is published by Tynesoft under licence from Alligata. As I can't say I've been overly impressed with the output of either company I was pretty amazed to discover that this is good stuff.

Don't get me wrong now. I'm not going so far as to give it an unreserved thumbs up, it even has the odd bug. But Tynesoft have all the same managed to come up with a pretty close approximation of the 64 original.

As if you needed to guess, you are a sort of Action Man character, complete with plastic hair, scar and eagle eyes. You have been assigned the task of rescuing your compatriots from deep within enemy territory where they are held captive by the armies of death.

This is a task which only the bravest will undertake, a job for a fearless hero, an assignment to which anyone with any sense would say 'bog off'. You get the picture.

In practice, what this boils down to is you standing at the bottom of screen one, gun in hand, while a bunch of crazy gooks come screaming at you from within the jungle (for which read odd tree-like objects here and there).

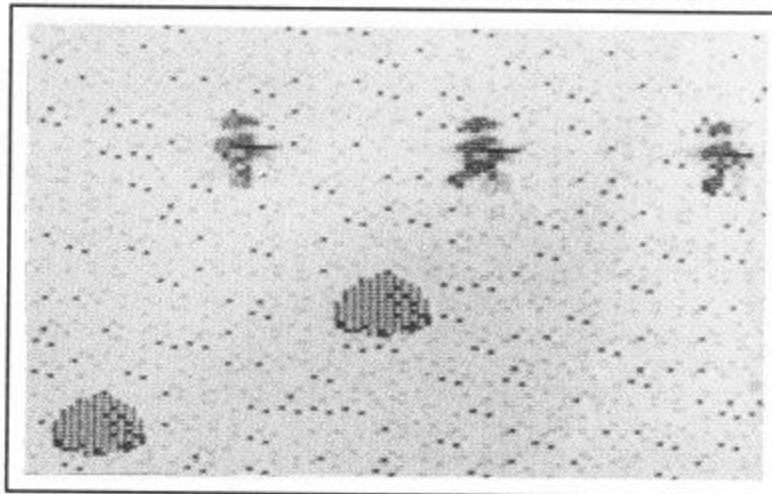
The Strategic Plan for Unobtrusive Combat, or spunc, as it's known in

up more along the way. Even so it's probably best to save the grenades for trucks, trains and the like, which are impervious to mere bullets.

That's basically it really. You kill them before they kill you. If you make it to the top of the screen, another one scrolls on with different terrain and more soldiers. The basic

What didn't impress me was the bug that enabled me to walk straight through the enemy when on a certain part of the screen. Equally unimpressive is the square block that appears around sprites on all C16 games apart from those by Gremlin Graphics.

The twelve hours (well, it seems



▲ No more crazy gooks on this screen, on to the next.

backdrop is sort of sandy stuff and there are all sorts of interesting things like trees, mounds (the military term escapes me at this moment), lakes, railways and outposts.

When you get to an outpost lots of soldiers run out and the bullets really fly. If you kill them all that's the outpost captured and it's on to the next one.

Overall, I was really impressed.

like it) of Colonel Bogey I was forced to listen to between one game ending and another starting also impressed me little. And finally my game ended for no reason whatsoever when I was just about to capture an outpost (we believe you, Ed.)

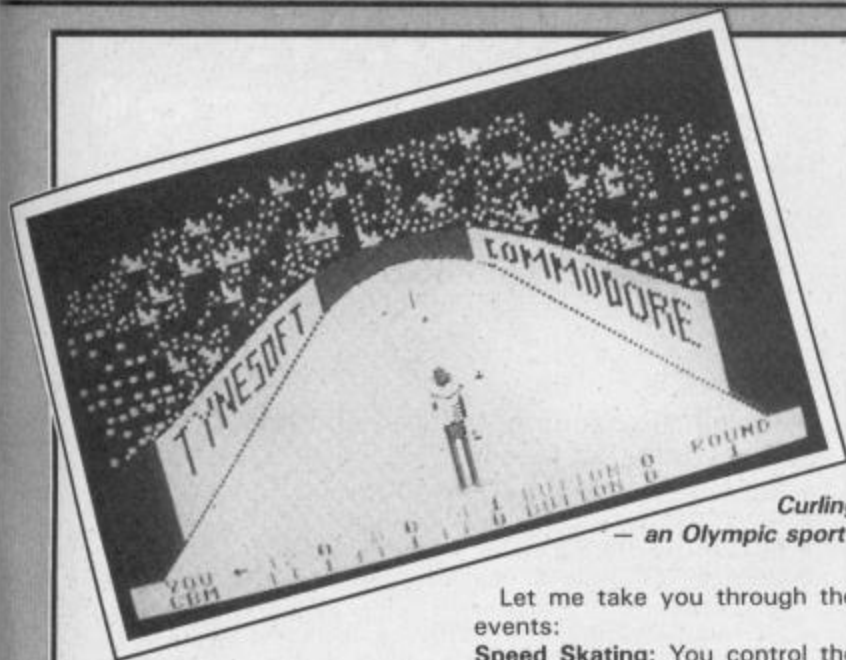
Finally, so as not to go out moaning, the bits I really liked; when the gooks die they throw their arms in the air and do a little dance, brilliant grenade explosions and twelve hours of wonderful Colonel Bogey music between each game.

Ken McMahon



Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

7
Overall



*Curling
— an Olympic sport?*

WINTER OLYMPICS Commodore 16 and Plus/4 Tynesoft Price: £6.95/disk

At first sight this looks promising. A version of the brilliant and hugely successful Winter Games for the C16. But, as luck would have it Winter Olympics turns out to be hugely disappointing. Tynesoft seem to have a talent for producing naff games and this one is no exception.

Winter Olympics is actually six naff games in one package. If I was feeling charitable I might say that one of them, ski slalom, was at least half decent, but it only looks good because it's in such diabolically bad company.

Let me take you through the events:

Speed Skating: You control the little skater in the top half of the screen, the 16 controls the one on the bottom. Wiggle the joystick back and forth to make him go faster. It's more a question of timing and co-ordination than sheer frantic wiggling. Despite that I managed to beat the computer on my second attempt. After that the only option is to improve on your personal best.

Ski Jump: Some nice scenery here, but total lack of gameplay. Your man flies down the slope and you must press the fire button at precisely the right moment to launch him into the air. Pull back on the joystick to land, then press fire to straighten up or you'll end up on your backside. Takes about five minutes to master.

Cresta Run: You get a cross-section view of the run with the sledge hopefully in the middle and overhead view of the route

so you know when the corners are coming up. Probably the most difficult game to complete. You must lean into the corners to avoid flying off the course. This event has potential, but is let down by boring screen display.

Ski Slalom: Guide your skier through the gates as in the real thing. If you miss a gate you're given a time penalty and if you hit one that's your lot. Speed up and slow down at crucial moments using joystick back/forwards. This was the only event that aroused my excitement at all. Although it doesn't take long to acquire enough skill to complete the course, the incentive is there to try and improve your time.

Curling: I just didn't understand what was going on here. What's more I got the feeling that if I had it wouldn't really have been any more interesting.

Downhill: The same as slalom, only with trees instead of gates. I felt conned.

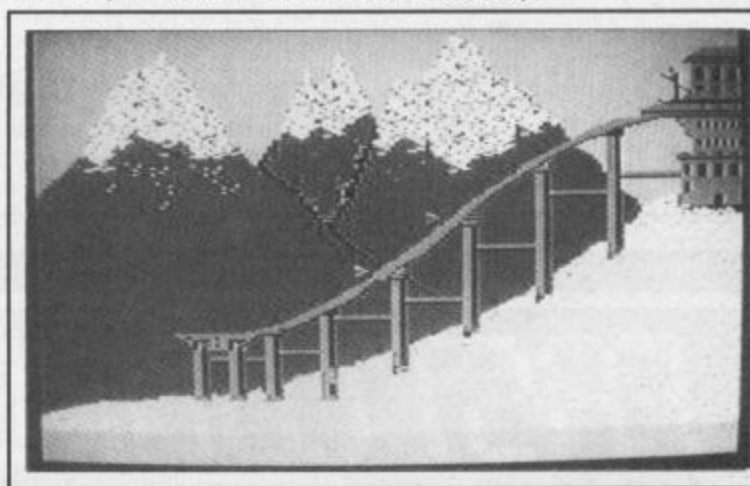
C 16

The only good thing I can find to say about Winter Olympics is that it's not as bad as Mount Vesuvius. I've made a belated New Year resolution to avoid Tynesoft games and I'd advise you to steer well clear of this one.

Ken McMahon

Graphics	★★★
Sound	★★
Toughness	★★
Staying Power	★
Value	★

Ski Jump — never knew it could be so easy.



COMMANDO Commodore 16 and Plus/4 Elite Price: £7.95/cass

This is the conversion all you C16 gamers have been waiting for. Is it nice to feel wanted at last now the games houses

realise there's a bit of money to be made out of you?

Well I think you're going to be pleased with this one. Elite have made a fairly good job of the conversion. Don't expect an easy ride though. Commando may be quicker to complete on the C16 but it's certainly not easier.

The action isn't so trigger-fast as the 64 version, but you have to get to grips with the limited manoeuvrability of GI Joe. Just pretend that he's got a piece of shrapnel in his leg or something.

This means that he has to be shifted using fast stabs on the stick. Another added problem is that the ground seems to have been plastered down with large dabs of Evostik, so poor Joe gets bogged down very easily.

The other nasty feature of this game is the wicked crossfire. If you stand still for a moment you can watch your lives tick away

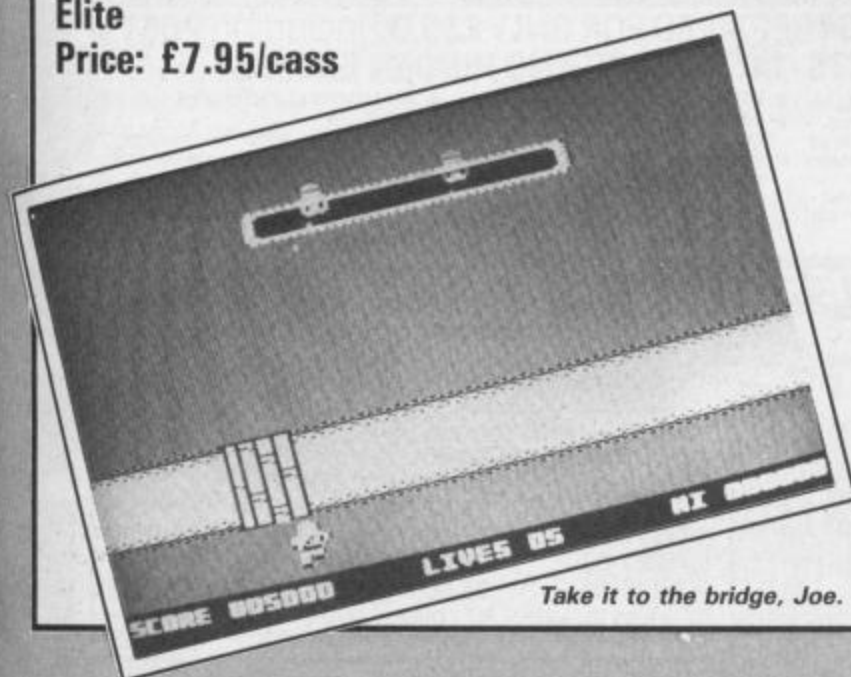
like seconds off the clock.

The key is to manoeuvre Joe into a position where he's in a safe spot from the wicked crossfire. Then shoot left and right to take out the enemy positions. This will work with no problems on zone one, but is not so easy on the next screen. When you get cut down on this level — as you most surely will, you will end up back to square one but with more lives.

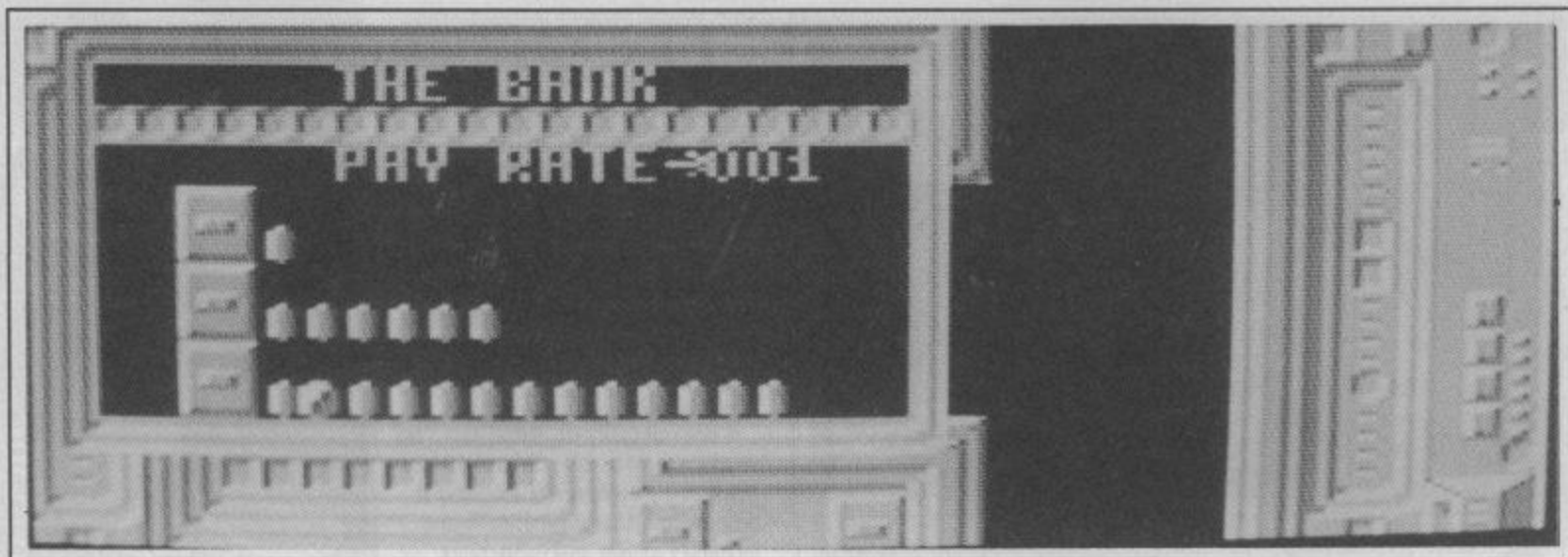
No complaints here. The conversion works — which is more than can be said for some — and it has good graphics. This game is a must for all C16 and Plus/4 owners.

Mike Pattenden

Graphics	★★★★
Sound	★★
Toughness	★★★★
Staying Power	★★★★
Value	★★★★



Take it to the bridge, Joe.



▲ Push your way up the queue to get a better rate at the bank.

XCELLOR 8

C16 and Plus/4 GREMLIN GRAPHICS

Price: £6.95/cass

If Gremlin continue to release games like *Xcellor 8* and *Trailblazer*, C16 and Plus/4 fans have a lot to look forward to. *Xcellor 8* features the kind of metallic, bas relief graphics only previously found on the 64.

Xcellor 8 is, in fact, a quite simple maze. The runners nip around the maze at lightning speed for seemingly no other reason than to give you something to shoot at, though they are no doubt engaging in 'low-life' activities of a highly illegal nature.

blast one of them it's unfortunate, but not as unfortunate as if you blast three because then the game ends.

This unhappy situation can, however, be avoided by a hasty visit to the hospital, which will patch up the innocent, no questions asked for a mere 78 credits.

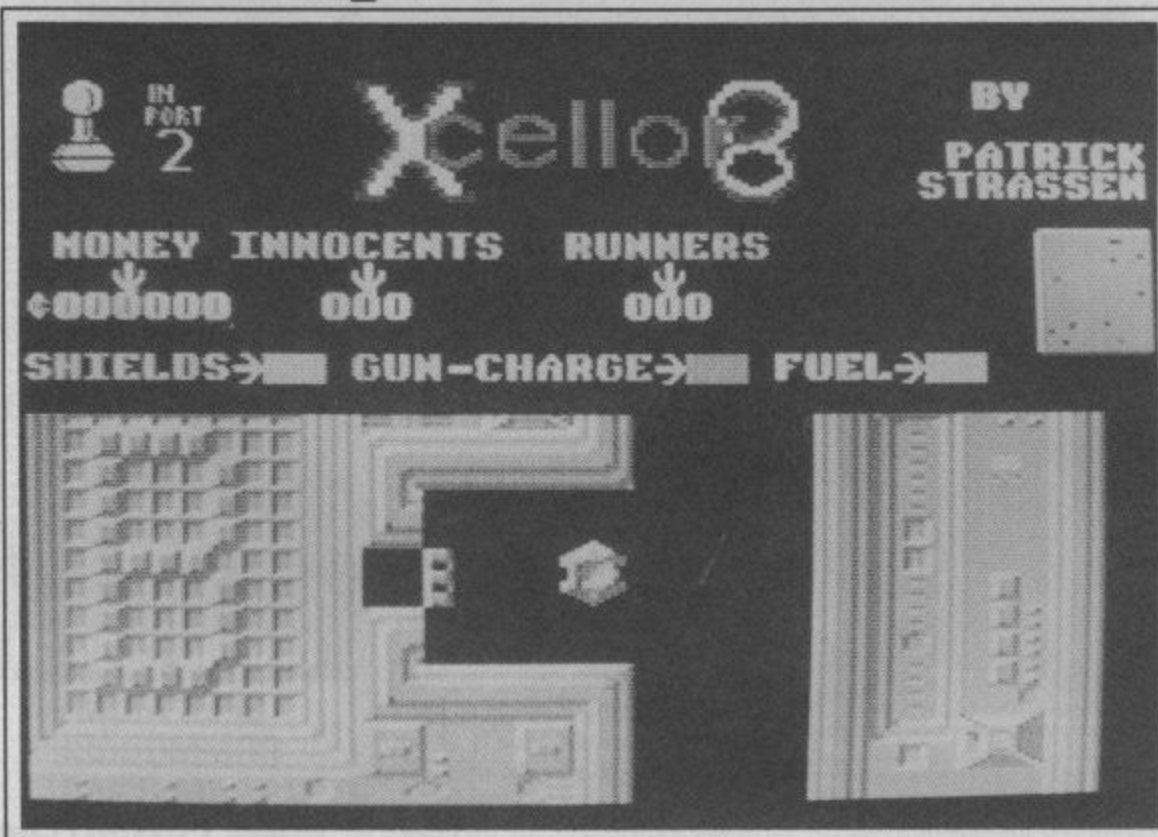
But where do you get the cash? From the bank of course. The bank pays a good price for terminated criminals. The only problem is the rate drops from the moment you walk through the door so you have to muscle your way through the crowds (queues of dots) if you want to get a good price.

If you're careful and manage to make a killing without wasting too many innocent passers-by, you will soon accumulate a hefty wad in your back pocket. This can be blown on extra equipment and fancy gadgets to make the task of cleaning up the streets that much easier.

I suggest as soon as you've got the cash you head for the shop and fuel up. Running out of gas has the same effect as shooting mum, dad and the kids out on a weekend shopping spree, i.e. game over.

Xcellor 8 is a pretty simple game really, it doesn't have a megamaze (you can map it in ten minutes) and the gameplay is straightforward. But it does have amazing graphics — everyone thought it was a 64 game, and was great fun for a couple of hours. Arcade addicts might find the attraction a bit short lived.

Ken McMahon



▲ Graphics like these on the C16? Never.

The story line, it's true is nothing exceptional: "A city of the future, *Xcellor 8* plays host to the low-life of the universe. Known as runners, these criminals keep you employed as you are a mercenary bounty hunter of the future; your job — to shoot and capture these desperate villains."

There is a little more to the game than just zipping around the maze zapping low-lifers. There are a few inhabitants of the labyrinth who are innocent law abiding citizens. If you

Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

7
Overall

YIE AR KUNG FU

**COMMODORE
C16 and Plus/4
IMAGINE**

**Price:
£7.95/cass**

Just in case you've been in a coma for the past year, or on holiday in Outer Mongolia, or you picked up this magazine thinking it was *Woman's Own*, a few words about martial arts computer games.

Every so often, the software industry hits on a theme which captures the imagination — and the cash — of the games buying public. Last year it was sport and we had *Summer Games I and II*, *Winter Games*, *Winter Events*, *Winter Olympics*, *Daley Thompson's T-Shirt* and a couple of million others.

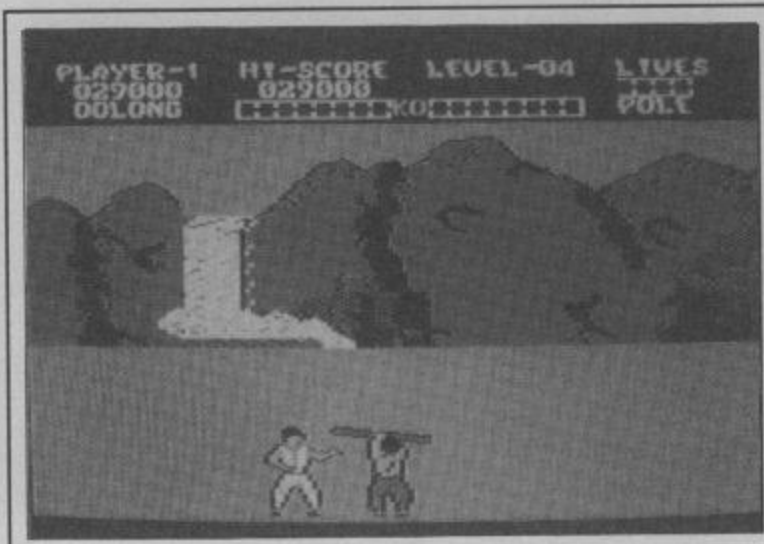
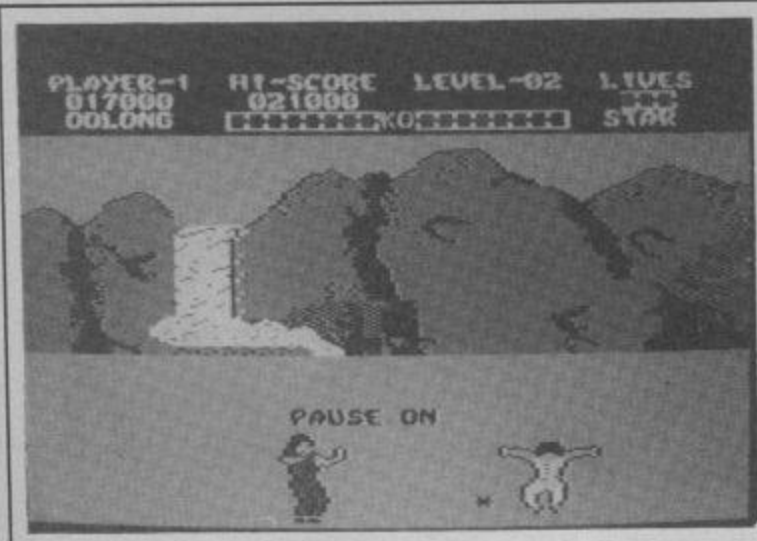
This year it's pyjama parties, and *Yie Ar Kung Fu*, originally released on the 64, is the latest in a long line of such games. If the tone of all this sounds mildly disapproving that's because, oddly enough, the first releases are usually the best and the mountain of clones that follow are just turgid reworked rubbish.

What is all this leading to? Well, what I'm trying to say is that there's nothing incredibly new or original or brilliant about C16 *Yie Ar Kung Fu*. It's a very basic, bog standard game with no frills attached. There is one overriding reason why that will probably not diminish its success and that is because there's only one similar game for the C16 (unless you count Frank Bruno's Boxing), and this is better.

You control Oolong, initially a bit of a novice in the art of killing people with his bare hands. Assorted loonies try to kill you with clubs, chains, poles, swords and shurikens — those little stars you can make from milk bottle tops. You can fight back in a variety of ways depending on which way you move the joystick.

If you were a true master I guess you would put together clever combinations of kicks and punches to defeat your opponent, but I found the best method was to go absolutely crazy with the joystick. It

▼ **Your third opponent is Star, a beautiful girl warrior who is a master of the 'shuriken' vicious spiky stars that she hurls at you. You'll need to look lively to hop over these and nip in and deliver a punch.**

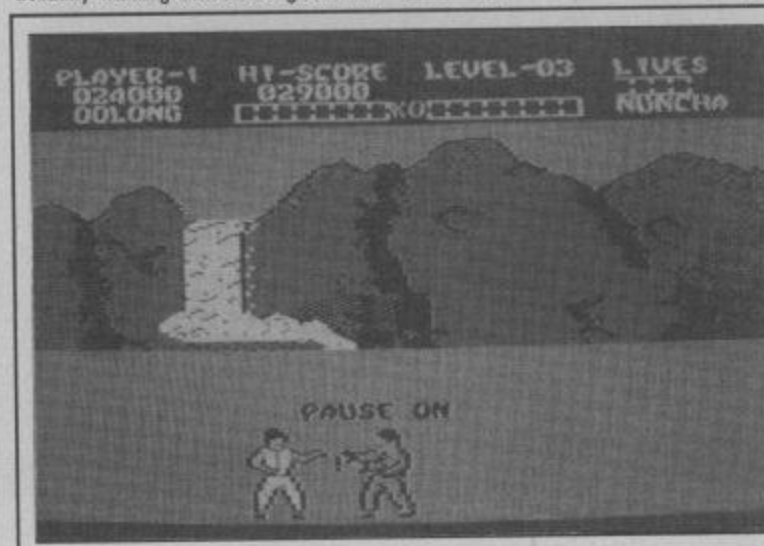


doesn't look pretty, but it's effective. Eventually, if you're lucky, you will defeat your bemused adversary and the next one will be dragged on.

One thing I didn't like about the graphics was that sometimes you managed to kill an opponent without actually making contact. I guess its

▲ **Nuncha has great reach and is a master of the nunchaku — a vicious chain-like weapon.**

▼ **Pole — as the name suggests — tries to poke you with a staff.**



something to do with the block of graphics that contains the nasty — either way it seemed strange — though fun — decking these guys by just swinging a punch in their general direction.

Altogether there are eight combatants, not including yourself. The first four bouts are contested against an uninspiring mountain scenery backdrop, then the second four are loaded with accompanying pagoda background — a slight improvement. There was a particularly annoying bug in my version. Despite finishing the first

section with all five lives intact, when the second half loaded I only had one life remaining. This I promptly lost, necessitating a complete reload from the beginning of the tape.

The best description that can be applied to *Yie Ar Kung Fu* is that it is adequate. There's nothing particularly inspiring about it. The important fact for unrelenting Martial artists is that it's better than *Ninja Master* by miles. So, to all those of you who ignored my massive slagging and pushed it to number five in the charts, ya boo and sucks.

Ken McMahon

Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

4
Overall